



Abstract.

The study was carried out among 3 - 5 years old children who attend pre-schools in Matale DDHS area. 329 children were included in the survey. Their caries experience & plaque index was recorded using WHO criteria. A questionnaire was administered to the mother of the pre-school children to find out about their sweet consumption, brushing habits, and feeding practices.

The mean dmft for the whole sample was 2.87 (SD = 3.60) The percentage of caries free children were 39.8%. Mean age of the sample was 50.9 months.

Association seen between the caries experience of the child and the following factors - Sector/Level of Mothers education/sweet consumption (Respectively $P = 0.0266$, $P = 0.0034$, $P = 0.0008$).

With plaque index, only the type of milk given to the child showed association ($P = 0.0088$) Almost 87% of the children had a plaque index equal or below 0.6 which was considered as the acceptable level of plaque. The mean plaque index for the whole sample was 0.41 (SD = 0.26)

96% of the children reported that they used a toothbrush for cleaning their teeth. 90% of the children used fluoride containing toothpastes.

95% of the mothers of the pre-school children admitted that the deciduous dentition was important. Also it has been found that 87% of the mothers seek treatment from government or private, qualified dental service providers, for their children's dental problems.