

Oral and Perioral Piercings: Awareness and Knowledge among Undergraduate Dental Students in a Private Dental College, Haryana

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Abstract

Background: Oral and perioral piercings are now commonly seen in young adults leading to various types of complications. Undergraduate dental students are the most immediate group with peers belonging to this age criteria thus their knowledge regarding oral piercings and related complications is of utmost concern. **Aim:** The present study was conducted among undergraduate dental students in a private dental college in Haryana to determine the knowledge and awareness of oral and perioral procedures and their complications. **Materials and Methods:** A closed ended questionnaire was circulated online using Google forms. Total 145 dental undergraduate students of a private college participated in this survey. Total 10 questions were asked from the students. The data was then evaluated in form of pie charts and bar charts. **Result:** The subjects had a fair knowledge and awareness about oral and perioral piercing procedures and their associated complications. **Conclusion:** These undergraduate students had a decent awareness and knowledge about the oral and perioral piercings. But as oral and perioral piercings have potential oral health hazard, we wish to recommend that it should be not encouraged and request the dental fraternity to discourage the same.

Keywords: Oral piercing, perioral piercing, complications

Introduction

Piercing is a worldwide form of body art has become increasingly popular in western society¹Piercing refers to the infiltration of the jewelry into the body areas such as the eyebrows, ears, tongue, nose, lips, navel and genitals.^{1,2}Oral and perioral piercing has been practiced for a long time for various

religious, cultural, sexual or identical reasons and has been believed and practiced autonomously all over the world.² With today's fast-growing generation, a desire for distinctive identity is the main factor responsible for such piercings.^{1,2}Lately oral piercings has gained popularity among teens and young adults. Self-representation in these age groups has increased significantly and they go towards extreme to get desired results.³ Other contributing factors are daring behavior, independence of spirit and enhancing the body as per the "fashion".^{3,4}Although tongue piercing is the most common, followed by lips, piercing has entered a new sphere involving other areas such as

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frenum, uvula, philtrum, cheeks and even tongue splitting.¹⁻⁵ Frequently used jewelry for such piercings are barbell, studs, labret, captive beads, rings etc.¹⁻⁵

Even though individuals succeed in expressing themselves, but many of them are unaware of the associated risks. It is important to know that oral and perioral piercings not only affect oral health, but also cause other long-term systemic damage if not treated with care⁶. Many local and systemic complications have been observed as a consequence of oral and perioral piercing which include;

Immediate complication

Edema of the tongue leading to airway obstruction,^{7, 8, 9} pain of tongue affects speech, mastication and deglutition.^{7,9,10} Anaphylactic reactions can be caused by some of the materials e.g., nickel, hyper salivation,^[7,9] hemorrhage, puncturing the tissues without proper measures can cause severe hemorrhage, trigeminal nerve damage, inferior alveolar and superior alveolar are commonly involved, lingual nerve damage usually seen in tongue piercings, aspiration of jewelry during an uvula piercing or tongue piercing, leading to choking and death of the patient.^{7, 11}

Delayed complication

Ulcerations,^{11,12} plaque accumulation can produce halitosis and possible infections¹¹. Endocarditis being the most common and potentially due to *Neisseria mucosa* and *Haemophilus aphrophilus*^{13,14,15}. Localized infection moist warm environment enables the breeding ground for bacteria.^{1, 3, 11} Trauma to lingual gingiva, erythema and edema of gingiva by rubbing the ball in the lingual gingiva: Fever, chills, shaking or red streak appearance near the site of piercing. Periodontal attachment loss involving proximal teeth,^{16,17 18} Ludwig's angina usually due to frenulum and lingual piercing,^{1,9,19} hyperplastic tissue,^{20,21,22} dehiscence especially in mandibular anterior,²¹ fractured teeth occur by biting the barbell,

careless jewelry insertion, talking, eating etc.^{1,9,24,25,26} Gingival recession due to continuous friction of the gingiva with the jewelry.^{3,16,17,23,24,28,29,31} If tongue piercing goes wrong, patient experiences bifid tongue which can only be treated surgically.²⁷ Pulpal sensitivity from contact between galvanic currents in stainless steel ornaments and other intra-oral jewelry.^{9, 19} Radiopacity of piercing jewelry is seen during X-ray examinations. Hence for panoramic X-rays, removing metal objects above the neck is a must.¹¹ Most dangerous oral site for piercing is the uvula, due to the increased chances of airway obstruction. It has been found that piercing is a potential route for the transmission of viruses such as HIV,³⁰ hepatitis (B, C, D and G), herpes simplex and Epstein-Barr.^{4, 10} Lick et al. have discussed few aiding factors to infective endocarditis.¹³ They have mentioned congenital deformities and the possibility of cerebral brain abscesses.³¹ As dental students, it is the responsibility of each and every student to educate their peer groups as well as patients about the effect of piercing and how it acts as a double edge sword.

Materials and Method

This was a questionnaire based survey on the awareness of complications, related to oral and perioral piercing which was conducted online using Google forms. In total 145 undergraduate students of a private dental college participated in this survey. Total 10 questions were asked from the students. The participants replied to the survey by clicking appropriate option. The questionnaire was self-conceptualized and its authenticity was made by discussing it with professors of Oral Medicine and Radiology. The survey was approved by institutional ethical committee of the college. After the data collection, statistical analysis was done.

Inclusion criteria-

- 19-22 years of individuals

- Region- Haryana
- Students from private dental college

Exclusion criteria

- Faculty, PG students and Interns
- Students not belonging to private dental college, Haryana

Results

Total of 145 subjects participated in the study and the results were evaluated with pie charts and bar charts.

1. Have you ever heard of or seen oral and perioral piercing?

88.2% have heard or seen oral and perioral piercing, 9% have never seen or heard of oral and perioral piercing and 2.8% responded with maybe.

2.If yes then from where?

83.6% said they saw it in movies 38.1% saw it in articles 37.3% heard it from friends and 4.5% from family members.

3. What is the most common site?

51.4% responded with most common site as tongue 30.3% said lower lip 9.9% said upper lip 8.5% responded as philtrum.

4. Click on the options you think are the piercing sites.

As far as the knowledge of other piercing sites are concerned only 6.4% knew that uvula is also pierced 19.3% knew about cheek 22.9% knew about frennum 88.6%about lips and 87.1% about tongue.

5. Do you think there is any complications after oral and perioral piercing is done?

While enquiring about the complication, 71.6%

responded as yes that there exist complications related oral and perioral piercing 25.5% responded as maybe and 2.8% didn't know about the complications.

6. What according to you are the complications of oral and perioral piercing?

88.9% knew ulceration as a complication 62.2% knew about edema and hemorrhage. 35.6% knew about gingival recession 30.4% had knowledge about hepatitis 22.2% knew about endocarditis and only 18.5% knew about Ludwig's angina.

7. What according to you are the jewelry used for oral piercing?

78.1% were familiar with ring as an oral piercing jewelry 64.2% recognized stud as an oral piercing jewelry 13.9% identified barbell as jewelry and only 5% knew about labret.

8. Why do you think people get their oral and perioral piercings done?

71.3% considered oral piercing as a fashion statement 21% believed it as a self-expression 1.4% regarded it as superiority and 6.3% didn't know why people perform oral piercing.

9. Do you think once oral piercing is done, there will be any change in oral hygiene methods?

72% believed that that will be change in oral hygiene practice 25.2% responded with maybe and only 2.8% said there will be no change.

10. What do you think is the most common age group that goes for oral piercings?

74.1% presume that teenagers are most commonly involved with oral piercings 21.7% responded that adults do it 2.8% answered as children and 1.4% old age.

Discussion

Oral and perioral piercing is just an ill wind that blows nobody any good. These piercings are performed in tattoo studios. Many of the piercers are not even licensed practitioners and thus piercing procedures are done without even giving appropriate anesthesia.⁷ Some of them use the same needles to different person frequently without sterilization. Hence, various piercing failure cases have been reported worldwide. In fact, American Dental Association has put across an opposing statement against oral piercings.³²

“The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry strongly opposes the practice of piercing intraoral and perioral tissues and use of jewelry on intraoral and perioral tissues due to the potential for pathological conditions and sequelae associated with these practices”

Cinzia et al., clearly explains how the oral hygiene practices changes after oral piercings.⁴but in our study only 72% students knew about this fact and rest were unaware of the context. According to Hennequin-Hoenderdos et al., the rising popularity of body piercings in young adults, is determined by various factors, including the urge to fulfil social demands, establish a personal statement or enhance sexual appeal.³³ but in our study, 71.3% students considered oral piercing as a fashion statement. Moreover only 5.8% students in our study knew that labrets are also used as an ornament.

Conclusion

Dentists are the paramount professionals in detecting such complications and hence they should be well aware and so requires comprehensive knowledge regarding sequelae of oral and perioral piercings. Dental students on the other hand are nascent dentists and thus play an important role in educating their peer groups and other patients. Although many dental students had a knowledge

regarding harmful complications of oral and perioral piercing, but many pages are unturned with respect to its severity and how it affects the life of an individual after. Hence, students should encourage everyone to be aware of these ruinous procedures and discuss their detrimental effects with patients as much as they can. Students should also educate them about how the oral hygiene practices change after these jewelry, and how to properly maintain the oral hygiene.³³

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