

Gender and Ethnic Group Differences in Dental Caries in a Sri Lankan Population

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This study was conducted to determine the prevalence of caries rate of children and adolescent in contemporary Sri Lankan Sinhalese and aboriginal Vedda population in Sri Lanka. Two age groups were studied in each ethnic group, 5-7-year-old and 12-15-year-old. A target sample of 563 subjects was recruited (373 Sri Lankan Sinhalese and 190 Aboriginal Vedda). In 5-7-year age group caries prevalence and dmft were higher in females than males in Sinhalese while those of males were higher than females in Vedda. In 12-15-year age group, although not statistically significant, Vedda showed higher caries prevalence and DMFT in males than those of females while Sinhalese showed the opposite where females had higher caries prevalence than males. When compared the caries prevalence and dmft between Sinhalese and Vedda, in 5-7-year age group, above parameters of both males and females were higher in Sinhalese than Vedda. The difference was statistically significant only in female dmft. However, in 12-15-year age group the pattern was opposite where caries prevalence and DMFT were higher in Vedda than Sinhalese in both the sexes. Caries prevalence of 5-7-year old age group was significantly higher than that of 12-15-year age group in both males and females of contemporary Sinhalese and Vedda. Overall caries prevalence of 5-7-year and 12-15-year age group are 72.3% and 33.1%, respectively in contemporary Sri Lankan Sinhalese and 63.9% and 40.3%, respectively in Vedda. The present study doesn't conclusively show lower caries prevalence in Vedda than contemporary Sri Lankan Sinhalese. Lower caries prevalence is observed in Vedda of 5-7-year age group but not in 12-15-year age group. Furthermore, females of 12-15-year age group don't demonstrate significantly higher caries rates than males in both the population groups. The caries prevalence in children is higher than adolescent in both sexes of contemporary Sri Lankan Sinhalese and Vedda.

Key words: Sri Lankan Sinhalese, Aboriginal Vedda, Caries prevalence, DMFT, children, adolescent

Supported by University of Peradeniya research grant No URG/2014/17/D