

PREVALENCE OF DENTAL CARIES AND RISK FACTORS AMONG STUDENTS

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Purpose of the study. To study the prevalence of dental caries and identify the main risk factors among students.

Materials and methods. The study included 100 medical students aged 18–25 who provided informed consent. A clinical dental examination was performed under standard lighting using a dental mirror and probe. Caries severity was assessed using the CFU index (caries, filled, and extracted teeth) according to WHO recommendations. A questionnaire was also administered, including questions about the frequency of toothbrushing, the use of additional hygiene products (dental floss, mouthwash), diet, the frequency of carbohydrate and sugary beverage consumption, and the frequency of preventive dental visits. Statistical data were processed using mean values and standard errors. Group comparisons were performed using the Student's t-test; differences were considered significant at $p < 0.05$.

Research results. The prevalence of dental caries among the surveyed subjects was 78%, indicating a high prevalence of dental caries in the young adult population. The average CFI index was 5.8 ± 0.4 . The "K" component (caries teeth) contributed the most to the index, indicating the presence of untreated demineralization foci. Students who consumed sweets and sugary drinks more than three times a day had a statistically higher CFI index ($p < 0.05$). Individuals who brushed their teeth twice a day had lower CFI values compared to those who brushed only once. Flossing was associated with a reduced incidence of approximal caries. It was found that only about a third of students visit the dentist for preventive purposes, while the majority only seek treatment when they have complaints.

Conclusion. The data obtained demonstrate a high prevalence and intensity of dental caries among university students. The main modifiable risk factors are frequent sugar consumption, irregular oral hygiene, and insufficient preventive dental care. The results highlight the need for educational and preventive programs aimed at developing sustainable oral hygiene habits and reducing the caries burden at a young age.