

Caries prevention: A global strategy

Sir,

It is a matter of great concern to notice that the percentage of children suffering from caries is increasing globally. While dentists are effectively treating this problem, it is essential to ensure that all precautions are taken by the parents, teachers, and community as a whole to prevent caries among children or at least notice the incipient stages of this disease. Adequate awareness among all, especially parents and teachers for prevention or early identification of symptoms is essential.

Among the main contributing factors for caries such as non-milk extrinsic sugar rich diet, intermediate snacking habit, decrease in the fluoride usage, streptococcus mutans etc., the first three factors can be fully taken care of by the community. This certainly contributes very much to the prevention of the disease. But for this, awareness of the type of the diet and the means of fluoride usage is necessary.

Among various symptoms of the caries such as discoloration, discontinuity of the enamel, definite catch, definite cavitation, and definite cavitation with softness at the base; discoloration can be identified clearly by the parents/teachers and through periodic check up at the schools/community centres. If this is

done at the initial stages and dentist's advice is sought wherever necessary, advancement of this disease can be stopped and treated effectively at economically affordable cost.

Prevention or early detection of the caries in the initial stages certainly requires total and continuous awareness of the disease among the community. This is possible only through well-planned, systematic, and structured awareness programmes by Public Health Institutions. Contribution of community dentists, pediatric dentists, and publications/conference presentations through Dental journals plays very important role in such programmes.

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Access this article online

Quick Response Code:



Website:

www.eurjdent.com

Source of Support: Nil.

Conflict of Interest: None declared

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DOI: 10.4103/1305-7456.110202