

Socioeconomic Indicators of Caries Incidence in an Iowa Pediatric Cohort

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Objective:

This study seeks to investigate the relationship between parental stress and children's diet, sugary beverage consumption, hygiene, and DMFT (Decayed, Missing, Filled Teeth) scores in children.

Methods:

This study includes children aged 2-6 undergoing elective surgeries under general anesthesia at the University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital. Legal guardians of eligible participants completed a questionnaire collecting data on demographics, oral hygiene habits, diet, systemic health, socioeconomic status, safety, and psychological distress. Intraoperative dental examinations were conducted to assess participants' DMFT scores.

Results:

Higher levels of parental stress were significantly associated with poorer dietary patterns ($p = 0.034$) and increased sugary beverage consumption ($p = 0.0413$). No statistically significant associations were observed between parental stress and DMFT scores. Additionally, parental stress was not significantly associated with children's oral hygiene practices.

Conclusion:

Parental stress was associated with poorer dietary patterns and increased sugary beverage consumption among children. No significant associations were observed between parental stress and DMFT scores or oral hygiene practices. These findings suggest that factors beyond those examined in this study may contribute to oral health outcomes. Interpretation of the results is limited by the small sample size and the qualitative nature of the data. Further research is warranted to better elucidate these relationships.