

## Correlation between dental caries and quality of life in children.

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**Introduction.** Measuring quality of life at an individual level can provide important data on health status and the effects of healthcare services. The aim of this study was to assess the impact of caries and its treatment on quality of life (QoL) in school-aged children.

**Materials and methods.** A cross-sectional prospective study was carried out within the Department of Pediatric Oral-Maxillo-Facial Surgery and Pedodontics *Ion Lupan* of the *Nicolae Testemițanu* SUMPh. The research group (L1) consisted of 70 children with dental caries. In the control group (L0) 70 children free of dental caries were included. For QoL assessment, the Child-Oral Impacts on Daily Performances (Child-OIDP) questionnaire was applied. The study was conducted in accordance with ethical requirements with the written consent of the children's parents. The Spearman  $\rho$  (rho) coefficient, calculated via nonparametric rank correlation test, was used to determine the correlation between tooth decay degree and its impact on children's QoL. The Child-OIDP self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data and data was analyzed using Epi-Info.

**Results.** A total of 140 students responded, of whom 49.2% experienced at least one impact. The most affected performances were eating (22.3%), followed by smiling (18.5%) and emotional state (6.5%), and the least affected daily activities were playing (0.8%) and schoolwork (1.1%). The main causes were bleeding gums (39.3%), injury (26.8%) and sensitivity (33.7%), and adolescents reported an average of 1.5 pathologies as perceived causes of impact.

**Conclusion.** A significant positive association of very high, high and moderate intensity was established between the indicators of dental caries and the impact of the oral health status on QoL. The high prevalence of dental caries' impact on children's QoL indicates their increased treatment needs and insufficient access to dental care. Estimating the impact of oral health status on daily performance is important for the creation of health policies that address the needs of the population.

**Keywords:** *oral health, quality of life, dental caries, surveys and questionnaires*