

## PRIMORDIAL DENTAL VISION

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**ABSTRACT:** An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Gentle introduction to the dental environment is an excellent way to learn proper oral hygiene at an early age. A retrospective study from the year 2009-08/2012 and prospective study from the year 09/2012-08/2013 was carried out using the records of children who have reported to OPD of Pediatric Dentistry, CKS Dental College at Tirupathi. The age group of the children were 0-3years, 3-6years and above 6years. The various chief complaints were categorized as pain, cavities, stains, bad breath, un-erupted tooth, fractures, irregular teeth and others. The average age group and most common complaint at first dental visit was assessed. The maximum number of children who reported for the first time was above 6years and most common complaint was dental caries and second most common complaint being pain.

**KEYWORDS:** First dental visit, Retrospective and prospective study, Age group, Dental caries.

## INTRODUCTION

Oral health is an integral part of overall health in children. First dental visit is the foundation upon which preventive education and dental care must be built to enhance the opportunity for life time free of preventable oral diseases.<sup>1</sup> Traditionally the child's first dental visit was reserved for an age when schooling was imminent, unless dental caries, trauma or any other predisposing event necessitated an earlier trip to the dentist.<sup>2</sup> The American Association of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) recommends that the first oral examination should occur within six months of the eruption of the first primary tooth, but not later than 12 months of age.<sup>2,3</sup> Prevention of all dental diseases and management of anomalies at very young age is possible if children are brought for care before or shortly after their first teeth erupt. The importance of an early visit to the dental office is highlighted by Window of Infectivity.<sup>4</sup> An early dental visit before completion of 12 months of age, will help the dentist to detect the early lesions, evaluate craniofacial and dental development, provide anticipatory guidance, parent and diet counseling and motivate parents towards prevention oriented interventions.<sup>5</sup> One dental disease alone, tooth decay, is the most common chronic disease of childhood and can lead to health consequences as seriously as reduced growth and development when disease is rampant.<sup>6</sup> Change in perspective, from only curative aspect of dental care to appreciating its preventive and educational value, will improve the compliance of parents with dental health programs and improve oral health status of child. Moreover, when the child is exposed to atraumatic dental visits, it inshifts positive dental attitude and co-operate in future visits.

## Aims and objectives

Aim of this study is to know the average age at which parents first seek dental care for their children and also to find the common reasons for seeking dental care at the first visit in Department of Pedodontics and Preventive dentistry, C.k.s.Theja Institute of Dental Sciences and Research.

## Materials and methods

Patient records and patients seeking for dental care were scrutinized, screened and are divided into three age groups they are 0-3years, 3-6 years, above 6years. For Retrospective study past 4 year records were used. A total of 9308 children were scrutinized, out of them 8551 children were taken as first dental visit are used for study. In Prospective study 3430 children were screened and 2703 children have come for first dental visit for a period of one year

For both the studies, reasons for first dental visit were divided into following categories.

1. Dental caries
2. Deposits/bad breadth
3. Trauma
4. Pain/sensitivity
5. Malocclusion
6. Missing/extra tooth
7. Habits
8. Others (anamolies of tooth, jaw, fluorosis)

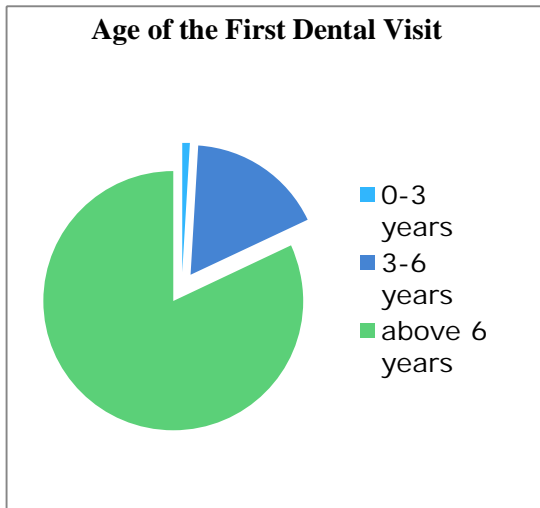
**Results**

The results for the retrospective study are tabulated (Table 1) according to age groups and the reasons for taking treatment are tabulated ( Table-2).

**Table.I. Age of the First Dental Visit**

Age Groups	Cases (2009-2012/08 )
0-3 years	85
3-6 years	1451
Above 6 years	7015

n= 8551

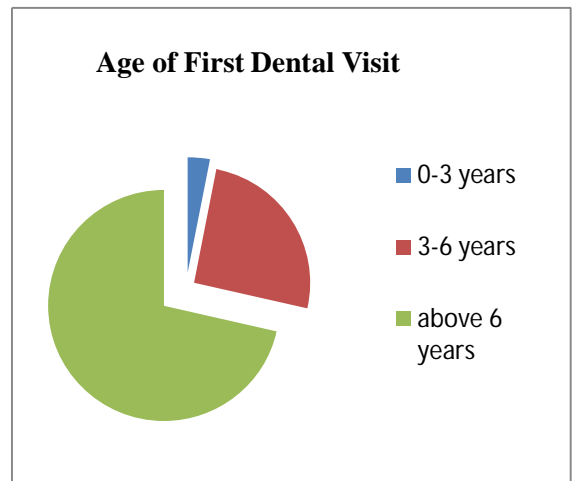


The results of the prospective study were tabulated ( Table . 3 and Table.4). The frequency of visits at different age groups was shown in Table.5.

**Table III. Age group of first dental visit**

Age Groups	Cases (09/2012-08/2013 )
0-3 years	83
3-6 years	689
Above 6 years	1931

(n = 2703)



**Table:II. Reasons for seeking dental care at first dental visit**

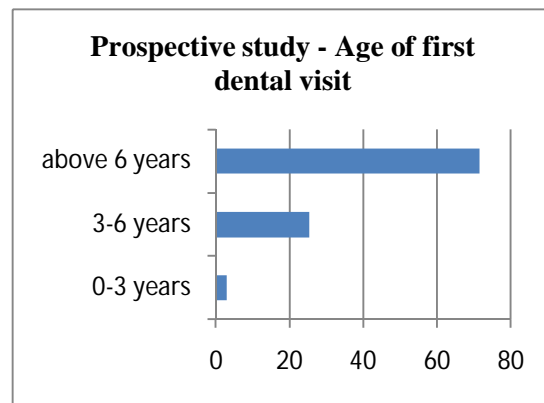
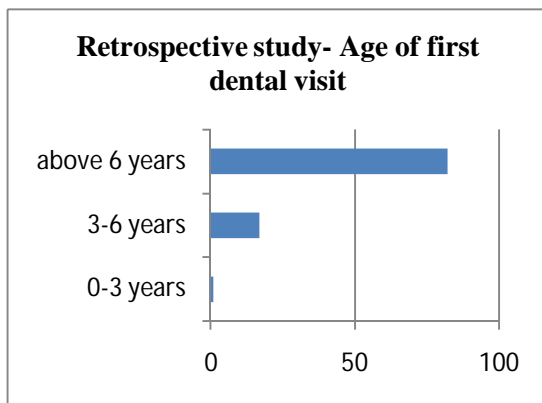
Reasons for seeking dental care	0-3 years	3-6 years	Above 6 years
Dental caries	38	506	3721
Deposits/ bad breath	17	390	616
Trauma	7	24	130
Pain/sensitivity	22	445	2218
Malocclusion		27	174
Missing/extra tooth		32	95
Habits		26	11
Others	1	1	50

**Table 4. Reasons for seeking dental care at first dental visit**

Reasons for seeking dental care	0-3 years	3-6 years	Above 6 years
Dental caries	34	247	697
Deposits/ bad breath	10	108	293
Trauma	6	14	128
Pain/sensitivity	19	252	520
Malocclusion		10	92
Missing/extra tooth		22	148
Habits	5	14	20
Others	9	22	33

Table V. Frequency of first dental visit in different age groups

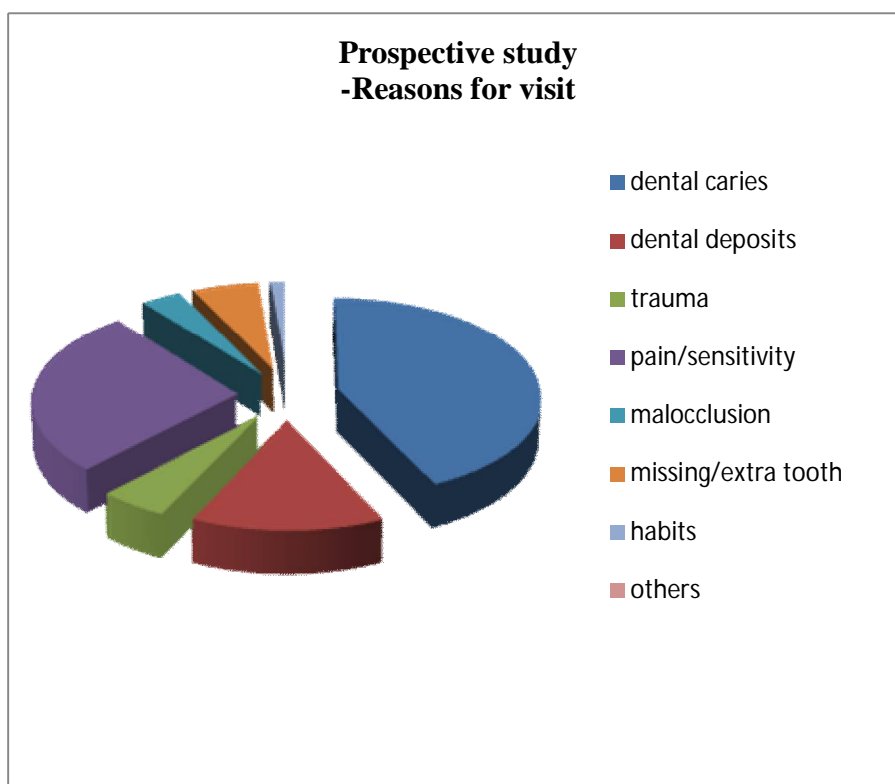
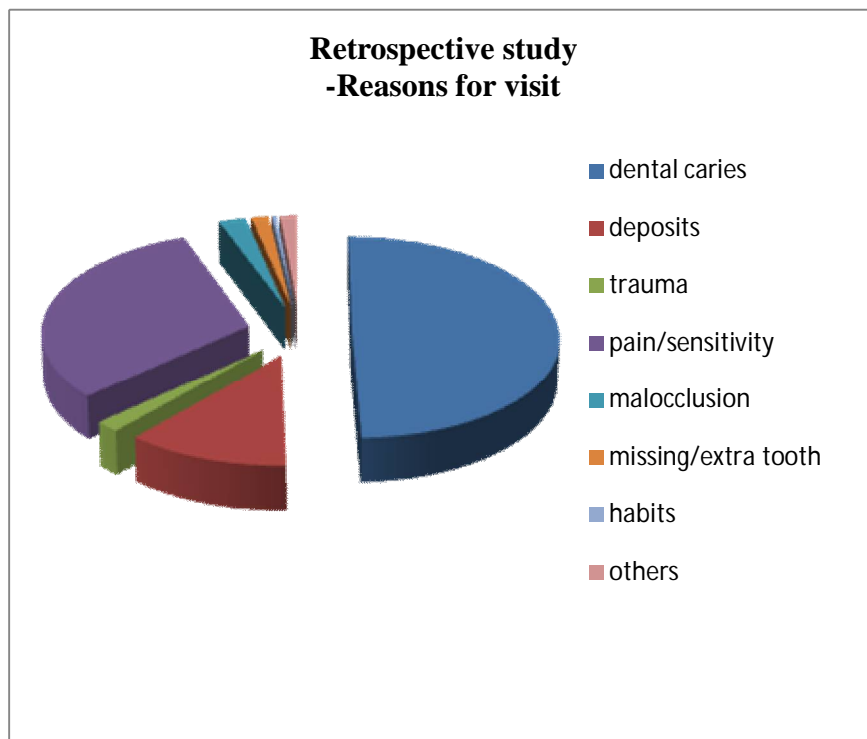
Age group	Retrospective study (n = 8551)	Prospective study (n = 2703)
0-3 years	0.99 %	3.07 %
3-6 years	16.96 %	25.4 %
Above 6 years	82.03 %	71.4 %



Graph-1 . Comparison of different age groups of first dental visit in retrospective and prospective study

Table VI. comparison between retrospective study and prospective study of the reasons for seeking Dental care at first visit

Reasons for seeking dental care	Retrospective study % (n = 8551)	Prospective study% (n= 2703)
Dental caries	49.8	46.1
Deposits/bad breadth	11.9	15.2
Trauma	1.8	5.4
Pain/sensitivity	31.3	29.2
Malocclusion	2.3	3.77
Missing/extra tooth	1.48	6.28.
Habits	0.43	1.44
Others	0.6	2.36



**Fig.1. Pie Diagram showing the reasons of First dental visit in retrospective and prospective study**

**Discussion**

In India most of the parents take their children to the dentist not for preventive procedures but for curative treatment. So early First Dental Visit is the only method to reduce dental problems. Mother was the source of MS, so maternal counseling and dental intervention in early first visit is necessary to prevent initiation and/or to arrest incipient caries lesion as MS is detected by 6 months of age.<sup>7</sup>

Dental trauma affects as many as 30% of children in primary dentition stage of life Anticipatory guidance that is counseling parents on injury prevention and non-nutritive oral habits.<sup>7</sup>The preventive goals during an early dental visit includes improvement of oral hygiene and eating habits, informing parents about the risks posed by non-nutritive sucking, educating parents regarding traumatic injuries, how to seek emergency dental care, etc<sup>3</sup>

Many national associations recommend that first dental visit for a child should be by the age of one year or as soon as the first primary tooth erupts.

**Recommendations from major Dental associations<sup>8</sup>**

Organization	Current recommendations
<b>Australian Dental Association</b>	Early visits to prevent dental disease
<b>British Dental Association</b>	As early as possible
<b>Canadian Dental Association</b>	Within 6 months of eruption of first tooth or by 1 year of age
<b>American Dental Association</b>	Year 1 dental visit
<b>American Association Pediatric Dentists</b>	As soon as first tooth erupts or no later than 1st birthday

In initiating the continuing care process there should be no lower age limit to the first dental visit for a child which should, if possible, be within the first year of life<sup>9</sup>. Children taking liquid oral medicine had significantly more caries of deciduous anterior teeth than their siblings<sup>7</sup>

Children from a low socioeconomic background as well as selected children from middle-to-high socioeconomic backgrounds who were at high dental caries risk, such as those with chronic medical conditions, require referral to the dentist for a Year One dental visit.<sup>7</sup>

Traditionally, the family physicians and pediatricians have been providing information on preventive oral health in infants, because of the early age at which these children are brought to their offices, and the fact that parent generally accept their recommendations. As children became younger and procedures more difficult, the number of general dentists willing to provide treatment decreased.<sup>10</sup>One in five Pediatric dentists did not perform infant dental evaluations.<sup>8</sup>Inadequate numbers of dentists who are willing to see a 12-month-old child for a dental examination.<sup>11</sup>

The present study revealed a very late visit of the child to the dentist and for a condition that was not mild or in a preventable stage. In this study only least subjects reported for the first dental visit before 3 years of age in retrospective and prospective studies respectively

The present study shows that we are nowhere near the ideal age. Where the most common reason for the visit should have been prevention, orientation or for routine dental checkup, the present study shows the reason for visit as dental caries followed by pain which is a later stage of the disease process.

**CONCLUSION**

- Based on this study results,
1. It is evident that awareness level regarding the importance of the first dental visit is very low in the Indian population, with an average age of the child's first dental visit being around 6yrs of age.
  2. The commonest reason for seeking dental care at the first visit is found to be pain and dental caries.

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