

Enculturation, Myths and Misconceptions Regarding Oral Health Care Practices among Rural Female Folk of Rajasthan

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KEYWORDS Culture. Oral Health. Rural Health. Sociology. Ethnology

ABSTRACT Utilization of dental services is hampered by multiple barriers which include culturally influenced factors, misconceptions regarding oral health care, low education and health literacy level. The purpose of the study was to uncover the cultural and ritual practices and their effect on the oral cavity and the utilization of dental services. A cross-sectional door to door survey was conducted in Bhanpur Kalan village, Jaipur in which 600 females were surveyed using a pilot tested, structured 14-item, close-ended, self-administered questionnaire. Chi-square test was employed for inter group comparison of variables. It was revealed that myths and misconceptions associated with dental treatment and ritual practices were significantly higher among uneducated females as compared to educated females ($p < 0.005$). Cultural beliefs act as access barriers for the utilization of dental services. Co-ordinated efforts by dentists and other health professionals are required to impart dental health education and improve knowledge about oral health and oral hygiene practices.