

Personal Hygiene Perception among School-Age Children in Baghdad City/ Resafa Side

مفهوم النظافة الشخصية لدى الاطفال بعمر المدرسة في مدينة بغداد / جانب الرصافة

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Abstract:

Objectives: The aim of this study is to identify the perception of school-age children in concern to personal hygiene and find out its relationship with socio- demographic characteristics in Baghdad City, Resafa Part.

Methodology: Descriptive study was designed to identify the perception of personal hygiene among school-age children during march 2014 in Resafa Side, Baghdad City. The subjects of the study were (50) males and same number of females chose randomly from fifth and sixth year primary schools. A questionnaire was comprised two main categories of (5) items for socio-demographic characteristics, and (9) main items to check the personal hygiene perception. Data were analyzed by using many statistical methods to identify the results need it.

Results: The findings of this study indicated that the children perception in relation to personal hygiene is applying without knowing the knowledge of its importance and the reason behind carrying these activities out.

Recommendations: Establishing a special program for the teachers at primary schools who teach biology, and get hand from other teachers like who teach physical education. This program can be held one hour weekly to add knowledge to the practice of the students. Parents can join this program too. The program should be set in a way that attracts children's interest.

Keywords: hygiene, personal hygiene, school-age children.

I. Introduction:

Children's wellbeing is important in its own right (United Nations, 1989). It can affect the physical health of the children and determines how well they do at school (Zulling et al.2005) and correspondingly their future. Hygiene which means cleanliness is defined by WHO as " conditions and practices that help to maintain health and prevent the spread of diseases" (WHO 2014).Also, it refers to the science that deals with the promotion and preservation of health (medical dictionary). Hygiene is a set of forms practiced and performed to preserve human health. Personal Hygiene defined as keeping the body, clothing and the surrounding (whether inside or outside home) clean and away from microbes to maintain health and cease the spread of diseases (Rasool H. 2012). Hence, personal hygiene serves two main objectives. First; it keeps the person healthy and prevents catching or spreading the diseases via him. Second; it helps in keeping good mentality, by feeling good in concern to self and body.

The talk about keeping good hygiene thoroughly and on regular basis should includes also the home and the surrounding as a whole not only the body. It is an overall cleanliness. The child's health belongs mainly to his body and his environment and this will decide if he is safe or vulnerable to get diseases and correspondingly damaged health.

Personal hygiene perception and practice varies from country to another. This depends mainly upon habits, cultures, resources, genders, stander of living and level of education. And at the same time all agree at the main purpose of personal hygiene is to keep bacteria, viruses and fungus away from human bodies. Being dirty, body, clothes and surrounding will make the person under the attack of microorganisms and be unacceptable and suffer from discrimination which leads to physical, mental and social problems and eventually death.

There are specific sets of norms of hygiene applicable in every country. The Problem of the human body, its capability of providing good places for disease- causing microorganisms to grow and multiply. These places are represented by skin of the whole body and in and around the openings of the body. Important aspect of self-care is proper hygiene practices. Although techniques are basic, there are still many people who do not practice it properly.

Usually, school age child (6-12 years) is in close contact with floor (Feigelman S.2011). His hands are in touch with everything surrounds him. Caregiver (body and clothes), toys and also peers in the class room with whom he shares things without thinking of the importance of hygiene are main sources of getting dirt and germs. Moreover, relationships with peers and the physical environment of school are also associated with students' life satisfaction (Lindberg and Swanberg, 2006). He doesn't have the understanding of how the infectious diseases

spread and how can be decreased by practicing certain norms of hygiene and how to make self-esteem high. The later comes from being clean and tidy.

As the child grows older and reaches the adolescence stage, the body goes under many changes. The body will experience a transitional period. The hormonal changes will lead to an increase of production of oils in skin and hair, and more stickiness in body odor. Personal hygiene needs greater care in preparing the child for the puberty. The child will grow physically and emotionally. The physical growth needs a lot of attention regarding the personal hygiene as well as being dirty will make him carry that stigma the whole his life.

The child must identify problems related to his hygiene and their causes. He should know that the personal hygiene activities must be carried out on daily, weekly and monthly basis according to the needs and habits. These activities must be carried on in enjoyable and exciting way to keep children interested. Children will not understand the importance of hygiene unless they understand its purpose. Good sanitary habits start from childhood and will set the person up through lifetime.

II. Methodology:

A descriptive study was conducted in Baghdad City/Iraq at March, 2014. It is carried out on the fifth and sixth year students, for both genders, males and females, at primary schools to assess the perception of personal hygiene among them. Directorate One of education was chosen randomly out of three directorates at Resafa Part. Ten schools were chosen by clusters sampling from this Directorate. Five elementary schools for males and another five for females were taken. Ten students from each school were chosen randomly, so the total sample were (100) students. The total of (50) males and (50) females were the subjects of this study.

To collect data needed for this study, an assessment tool was constructed in a form of questionnaire which designed and set from literature and studies reviewed. It was comprised of two main parts: Socio-demographic information concerning the subject and his parents which includes sex, year of study, the level of education for both parents, number of children in the family, order of the child in the family and the average income to the family. Secondly, the information related to the perception of students in concern to hand washing, oral hygiene, nails, whole body cleanliness, face and ears, hair, clothing, area surrounding the subject like home and school and at last general information concerning the personal hygiene. Data are collected through the interview by the researcher and the subject.

The questionnaire provided a three- point scale: (1) Yes. (2) Seldom, (3) No. The items of personal hygiene were rated and scored as (3) for Yes, (2) for seldom and (1) for no.

A pilot study was carried out with 10 subjects to test the validity and the reliability of the questionnaire. The data collected were not included with the results of the study. The all hundred questionnaire were filled without any withdrawal or drop out.

The data were analyzed by descriptive statistics (percentage, frequency, mean of score and demonstrated by tables.

III. Results:

Table (1) Distribution of children according to the demographical data

Demographical Characteristic of the Child	Groups	Frequency	%
Age in years	10-11	12	12
	<11-12	52	52
	<12-13	32	32
	<13-14	4	4
	Total	100	100
Gender	Male	50	50
	Female	50	50
	Total	100	100
Child's level of education	5 th year	50	50
	6 th year	50	50
	Total	50	50

Table (1) Continued

Demographical Characteristic of the Child	Groups	Frequency	%
Father's level of education	Illiterate	4	4
	Reads and writes	31	31
	Intermediate	16	16
	High school	23	23
	College and more	26	26
	Total	100	100
Mother's level of education	Illiterate	5	5
	Reads and writes	23	23
	Intermediate	34	34
	High school	19	19
	College and more	19	19
	Total	100	100
No. of children in family	1-3	45	45
	4-6	43	43
	<6	12	12
	Total	100	100
Child order in family	1 st	34	34
	2 nd	18	18
	3 rd	27	27
	< 3 rd	21	21
	Total	100	100
Family income	Adequate	59	59
	Relatively adequate	36	36
	Inadequate	5	5
	Total	100	100

The table above shows that the age of children is ranging between age <11-12 (52%) and the age <12-13 (32%).The cumulative percentage is (84%). For the gender and year of study, the researcher chooses them identically. Only (4%) of fathers are illiterate and (5%) of mothers are also, while the fathers and mothers who can read and write comprise (31%) and (23%) from the sample's parents respectively. The majority of mothers are intermediate level graduates (34%), while the college's graduates comprise the higher ratio for the fathers (26%). As seen in the table, most of the families have from 1-3 children (55%) and comes second (31%) the families who have 4-6 children. Also; (34%) of the families, their children whom taken in the study are the 1st born. A total of (59%) of the income reviewed as adequate (<500 000 -1000 000 ID).

Table (2) demonstrates personal hygiene activities in regard to hand washing.

Hand washing	Answers						MS	C. S
	Yes		Seldom		No			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Before eating	56	56	42	42	2	2	2.54	H
After eating	94	94	0	0	6	6	2.88	H
After using toilet	91	91	9	9	0	0	2.91	H
After nose wiping	12	12	25	25	63	63	1.49	P
After playing with toys	39	39	51	51	10	10	2.29	H
After playing with pet	11	11	36	36	53	53	1.58	P
With soap & water	82	82	10	10	8	8	2.74	H
With water only	18	18	9	9	73	73	1.45	P
Removes germs	52	52	47	47	1	1	2.51	H
Total	455	50.6	229	25.4	216	24	2.26	H

H=high; M=moderate; P=poor

School age children show high significance for all items except for washing after playing with pets (1.58) and to use water only (1.45) as an easy method of cleaning.

Table (3) shows personal hygiene activities in concern to mouth cleaning.

Mouth cleaning	Answers						MS	C.S
	Yes		Seldom		No			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
With brush / morning	90	90	10	10	0	0	2.90	H
With brush/at night	50	50	31	31	19	19	2.31	H
New brush every 3-4 months	67	67	27	27	6	6	2.61	H
Rinse with water only	47	47	40	40	13	13	2.34	H
Using floss for debris	51	51	23	23	26	26	2.25	H
Visit dentist / 6 months	22	22	17	17	61	61	1.61	P
Brush removes remained diet	2	2	7	7	91	91	1.11	P
Total	329	47	155	22.1	216	30.9	2.16	H

H=high; M=moderate; P=poor

Children didn't have idea when to visit the dentist (1.61) and why they brush their teeth (1.11).

Table (4) describes the personal hygiene activities in relation to nail's care.

Nail's care	Answers						MS	C.S
	Yes		Seldom		No			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
underneath	93	93	7	7	0	0	2.93	H
Keep them short	98	98	2	2	0	0	2.98	H
Fix broken nails	88	88	10	10	2	2	2.86	H
Use clipper or scissors	91	91	5	5	4	4	2.87	H
Use teeth for clipping	78	78	12	12	10	10	2.68	H
Dirt collects germs	100	100	0	0	0	0	3.00	H
Total	548	91.3	36	6	16	2.7	2.89	H

H=high; M=moderate; P=poor

Highly significant was the domain for the nail's care activities as shown in Table (4).

Table (5) declares the personal hygiene activities in concern to body care.

Body care	Answers						MS	C.S
	Yes		Seldom		No			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Bathing 3 times/week	12	12	10	10	78	78	1.34	P
Clean genital area/day	56	56	40	40	4	4	2.52	H
Clean under axilla/day	8	8	2	2	90	90	1.18	P
Use personal towel	0	0	15	15	85	85	1.15	P
Removes dead skin	22	22	25	25	53	53	1.69	P
Removes germs	94	94	4	4	2	2	2.92	H
Removes sweating	74	74	23	23	3	3	2.71	H
Bathing is refreshing	86	86	14	14	0	0	2.86	H
In good appearance	90	90	6	6	4	4	2.86	H
Total	442	49.1	139	15.5	319	35.4	2.14	H

H=high; M=moderate; P=poor

The table above shows that the children concept concerning bathing not at the optimum. They ignored the detailed principles of cleaning as seen in their answers in concern to axilla, using personal towel and when to take bath..

Table (6) contains the personal hygiene activities in relation to care of face and ears.

Care of face & ears	Answers						MS	C.S
	Yes		Seldom		No			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Washing face/morning	100	100	0	0	0	0	3.00	H
Removing dirt & dust	82	82	12	12	6	6	2.76	H
Removes germs	10	10	29	29	61	61	1.49	P
Refreshing	39	39	50	50	11	11	2.28	H
Behind ears /daily	2	2	14	14	84	84	1.18	P
Prevent germ collection	46	46	33	33	21	21	2.25	H
Total	279	46.5	138	23	183	30.5	2.16	H

H=high; M=moderate; P=poor

Behind ears is almost neglected among these children (1.18) while washing face achieved full ratio.

Table (7) reveals the personal hygiene activities related to hair care.

Hair care	Answers						MS	C.S
	Yes		Seldom		No			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Wash twice/week	40	40	28	28	32	32	2.08	H
Washing removes oil	99	99	1	1	0	0	2.99	H
Washing remove dirt	100	100	0	0	0	0	3.00	H
Washing removes germs	86	86	10	10	4	4	2.82	H
Clipping on need	67	67	23	23	10	10	2.57	H
Watch for itching	8	8	49	49	43	43	1.65	P
Watch lice of others	100	100	0	0	0	0	3.00	H
Total	500	71.5	111	16	89	12.5	2.59	H

H=high; M=moderate; P=poor

Table (7) shows that the concept of children in concern to the care of hair is obvious.

Table (8) shows the concept of the children toward the care of their clothes.

Caring of clothes	Answers						MS	C.S
	Yes		Seldom		No			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Wear clean clothes/day	15	15	29	29	56	56	1.59	P
Don't wipe with dirty hand	88	88	10	10	2	2	2.86	H
Change underwear/day	28	28	20	20	52	52	1.76	P
Wear clean cloth after bath	100	100	0	0	0	0	3.00	H
Put dirty ones in special place	29	29	32	32	39	39	1.90	P
Put clean ones in right places	92	92	4	4	4	4	2.88	H
Change school uniform	64	64	23	23	13	13	2.51	H
Total	416	59.5	118	17	166	23.5	2.36	H

H=high; M=moderate; P=poor

The outfit seems not their duty (1.59) and the same for the underwear (1.76) while they show responsibility of caring of clean clothes (2.88) and not wiping their dirty hands with their clothes (2.86).

Table(9) demonstrates the caring of school and home as an activities of personal hygiene.

Caring of school and home	Answers						MS	C.S
	Yes		Seldom		No			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Throw trash in special places	86	86	14	14	0	0	2.86	H
Be away from dirty places	91	91	9	9	0	0	2.91	H
Not playing with dirty water	87	87	12	12	1	1	2.86	H
Take care of books, stationary and bag	100	100	0	0	0	0	3.00	H
Put toys in their places	89	89	11	11	0	0	2.89	H
Not playing with food or throw it	76	76	22	22	2	2	2.74	H
Help mother in arranging room	100	100	0	0	0	0	3.00	H
Help in arranging bed/day	12	12	47	47	41	41	1.71	P
Total	641	80	115	14	44	6	2.74	H

H=high; M=moderate; P=poor

Children have perfect concept toward their surrounding as seen in table (9).

IV. Discussion and Conclusion

Personal hygiene and regular hygiene routine is very essential in everyone's daily life. To achieve this goal, man should understand and practice it since childhood. This study was carried out to focus on the concept of school age children in regard to personal hygiene. The prevalence of concept was present among all the sample but in different levels. The lack of concept could be attributed to the families and the schools. The socio-demographic table (1) shows that the students shared in this study were 50 males and 50 females and from fifth and sixth grades. Of the students interviewed, (--) were classified as having acceptable concept of personal hygiene. They belongs to families can be considered literate and can share in any low-cost program shall be designed concerning the personal hygiene of their children. Also, the income is adequate (59%) and relatively adequate (36%) to provide necessary elements for this matter.

Hand washing considered to be a vital behavior must be done frequently/day by the child to minimize the risk of getting and spreading the micro-organisms (Bloomfield et al 2007). Before (56%) and after (94%) eating was an indicator of having proper hygiene. Also the same talk can be said about washing hands after using the toilet (91%) which considered to be very vital in ceasing the gastrointestinal infections. On the other hand, students had almost little idea of the necessity of washing hands after playing with toys (39%), nose (12%) and pet (11%). They believe that washing hands will remove germs (52%) and it should be with soap and water (82%) cause water alone (18%) is not enough to eradicate germs from hands. They need reminders (parents or teachers)all the time and keep telling them the advantages of hand washing and the contrary will attribute to diseases and death eventually.

Dentition of permanent teeth is marking this period of life. The child will experience of losing baby teeth as well as the eruption of adult teeth. The outlook of the face will be changing, in addition to the difficulties of chewing, giving optimum care has many effects on the psychology of the child and correspondingly his health. The results showed that the concept of the students is quite satisfactory starting from brushing teeth at morning (90%), at night (50%), using the floss (51%) and changing the old brush with new almost every 3 months (67%) although they need more apprehension the use of water during the day (47%) and when to visit the dentist (22%). The later is usually the job of the parents to fulfill.

Caring of nail which considered a kind of modified skin is not for beauty only, but to keep them skin and free from germs and dirt especially underneath them. They considered as indicator of man's general health,

and sickness even they affect the growth and development of the human being. Table (4) showed that the concept among children regarding caring of nails in all items is fantastic except for using teeth for trimming the nails (78%).

Bathing considered to be the universal way of cleaning the skin which is the largest organ on the body. Washing the body on routine basis will remove dirt, oil, and dead cells to prevent their accumulation. During this period of age and prior usually the parents are responsible to perform these procedures starting from bathing the child, cleaning the genital area, and under axilla. The concept of children is not with the level promising as seen in table (5). While on the other hand, their concept that caring of skin removes germs (94%), sweating (74%), refreshing (86%) and be in good appearance (90%) is high and may push the children to take the job of parents in cleaning themselves when they allowed to do so. All the students agreed upon washing face after getting up from bed at morning (100%) as seen in table (6). They believe that washing face is removing dirt (82%) while (61%) think that it doesn't remove germs and refreshing (39%). Only (2%) of students have concept of cleaning behind the ears. Overall, (46%) think that cleaning prevent the accumulation of micro-organism. Caring of hair as declared by table (7) showed that the children have good concept on this. Most of the answers were positive so this telling that they recognized the importance of giving care to hair. From caring of hair to clothes, table (8) showed that the children don't wear clean clothes every day (15%), but they wear clean ones after bathing (100%). Majority think that wiping dirty hands with clothes that they are wearing (88%) is not allowed. They have the concept of putting the clean clothes in the places designed for (92%) while little concept toward the dirty clothes (29%) although they take care of their school uniforms (64%).

Proper concept of hygienic practices was shown clearly among children in concern to their environment table (9). Approximately, (86%) of students reported that usually throw dirt in special places, (91%) be away from dirty places, (100%) take care of books and stationary, (89%) return toys to their designed places after finish playing, (76%) not play with food or throw it away, and all of them said that they help in arranging their room, while (12%) reported that they don't arrange their beds.

Schools must be directed toward reliance on personal hygiene in their programs. Students who perceived a positive school environment were more likely to have high life satisfaction (Zulling et al.2005). It is vital in many aspects starting from self of the child, and ending with the society. The children usually are willing and receptive to learn healthy behaviors and adopt them. Also, they will transfer what they learned and practiced to their families and peers.

V. Recommendations:

After analyzing the results; the study recommends; designing a program of one hour duration each week to the students with objective of increasing their perception in accordance to personal hygiene. To make this applicable and effective; a teaching stuff should be prepared by undergoing special courses held incorporate of Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health. The program of the students should be designed to gain knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) of personal hygiene. Also, this program should be set in a way that attracts the child and be interesting to him. Parents can join the program to in order to keep open link between school and home. The most important and above all, is having a good place for practicing in each school (the bathrooms). These places must be appropriately equipped to carry out this program. The most important qualifications is the cleanliness and providing the supplies need it to make this program beneficial.

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