# Prevalence of Dental Caries and Known Risk Factors among Children Aged 6 to 7 Years Attending a Semi Urban Primary School in Piliyandala Educational Zone

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Dental caries is an important dental public health problem and is the most prevalent oral disease among children. Sri Lanka is a developing country and WHO states that there is an increase in the prevalence of oral diseases in low- and middle-income countries.

The aim of this study is to determine the prevalence of dental caries and known risk factors among children aged 6 to 7 who are attending a semi urban primary school in Piliyandala educational zone. A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among 304 children. Data was collected from parents/guardians of children using an interviewer-administered questionnaire, which was modified based on WHO oral health questionnaire for children. Dental examination was conducted for all students to assess decayed, missed, filled teeth (DMFT/dmft) for primary and permanent teeth by the school dental therapist.

The study population comprised 160 (52.6%) males and 144 (47.4%) females. Prevalence of dental caries was 38.5% (N=117) which is less than National Health statistics for 2015. Five had caries in both primary and permanent teeth. The mean total dmft/DMFT score was 1.184/0.019. The decayed teeth and the dmft/DMFT score was 61(38.1%) and 1.156/0.006, respectively among male students and 56 (38.9%) and 1.215/0.013, respectively, among female students. Mothers perception was good about their children's' teeth and most of them had good oral health practices. There was a statistical significant association between oral health practices such as frequency of brushing, brushing before bedtime, and the prevalence of dental caries ($p< 0.05$). However, no significant association was found between consumption of sweet/sugar and prevalence of dental caries ($p>0.05$). This indicates, effective brushing is more important rather than reducing sweet/sugar consumption. There was a statistically significant association between educational level of mother and prevalence of caries ($p<0.05$).

**Key words:** *Dental caries, DMFT, Prevalence, School children*