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Hidden sugar in food and the prevalence of dental caries in pre-school children

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Increased consumption of processed foods, both by children and adults, is one of the factors linked to the onset of caries since most of them have sugar in their composition. The objective was to analyze the dietary pattern in children attending the "Baby Clinic" of the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG), Brazil and, consequently, to analyze the dental caries experience in early childhood. This is a cross-sectional observational study with a sample of 134 children, aged 0-36 months, attending until the first semester of 2017. The habits of food, hygiene, sociodemographic and economic factors were evaluated by means of a questionnaire addressed to parents / guardians. To evaluate the prevalence of dental caries, oral clinical examination was performed. Descriptive and bivariate analyzes were performed ($p < 0.05$). The prevalence of caries was 17.9% ($n = 24$). Of the 134 children treated 71 (53.0%) were males, with a mean age of 14 months. It was observed that 70.9% of the mothers who reported not adding sugar to the bottle did so without knowing. The most cited bottle-fed foods were 'Mucilon', 'Toddy' and 'Farinha Lactea Cereal Flour'. In the bivariate analysis, maternal schooling ($p < 0.01$), adding sugar in the bottle ($p = 0.04$) and consuming sugary foods more than 3 times a day ($p < 0.01$) were associated with presence of dental caries. The high prevalence of dental caries observed in young children is a reality. Therefore, the need for family counseling for food and dental care is observed earlier.



Recent Publications

1. Martins J G, Paiva H N, Paiva P P, Ferreira R C, Pordeus I, Zarzar P M and Kawachi I (2017). New Evidence about the "Dark Side" of Social Cohesion in Promoting Binge Drinking among Adolescents. PLOS ONE. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0178652>.
2. Martins-Oliveira J G, Jorge K O, Ferreira R C, Ferreira E F, Vale M P and Zarzar P M (2016). Risk of alcohol dependence: prevalence, related problems and socioeconomic factors. *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*, (21) 17-26.

Biography

Juliana Gabrielle Martins is a Pediatric Dentist and has completed her MSc and PhD in Pediatric Dentistry from UFMG, Belo Horizonte, Brazil. She was a Visiting Researcher at Harvard University (2015/2016). She has published papers in reputed journals and has been serving as an Editorial Board Member of the *Journal of Alcohol and Drug Abuse*. Furthermore, she is currently a Reviewer of the *Journal of Addiction & Neuropharmacology* and for the *Journal Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*, and she is the Collaborator of the Master in Pediatric Dentistry at Barcelona University and Researcher at Johns Hopkins University - Public Policy Center (UPF).

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