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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A SURVEY ON THE VARIOUS FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE A CUSTOMER'S CHOICE OF TOOTHPASTE IN MOGAPPAIR POPULATION

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ABSTRACT

The customer's choice of toothpaste may seem a light topic to be discussed. This survey discusses the factors that influence the customer's choice as well as the most common brand preferred among various age groups. This information can help understand the type of oral hygiene methods that patients feel comfortable to approach and use. It can also help to understand the knowledge level of patients regarding dental hygiene.

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INTRODUCTION

Brands and brand endorsement is a thriving global factor that influences as well as involves any product available in the market. Even toothpastes are also part of the branding world. Though common oral hygiene aids obtained from natural products like neem sticks, charcoal, bricks, etc, to name a few were in practice for a very long time and also are still in use by many, toothpastes are now generally associated with dental hygiene. Everybody has a favourite brand, apart from that celebrity endorsement in advertisements influence many youngsters especially children. Colour also plays a main role in attraction. Another important factor is taste, though there are some people who don't appreciate the taste of toothpaste, people also choose their toothpaste based on the flavour. Cost maybe not a big factor, but women in general also consider this in an economic point of view. In general customers are provided with a picture of white sparkling teeth and strong gums just from a single usage of toothpaste. Hence, awareness and knowledge regarding oral hygiene aids and techniques are to be spread more.

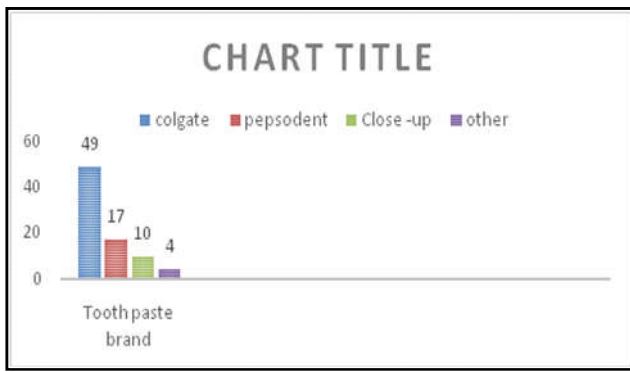
Aim: To study the factors that influence customer's choice of toothpaste and to understand the most preferred options in selection with respect to the toothpaste.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross sectional study was conducted among 80 patients from the outpatient pool of Department of Periodontics, patients were briefed about the study and informed consent was obtained from them and ethical committee approval was obtained from the University. A self conducted 20 questionnaire were distributed to all subjects of various age groups. The questionnaire included information related to the patient's name, age, gender and various factors that influence a customer's choice of toothpaste. The patients were asked to choose their options among the various choices given below the questionnaire. The following gives the list of questionnaire and the respective answer depicted in bar graph.

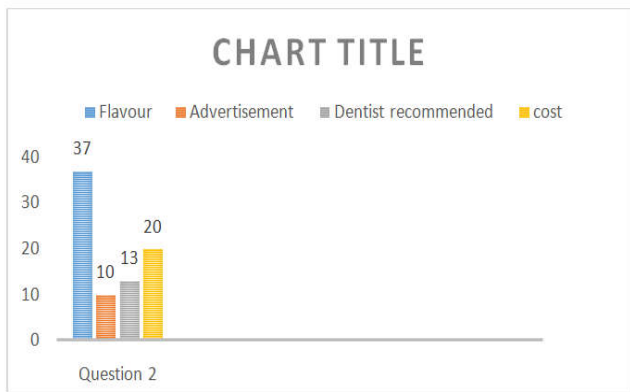
1. What is the brand of toothpaste that you are using at present?

- Colgate
- Pepsodent
- Close-up
- Other



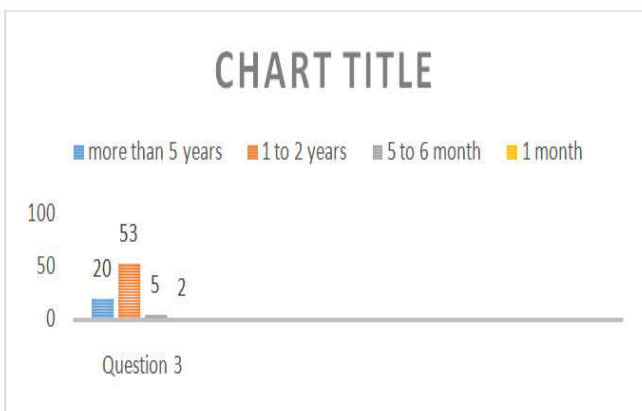
2. What is the reason behind choosing the brand of toothpaste that you are using at present?

- a) Flavour
- b) Advertisement/Celebrity Endorsement
- c) Dentist recommendation
- d) Cost



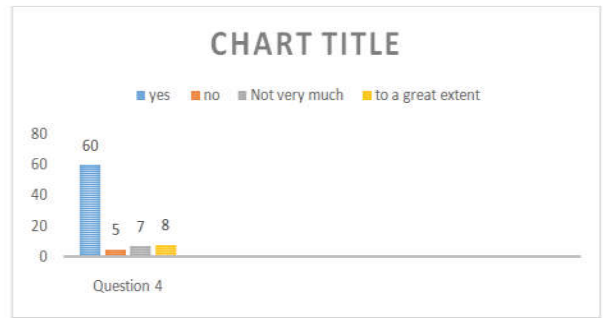
3. How long have you been using the brand of toothpaste that you are using at present?

- a) More than 5 years
- b) 1 to 2 years
- d) 5 to 6 months
- c) 1 month



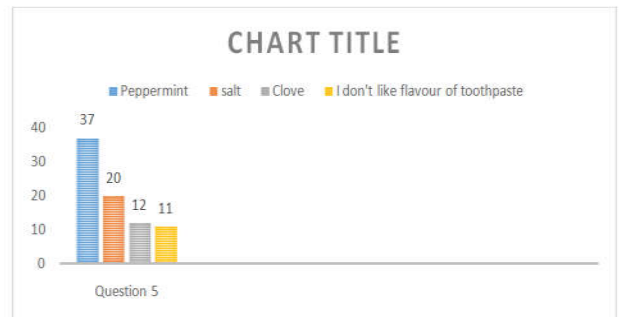
4. Does the taste of the toothpaste affect your choice of brand selection?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not very much
- d) to a great extent



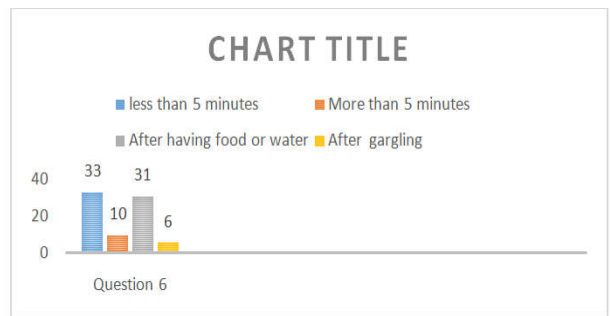
5. Which flavour of toothpaste do you prefer?

- a) Peppermint
- b) Salt
- c) Clove
- d) I don't like flavour of toothpaste



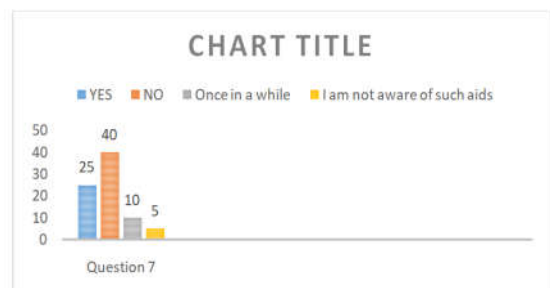
6. After how long does the flavour of toothpaste recede from your mouth?

- a) Less than 5 minutes
- b) More than 5 minutes
- c) after having food or water
- d) after gargling



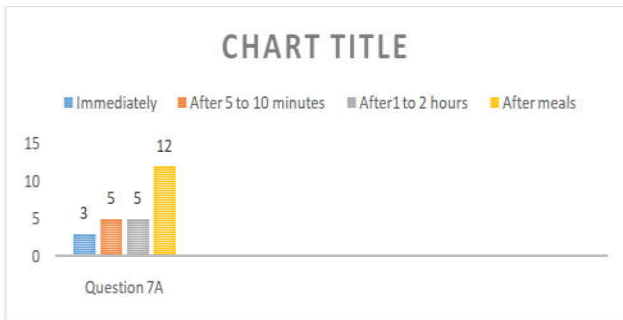
7. Do you have the habit of using any other oral hygiene aids such as mouthwash?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Once in a while
- d) I am not aware of such aids



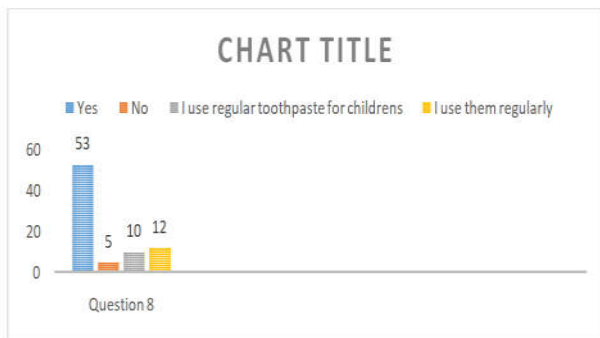
If Yes, How Long after brushing do you use a mouthwash?

- a) Immediately
- b) after 5 to 10 minutes
- c) after 1 to 2 hours
- d) after every meal



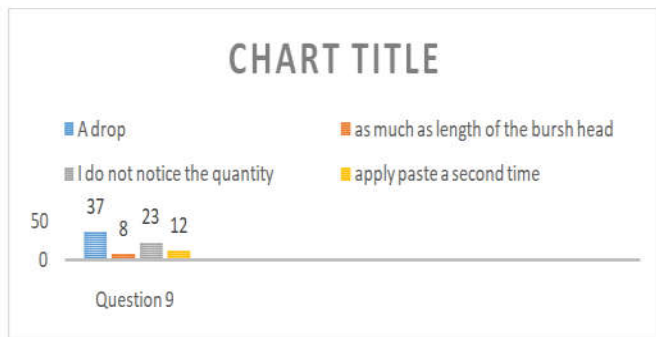
8. Do you know there are toothpastes specific for children?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I use regular toothpaste for children
- d) I use them regularly



9. What is the quantity of toothpaste you use...?

- a) About one drop
- b) As much as length of the brush head
- c) I do not notice the quantity
- d) Apply paste a second time



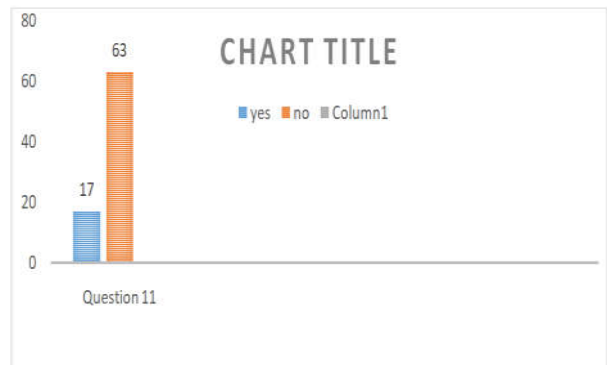
10. Do you believe that brushing your teeth can whiten your teeth?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I use a whitening toothpaste
- d) I have done bleaching



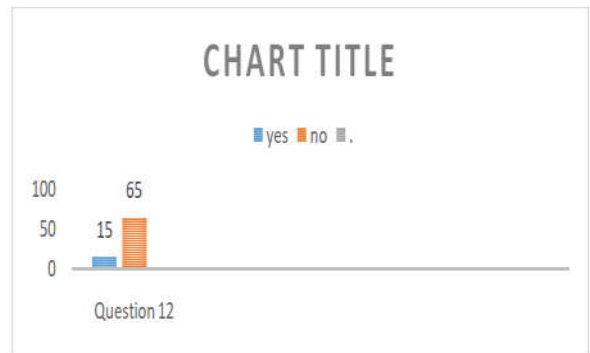
11. Have you tried using Herbal toothpaste?

- a) Yes b) No



12. Is your current brand prescribed by a dentist?

- a) Yes b) No



13. Have you used any natural brushing aids?

- a) Yes b) No



14. Do you change your toothpaste regularly?

- a) Yes b) No



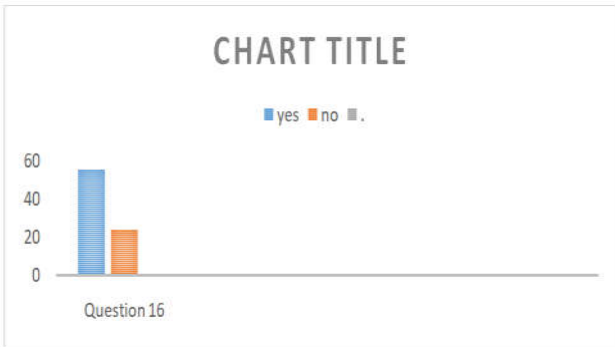
15. If Yes, why?

- a) No good results
- b) advertisement
- c) dentist recommendation
- D) Others



16. Does the cost of the toothpaste affect your selection?

- a)Yes b) no



17. Have you brought any toothpaste for free gifts or any amenities?

- a)Yes b) no



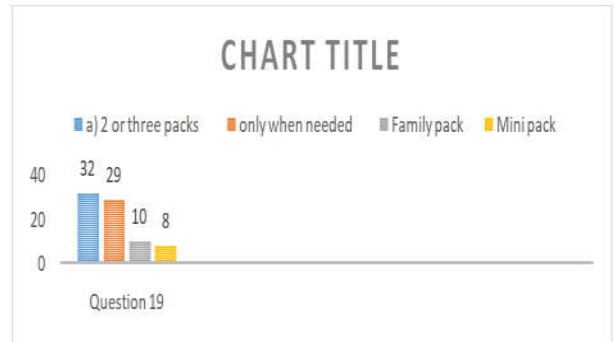
18. Do you believe packaging, advertisement or cost has nothing to do with the quality of the paste?

- a)Yes b) No



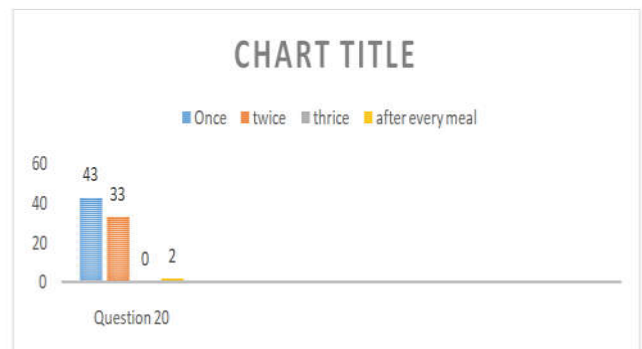
19. Do you buy toothpastes in stock or when needed?

- a) or three packs
- b) only when needed
- c) Family pack
- d) Mini pack



20. How many times do you brush your teeth a day?

- a) Once
- b) twice
- c) thrice
- d) after every meal



DISCUSSION

A total of 20 questions were included in the survey. The first question addressed the favourite brand of the consumer, in response Colgate was found to have the most number of preferences. Another study on customer satisfaction also declared Colgate to be a fast moving brand. Hence establishing its dominance in the oral hygiene aids industry. The second

question was related to what basis customers selected their toothpaste, flavor of the toothpaste was very important for most of the customers. Flavor is also an important consideration in manufacturing especially children's toothpaste [Alex, 2013]. There seems to be an inconsistency when it comes to using the same brand of toothpaste, most of the customers have been using the present brand of toothpaste only for the paste 1-2 years. Some of the customers select their brand according to the taste of the toothpaste. The taste of toothpaste is mainly due to Sodium Lauryl Ether Sulfate (SLES) [Matt Soniak, 2018]. There are toothpastes without SLES present now in the market. When coming to taste and flavor, peppermint taste was found to be the most favoured, psychologically it provides the user with a sense of freshness and prevents bad breath. Perusal of literature reports states that the Romans who were one of the first to prepare toothpaste added minty flavours to prevent bad breath or halitosis [The strange and minty history of toothpaste, 2017]. When asked about the time duration the toothpaste flavor recedes in their mouth, it was a close call, as some thought they couldn't feel the toothpaste taste after a few minutes of brushing, whereas some people felt the taste to recede only after having a meal. Most of the customers were not aware about other oral hygiene aids such as mouthwash. One study stated that only 8% of people used and were aware about a mouthwash [Bobby Paul, 2014]. Also another study found that medical students were less aware of mouthwashes compared to dental students [Benjamin et al., 2016]. Even if they were aware and regularly used a mouthwash, they use it as a replacement to brushing; they use a mouthwash after every meal. Flossing is recommended mostly, but a mouthwash is not recommended often, if used it has to be used in limited period, because of the complications on long term usage. Studies report altered taste sensation, colouring of teeth, etc, when mouthwashes are used long term.

Coming to children's toothpaste, customers are aware of separate toothpastes for children, but do not use them regularly. It is recommended to use fluoride toothpaste for children above the age of 3 in a pea size amount [Fluoride toothpaste use for young children, 2014]. Even adults are recommended a pea size of toothpaste [Stephanie, 2016]. Most of the participants used a less amount, but it was also noted that there was a percentile of people who did not notice the quantity of toothpaste they use. A high number of participants believe that their toothpaste whitens their teeth. But it is stated that not all whitening toothpastes are healthy, although pastes with hydrogen peroxide and carbamide peroxide are found to be safe, along with their risks [Clifton, 2014]. Subjects should be briefed about and made aware of the risks in long term usage of whitening pastes. The world is not only changing globally but also herbally, as more number of patients are opting for an organic lifestyle. But, yet when it comes to selecting a herbal toothpaste, many people responded in the negative. Studies have stated apart from the content of the toothpastes herbal or non-herbal, both were found to control plaque and gingivitis [Aravind Tatiknoda, 2014]. But, still there is no strong foundation for herbal pastes and its effectiveness. Further researches and evidences are needed to support this fact. It is noted that many don't use a dentist recommended paste. This could be attributed to the dentists or professionals appearing in advertisements, and endorsing a brand, though people who have selected a toothpaste on the basis of ads and endorsements are very few in number. But it is an undeniable fact that TV and internet related advertisements

play a major role in influencing a person's choice [Sahoo Jayadev, 2013], and also everyone does not like to accept this influence of media on them. It is not surprising to learn that most people have used natural brushing aids, as it used to be part of tradition and culture in our country. An article clearly states that chewing sticks have greater mechanical as well as chemical maintenance of oral tissues [Aeeza S Malik, 2014]. Customers always expect faster results, this was found to be the reason why they change toothpaste brand regularly, because of slower results. They should be educated with respect to the result as well. For example, minimum of one week for a desensitizing paste. Apart from flavor, the cost of the toothpaste came next in line, that concerns a brand selection. People also are keen on keeping a regular stock of their favourite toothpastes. Free amenities, attractive packaging do not affect the choice of the brand. In the last question it was found that a high number of customers or participants of the survey brushed only once a day. It is stated that children who brush twice have less caries risk [Polk et al., 2014]. Subjects should be educated with brushing technique and OHI maintenance. This would improve the oral care and decrease the prevalence of periodontal disease and dental caries in a long run.

Conclusion

Though there has been a lot of studies and survey related to branding in the oral care world, there are limitations to every study. Especially as the attitude of the customer is not that easily accessible [Thakur Mayukh, 2016]. Apart from that foreign brands are the ones ruling, whereas Indian brands are not that popular [Srivatsava et al., 2005]. Reasons for the above statement should be analyzed. Another interesting fact is that most of the customers have used a natural brushing aid, but have stayed away from herbal products. Thus, awareness about herbal pastes and its manufacturing is needed. Also, customers have awareness about children's toothpaste as well as other oral hygiene aids, but fail to incorporate them, so their awareness must be increased to push them into action. Oral care is neglected still by many, and is not even aware of the various brushing methods as well as quantity of paste to be used. Brushing their teeth is just a part of their daily activity, which most only do once a day, as found out in the survey. And still they believe brushing is only for whitening of teeth and annihilating odour of the mouth. In conclusion, people do not know any facts about oral hygiene maintenance, but only the myths about brushing and toothpastes. Further long term studies on a larger sample size could help us in critically analyzing these researches.

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