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Predictors of dental caries among primary school children

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Introduction: Dental caries is a common cause of tooth loss in young people. Different individuals will be susceptible to different degrees depending on the shape of their teeth, oral hygiene behavior, dietary behavior and socioeconomic status.

Objective: Determine prevalence of dental caries among 6-8 years old school children and examine the association between dental caries and socioeconomic status, oral health practices and other health practices (diet and feeding practices).

Method: This is a cross-sectional study among 578 male children aged 6-8 years old from 12 primary schools. Students were screened for clinically evident caries using the DMFT index. A parent questionnaire was administered to collect information on socioeconomic indicators, child oral health behavior, child feeding practices and dietary habits.

Results: The prevalence of caries was 83.13%. Presence of dental caries is significantly associated with poor oral health behavior ($P<0.001$), low socioeconomic status ($P<0.001$), consumption of cariogenic food ($P<0.001$) and the practice of sending the child to bed with a bottle ($p<0.001$). Difficulty to get an appointment (62.6%) was the main reason for not visiting the dentist. Logistic regression analysis revealed that low maternal education, low family income, not brushing teeth and high consumption of flavored milk were independent predictors for dental caries.

Conclusion: Prevalence of caries was high and significantly associated poor oral hygiene and socioeconomic status. Preventive programs should target families with low socioeconomic status and give them assistance and cues to action for prevention.

Biography

Yazeed A Alhabdan earned his BDS degree from King Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in 2010. In 2015, he completed his Master of public health in Community and Environmental Health in King Saud bin Abdul-Aziz University for Health Sciences in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

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