

ABSTRACT

Knowledge, attitudes and practices toward preventive Dental health care in the young adults, ages 18 – 35 years As compared to the elderly ages 65 years and over Attending for dental care.

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Dental diseases in the Caribbean are the most common diseases, but yet its prevention and treatment are the most neglected. Prevention rather than repair, but when problems do arise repairs are the answers. It is estimated that prevention takes much less time and money than treatment and it is better. Dental diseases cannot be ignored in any health care delivery system. It is a priority of primary health care in the quest of health for all by the year 2000.

In countries where preventive dental health care is practiced, there are fewer oral health needs than population served basically by restoration and maintenance type of dental care.

A cross-sectional survey was carried out between the period of February and March 1999. A sample of 62 consumers was selected by stratified systematic sampling method, from three health care facilities, two public and one private, in the Kingston and St. Andrew Health Department Zone.

The main findings were that a low number of elderly attended the dental health clinic and all obtained curative dental health services.

The respondent's choice of dental clinics was influenced by cost, accessibility and quality of the services.

There is a need for greater public awareness about preventive dental health. Health education in this area of health is recognized as important but is currently focused primarily on the school population.

The main conclusion was that while the majority of the respondents displayed a fairly high level of knowledge, attitude and practices toward preventive dental health, the elderly more than the young adults, there were a high level of Decayed, Missing and Filled permanent Teeth (DMFT) present in both sample groups.