

Children and adolescents with disabilities appear to have poorer oral health than their nondisabled counterparts. Oral health is an important aspect of health for all children, and is all the more important for children with special health needs. Because oral hygiene affects one's aesthetics and communication, it has strong biological, psychological and social projections. Variable access to dental care, inadequate oral hygiene and disability related factors may account for the differences. The type of dental care received may be determined more by the disability than the oral condition, compounding the chronicity of dental disease. Relatively few investigations of the oral conditions of the disabled children.

It is believed that the number of handicapped individuals is increasing in proportion to the general population. Dental care is the most common unmet health care need of disabled children.

Dental care is not a priority to families of the multidisabled child. Improvement in oral health status can be achieved through on-site oral health care. More awareness of the dental care needs of these children is necessary. Health care providers must have unique communication skills to deal with the special needs of deaf children. Programs designed to improve knowledge, attitude and behavior should be innovative to meet the special needs of this population.

The ultimate aim of this project was to assess the oral health status and oral hygiene practices in children with impaired hearing and speech in the state of Himachal Pradesh in India.

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**Target Group:** Hearing and speech impaired children in Himachal Pradesh