

Oral Health habits in the district of Ilala, Tanzania

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Oral health habits were investigated together with other aspects of oral health in collaborative Ilala Oral Health Survey. The aim of this study was to provide baseline information which could then be used in planning and implementation of health promotion activities in Tanzania. In this analysis data collected through personal interviews on oral hygiene habits, sugar consumption and tooth mutilation of 1512 residents of Ilala district aged 7 to 70 years were used. The rate of response was 91%. It was found that nearly all subject brushed their teeth daily, most of them brushing teeth was higher in the urban areas, and in females, and appeared to increase with age. In urban areas, factory-made toothbrushes were commonly used than locally-made toothbrushes. The latter were more common in the rural areas. The majority (80%) drank sugared tea daily. Cakes, “maandazi or Vitumbua” were eaten daily by 60%. Most subjects consumed the foods containing sugar less than three times per day. Sugar consumption was more common in the females and urban residents. Occasionally teeth were mutilated by opening bottles (15) and crapping (10%), especially in the adolescents and working age groups. Extraction of teeth due to cultural habits was rare. In conclusion, the reported oral hygiene habits, sugar consumption and tooth mutilation were different in the various population subgroups. Mutilation of teeth was not common. There is a need for community based oral health promotion programmes in the population studied. Scrapping tooth surfaces using some hard objects. This was defined as the deliberate regular use of any hard object for crapping the surfaces of the teeth by the subjects. Responses were coded for data analysis as following: Code 1= yes, 2=no. use of teeth for opening bottles. This was defined as the regular utilization of teeth for forceful removing of caps from bottles of drinks by the subjects. Responses were coded for data analysis as following: Code 1=yes, 2= yes. Extraction of teeth for cultural purposes. This was defined as having lost at least one tooth due to cultural reasons. Responses were coded for data analysis as following: Code 1=yes, 2=no