

# PREVALENCE AND INTENSITY OF DENTAL CARIES IN RELATION TO SEX AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AMONG TANTA PREPARATORY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

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## *ABSTRACT*

During the past few years a dramatic reduction in dental caries level has occurred. The most important reason for this improvement has been suggested to be the introduction of fluoride into the oral environment. However, up till now the situation of dental caries in developing countries, where economic development has occurred, is not yet clear. The present work was planned and carried out according to WHO pathfinder survey methodology 1997 in Tanta city from 2001-2002 to determine the prevalence and severity of dental caries in Tanta preparatory and secondary school children and their relation to sex and type of school as a determinant of socio-economic status. This study was conducted on 4300 school children (2054 boys and 2246 girls) using the index ages of 12 and 15 years.

The total number of schools included in this work was 20 schools, ten schools were selected randomly from east and west district. The current findings revealed a very low caries experience among the 12 and the 15 year-old age groups, where the mean DMFT was 0.42 and 0.53, with a percentage of caries-free children of 72% and 63% respectively. A higher caries experience was detected among females than males at 12 and 15 years old (mean DMFT of 0.48 and 0.60 vs 0.36 and 0.43 respectively). A significantly lower caries experience was detected among the 12 and 15 year-olds enrolled in private schools than those in public schools (DMFT 0.39 and 0.51 vs 0.44 and 0.55 respectively). The present findings emphasize the importance of maintaining the very low caries level detected in this survey through national health educational programs and special oral hygiene programs in all schools.