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Oral health conditions in children with and without school-based oral preventive program

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Abstract OBJECTIVES: To assess the degree of plaque, gingivitis and caries in children who either did or did not take part in a regular oral preventive program, thus establishing an overview of the oral health condition of those populations. METHODS: A population of 325 Brazilian children aged 8-12 years old, from two public schools, whose parents granted permission, were divided into two groups according to their school. The main group (G1) consisted of 203 children from the school, which has the preventive program, while the control group (G2) consisted of 122 children from the school without the program. The children were examined clinically by a single examiner to assess plaque and gingival status, as well as caries prevalence in order to assess their oral health status. Data was inserted in SPSS 11.0 and the Mann-Whitney test with a significance level of 5% was used for data analyses of the independent variables, while the Student *t* test was used for comparison between averages. RESULTS: The mean plaque score and mean gingival bleeding score of G2 were higher than G1 ($P < 0.05$). Regarding the percentage of caries-free children, it was 31.0% with a mean DMFT + dmft of 2.07 (± 2.87) in G1 and 21.3% with a mean DMFT + dmft of 3.03 (± 2.79) in G2 ($P > 0.05$). CONCLUSION: It was concluded that the oral preventive program seemed to demonstrate a satisfactory impact on the oral health condition of the target children when compared to the ones who were not enrolled in a school-based program.

Key words Caries, Dental plaque, Gingival bleeding, Oral health promotion, Schoolchildren

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