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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



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**PREVALENCE OF DENTAL CARIES AND ITS ASSOCIATED FACTORS
AMONG 12 YEAR OLD CHILDREN FROM SELECTED SCHOOLS IN
BATTICALOA EDUCATIONAL ZONE**

Sathik MMM¹, Indrarathna KAIP¹, Indunil YGGKD¹, R Sanjeev²

¹ Faculty of Health-Care Sciences, Eastern University, Sri Lanka

² Department of Human Biology, Faculty of Health-Care Sciences, Eastern University, Sri Lanka

Background: Oral health is a key indicator of overall health, wellbeing and quality of life. According to the available published data on oral diseases in Sri Lanka, the occurrence of common oral diseases such as dental caries and periodontal diseases are widespread. In Sri Lanka, there is a scarcity of research studies of public and professional knowledge, attitudes, and practices towards prevention of oral diseases.

Objective: To determine the prevalence and associated factors of dental caries among 12 year-old school children in selected schools in Batticaloa Educational Zone.

Methods: A cross sectional study was conducted among 12 year-old children (n=330) from selected schools in Batticaloa Educational Zone. A well-constructed self-administered questionnaire was filled out for each child including information on demographic details, socio-demographic factors, oral hygiene practices and dietary habits. Dental examination was carried out for all selected children by a trained dental surgeon using World Health Organization DMFT criteria. All data analysis was done using SPSS.

Results: The prevalence of dental caries was 57.60% (n= 190) without significant difference between males and females. Dental caries was more prevalent among children in rural areas (63.09%) compared to that of urban areas (51.85%). There was a significant correlation between educational status of mothers and dental caries ($p < 0.002$). Individual factors including practices of oral hygiene, dietary habits, brushing frequency in a day, tools and materials used for brushing, annual dental check-up, habit of snacking between meals, frequent consumption of beverages, were predominantly associated with dental caries in children ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusions: Dental caries is prevalent in school children, and individual factors were predominantly associated with the disease.

Keywords: Dental caries, Children, Associated factors