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A study of prevalence of caries and oral health behavior in Japanese children with cleft lip and palate

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Abstract The aims of this study were to investigate the condition of dental caries in 1-4 years old Japanese children with cleft lip and/or palate, and also to examine the relationships between age, location of the cleft, oral health behavior of cleft children and the incidence of dental caries. The study was carried out through a dental examination of a sample of children and a questionnaire to their parents which included questions about infant feeding practices, frequency of consumption of specific drinks and children's frequency of tooth brushing. A sample of 116, 1-4 years old Japanese children (58 boys and 58 girls) with oral clefts referred to the Department of Pediatric Dentistry Clinic, Showa University, after receiving surgical treatment, participated in this study. Results indicated that the prevalence of caries in cleft children was related to patient age, location of clefts and oral health behavior. A higher level of dental caries was recognized in children with cleft lip and alveolus/palate than in those with cleft lip alone. Incidence of caries increased with patient age. Children who had been fed in a determined time were less affected than those who had been fed at will. Incidence of caries was also high in the children who ingested drinks with sugar than in those who did not. The results of this study suggest that it is important to improve the oral health behavior of cleft children to minimize the risk of caries. Moreover, children with clefts and their parents should as early as possible undergo a preventive program to ensure preservation of primary dentition.

Key words Cleft lip and/or palate, Dental caries, Oral health behavior

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