It is well established that dental plaque is an important etiological factor in the progression of periodontal disease. The control of dental plaque in both the prevention and treatment of periodontal disease forms the primary basis for all forms periodontal treatment.

Generally, the public seems to be more aware of dental caries than of periodontal diseases. A survey was carried out to determine the periodontal status of the adult population in Singapore as well as to ascertain their knowledge of prevention against periodontal diseases. 725 subjects were interviewed and examined clinically. Subjects were asked to indicate the importance of toothbrushing, flossing and regular dental checkup in preventing periodontal disease. The importance of each measure was rated on a Likert scale of “very important”, “important”, “not so important”, and “unimportant”. Clinically, the subjects were examined for periodontal disease using the Community Periodontal Index of Treatment Needs.

The results of the interview showed that the majority of respondents were aware of the importance of toothbrushing (90%) and regular dental checkup (81%). However, only a small proportion recognized the need for flossing (41%). Chi-square analysis showed that females were more aware of the importance of flossing toward prevention of periodontal disease than males (p<0.001). Elderly persons and those without high-school education expressed significantly less importance to toothbrushing, flossing, and regular dental check-up.

Clinical findings showed that 73.61% of subjects presented with probing depths of less than 3 mm, 17.66% with depths of 3-5 mm and only 0.8% of subjects presented with a score of 4 (>6 mm).

The results of this study identified a need to emphasize the importance of prevention against periodontal diseases especially among the elderly and those without high school education. The clinical results demonstrated that although the level of plaque control is not high, the incidence of severe periodontal disease of very low, only 0.8%. 

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Present Status of Plaque Control Among the Singapore Adult Population

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