The Association Between Dental Caries and Growth in School-age Children in Sharjah, U.A.E

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Abstract:

Background and objective: As one of the most prevalent diseases worldwide, dental caries is hypothesized to be a potential risk factor for general health. Dental caries has previously been reported to have an effect on anthropometric measurements in children. However, there is obvious lack of data and research regarding the association between caries status and growth status topic in the MENA region. The aim of our study is to investigate the possible relationship between dental caries and growth in school-age children in the UAE, specifically in the emirate of Sharjah.

Methods: The study was a cross sectional study that included children aged 6-11

attending the university dental hospital. Dental caries was recorded using DMFT and dmft index. Children's anthropometric measures were recorded (height, weight, and BMI). BAZ (BMI for age) was used to categorize children into normal, underweight, and overweight using the WHO standardized age and sex-specific growth reference. The relationship between caries and BAZ were then assessed using regression models on SPSS.

Results: 33 children who attended the university dental hospital were included, 23 (69.7%) females and 10 (30.3%) males. The mean DMFT for permanent teeth was 2.606 (+-2.1642) while the mean dmft for primary teeth was 6.636 (+- 4.0913). For both dmft and DMFT, no significant associations were found with the underweight, normal, or overweight children.

Conclusion: No significant association was found between dental caries status and the child's growth. However, an interesting relationship was noted between mother's educational status and growth status of the child, as the mother's lower level of education (below university level) was significantly associated with higher BMI in children.