

ABSTRACT

This study mainly aimed to investigate the knowledge about dentistry of “Street Dentists” in Bangkok. The purpose of this study was to identify the sources of their knowledge, to explore their knowledge about making proper dentures and disinfection techniques, to know their work problems, and to acknowledge the help needed from the associated authorities.

The reason to study their knowledge was that street dentists will continue their existence among illegalization, whereas this denture making alternative has affected people harmfully.

This study was carried out among 23 street dentists in Bangkok and suburbs. Selection used the purposive with snowball sample technique. The research design used was descriptive, quantitative, and cross-sectional method. The instrument designed was fifteen-minute, self-administered questionnaire consisting of thirty closed-ended and open-ended questions. The questions included private information, knowledge about denture making and hygiene, working problems, and help needed from related authorities. The data collected was analyzed by using the Statistic Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program version 14.0 for descriptive statistics.

The research started in November 2008 and finished in February 2009. The research findings showed that the major sources of knowledge were their families and hired street dentists. Next, most of them passed the set level of knowledge of denture making and hygienic techniques, but none of them got full score. Then, they wanted no more knowledge of dentistry and no help from the associated authorities. Additionally, the unexpected findings during data collection were that their real practices were not the same as their answers, and many samples resisted questionnaires, some were willing to answer verbally. Also, a trained representative had to be provided to obtain data. In sum, this research may be advantageous to Thai society in discovering the significant information before someone decides to make dentures from this alternative. Likewise, it is desperate to educate them to be legal denturists like in other countries owing to their rejection of more knowledge.