

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# Letter to Editor: The influence of parental oral health literacy on children's oral health: a scoping review

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To the Editor:

A recent publication “The influence of parental oral health literacy on children’s oral health: a scoping review” by Alzahrani *et al.* [1] was both informative and thought provoking. The scoping review found that children whose parents possessed low oral health literacy exhibited toxic oral health habits. These children also showed a higher prevalence of dental caries, a preventable condition. Other studies have similarly demonstrated the correlation between low health literacy of the parents and the children’s number of tooth fillings, tooth extractions and dental visits [2]. Oral health is a prime indicator of overall health, well-being and quality of life [3]. Poor oral health due to oral diseases in children can result in psychological distress because of appearance, and deprive them of essential nutrition because of compromised food intake [4]. The results of the study are particularly relevant for the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The burden of overall oral disease is increasing given the limited knowledge of oral health literacy among the parents. Enhanced consumption of sugar from the consumption of flavored drinks, packaged sweets and the higher rate of tobacco use are common among the children. A recently concluded study of ours showed that 34.9% of the adult patients visiting the dental clinics for treatment in the UAE, possessed adequate oral health literacy levels (personal communication). The majority of the adult patients (65.1%) demonstrated moderate and low health literacy. In stark contrast, only 14.3% and 11% of the adult patients with cardiovascular diseases, and type-2 diabetes, respectively, possessed adequate literacy [5, 6]. Diabetes prevalence in the UAE is approximately 19%. An increased number of adults are diagnosed with diabetes in the UAE, coupled with the association of gum disease as a potential complication of diabetes mellitus. Strengthening the oral health literacy knowledge and competencies of parents are critical to circumvent oral health diseases, and prevent a public health crisis of the future.

**AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIALS**

Not applicable.

**AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

SCN—designed the research study, performed the research, analyzed the data, wrote the manuscript.

**ETHICS APPROVAL AND CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE**

Not applicable.

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**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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