

Gum Health Awareness Day

Report on survey of awareness
and experiences of gum disease in
Diabetes.co.uk community
members

April 2017

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Brief

Diabetes.co.uk is conducting pre- and post- surveys of its community around Gum Health Awareness Day in collaboration with the British Society of Periodontology to establish awareness and understanding regarding gum health. The survey will be rerun in six months time to explore the effects of the Gum Health Awareness Day campaign.

At a glance

In total, there were 713 responses within 5 days. Females made up 71% of respondents.

The majority of respondents were over the age of 50 (56%), with the highest number of responses from the 50-59 years age group.

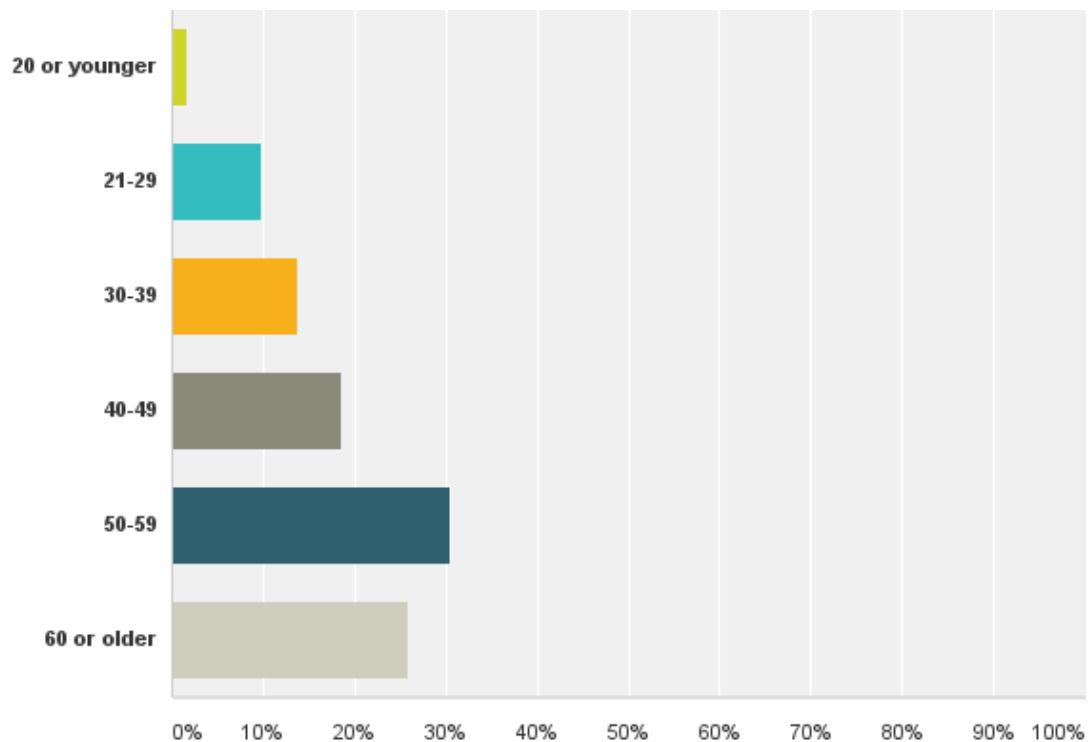


Figure 1: Age distribution

More respondents have type 2 diabetes (50%) than type 1 diabetes (39%).

The remaining ~10% were made up mainly of people with prediabetes (3%) or those who said they do not have diabetes (6%).

Dental check-ups

Most of the people surveyed had been for a dental check-up within the last year (71%), However, 29% reported not attending for a check-up for at least 12 months.

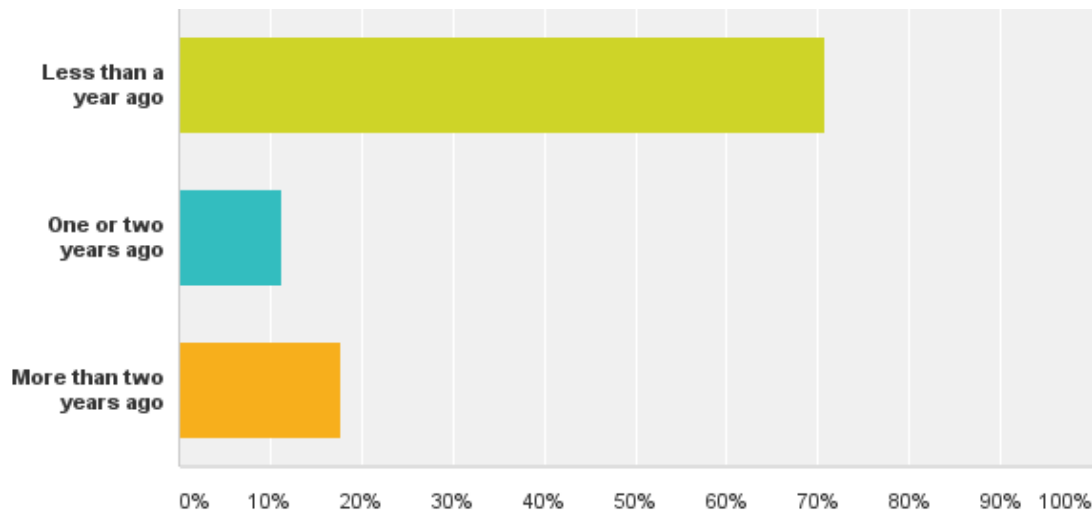


Figure 2: When did you last attend for a dental check up?

Male respondents were less likely to go for regular dental check-ups compared to females.

Only 64% of males had been for a dental check-up within the last year, compared to 74% of females.

This trend was supported by the fact that it had been more than 2 years since the last dental check-up for 22% of men, compared to 16% of females.

Overall, it would appear that females are more likely to be concerned about their dental health, or there is some other factor at play that is preventing males from going to the dentist.

Those earning £50,000+ per year were more likely to have gone for a dental check-up within the last year than any other income bracket. 80% of those earning this much and above had been within the last year, nine percentage points above the average of 71%.

Of those earning £26,000 - £31,999, only 64% had been for a dental check-up within the last year.

Around half of responses had never received information about gum health from their dental professional, doctor or pharmacist. Of the rest, they were much more likely to receive information about gum disease from their dental professional (49%) compared to their doctor (2%) or their pharmacist (1%).

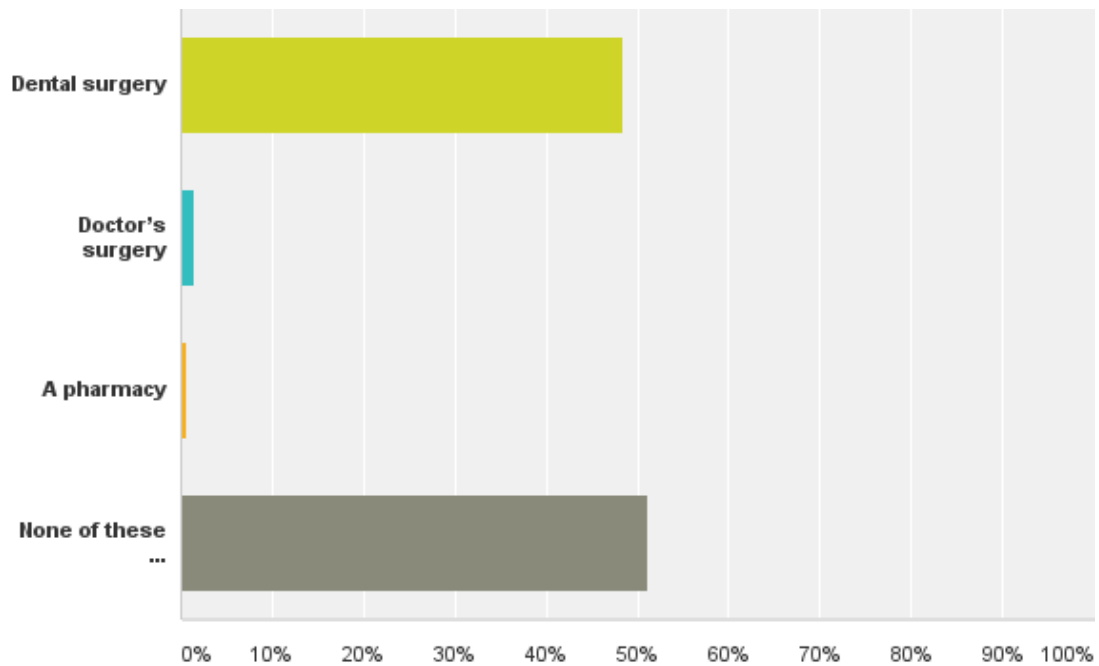


Figure 3: Have you ever been given information about gum disease at any of the following?

Gum bleeding and gum disease

Although 75% of respondents (536) reported that they had experienced gum bleeding, only 42% (296) had been told that they had gum disease. This trend was seen whether the respondent was male or female, or had type 1 or type 2 diabetes.

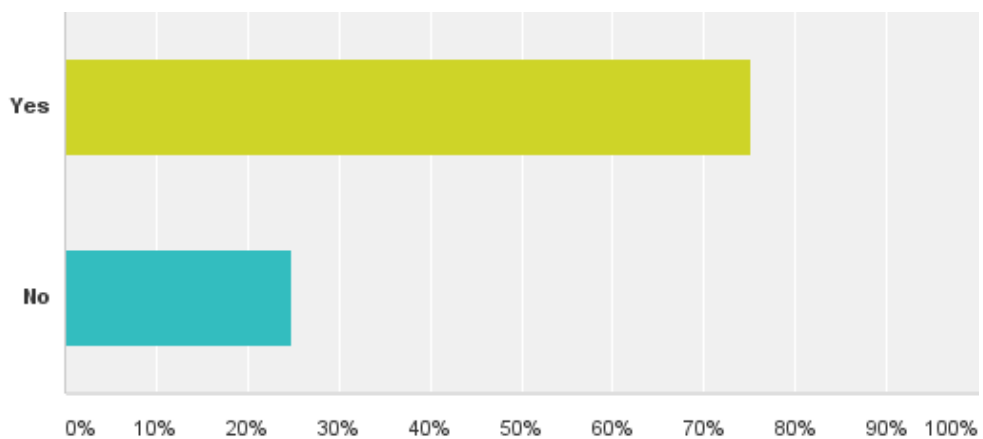


Figure 4: Do your gums ever bleed?

Knowledge of diabetes affecting the gums

Almost 30% said they did not know whether diabetes could affect their gums, and 4% said that they thought that it didn't.

It would appear that people with type 1 diabetes are more aware in this regard compared to those with type 2 diabetes. 77% of respondents who had type 1 diabetes were aware that the condition affects gum health compared with 64% of those with type 2 diabetes.

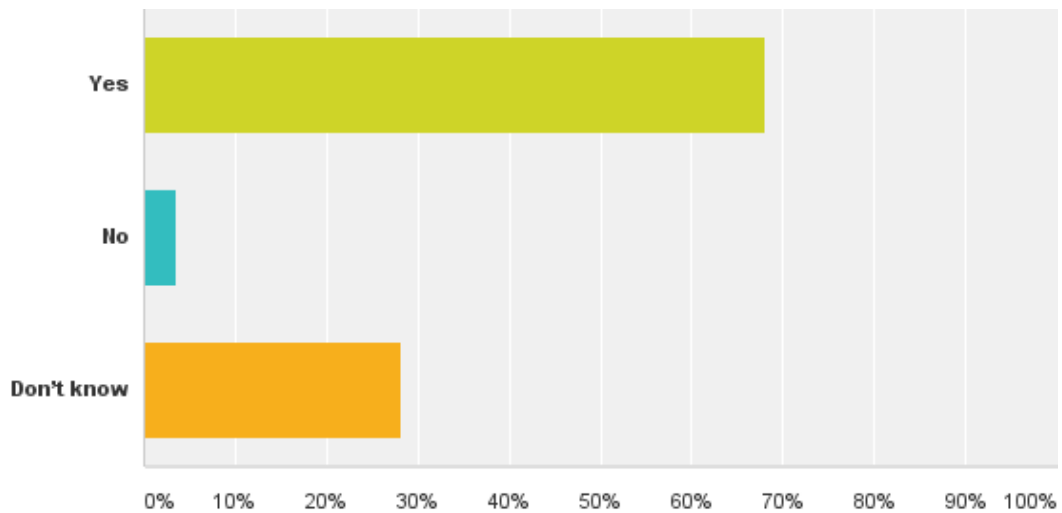


Figure 5: Do you think diabetes can affect your gums?

Conclusions

This survey needs to be understood in the context that diabetes is a risk factor for gum disease. Gum disease can impair the quality of a person's life, and can affect their diabetes control. Gum disease is also associated with poorer diabetes-related health outcomes. Half of the respondents in this survey had never received information about gum disease, whether at their dental surgery, their doctor's surgery, or their pharmacy, even though three quarters of them had experienced gum bleeding.

This survey highlights the need for greater awareness, both in the community and amongst health professionals, of the interrelationships between diabetes and gum health and underlines the importance of the campaign by the British Society of Periodontology and Diabetes.co.uk.