



University of Dundee

Mother's perception of general family functioning and sugar consumption of 3- and 4year-old children

Nanjappa, Sucharita; Hector, Mark; Marcenes, Wagner

Published in: **Caries Research**

DOI: 10.1159/000431234

Publication date: 2015

Document Version Peer reviewed version

Link to publication in Discovery Research Portal

Citation for published version (APA): Nanjappa, S., Hector, M., & Marcenes, W. (2015). Mother's perception of general family functioning and sugar consumption of 3- and 4-year-old children: the East London Family study. Caries Research, 49(5), 515-522. DOI: 10.1159/000431234

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in Discovery Research Portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

• Users may download and print one copy of any publication from Discovery Research Portal for the purpose of private study or research.

You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain.
You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal.

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

- 1 Mother's perception of general family functioning and sugar consumption of 3 and 4 year old
- 2 children: the ELF study.
- 3 Nanjappa S
- 4 Dental Health Services Research Unit, Dundee Dental School, University of Dundee,
- 5 Dundee, United Kingdom.
- 6
- 7 Hector M
- 8 Dundee Dental School, University of Dundee, Dundee, United Kingdom.
- 9
- 10 Marcenes W
- 11 Institute of Dentistry, Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry, Queen Mary
- 12 University of London, London, United Kingdom
- 13 Short title: General family functioning and sugar consumption
- 14 Key words: frequent sugar consumption, family functioning, health behavior, family
- 15 influences

16 Corresponding Author:

- 17 Prof. Wagner Marcenes,
- 18 Institute of Dentistry,
- 19 Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry,
- 20 Queen Mary, University of London
- 21 Turner Street, London E1 2AD, UK
- 22 Email: <u>w.marcenes@qmul.ac.uk</u>
- 23
- Declaration of Interests: The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest with regard to
 publication of this article.
- 26

This is the peer-reviewed but unedited manuscript version of the following article: 'Mother's perception of general family functioning and sugar consumption of 3- and 4-year-old children: the East London family study', Caries Research 49:5 (2015): 515-522. The final, published version is available at http://www.karger.com/10.1159/000431234.

27 Abstract

28 Frequent consumption of sugary foods is a common risk factor for chronic diseases such as 29 dental caries and obesity. Dietary patterns are acquired at home during early life and form a 30 blueprint for dietary behaviours in later life. A favourable family environment can provide a 31 supportive context that enhances the adoption of healthy dietary habits. The aim of this 32 study was to identify the contribution of general family functioning towards the frequent 33 consumption of sugary foods by three and four year old children in Outer North East London. 34 The research question was explored with data from the ELF study, which collected data 35 through home visits from a representative sample of adults and children living in Outer North 36 East London in 2008-10. This study analysed data from 698 three and four year old children 37 and their mothers and included logistic regression, conceptual hierarchical modelling and 38 mediation analysis. The results showed that 17% of the sample consumed sugary foods 39 more than four times day; and that effective general family functioning may help reducing 40 frequent consumption of sugary foods. There was a 67% reduction in children's frequent 41 consumption of sugary foods with every unit increase in the general family functioning score. 42 Mother's higher education may also help reducing frequent consumption of sugary foods by 43 children. The negative impact of mother's lower education was buffered by the effect of 44 effective general family functioning. The study findings underscore the prospect of identifying 45 factors that contribute to the acquisition of good dietary behaviours.

46

47

48

50 Introduction

51 The WHO has long advocated the common risk factor approach. This enables a large 52 number of chronic diseases to be targeted by focusing on a small number of risk factors. 53 This improves efficiency and effectiveness and lowers the costs involved in promoting health 54 [Grabauskas, 1987; Sheiham and Watt, 2000; World Health Organisation, 1980]. The high 55 consumption of sugary foods is one such risk factor and is common to chronic diseases such 56 as dental caries and obesity, including its associated comorbidities of heart disease, 57 hypertension, stroke, and diabetes [Brynes et al., 2003; Ebbeling et al., 2002; Moynihan, 58 2005; World Health Organisation, 2003]. Furthermore, a focus on diet is relevant because it 59 is a modifiable behaviour.

60 Socio-economic position (SEP) influences multiple outcomes, including oral health, and 61 impacts negatively on disease outcomes in a number of ways. Furthermore it involves 62 access to resources to avoid risk and minimise the consequences of disease, and this socio-63 economic disadvantage repeats over time because higher socio-economic groups are better 64 equipped to benefit from new knowledge [Phelan et al., 2010]. It is essential to choose 65 socioeconomic position indicators appropriate to the aims of a study, because different 66 measures involve different pathways and have varying degrees of association with different 67 health behaviours [Singh-Manoux et al., 2002]. Education is a good proxy for SEP because it 68 is associated with occupation and income [Galobardes et al., 2006]. In addition, education is 69 a relevant variable for measuring variation in SEP across ethnic groups [Kelaher et al., 70 2008]. It is well established that a poor dietary pattern in children, including diets rich in 71 sugar, is highly correlated with parents' low level of education [North and Emmett, 2000; 72 Northstone and Emmett, 2005]. Turrell and Kavanagh [2006] demonstrated that mothers' 73 education guides their knowledge about different foods. This determines the types of foods 74 that they buy, which influences children's exposure to these foods, affecting their preference; 75 and, ultimately, their sugar consumption habits.

Dietary patterns are acquired at home during early life [Benton, 2004] which, in accordance with the life course theory, forms a blueprint for dietary behaviours in later adolescent and adult life [Fisher-Owens et al., 2007; Mattila et al., 2005; Nicolau et al., 2003]. Families are in a unique position as they are responsible for instilling the initial values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours in young children. This forms the backbone on which rests their ability to behave in a health-promoting manner in later years [Benton, 2004; Blinkhorn et al., 2001]. Furthermore, a favourable family environment may provide a supportive context in which to enhance the adoption of healthy dietary habits [Benton, 2004; Rhee, 2008; Ryan et al.,2005].

Previous studies have focused on the importance of parental psychosocial factors, including cognitive aspects such as knowledge, attitudes and parental self-efficacy, to instil healthy behaviours and establish healthy routines [Adair et al., 2004; Finlayson et al., 2007; Lencova and Duskova, 2013]. In recent years, the shift towards positive medicine has seen the identification of health "protective" factors gain prominence. Therefore, further understanding of the role of family functioning on diet offers opportunities to identify factors, within the family environment, that contribute to the acquisition of good dietary behaviours.

92 Family functioning can be studied in many different ways. This study focuses on whole 93 family functioning as it is more inclusive than focusing solely on parenting styles or parental 94 modelling of behaviour [Renzaho et al., 2011]. Current definitions of 'effective family 95 functioning' include the family's ability to face challenges that arise as part of a family's life 96 cycle; to have clear and direct communication between members; to have flexible rules in 97 order to regulate family behaviour; to define clearly the roles and responsibilities of its 98 members; and to have warm, affectionate relationships [Ryan et al., 2005]. The aim of this 99 study was to assess whether effective general family functioning contribute to the acquisition 100 of good dietary behaviour among three and four year old children living in a deprived area of 101 London. Also, the study sought to assess whether effective family functioning can act as a 102 buffer against the detrimental effects of having lower education and belonging to minority 103 groups.

104 Methods

This study is part of the East London Family (ELF) study, which is a two generation crosssectional family study including a representative sample of children aged 3 and 4 (n=1,174) and adults 16-65 years old (n=2,343) living in Waltham Forest, Redbridge, and Barking and Dagenham in 2009-10, in order to investigate the importance of family functioning for oral health [http://www.dentistry.qmul.ac.uk/research-listing/32-patient-and-population-orientatedresearch/294-onel-family-study]. The Outer North East London Research Ethics Committee approved the ELF study protocol (REC Reference Number: 08/H0701/93).

A sub-sample of participants was drawn from the ELF study for this study on mother'sperception of family functioning and sugar consumption by their three and four year old

114 children. The ELF study conceptualized families according to the Family System Theory as

- dynamic systems of family members who interact with one another, aiming to adjust to the
- 116 developmental needs and maintenance of their members. The family system comprises
- 117 dyadic subsystems, such as parent-child, partner-partner and sibling-sibling relationships
- 118 [Whitchurch and Constantine, 1993]. This study focused on the mother-child dyadic.

119 The minimum sample size for this sub-study was estimated to be 644. This sample size 120 provided 90% statistical power to identify an odds ratio of 0.70 for the association between 121 one unit change in general family functioning score and children's high frequency of 122 consumption of sugary foods. The calculation assumed that 15% of children consume 123 sugary foods more than four times per day at the mean value of the explanatory variable 124 (general family functioning), α equal to 0.05, and β equal to 0.10.

125 The ELF study adopted a stratified random sampling approach to select a representative 126 sample of the general non-institutionalised population. The sampling frames were lists of all 127 addresses in each of the wards (n=58) in Waltham Forest, Redbridge, and Barking and 128 Dagenham. A minimum of 55 addresses were randomly selected from each ward to yield 129 3,193 addresses. Residents in these addresses were then contacted by post, and invited to 130 participate in the study. Vacant addresses, commercial premises, and households with 131 ineligible residents (e.g.: outside the age range of interest) were excluded. The maximum 132 number of adults and children invited to participate per household were two and one 133 respectively.

134 Adult participants completed two structured questionnaires in their own homes, and provided information about themselves and their children. Trained interviewers administered the 135 136 questionnaires. The child questionnaire included questions about the child's demographics 137 (age and sex) and diet. The frequency of children's sugar consumption was assessed using 138 a modified version of the food frequency questionnaire (FFQ), used in the National Diet and 139 Nutrition Survey for children aged 1 ¹/₂ to 4 ¹/₂ years [Hinds and Gregory, 1995]. The adult 140 questionnaire included socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, marital status, 141 education and ethnicity) and family functioning. Family functioning was measured using the 142 Family Assessment Device [Epstein et al., 1983]. The Family Assessment Device was 143 chosen because it was a validated instrument with cross cultural applicability (Miller et 144 al.,1985; Byles et. al., 1988), as it has been translated into over 20 languages and been 145 applied across cultures (Ryan et al., 2005; Herzer et al., 2010). The address postcode was

- 146 used to derive the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), which was used as an indicator of a
- 147 family's levels of social and material deprivation.

149 Data analysis

150 ELF data was weighted to adjust for the unequal probability of selection and non-response. 151 in order to produce a representative sample with respect to age, gender and ethnicity based 152 on the UK Census of 2001 [Office for National Statistics, 2001]. A sub sample of 698 mother-153 child dyads was included in this data analysis. The criterion for entry into this sub-study was 154 mother-child dyads (n=908) with complete data (n=698) on variables needed to explore the 155 study's aims. Data were analysed using STATA/IC 11 [StataCorp, 2009] to take into account 156 the complex survey design (stratification and clustering); and to produce corrected standard 157 errors and confidence intervals.

Mean family functioning domain scores were calculated for each of the six domains only when a minimum of 60% of the questions relating to that domain were answered. If more than 40% of the items for a domain were missing, that domain score was designated as missing and the subject was not included in the analysis. General family functioning was treated as a continuous variable.

163 The variable relating to mother's education was divided into two categories: 'higher 164 education' and 'less than higher education'. Information on mother's ethnicity was categorised into four main groups: White, Asian, Black and Mixed/Others. Information on 165 166 mother's marital status was divided into the following categories: 'living alone' (single, 167 separated, widowed, and divorced); and 'living with a partner' (married, re-married, cohabiting) [Office for National Statistics, 2005]. The IMD was categorised into quintiles 168 169 based on the distribution for England; and each family was assigned to a quintile based on 170 the residential postcode. For the purpose of analysis, the sample was further divided into 171 'less deprived' and 'more deprived', based on relative deprivation for the whole of England. 172 The first three quintiles were relatively 'less deprived' areas while the last two quintiles were 173 relatively 'more deprived' areas.

174 'Sugar consumption frequency' refers to how often a child eats/drinks commonly available175 sugary foods which are potentially damaging to children's teeth (such as chocolate, biscuits)

176 or cookies, cakes, confectionary or other sweets, sweetened milk, sweetened fruit juice and 177 sweetened fizzy drinks) [Hinds and Gregory, 1995]. Responses were collected using 7-point ordinal scales ('more than once a day', 'once a day', 'most days', 'at least once a week', 'at 178 179 least once a month', 'less than once a month', and 'never'). The responses for each sugary 180 food item were transformed into a daily equivalent and the daily equivalents were added up 181 to give an estimate of the daily frequency of consumption of sugary foods. A response of 182 'more than once a day' was conservatively estimated to mean 'twice a day' and given a 183 value of two per day; 'once a day' was given a value of one; 'most days' was estimated as 184 consumption of that sugary food item at least four days out of seven and was given a value 185 of 0.57(4÷7) per day; a response of 'once a week' was estimated as consumption of that 186 item once in seven days and given a value of 0.14 (1÷7) per day; and responses indicating 187 consumption of the sugary food 'once a month' or less was given a value of zero. If up to two 188 responses for sugary foods were missing then the mean value of the other items was 189 imputed. Children were then divided into two groups: those consuming four or more sugary 190 foods per day; and those consuming less than four sugary foods a day. This threshold was 191 established based on international dietary guidelines for the reduction of the risk of 192 developing dental caries [Department of Health/British Association for the Study of 193 Community Dentistry, 2009; Moynihan and Petersen, 2004; Moynihan, 2005; Sheiham, 194 2001; World Health Organisation, 2003].

195 Simple logistic regression analyses were carried out to assess the unadjusted association 196 between each of the study variables (children's age and sex; mother's ethnicity, marital 197 status, education; IMD; and general family functioning) and children's consumption of sugary 198 foods more than four times per day. In accordance with the lax criterion [Altman, 1994], 199 explanatory variables that were not statistically significant related to the outcome at the level 200 of 0.20 were excluded at this stage. Thereafter, conceptual hierarchical modelling [Victora et 201 al., 1997] was carried out. Age, gender and socio-economic variables were entered in the 202 regression equation due to their well-known strong association with sugar consumption. 203 Variables were included sequentially as follows: (1) age, gender and mother's ethnicity; (2) 204 age, gender, mother's ethnicity plus IMD and mother's education; (3) age, gender, mother's 205 ethnicity, IMD, mother's education plus general family functioning. Odds Ratios (OR) were 206 reported and the 95% confidence interval was considered. Attenuation of the OR was 207 calculated using the formula:- (ORU - ORA)+(ORU -1) [Birkmeyer et al., 2003], where ORU 208 represents the odds ratio before including the family functioning score; and ORA reflects the 209 odds ratio after including family functioning in the model. Finally, mediation analysis was 210 carried out following the Baron and Kenny (1986) approach.

212 Results

213 The ELF study response rate was 67.9% for children and 56.8% for adults. The average 214 number of adults and children recruited per household was 1.3 and 1.1 respectively. The 215 mother-child dyads study sub-sample comprised 698. The characteristics of the study sub-216 sample (Table 1) shows that 3 and 4 year old children were fairly equally distributed by age 217 and sex. Only 2% of the sample were categorised into the 'least deprived' quintile reflecting 218 the population distribution reported in the last Census [Office for National Statistics, 2001], 219 which conveys the relative high levels of deprivation of this area. Fifty seven per cent of the 220 mothers were White; 26% were Asian; 11% were Black; and 6% were mixed or other 221 ethnicities. The majority of the mothers (80%) lived with a partner. Forty five per cent of the 222 mothers reported a lower educational qualification. Seventeen per cent of the children in the 223 sub-sample consumed sugary foods more than four times per day. The mean score for 224 general family functioning in the sub-sample was 3.16. General family functioning scores can 225 range from 1 to 4, with higher scores reflecting better family functioning.

226 The results of simple logistic regression showed that both mother's higher education and 227 effective family functioning were associated with low sugar consumption, which suggested 228 that these factors contributed to the acquisition of good dietary behaviour. Children whose 229 mothers reported higher education were significantly (p=0.001) 59% (OR 0.41; 95% CI: 230 0.25,0.68) less likely to consume sugary foods more than four times per day compared to 231 children whose mothers reported lower qualifications. Similarly, effective general family 232 functioning was highly significantly associated with lower consumption of sugary foods by 233 children. There was a 77% reduction in children's chances of consuming sugary foods more 234 than four times per day for every unit increase in the general functioning score, where higher 235 scores indicate more effective general family functioning (Table 2).

Although not significant, the associations for age, sex and IMD were in expected directions,
with boys, four year olds and children living in more deprived areas being more likely to
consume sugary foods more than four times per day by comparison with girls, three year
olds and children living in less deprived areas. Children with Asian mothers were significantly
2.69 times more likely to consume sugary foods frequently compared with children with
White mothers (95% CI: 1.53, 4.74). Hierarchical modelling confirmed that children with
Asian mothers were significantly 3.46 times more likely to consume sugary foods more than

four times per day (95% CI: 1.63, 5.25) compared with children with White mothers, afteradjusting for age, gender, mother's education and IMD.

245 Hierarchical modelling (Table 3) confirmed the highly significant association between 246 effective general family functioning and the consumption of sugary foods more than four 247 times per day. There was a 67% reduction in children's frequent consumption of sugary 248 foods with every unit increase in the general family functioning score. This association was 249 independent of mother's education, mother's ethnicity, level of deprivation, children's age or 250 sex. Hierarchical modelling also confirmed that mother's higher education had a positive 251 influence against consumption of sugary foods more than four times per day by children. 252 Children whose mothers had a higher qualification were 65% less likely to consume more 253 than four intakes of sugary foods (OR 0.35; 95% CI: 0.21, 0.58) compared with children 254 whose mothers reported lower qualifications, after adjusting for age, gender, mother's 255 ethnicity and IMD.

The results of mediation analysis suggested that effective family functioning may have a buffer effect on the negative impact of lower education on sugar consumption. When tested for mediation, using the four steps proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986), it was found that this relationship was partially mediated through general family functioning. The association was attenuated by 9% when general family functioning was added to the model indicating that part of the association between mother's education and children's sugar consumption is potentially mediated through general family functioning (Table 3, model 3).

Similarly, the association between high sugar consumption and children with Asian mothers
was attenuated by 16% when general family functioning was added to the model (Table 3).
When tested further for mediation [Baron and Kenny, 1986], it was confirmed that this

relationship was partially mediated through general family functioning.

267 Discussion

The main finding of this study is that effective general family functioning may contribute to the acquisition of good dietary behavior of three and four year old children in East London, a multicultural and deprived area of the UK. The positive influence of effective general family functional on sugar consumption is plausible. First, the day to day functioning of families provides the best context within which specific rules are established regarding three and four year old children's health behaviours, including sugar consumption behaviours. Positive social interactions enhance the adoption of healthy dietary habits [Benton, 2004]. Therefore,

- the favourable atmosphere created by effective general family functioning may facilitate
- better acceptance of rules by children and enhance their ability to behave in a health
- 277 promoting manner [Rhee, 2008]. On the other hand, ineffective functioning could lead to
- 278 problems, including the adoption of unhealthy behaviours [Ryan et al., 2005].

279 To our knowledge, this is the first study which demonstrates the relationship between 280 effective general family functioning (as measured by the FAD), and low sugar consumption. 281 Nevertheless, this finding corroborates the wider, but related, literature on the link between 282 effective family functioning and children having a healthy calorie intake, eating breakfast and 283 consuming more fruit and vegetables [Kitzman-Ulrich et al., 2010; Renzaho et al., 2011]. On 284 the other hand, ineffective family functioning has been linked to eating disorders [Emanuelli 285 et al., 2003] and obesity in children [Chen and Kennedy, 2005]. The findings of this study 286 support the idea that effective family functioning is more important for the health of family 287 members than the family structure per se [Fisher-Owens et al., 2007; Sweeting and West, 288 1995; World Health Organisation, 2004].

289 The importance of family-based programmes in reducing childhood obesity has been 290 recognised [Kitzman-Ulrich et al., 2010]. However, there has been a lack of upstream 291 interventions targeted at improving the home environment [Flynn et al., 2006]. Frequent 292 sugar consumption seldom occurs in isolation and is often an indicator of the larger dietary 293 picture, which affects a multitude of chronic diseases. Family functioning is modifiable and is 294 therefore amenable to interventions. Our findings suggest that improving family functioning 295 could equip families with resources that encourage healthy behaviours, even in the presence 296 of less than optimal social and economic circumstances. Furthermore, an intervention aimed 297 at improving family functioning may have enormous potential to improve the quality of family 298 life in a whole range of areas. By equipping the family with skills to handle their day to day 299 lives, health-related behaviours become embedded in daily activities, and therefore become 300 sustainable even in the midst of adversity. In addition, interventions at the family level have 301 the ability to influence outcomes at whole population levels [National Institute For Health and 302 Clinical Excellence, 2007]. This underpins the importance of influencing family environments 303 positively. An increase in the general family functioning score by just one unit has the 304 potential to reduce children's chances of consuming sugary foods frequently by 67%. 305 Therefore, an intervention to improve general family functioning has significant potential to 306 reduce the risk of children developing unhealthy dietary behaviours and promote health 307 effectively.

308 The main limitation to studying sugar consumption is related to its measurement. Food 309 frequency questionnaires (FFQs) offer a cost-effective and appropriate means of assessing 310 habitual long-term diet and are relatively easy to use [Cade et al., 2002]. However, the 311 validity of FFQs have been challenged, with the suggestion that they are susceptible to recall 312 bias and to underreporting of frequency of consumption of foods that project an unhealthy 313 image [Gibson and Williams, 1999]. This has been addressed by validating FFQs by 314 comparing them with dietary diaries and weighted intakes [McNeill et al., 2009]. This study 315 adopted a conservative approach to the calculation of daily sugar consumption frequency; 316 and it is more likely that frequent consumers were misclassified as low frequency consumers 317 than the reverse.

318 Other potential limitations of this study are related to the obtaining information by self-319 reports; the presence of incomplete data; and the cross-sectional nature of the study design. 320 Respondents may have felt embarrassed to reveal private details of their life; answers may 321 have been influenced by the person's feelings at the time they filled out the questionnaire; 322 and subjects may have forgotten pertinent details of their relationship. It is also possible that 323 answers were influenced by social desirability bias. There was minimum manipulation of the 324 data and good completeness of data. It is unlikely that missing data have influenced the 325 findings. Cross-sectional data do not allow causal inferences to be drawn because of the 326 difficulty in establishing temporal relations. This design is recommended for the exploration 327 of associations between the risk factors and the outcome of interest, if there is limited 328 research to support the hypothesis. Furthermore, it is more likely that family functioning has 329 affected sugar consumption than the reverse causality. The findings of this cross-sectional 330 study are relevant to the further understanding the complex process that underpins the 331 development of children's sugar consumption behaviours. Once a clear understanding of this 332 association is established, further research should be carried out adopting a randomised 333 controlled trial design.

In conclusion, a mother's perception of effective general family functioning (defined as a
family that is able to manage daily life and resolve problems in the context of warm and
affective family interactions, through clear communication, well-defined roles and flexible
behaviour control), has a significant protective effect against high frequent intakes of sugary
foods by their three and four year old children.

339 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- 340 This study was carried out by the Institute of Dentistry, Barts and The London School of
- 341 Medicine and Dentistry, Queen Mary University of London (QMUL), in collaboration with
- 342 Redbridge, Waltham Forest and Barking and Dagenham Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) to
- 343 inform planning and commissioning of dental care services. We are grateful for the support
- of the families and individuals involved in this study. We also thank individuals who helped to
- 345 organise and execute the ELOHI study (<u>http://www.dentistry.qmul.ac.uk/research-listing/32-</u>
- 346 <u>patient-and-population-orientated-research/67-oral-health-needs-assessment</u>). ELF is an
- 347 extension of the ELOHI study. The funders had no role in the study design, data collection
- 348 and analysis, decision to publish, or preparation of the manuscript.

349 AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

350 All authors contributed to selection of key covariates, wrote and reviewed the manuscripts.

351 SN and WM analysed the data. WM conceived of the study, oversaw the implementation

- and conducting of the fieldwork and provided overall guidance.
- 353 References

Adair PM, Pine CM, Burnside G, Nicoll AD, Gillett A, Anwar S, Broukal Z, Chestnutt IG,
Declerck D, Ping FX, Ferro R, Freeman R, Grant-Mills D, Gugushe T, Hunsrisakhun
J, Irigoyen-Camacho M, Lo EC, Moola MH, Naidoo S, Nyandindi U, Poulsen VJ,
Ramos-Gomez F, Razanamihaja N, Shahid S, Skeie MS, Skur OP, Splieth C, Soo
TC, Whelton H, Young DW: Familial and cultural perceptions and beliefs of oral
hygiene and dietary practices among ethnically and socio-economicall diverse
groups. Community Dent Health 2004;21:102-111.

- 361 Altman D: Practical statistics for medical research. London, Chapman & Hall, 1991.
- Baron RM, Kenny DA: The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological
 research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. J Pers Soc Psychol
 1986;51:1173-1182.
- Benton D: Role of parents in the determination of the food preferences of children and the
 development of obesity. Int J Obes Relat Metab Disord 2004;28:858-869.
- Birkmeyer JD, Stukel TA, Siewers AE, Goodney PP, Wennberg DE, Lucas FL: Surgeon
 volume and operative mortality in the united states. New England Journal of Medicine
 2003;349:2117-2127.

- Blinkhorn AS, Wainwright-Stringer YM, Holloway PJ: Dental health knowledge and attitudes
 of regularly attending mothers of high-risk, pre-school children. International Dental
 Journal 2001;51:435-438.
- Brynes AE, Mark Edwards C, Ghatei MA, Dornhorst A, Morgan LM, Bloom SR, Frost GS: A
 randomised four-intervention crossover study investigating the effect of
 carbohydrates on daytime profiles of insulin, glucose, non-esterified fatty acids and
- triacylglycerols in middle-aged men. Br J Nutr 2003;89:207-218.
- Byles J, Byrne C, Boyle MH, Offord DR: Ontario Child Health Study: Reliability and Validity
 of the General Functioning Subscale of the McMaster Family Assessment Device.
 Family Process 1988;27: 97-104.
- Cade J, Thompson R, Burley V, Warm D: Development, validation and utilisation of food frequency questionnaires a review. Public Health Nutrition 2002;5:567-587.
- Chen JL, Kennedy C: Factors associated with obesity in chinese-american children. Pediatr
 Nurs 2005;31:110-115.
- 384 Department of Health/British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry: Delivering
 385 better oral health: An evidence- based toolkit for prevention 2009.
- 386 Ebbeling CB, Pawlak DB, Ludwig DS: Childhood obesity: Public-health crisis, common
 387 sense cure. Lancet 2002;360:473-482.
- Emanuelli F, Ostuzzi R, Cuzzolaro M, Watkins B, Lask B, Waller G: Family functioning in
 anorexia nervosa: British and italian mothers' perceptions. Eat Behav 2003;4:27-39.
- Epstein NB, Baldwin LM, Bishop DS: The mcmaster family assessment device. Journal of
 Marital and Family Therapy 1983;9:171-180.
- Finlayson TL, Siefert K, Ismail AI, Sohn W: Maternal self-efficacy and 1-5-year-old children's
 brushing habits. Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology 2007;35:272-281.
- Fisher-Owens SA, Gansky SA, Platt LJ, Weintraub JA, Soobader M-J, Bramlett MD,
 Newacheck PW: Influences on children's oral health: A conceptual model. Pediatrics
 2007;120:e510-520.
- Flynn MA, McNeil DA, Maloff B, Mutasingwa D, Wu M, Ford C, Tough SC: Reducing obesity
 and related chronic disease risk in children and youth: A synthesis of evidence with
 'best practice' recommendations. Obes Rev 2006;7 Suppl 1:7-66.

400 Galobardes B, Shaw M, Lawlor DA, Lynch JW, Davey Smith G: Indicators of socioeconomic 401 position (part 1). Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health 2006;60:7-12. 402 Gibson S, Williams S: Dental caries in pre-school children: Associations with social class, 403 toothbrushing habit and consumption of sugars and sugar-containing foods. Further 404 analysis of data from the national diet and nutrition survey of children aged 1.5-4.5 405 years. Caries Res 1999;33:101-113. 406 Grabauskas V: Integrated programme for community health in non-communicable disease 407 (interhealth); in Leparski E (ed): The prevention of non-communicable diseases: 408 Experiences and prospects. Copenhagen WHO Regional Office for Europe, 1987, pp 285-310. 409 410 Herzer M, Godiwala N, Hommel KA, Driscoll K, Mitchell M, Crosby LE, Piazza-WaggonerC, 411 Zeller MH, Modi AC: Family Functioning in the Context of Pediatric Chronic 412 Conditions. Journal of Development and Behavioural Pediatrics 2010;31: 26-34. 413 Hinds K, Gregory JR: National diet and nutrition survey: Children aged 11/2 to 41/2 years: 414 GB 1992-3. Volume 2: Report of the dental survey. London, HMSO, 1995, vol 2. 415 Kelaher M, Paul S, Lambert H, Ahmad W, Smith GD: The impact of different measures of 416 socioeconomic position on the relationship between ethnicity and health. Annals of 417 Epidemiology 2008;18:351-356. 418 Kitzman-Ulrich H, Wilson DK, St George SM, Lawman H, Segal M, Fairchild A: The 419 integration of a family systems approach for understanding youth obesity, physical 420 activity, and dietary programs. Clin Child Fam Psychol Rev 2010;13:231-253. 421 Lencova E, Duskova J: Oral health attitudes and caries-preventive behaviour of czech 422 parents of preschool children. Acta Med Acad 2013;42:209-215. 423 Mattila ML, Rautava P, Aromaa M, Ojanlatva A, Paunio P, Hyssala L, Helenius H, Sillanpaa 424 M: Behavioural and demographic factors during early childhood and poor dental 425 health at 10 years of age. Caries Res 2005;39:85-91. 426 McNeill G, Macdiarmid J, Craig L, Holmes B, Loe J, Nelson M, Masson L: Secondary 427 analysis of the survey of sugar intake among children in scotland; in: Food Standards 428 Agency Scotland Research Project S14039. 2009.

429 430	Miller IW, Bishop DS, Epstein NB, Keitner GI:The McMaster Family Assessment Device - Reliability and Validity. Journal of Marital and Family Therapy 1985;11: 345-356.
431 432	Moynihan P, Petersen PE: Diet, nutrition and the prevention of dental diseases. Public Health Nutr 2004;7:201-226.
433 434	Moynihan PJ: The role of diet and nutrition in the etiology and prevention of oral diseases. Bulletin of the World Health Organization 2005;83:694 - 699.
435 436 437	National Institute For Health and Clinical Excellence: Behaviour change at population, community and individual levels in: NICE public health guidance 6. London NICE, 2007.
438 439 440 441	Nicolau B, Marcenes W, Bartley M, Sheiham A: A life course approach to assessing causes of dental caries experience: The relationship between biological, behavioural, socio- economic and psychological conditions and caries in adolescents. Caries Res 2003;37:319-326.
442 443 444	North K, Emmett P: Multivariate analysis of diet among three-year-old children and associations with socio-demographic characteristics. The avon longitudinal study of pregnancy and childhood (alspac) study team. Eur J Clin Nutr 2000;54:73-80.
445 446 447	Northstone K, Emmett P: Multivariate analysis of diet in children at four and seven years of age and associations with socio-demographic characteristics. Eur J Clin Nutr 2005;59:751-760.
448 449 450	Office for National Statistics: 2001 census: Standard area statistics (england and wales); in: ESRC/JISC Census Programme, Census Dissemination Unit. MiMAS(University of Manchester) 2001.
451 452	Office for National Statistics: The national statistics socio-economic classification: User manual, 2005.
453 454 455	Phelan JC, Link BG, Tehranifar P: Social conditions as fundamental causes of health inequalities: Theory, evidence, and policy implications. J Health Soc Behav 2010;51 Suppl:S28-40.
456 457	Renzaho AMN, Kumanyika S, Tucker KL: Family functioning, parental psychological distress, child behavioural problems, socio-economic disadvantage and fruit and

- vegetable consumption among 4–12 year-old victorians, australia. Health Promotion
 International 2011;26:263-275.
- 460 Rhee K: Childhood overweight and the relationship between parent behaviors, parenting
 461 style, and family functioning. The annals of the American Academy of Political and
 462 Social Science 2008;615:11-37.
- 463 Ryan CE, Epstein NB, Keitner GI, Miller IW, Bishop DS: Evaluating and treating families:
 464 The McMaster approach. New York, Routledge, 2005.
- 465 Sheiham A: Dietary effects on dental diseases. Public Health Nutr 2001;4:569-591.
- Sheiham A, Watt RG: The common risk factor approach: A rational basis for promoting oral
 health. Community Dent Oral Epidemiol 2000;28:399-406.
- Singh-Manoux A, Clarke P, Marmot M: Multiple measures of socio-economic position and
 psychosocial health: Proximal and distal measures. Int J Epidemiol 2002;31:1192 1199.
- 471 StataCorp: Stata statistical software: Release 11. College Station, TX, 2009.
- 472 Sweeting H, West P: Family life and health in adolescence: A role for culture in the health
 473 inequalities debate? Soc Sci Med 1995;40:163-175.
- 474 Turrell G, Kavanagh AM: Socio-economic pathways to diet: Modelling the association
 475 between socio-economic position and food purchasing behaviour. Public Health Nutr
 476 2006;9:375-383.
- 477 Victora C, Huttly S, Fuchs S, Olinto M: The role of conceptual frameworks in epidemiological
 478 analysis: A hierarchical approach. Int J Epidemiol 1997;26:224-227.
- Whitchurch GG, Constantine LL: Systems theory; in Boss PG, Doherty WJ, LaRossa R,
 Schumm WR, Steinmetz SK (eds): Sourcebook of family theories and methods: A
 contextual approach. New York, Plenum Press, 1993, pp 325-352.
- World Health Organisation: Risk factors and comprehensive control of chronic diseases; in
 Report ICP/ CVD 020(2). Geneva, WHO, 1980.
- World Health Organisation: Diet, nutrition and the prevention of chronic diseases: Report of
 a joint who/fao expert consultation; in: WHO Technical Report Series, No 916.
 Geneva, World Health Organisation 2003.

World Health Organisation: Young people's health in context : Health behaviour in schoolaged children (hbsc) study; in Curie C, Roberts C, Morgan A, Smith R, Settertobulte
W, Samdal O, Rasmussen VB (eds): International Report from the 2001/2002
Survey. Geneva 2004.

493 Legends

- 494 Table 1. Characteristics of the study sub-sample
- 495 Table 2. Simple logistic regression models for the relationship between children's age, sex,
- 496 mother's ethnicity, mother's marital status, mother's education, Index of Multiple Deprivation
- 497 and General family functioning, and consumption of sugary foods more than four times per
- 498 day by three and four year old children in the study sub sample
- 499 Table 3. Hierarchical logistic regression models for the association between socio-
- 500 demographic variables and general functioning, and the consumption of sugary foods more
- 501 than four times per day by three and four year old children in the study sub sample.

Variables (N=698)	Frequency	Weighted Proportion
Age: 3 years 4 years	359 339	49% 51%
Gender: Male Female	356 342	47% 53%
Mother's ethnicity: White Asian Black Mixed/Others	253 225 200 20	57% 26% 11% 6%
Mother's marital status: Living alone Living with a partner	131 567	20% 80%
Mother's Education: Lower qualification (None, Secondary school, technical) Higher qualification (A levels, university, postgraduate)	303 395	45% 55%
IMD Less deprived (IMD score ≤ 21.22) More deprived (IMD score ≥21.23)	127 571	28% 72%
Children consuming sugary foods more than four times per day	122	17%
General family functioning	Mean	(95% CI)
	3.16	(3.12, 3.20)

Variables (N=698)	Odds Ratio (95% CI)	P value
Age: 3 years 4 years	1 1.58 (0.97,2.58)	0.07
Sex: Male Female	1 0.70 (0.42,1.17)	0.17
Mother's Ethnicity: White Asian Black Mixed/Other Mother's marital status: Living alone Living with a partner	1 2.69 (1.53,4.74) 1.29 (0.68,2.45) 1.43 (0.34,6.04) 1 1.22 (0.61, 2.43)	0.001 0.43 0.63 0.58
Mother's Education Lower (None, Secondary school, technical) Higher (A levels, university, postgraduate)	1 0.41 (0.25, 0.68)	0.001
IMD Less deprived (1st, 2nd, 3rd quintile) More deprived (4th, 5th quintile)	1 1.87 (0.89, 3.90)	0.10
General family functioning	0.23 (0.11, 0.46)	<0.001

Variables	Model 1 OR (95% CI)	Model 2 OR (95% CI)	Model 3 OR (95% CI)
Age: 3 years 4 years	1 1.49 (0.90, 2.49)	1 1.46 (0.87, 2.46)	1 1.54 (0.92,2.59)
Sex: Male Female	1 0.70 (0.41,1.18)	1 0.72 (0.42,1.23)	1 0.72 (0.42, 1.23)
Mother's Ethnicity: White Asian Black Mixed/Other	1 2.61 (1.48,4.61)*** 1.28 (0.68, 2.41) 1.43 (0.35, 5.86)	1 3.46 (1.63,5.25)*** 1.24 (0.73,2.66) 1.70 (0.42,6.12)	1 3.06 (1.63, 5.72)*** 1.20 (0.61, 2.36) 1.54 (0.39, 6.11)
IMD: Less deprived More deprived		1 1.92 (0.89,4.14)	1 1.79 (0.83, 3.87)
Mother's Education: Lower Higher		1 0.35 (0.21,0.58)***	1 0.41 (0.23, 0.70)***
General Functioning			0.33 (0.15, 0.72)**

514 * p≤0.05, **p≤0.01, ***p≤0.001

515 Model 1: Adjusted for age, sex and mother's ethnicity

516 Model 2: Adjusted for variables in Model 1 plus mother's education and IMD

517 Model 3: Adjusted for variables in Model 2 plus family general functioning