

PP 31 - Prevalence of Dental Caries and Oral Hygiene Practices among Children Attending a Primary School in Piliyandala Educational Zone; A Descriptive Cross Sectional Study

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Background: Dental caries is an important dental public health problem and is the most prevalent oral disease among children.

Objectives: To determine the prevalence of dental caries and oral hygiene practices among children aged 6 to 7 years attending a semi urban primary school in Piliyandala educational zone.

Methodology: A descriptive cross sectional study was carried out among 304 children aged between 6 to 7 (grade 1 to 2) who are attending a semi urban primary school in Piliyandala educational zone. An interviewer administered questionnaire was developed and modified based on WHO oral health questionnaire for children. Data collection was done among mothers. Dental examination was conducted for all students to assess decayed, missed, filled teeth for primary (dmft) and permanent (DMFT) teeth by the school dental therapist.

Results and conclusions: The study population comprised of 160 (52.6%) males and 144 (47.4%) females. Prevalence of dental caries was 38.5% (n=117) and five had caries in both primary and permanent teeth. The mean total dmft/DMFT score was 1.184/0.019. Among male students, 61 (38.1%) had decayed teeth and the dmft/DMFT score was 1.156/0.006 and among female students 56 (38.9%) had decayed teeth and the dmft/DMFT score was 1.215/0.013 respectively. Majority stated that they brushed the teeth at least twice a day (84.2%) and at bedtime (86.8%). There was a statistically significant association between oral health practices such as frequency of tooth brushing, brushing before bedtime, and the prevalence of dental caries in children ($p < 0.05$), but no significant association between consumption of various food items. Prevalence of dental caries was 38.5%, which is less than National Health statistics for 2015. Mothers perception was good about their childrens teeth and most of them had good oral health practices. There was a significant association between tooth brushing and preventing dental caries rather than sugar/sweet consumption.

Key words: dental caries, DMFT score, prevalence, school children