

SUMMARY

There is no available information regarding the pattern of habits in Sri Lankan children. This study was carried out to assess the underlying pattern of habits amongst children in Sri Lanka using those who seek orthodontic treatment as a sample.

Two hundred and sixty four children were examined by using the criteria given by W.H.O. with little modifications. Previous or persisting habits were found in 60% of children examined, and majority of them were females.

Children with underlying habits sought treatment at a much younger age than others. Generally males sought treatment at a younger age than females.

Severe malocclusions were more significantly associated with habits. There was a significant increase in severity of malocclusion with the increase of duration and frequency of habits.

The commonest habit seen was thumb sucking, and the second commonest was nail biting. Lip biting, finger sucking and dummy sucking habits were also common amongst the children examined, with decreasing order of prevalence.

Common malocclusions seen amongst children with sucking habits were characterized by increased overjet, reduced overbite, anterior openbite, spacing in upper anterior arch and crowding of lower anterior arch; whereas in children with biting habits malocclusions such as raised overjet, crowding and crossbites of anterior dental arches and varying degrees of overbite were common.

