Abstract

Objectives Developing and testing a clinical-behavioural scoring system for assessing children's oral hygiene. Materials and Methods One clinical variable (the presence of dental plaque, measured using Silness and Löes index) and one behavioural variable (self-reported tooth brushing frequency) were combined into secondary data analysis of research databases for 3-6-year-olds and 6-13-year-olds in a Mexican community. The combined scoring is an ordinal scale that depicts suitable, moderate and inadequate hygiene. Blinded dental examiners also collected dmft/DMFT data in standardised conditions. Data was analysed with Spearmans rho, Kruskall-Wallis, non-parametric tests for trends and Pearsons χ² tests. Results 1,303 children aged 3-6 years old and 1,644 children aged 6-13 years old participated in the study. Clear relationships existed between the combined scoring system and dmft (p<0.01) and between the scoring system and DMFT (p<0.01), suggesting that the combined clinical-behavioural scoring system is a reasonably accurate measurement of the relationship between caries experience and oral hygiene in children in the given setting. Conclusions The combined clinical-behavioural scoring system is a simple, easy-to-use tool that incorporates clinical and behavioural data commonly found in dental systems. Whether the clinical-behavioural scoring system can be generalised remains to be established.

Keywords

Oral hygiene, children, preschool, schools, Mexico (source: MeSH, NML).