

The role of sugar, xylitol, toothbrushing frequency, and use of fluoride toothpaste in maintenance of adults' dental health: findings from the Finnish National Health 2000 Survey.

Tseveenjav B, Suominen AL, Hausen H, Vehkalahti MM.

Abstract

We assessed the effect of certain oral health-related behaviours on adults' dental health. As part of the Finnish nationwide Health 2000 Survey, dentate subjects, 30-64 yr of age, reported their frequency of consumption of eight sugar- and xylitol-containing products, together with toothbrushing frequency and use of fluoride toothpaste, and underwent clinical oral examination (n = 4,361). The mean number of teeth present (NoT) was 24.2 and the mean numbers of sound teeth (ST), filled teeth (FT), and decayed teeth (DT) were 10.8, 12.1, and 1.1 for men and 9.6, 13.8, and 0.5 for women, respectively. Consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages was more frequent than that of other sugar-containing products, and greater in men than in women. Daily use of xylitol chewing gum was reported by 13% of the men and by 22% of the women. Toothbrushing at least twice daily was reported by 47% of the men and by 79% of the women; 86% and 96%, respectively, reported daily use of fluoride toothpaste. The frequency of consumption of sugar- and xylitol-containing products and of toothbrushing, as well as use of fluoride toothpaste, play a role in the dental health of dentate adults, with the impact being weak on NoT, ST, and FT, but stronger on DT, especially concerning toothbrushing frequency (relative risk = 1.5) and use of fluoride toothpaste (relative risk = 1.8). Understanding the impact of certain oral health-related behaviours on dental health in adults would facilitate better targeting of oral self-care messages.