

Effectiveness of Toothbrushing Instruction through Sign Language on the Oral Hygiene Performance of Hearing Impaired Children

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Maintenance of oral health of hearing impaired children requires special care and attention. Their condition presents the need to modify health education measures such as oral hygiene instruction through sign language. Hearing impaired children lack the ability to hear the proper method of removing dental plaque and debris which are etiological factors of dental disease. To improve the oral health of hearing impaired children, proper technique of toothbrushing through sign language instruction should be promoted. This one year study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of oral hygiene instruction through sign language in improving oral hygiene performance of the hearing impaired children in a special education school. Toothbrushing instruction through sign language in this study involves the process of directing/ guiding the hearing impaired children in proper brushing of their teeth. This 2 group pre-test-post-test experimental study utilized the Patient Hygiene Performance (PHP) Index by Podshadley in determining the oral hygiene performance of the children. All the hearing impaired children enrolled at SPED Center during the school year 2006-2007 participated in the study. The comparison between the pre-test and post-test oral hygiene performance was answered through the t-test for paired observations. The comparison between the pre-test and post-test oral hygiene performance of the experimental and control group according to moderator variables was answered through the chi-square test. The mean PHP of the control group in the pre-test is 4.31 while the mean PHP of the experimental group in the pre-test is 7.25. The mean PHP in the post-test of the control group is 2.16 while the mean PHP of the experimental group in the post-test is 2.74. The control group has a good oral hygiene performance in the pre-test and in the post-test. The experimental group has a fair oral hygiene performance in the pre-test while in the post-test they have a good oral hygiene performance. Age significantly affected the oral hygiene performance of the children. Older children had a better oral hygiene performance than the younger children. There is significant difference in the performance of the children in the pre-test and post-test at 0.05 level of significance. Oral hygiene instruction through sign language helps improve the oral hygiene performance of the hearing impaired children.

The minimum cost of this project is approximately 2,000 php, other materials used were borrowed. The effectiveness of the program or study was evaluated through the comparison of the pre-test and post-test results after which, panel discussion was done.