

gestational diabetes mellitus. Mothers with high concentration of *Streptococcus mutans*, have a higher probability of contamination of their children and contribute for a higher risk of developing tooth decay at very early ages.

**Objectives:** Evaluate oral health, knowledge and habits of oral health in recent mothers.

**Methods:** Data collection was conducted through a questionnaire and oral observation to 142 recent mothers in the Alfredo da Costa Maternity (Lisbon).

**Results:** 59.2% of recent mothers felt an increasing in oral health problems during pregnancy (70.4% were felt in the teeth and 36.6% into the gum). 76.1% of recent mothers reported that they had received teachings of oral health, transmitted essentially by the dentists or dental hygienists. Only 4.9% of recent mothers were caries free (DMF = 0) and 48.6% had untreated tooth decay. For 35.9% of recent mothers, dental consultations were held rarely or when they had pain. About 25% of mother's didn't know when to start oral hygiene in children and when to start using toothpaste. Also, they thought that children must have the first dental appointment at 6 years old or when they have tooth decays.

**Conclusions:** Oral health programs in maternal health are fundamental and an excellent opportunity for the pregnant learn how to take better care of her oral health, to demystify the fears of dental consultations and provide good oral hygiene habits since the beginning of the child's life.

**Key words:** Dental caries. Maternal health. Oral Health.

## ORAL HYGIENE AND HEALTH EDUCATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

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**Introduction:** Dental caries, a progressive infection caused by microorganisms, remain one of the most common diseases throughout the world. The mouth is an ideal environment for bacteria, and one of the best-known for being responsible for dental caries is the *Streptococcus mutans*.

**Aims:** Evaluate the association between oral hygiene practices, nutrition and dental caries, comparing participants in terms of gender and age; suggest recommendations for oral hygiene practices and prevention diet, evidencing the inherent risk of poor practices for the public health; to assess an adult sample for *Streptococcus mutans*, evaluating the impact of oral hygiene on the absence/presence of this bacteria.

**Methods:** This is a cross-sectional exploratory study. For the first aim, a specific questionnaire was constructed with all the variables under study. Snyder Agar test was used to identify susceptibility to dental caries, because it's a simple test for determination of *Streptococcus mutans*, based in acidification of the agar medium (Garcia et al, 2009).

**Results:** The sample consisted of 33 participants (73% female), with a mean age of 36 years old (SD = 13.21), recruited from a private Portuguese clinic. 67% reported brushing the teeth between 2-4 times a day. 58% of the sample does not use any brushing teeth auxiliary and 76% of the sample already extracted teeth, and the majority of cases correlated with dental caries. 79% of the sample tested positive for *Streptococcus mutans* and 38% showed high susceptibility to this bacterium.

**Conclusions:** These results suggest negligent oral hygiene in adults, being imperative to prevent its increase through appropriate health programs. In this way, health prevention measures for adult caries and oral hygiene are proposed.

## TEENAGER'S GENDER: HABITS, KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS DENTAL HYGIENE – BOYS WILL BE BOYS

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**Introduction:** The knowledge attitudes and habits of teenagers towards dental hygiene are relevant when planning for a dental diseases preventive program.

**Objectives:** To understand the oral health attitudes, habits and knowledge of teenagers, using the Portuguese version of an international questionnaire.

**Methods:** A questionnaire composed by 5 dimensions (dental fear, esthetics and dental hygiene, health concern, prevention of dental problems and general health) was applied to 1203 teenagers with parental and personal informed consent. Statistical analysis of data was performed using independent sample t-test for comparison between genders, with a significance level of 5%.

**Results:** A sample composed by 532 boys and 671 girls, aged from 12 to 20 years old, mean (sd): 14.9 (1.7) answered the questionnaire. For the dental fear dimension it is noticeable that boys have a greater fear of dental treatments, compared to girls ( $p = 0.013$ ), although girls report to be more nervous at appointments ( $p < 0.01$ ). For esthetics and dental hygiene, girls are more concerned with these issues ( $p < 0.01$ ), and also acknowledge the importance of lifelong dental care. For the health concern dimension, boys are less willing to acknowledge oral health professionals advices ( $p = 0.04$ ), reporting no value to friend and family oral health well-being ( $p < 0.01$ ). Concerning the prevention of dental problems, boys do not value oral health education in school or in private practice environment ( $p < 0.01$ ), giving low respect to gingival problems as a sign of bad oral hygiene ( $p < 0.01$ ). Finally for the general health concerns, boys do not recognize oral health as part of it, differently from girls ( $p < 0.01$ ).

**Conclusions:** Gender influences teenager's oral health knowledge, habits and attitudes.

## ORAL HEALTH ATTITUDES OF TEENAGERS

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**Introduction:** Attitudes can be structured in three components: cognitive, affective and appellative (Dubois, 1999). Questions related to obtaining information to avoid oral diseases and to attend regular dental appointments are grouped in the cognitive component; those related to emotions, mainly the recognition of oral health professional as knowledge providers, self-image evaluation and negative or positive feelings towards dental hygiene are included in affective component; questions relating to the health care demand are part of the appellative component.

**Objectives:** To present the attitudes of 1203 teenagers regarding oral health.

**Methods:** The attitudes dimension of a Portuguese version oral health questionnaire is presented. The questionnaire was applied