

## **LAY ATTITUDE TOWARDS DENTAL APPEARANCE AND NEED FOR ORTHODONTIC TREATMENT**

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Most people undergo Orthodontic treatment to improve their dental appearance. Indeed, their major concerns are usually related to aesthetics rather than health or function. When advising about aesthetic treatment need, visual stimuli as a tool in communication may have some advantages compared to verbal descriptions, in particular where children are concerned. The aesthetic component of the Index of Orthodontic Treatment Need (IOTN) is an illustrated scale for rating of dental attractiveness developed in the UK and is based on lay adult ratings of dental photographs. This scale has been recommended for use in patient education. The purpose of the present study was to investigate the applicability of the aesthetic component of the IOTN as a tool in patient information in Sri Lanka.

A sample of 100 children and 100 of their parents (both father and mothers) and 100 young adults were shown the 10 photographs comprising the aesthetic component of the IOTN. The subjects were asked to assess the photographs for dental attractiveness and orthodontic treatment need on a four-category rating scale. According to the findings, 95.3% of the total sample rated the aesthetic scale progressively unattractive. 94.3% of all three groups (total sample) rated the five photographs on the unattractive end of the scale to be in need of treatment. Mean cut off points were  $5.49 \pm 0.68$ ,  $5.19 \pm 0.99$  and  $5.42 \pm 0.75$  for children, parents and young adults respectively. A significant difference in the cut-off points was observed between children and young adults. The findings of the study confirms that the aesthetic component of the IOTN could be used without modifications for the Sri Lankan population as a tool in patient information with regard to the perceived aesthetic need.