

# ASSESSING ORAL HEALTH CONDITIONS OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN BELONGING TO HIGH SOCIOECONOMIC GROUPS

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## ABSTRACT

*Among the issues that determine the performance of a child at school is health. However, while a number of well-known strategies are being applied, the full range of health promoting actions is not being used globally. Increasing evidence suggests that socioeconomic factors are associated with an increased risk of oral diseases. The purpose of the present study was to find out the presence of oral disease in 141 preschool children of one of the renowned school of highly posh area in Clifton, Karachi and to provide their attendants/parents Dental Health Awareness. They were examined on 18th and 19th October, 2016. Male 87 and female 54 children of age range from 3 to 5 years old formed the study group. Only carious teeth were found in 54% children while remaining children showed good oral hygiene.*

**Key Word:** Preschool children, dental caries frequency, socioeconomic status.

## INTRODUCTION

Oral health is a core component of general health and well-being. A healthy mouth enables an individual to speak, eat, and socialize without experiencing active disease, discomfort or embarrassment.<sup>1</sup> There has been a reduction in the prevalence of oral disease in both developed and developing countries. However, the prevalence remains high among populations of low socioeconomic status. Therefore, socioeconomic indicators are associated with risk factors of oral disease.<sup>2</sup> It was also observed that socioeconomic factors are

considered to be a strong risk factor for school children caries.<sup>3</sup>

Present study was undertaken with an aim to find out the frequency of oral disease among the children of higher socio economic school and to provide feedback to their parents so that they can consult a dentist if the treatment is required and also to understand the preventive strategies that should be undertaken for the control of the disease.

## METHODOLOGY

This study comprised children of a renowned school located in a, highly posh area of Clifton, Karachi. Dental checkups were done on 18th to 19th October 2016. Ethical approval was obtained from ethics committee of Dental section of SSCMS. The sample consisted of 141 children of both genders. Age ranged from 3 to 5 years 76 were diagnosed with carious teeth. The presence of carious teeth in each child was examined with naked eye. The examination of the participants was performed by a single calibrated examiner using mouth mirror under adequate illumination on an upright chair. The data were recorded and analyzed by SPSS software 17 version using Z-test and chi square test and a value of  $p < 0.05$  was regarded as significant.

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**RESULTS**

The present study comprised 87 male and 54 female children with a mean age of 4.3 each respectively (Table 1). 76 children were diagnosed with dental caries. In the 3 years age group, the caries were found in 15 children while 14 and 47 children had caries in 4 and 5 years age groups respectively. Details of the results can be seen in Table 1-3.

Gen-der	n	Age in years			Mean age	Total %
		3	4	5		
Male	87	16	17	54	4.3	61.8%
Fe-male	54	20	10	24	4.3	38.2%
	141	36	27	78	4.3	100%

TABLE 2: INTER-AGE GROUPS AND GENDER COMPARISON OF CARIES PRESENCE STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT\*

Compared age groups	Z- value	P-value
3 years and 4 years	2.08	<0.05*
3 years and 5 years	6.09	<0.001*
4 years and 5 years	2.94	<0.01*
Male and Female	1.81	>0.05

TABLE 3: COMPARISON OF CARIES PRESENCE

Variabl	Parame-ters	Caries presence	95% CI
Age	3 Years	15	37-47
	4 Years	14	44-56
	5 Years	47	56-63
Gender	Male	47	52-59
	Female	29	47-54

**DISCUSSION**

The ratio of people suffering from dental caries has reduced on a global scale. Although a major decline is seen in slightly older children, no such progress has been observed among the younger ones. School going children are the subjects of most of the surveys, as they can be easily accessible, which may not be the case for preschool children.<sup>4</sup> Parent’s assistance and care greatly affects the dental health of a child.<sup>5</sup>

This study revealed that dental caries was seen in the preschool children of high socioeconomic status. Comparatively, in few other studies low prevalence of dental caries was found among children of high socioeconomic status and this may be due to oral health

care awareness among the high socioeconomic class which has resulted in better oral health care service utilization among them.<sup>6,16</sup>

A recent study indicated, that the occurrence of dental caries was low in 1-5 years old preschool children of high socioeconomic status.<sup>7-8</sup> Several other surveys exhibited variable occurrences of dental caries in 3-5 years age group.<sup>9-14</sup>

Low socioeconomic status, low monthly household income and low educational level are associated with less access to dental services and oral hygiene products, poorer knowledge regarding oral health and oral hygiene and, consequently, a greater frequency and severity of dental caries.<sup>15</sup> Another study suggested that, the use of tooth brushing was higher among the children of mothers with higher education, as compared with those born to mothers with lower education.<sup>16</sup>

Further studies with larger sample size are needed in order to reveal more detailed results as it’s a known fact that people/culture of low socioeconomic groups have poor oral health status and increased caries rate.

**CONCLUSION**

It was concluded that in preschool children belonging to upper socioeconomic groups born to parents with higher education, the caries was found in 54% study subjects.

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- 1 Mahreen Shahzad:** Conception and design of research, literature search, data collection, drafting of article and final review.
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- 3 Hiba Khan:** Literature search and data collection.
- 4 M Shoaib Khan:** Data Collection.
- 5 Mehreen Iqbal:** Work editing.
- 6 Manahil Khalid:** Data interpretation.