

**Parents believe that children deserve an aesthetic smile before starting school.**

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**AIM:** To explore parental attitudes, beliefs, and values regarding aesthetics and treatment need of children in primary dentition affected with Amelogenesis and Dentinogenesis imperfecta.

**METHODS:** A descriptive qualitative study was conducted involving a purposive sample of thirteen parents of young children affected with AI and DI. Parents were divided into two separate focus groups; mothers (n= 7) and fathers (n=6). A topic guide was formulated and included open ended questions. Eleven standardised photographs of a smile showing primary teeth affected by varying severity of AI/DI and photographs of different aesthetic treatments were utilised to stimulate the discussion. Data were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. A cross sectional thematic analysis approach was followed in data analysis using MAXQDA software.

**RESULTS:** Analysis identified six main themes; the impact on affected children, the impact on parents, the life course of the disease, coping mechanisms, treatment need, and experience of treatment. Parents highlighted the emotional and psychosocial challenges experienced by families and believed that young children would be aware of their affected teeth. Most parents sought dental treatment before approaching school age due to worries about the impact on the child at school. Dental treatment was viewed as a way of achieving normality and protecting children from feeling different and/ or experiencing negative social reactions.

**CONCLUSIONS:** Whether affected with the same condition or not, parents of children affected with AI and DI believe that ‘ ‘ baby teeth are important’’. The dentist must acknowledge parents’ perspectives and arrange for appropriate referral. In this population, the specialist paediatric dentist had a powerful influence on parental decisions.