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# Oral Health Behaviors and Predictive Factors Among Parents of Preschoolers in an Industrial Urban Setting: A Case Study in Mueang District, Samut Sakhon, Thailand

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## Abstract

**Objectives:** Early childhood caries is a significant oral health issue that progresses rapidly and affects the long-term health and quality of life of preschool children. Therefore, this study aimed to study the oral health behaviors and their predictors among parents of preschool children in Samut Sakhon, Thailand.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional design was employed with a sample of 351 parents of preschool children, selected through multi-stage random sampling. Data were collected using a questionnaire developed based on theoretical frameworks and study objectives, comprising four parts: personal factors, oral health knowledge, Health Belief Model-based oral health beliefs, and parental oral health behaviors. The instruments demonstrated a content validity (IOC) of 0.66–1.00 and a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.896. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and stepwise multiple regression were used for data analysis.

**Results:** The results indicated that 53.6% of parents exhibited moderate oral health behaviors for their children (Mean=55.95, SD=10.575). Factors significantly predicting oral health behaviors, accounting for 32.4% of the variance ( $R^2=0.324$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), included cues to action ( $\beta=0.323$ ), perceived barriers ( $\beta=0.296$ ), oral health knowledge ( $\beta=0.125$ ), educational background ( $\beta=0.117$ ), and perceived severity of oral health issues ( $\beta=0.103$ ).

**Conclusions:** Findings suggest the need for targeted interventions to improve oral health behaviors among parents, focusing on oral hygiene, milk bottle care, nutrition, and dental visits. Programs should raise awareness and provide educational resources on preschool oral health to promote better oral hygiene practices.

**Keywords:** children, health belief model, oral health behavior, predictive factors, preschool