

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Dental caries is an irreversible multi-factorial disease affecting the calcified tissues of the teeth, in which the diet, the host and microbial flora interact over a period of time resulting into demineralization of the inorganic tissues followed by destruction of the organic tissues of the teeth leading to teeth cavitations.

Main objective of the study: To establish the factors influencing the occurrence of dental caries among patients attending the dental outpatient department at Mbale regional referral hospital.

Methodology: This was a descriptive cross-sectional study aimed to evaluate the factors influencing the occurrence of dental caries among patients (n=384) attending dental clinic at Mable regional referral hospital, Mbale municipality, Mbale district.. The collected data was entered into the computer, cleaned, coded and analyzed using statistical package for social scientists (SPSS), and excel in order to establish the relationship between the occurrence of dental caries and the associated factors among the respondents.

Results: The majority of the respondents were females (64.92%), where as the most common age group was between 15 – 18 years of age (32.98%), 41.10% had knowledge on dental caries, however almost two quarters of the respondents used fluoridated tooth paste, with only 6.02% brushing their teeth, atleast 2.88% reported not to practice tooth brushing. At multivariate logistic regression analysis, the level of knowledge on dental carries was found to be significantly low and thus affecting the oral status of the community members.

Conclusion: Relatively the majority of the respondents had less knowledge on dental carries, in terms of causal factors, knowledge and oral hygiene practices.

Recommendation: Health workers should be encouraged to offer dental health education to increase use of preventive dental services. The government and the ministry of health should involve communities in this region especially on the areas of planning, implementation and monitoring of oral health programs.