



# Knowledge and Awareness of Dental Specialties and Prevalent Myths among IT Professionals in India: A Cross-Sectional Study

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## KEYWORDS

Health Knowledge, Attitudes, Practice; Specialties, Dental; Oral Health; Myths; Health Literacy; Information Technology; India; Dental Care.

## ABSTRACT:

**Background:** Oral health is a key determinant of general health and well-being. Despite advancements in dentistry, public understanding of various dental specialties remains limited. Myths about dental care further hinder the acceptance of modern dental practices. In India, IT professionals represent a well-educated demographic whose awareness can reflect broader societal trends.

**Aim:** To evaluate the awareness of dental specialties and the prevalence of dental myths among Indian IT professionals.

**Materials and Methods:** An observational, cross-sectional study was conducted online. A structured questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms among 100 IT professionals over two weeks.

**Results:** High awareness was observed regarding basic dental practices, with 97% of participants having visited a dentist and 92% aware of their dentist's qualification. However, only 59% identified the specialist's branch correctly. Awareness regarding specific specialties such as pedodontics and orthodontics was moderate. A significant number of participants demonstrated rejection of dental myths, indicating positive oral health literacy trends.

**Conclusion:** While awareness of oral health and dental specialties is improving among IT professionals, there are still areas requiring targeted educational efforts. Promoting accurate knowledge and dispelling myths is essential for improving community oral health outcomes.

## 1. Introduction

Oral health is a fundamental component of general health, contributing to overall well-being, quality of life, and economic productivity. The World Health Organization recognizes that oral diseases are among the most common non-communicable diseases globally, affecting approximately 3.5 billion people. Inadequate oral health can lead to physical discomfort, impaired functionality, social withdrawal, and systemic complications [1].

Dentistry, akin to general medicine, comprises various specialties, each designed to address specific conditions and populations. These include Prosthodontics, Orthodontics, Pedodontics, Endodontics, Periodontics, Oral Medicine and Radiology, Oral and Maxillofacial

Surgery, Oral Pathology, and Public Health Dentistry. Despite their importance, public awareness of these specialties remains limited, with many people unable to distinguish their specific roles [2].

Cultural beliefs and myths contribute significantly to misinformation about dental care. These myths are perpetuated by anecdotal evidence, traditional practices, and lack of scientific outreach. Common misconceptions such as "scaling loosens teeth," "extractions affect eyesight," or "salt and baking soda whiten teeth" continue to be believed and practiced. This leads to delayed treatment, reliance on home remedies, and progression of dental diseases [3].

India's IT sector employs a large portion of the country's educated youth. These professionals not only



represent a literate population but also have access to technology and information, making them ideal candidates for assessing the penetration of accurate dental knowledge. Moreover, as influencers in their social circles, their understanding of dental health can indirectly affect broader community behaviors [4].

This study explores the knowledge and awareness of dental specialties and prevailing dental myths among Indian IT professionals. By understanding the current awareness level, the study aims to highlight the areas needing intervention and the potential role of IT professionals in improving dental health literacy.

## 2. Materials and Methods

A descriptive, observational cross-sectional study was conducted among IT professionals in India to assess their knowledge of dental specialties and their beliefs about prevalent dental myths. The survey was administered via Google Forms and distributed through email and professional networks. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. The questionnaire consisted of 20 multiple-choice and binary (Yes/No) questions, divided into two categories: (1) awareness of dental specialties, and (2) belief in dental myths. The questions were designed based on previous studies that evaluated public understanding of dental specialties and common misconceptions [1-7].

The survey remained open for two weeks, during which 100 complete responses were collected and analyzed. Inclusion criteria included individuals currently employed in the IT sector, aged between 20 and 50, residing in India, and having access to the internet.

The data was compiled and analyzed using basic statistical tools. Percentages and frequency distributions were calculated to represent participant responses. The results are presented in both tabular and descriptive formats.

## 3. Results

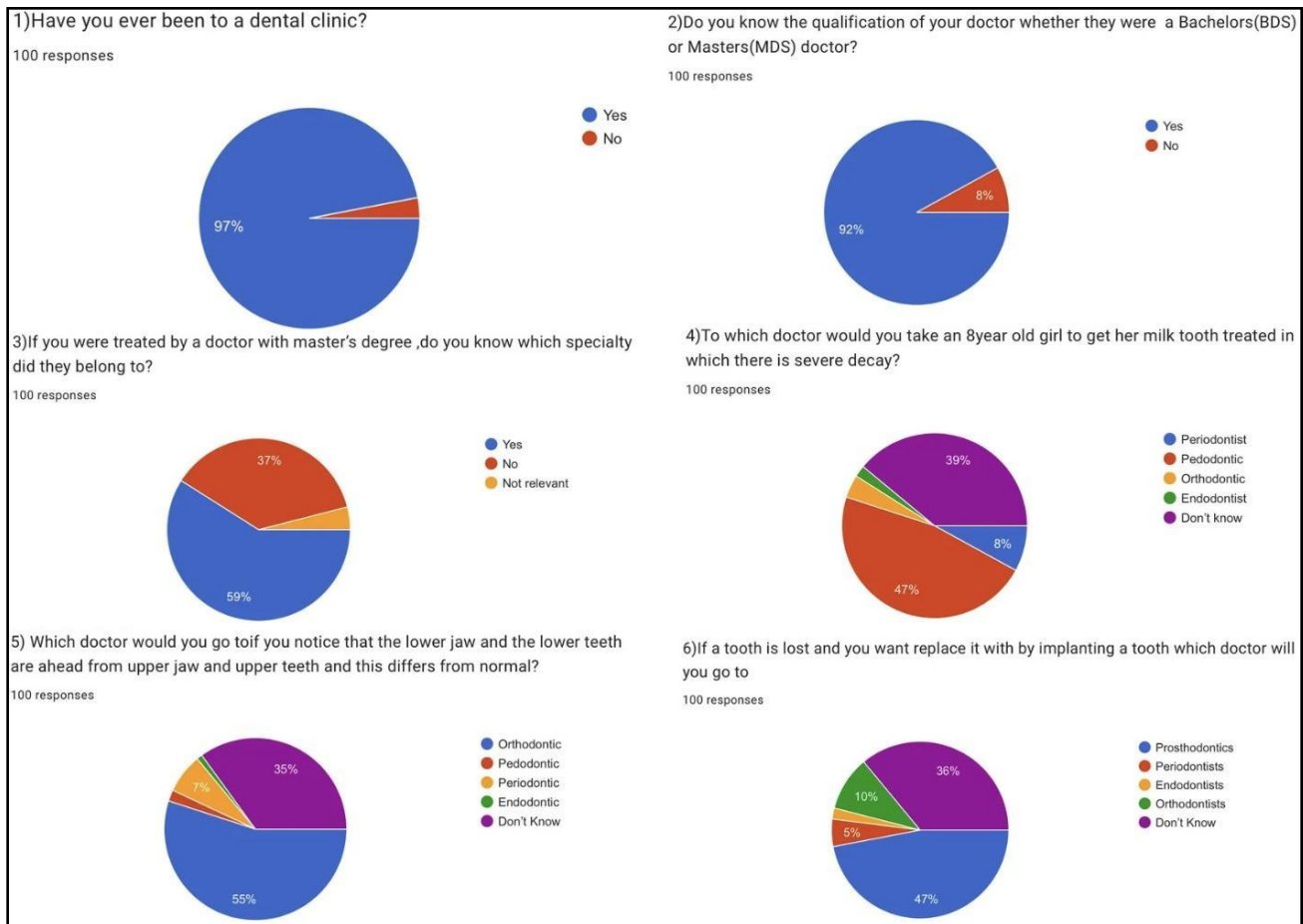
### Awareness of Dental Specialties

Out of the 100 respondents, 97% had visited a dental clinic at least once. Among them, 92% were aware of the academic qualifications of their treating dentist (BDS or MDS), while 59% could identify the specific dental specialty of the practitioner.

When asked which specialist they would consult for an 8-year-old with severe tooth decay, 47% correctly chose a pedodontist, while 39% were unsure. For orthodontic issues such as malocclusion, 55% identified an orthodontist, 35% were uncertain, and the rest chose incorrect options. Regarding tooth replacement using implants, 47% selected a prosthodontist, 36% were unsure, and the remainder gave incorrect responses (Table 1, Figure 1).

**Table 1:** Awareness of Dental Specialties Among IT Professionals

Question	Correct Response (%)	Don't Know/Incorrect (%)
Visited dental clinic	97	3
Aware of dentist's qualification	92	8
Knew their dentist's specialty	59	41
Correct specialist for child's tooth decay	47	53
Correct specialist for jaw alignment issue	55	45
Correct specialist for dental implants	47	53



**Figure 1:** Pie chart depicting Awareness of Dental Specialties Among IT Professionals

These results indicate that while general awareness of dental visits and qualifications is high among IT professionals, there is a significant lack of awareness regarding specific dental specialties and the scope of each field.

**Beliefs About Dental Myths**

The survey also revealed insights into common dental myths. For example, 67% disagreed that dental procedures are always painful. A majority (90%)

rejected the idea that brushing with fingers and powder is better than using a toothbrush. Additionally, 59% denied the myth that tooth extraction affects eyesight, while 94% did not believe that malocclusion or spacing in front teeth brings luck.

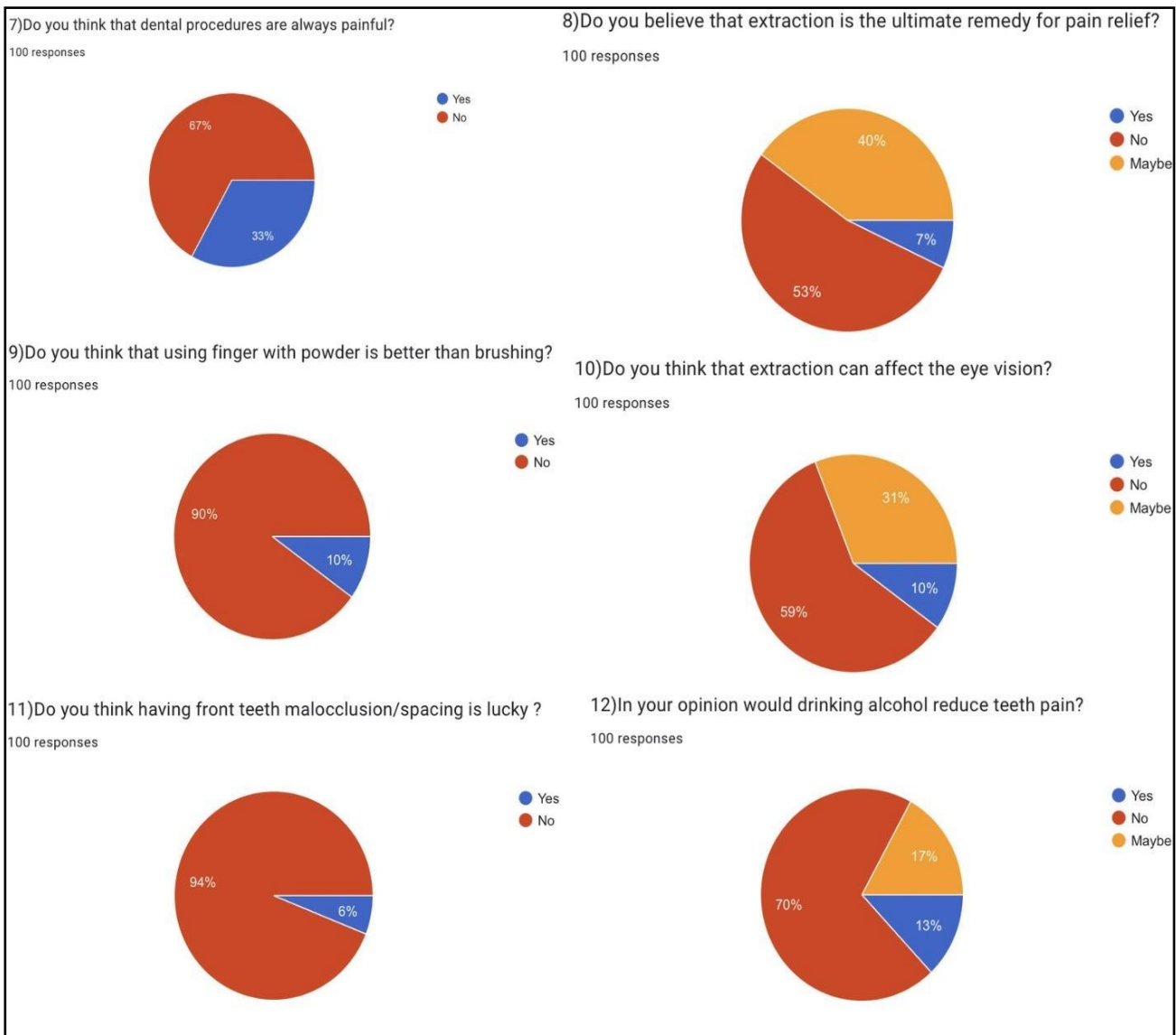
However, myths such as scaling causing tooth mobility (43% said “maybe”), and using salt/baking soda for whitening teeth (46% said “maybe”), remain prevalent, indicating the need for better education (Table 2, Figure 2).

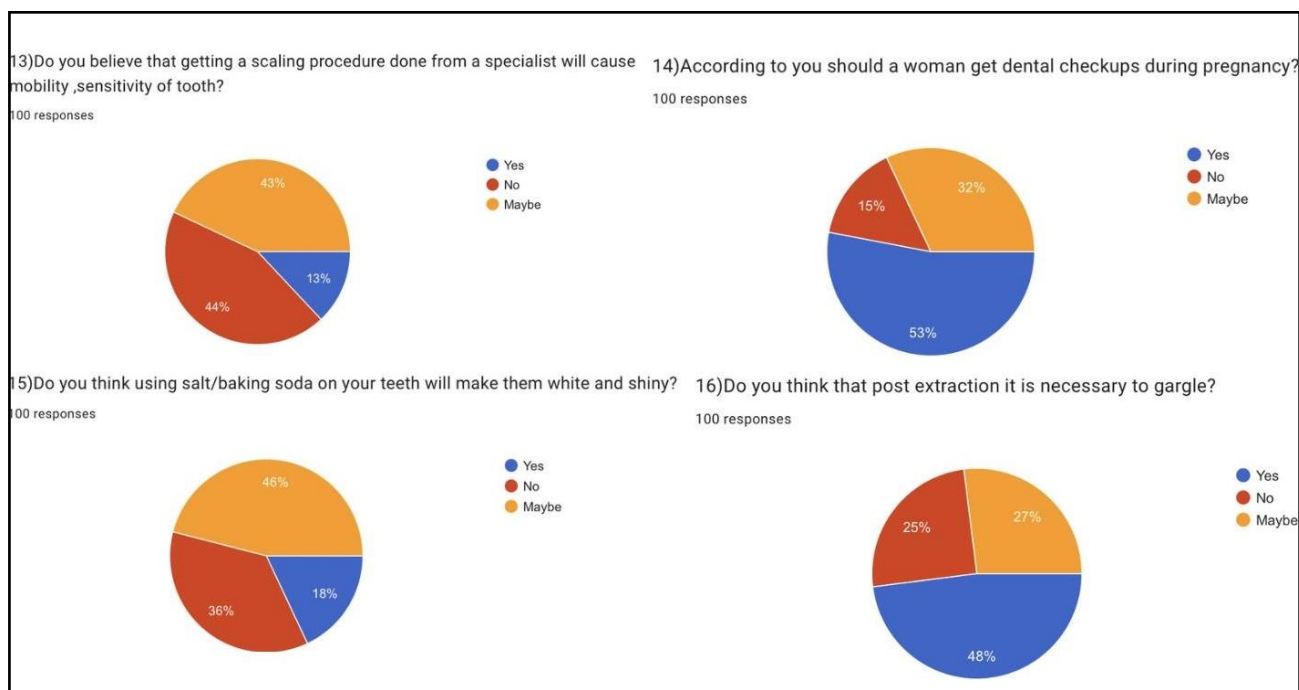
**Table 2:** Beliefs About Dental Myths Among IT Professionals

Dental Myth	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Maybe/Unsure (%)
Dental procedures are always painful	67	33	0
Extraction is ultimate pain relief	53	7	40
Brushing with powder is better	90	10	0



Dental Myth	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Maybe/Unsure (%)
Extraction affects eyesight	59	10	31
Front teeth spacing is lucky	94	6	0
Alcohol reduces tooth pain	70	13	17
Scaling causes mobility	44	13	43
Salt/baking soda whitens teeth	36	18	46





**Figure 2:** Pie chart depicting Beliefs About Dental Myths Among IT Professionals

#### 4. Discussion

This study offers valuable insights into the current level of awareness regarding dental specialties and prevailing dental myths among Indian IT professionals. The findings reflect both progress and persisting gaps in dental health literacy.

The fact that 97% of participants had visited a dentist and 92% were aware of their dentist's qualifications reflects high engagement with oral healthcare services among this educated cohort. However, a sharp drop to 59% in awareness regarding their dentist's specialty suggests that while patients recognize the professional status of their dentist, many remain uninformed about the differentiation and scope of dental specialties. This finding is consistent with other studies which show that the general population often perceives dentistry as a monolithic profession rather than a multidisciplinary one [1,2].

Awareness of specific specialties such as Pedodontics and Orthodontics was moderate, while the understanding of specialties like Prosthodontics remained limited. Such knowledge gaps could lead to misinformed decisions about seeking care. In contrast, studies in the United States and Western Europe report

higher public awareness due to robust oral health education programs [3,4].

On the positive side, a large proportion of respondents rejected common dental myths. For instance, 67% disagreed that dental procedures are always painful, and 90% denied that brushing with powder is superior to using a toothbrush. This indicates a shift towards modern oral hygiene practices, likely driven by increased access to digital information and social influence in professional networks [5,6].

However, myths around scaling and use of salt/baking soda persisted among many respondents. Nearly 43% were unsure if scaling caused tooth mobility, and 46% believed or were unsure that salt could whiten teeth. This suggests that misinformation continues to be passed through informal channels, such as family traditions or social media, underscoring the need for scientifically validated oral health education [7-10].

Previous studies in rural and semi-urban settings in India have highlighted the role of culture and superstition in shaping health behavior [11,12]. Comparatively, the IT professionals in this study exhibit better awareness, though not free from misinformation. This demographic could potentially act as a catalyst in



spreading accurate dental knowledge if properly engaged through targeted outreach programs [13-15].

Integrating oral health awareness campaigns into workplace wellness programs, particularly in large IT firms, could be an effective strategy. Collaborations between dental institutions and corporate health departments may help bridge the awareness gap while fostering preventive behavior [16-20].

This study is limited by its sample size (100 participants) and the mode of data collection (online), which might have excluded individuals not active on digital platforms. A larger sample and more diversified methods could yield more generalizable data.

## 5. Conclusion

The present study highlights a relatively high awareness among Indian IT professionals regarding general dental care and a rejection of some traditional myths. However, knowledge about specific dental specialties remains incomplete, and certain misconceptions persist.

This underlines the need for continued public education to emphasize the distinct roles of dental specialists and to address commonly held dental myths. Empowering professionals with correct information not only enhances individual oral health but also positions them to serve as informed advocates within their social networks.

Future research should aim for broader geographic and demographic coverage to assess awareness in more diverse populations. Systematic educational interventions through digital campaigns, corporate training, and inclusion in general health checkups are recommended.

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