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Controlling cariogenic bacteria by the regular check-up system

Yoshiaki Nomura¹⁾, Akihisa Tsurumoto¹⁾, Fusao Nishikawara²⁾, Mizuho Motegi²⁾,
Nobuhiro Hanada²⁾ and Takashi Kumagai³⁾

1) Department of Preventive Dentistry and Public Health, Tsurumi University School of
Dental Medicine

2) Department of Oral Health, National Institute of Public Health

3) Hiyoshi-Dental Office

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Abstract Regular check-ups are important for reducing the risk factors of dental caries. Through regular check-ups, clinicians empirically know that the incidence of the new dental caries was suppressed. However, the effects of the regular check-up system have not been thoroughly evaluated. Our primary concern was to evaluate the efficacy of the regular check-up system with professional preventive care for preventing dental caries. In this study, we evaluated attitudes toward regular check-ups. Five hundred and thirteen patients who visited one dental office in Japan from 1981 to 2000 and who were under 12 on the first visit were examined for dental caries, salivary mutans streptococci, and Lactobacilli to obtain baseline values and the values for the more recent visit analyzed in this study. Salivary mutans streptococci and Lactobacilli were counted using Dentocult SM and Dentocult LB. Most of the risk factors, particularly the salivary levels of the mutans streptococci, were reduced by regular check-ups in this study. There was a greater risk reduction in particular for the salivary levels of mutans streptococci in patients undertaking regular check-ups. Reduced salivary levels of Lactobacilli were also observed. However, the changes between the groups in the attitude toward regular check-ups were not statistically significant. This result indicates that most of the risk factors investigated in this study could be reduced by regular check-ups, particularly the levels of mutans streptococci, which has been suggested to be a strong etiology of dental caries.

Key words Lactobacilli, Mutans streptococci, Regular check-up system, Risk factors

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