

## **A STUDY ON PET OWNERS AWARENESS WITH REGARD TO ORAL HYGIENE PRACTICES AMONG PERIODONTAL DISEASE IN DOGS**

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**Abstract:** Oral hygiene is the most important factor in the development of periodontal disease, as most of the clients do not know how dental disease progresses. Of the 89 dogs diagnosed with periodontal disease, owner awareness about dental prophylaxis was evaluated. Of the 89 dogs, 26 dogs were subjected for brushing, in that 11 dog owners brushed their dog teeth at weekly interval (12.35 %), 8 at biweekly (8.98 %), 7 occasionally (7.86 %). Among the different devices used, 24 dog owners used human toothbrush (26.96 %) and 2 used cloth (2.24%) to clean the teeth. Among the cleansing materials used, 11 dog owners used human tooth paste (11.23%), 6 used dog tooth paste (6.74%), 9 used plain water (10.11 %). It implies that there is lack of awareness among the pet owners as to what kind of devices and cleansing agents needs to be used for wellness of the dogs.

**Keywords:** Periodontal disease, Oral hygiene, Dog owner's awareness,

### **INTRODUCTION**

Oral hygiene is the most important factor in both human and veterinary medicine that favours development of periodontal disease. As dental care is important in humans, it is equally or even more important in pets as oral health is important for the wellness of the dogs. Periodontal disease is the most common oral disease in dogs with up to 80% of animals affected by the age of 3 years. Most of the pet owners do not understand how dental disease progresses and how they can play a positive role in the care of their pet (Berryhill, 2005).

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Dogs presented to the Veterinary College Hospital, Bangalore during November 2012 to April-2014 with clinical manifestations indicative of periodontal disease (PD) like halitosis, calculus, bleeding upon chewing, loss of gingival stippling and ligament loss as detected by probing were selected and a separate dental case history sheet was prepared with appropriate questionnaire for assessing the owner's awareness as well as recording the alterations in the oral cavity among the dogs. Dental history comprising of brushing history of teeth, kind of paste/brush used, dental scaling history, feeding of dental chews, past history of any dental

illness or treatment, kind of food offered, frequency of feeding and other oral hygiene practices followed by pet owners were recorded.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Out of 89 dogs diagnosed with PD, 26 dogs were subjected for dental cleaning. With regard to frequency of brushing, 11 (12.35 %) dog owners brushed/cleaned dog teeth at weekly interval, 8 (8.98 %) owners brushed at biweekly interval and 7 (7.86 %) owners brushed occasionally or monthly bases and 63 (70.78 %) dog owners never brushed their dog teeth . With regard to the devices used for dental cleaning (table1), 24 dog owners brushed their dogs teeth with human brush (26.96%), 2 dog owners wiped the dogs teeth with towel (2.24 %), while 63 dog owners did not brush (70.78 %) their dog's teeth (Fig 2). With regard to the cleansing-agents used (table 2), 11 dog owners used human tooth paste (11.23 %), 6 dog owners used dog tooth paste (6.74%), 9 dogs owners brushed/wiped using plain water (10.11 %) alone and 63 dog owners did not use any kind of paste or anything to clean the oral cavity (70.78 %). With regard to dental scaling, of the 89 PD dog owners, only one dog owner subjected the dog for scaling of teeth that too only one time.

The results imply that majority of the owners did not give much importance to oral hygiene. Similar observations were made by Ranjan, *et al.*, (2010) and Gawor, *et al.*, (2006), who stated that, there is lack of awareness among the pet owners and there is a need to increase the awareness among the pet owners with regard to dental hygiene for good health and well being of dog. Current study observations indicate that, there is lack of awareness among the pet owners as to what kind of devices and cleansing agents needs to be used for dental cleaning as well as because of the fact that, different kinds of devices and cleansing materials used for dental hygiene and prophylaxis in dogs is not available. There is probably lack of information or no information available in India with regard to dental hygiene practices adopted by pet owners.

Therefore, dogs need to be introduced for brushing at least 3 times in a week or preferably daily if possible with a soft bristle toothbrush or pet dentifrice (Gorrel, and Rawlings, 1996). Oral hygiene can also be enhanced by concurrent use of treats, diets and products that meet preset criteria for effectiveness in mechanically and/or chemically controlling plaque or calculus deposition in companion animals as opined by Reiter, (2009).

## SUMMARY

The present study indicated that, PD was less frequent among the dogs subjected for brushing and more than 70 % of the dog owners are not aware as to what kind of dental hygiene

measures to be adopted among the dogs and there is a need to increase the awareness among the pet owners with regard to dental hygiene for good health and wellness of dog. Data pertaining to the oral hygiene practices in dogs in India is meager as well as many of the devices and cleansing agents used for oral hygiene were not available.

**Table 1: Devices used for teeth cleaning in PD dogs**

	<b>Brushing device</b>	<b>Number of dogs</b>	<b>P value</b>
Periodontal disease	Human tooth Brush	24 (26.96 %)	0.00
	Cloth	2 (2.24 %)	0.89
	No device	63 (70.78 %)	0.00

**Table 2: Cleansing agents used among PD dogs**

	<b>Tooth paste</b>	<b>Number of dogs</b>	<b>P value</b>
Periodontal disease	Human tooth paste	11 (11.23 %)	0.00
	Dog tooth paste	6 (6.74 %)	0.23
	Plain water alone	9 (10.11 %)	0.26
	No teeth cleaning	63 (70.78 %)	0.00

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