

**Oral health education: A call for couple centred intervention**

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*Dear Editor,* Oral health has a direct influence on systemic health. It is a well-known fact that oral health and systemic health have a bidirectional relationship, with each affecting the other. Poor oral hygiene can lead to numerous health problems, such as cardiovascular diseases, liver diseases, and Alzheimer's among others.<sup>1</sup> That is why educating the masses about preventive oral care and hygiene practices is indispensable.

A study published in 2016 in *Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology* suggests that spouses influence each other's oral hygiene practices and attitudes; meaning that a husband's oral health practices affect his wife's, and vice versa.<sup>2</sup> This study strongly suggests that oral health behaviours are often shaped within the household and influenced by close relationships.

Typically, oral health education programmes are designed

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**Submission completed:** 16-07-2025    **1st Revision received:** 06-08-2025

**Acceptance:** 22-10-2025                      **2nd Revision received:** 21-10-2025

to target people as individuals. However, this study strongly suggests that such efforts may be more fruitful and effective if they focus on the couples, educate them as a single unit rather individually. This approach can lead to a more sustained behavioural change. Therefore, I advocate for a shift in the design of oral health education programmes and strategies- one that incorporates family or spousal dynamics into programme planning. A couple-based strategy is likely to be more effective in improving the oral health of the community.

**Disclaimer:** None.

**Conflict of interest:** None.

**Funding disclosure:** None.

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.47391/JPMA.31904>

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**Author Contribution:**

**AK:** Concept, wrote the initial draft, revisions and final submission.

**TA:** Conceptual development, critical review and suggested revisions.

**UA:** Literature review and supported editing of the final version for clarity and coherence.