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Caries experience in nursery school children in Sendai, Japan: Time trends from 1972-2002

Nobue Goto¹⁾, Ayako Kudo²⁾, Kazuko Igari²⁾, Yukako Kogue²⁾, Hideji Komatsu²⁾ and Hideaki Mayanagi¹⁾²⁾

1) Clinics of Dentistry for the Disabled, Tohoku University Dental Hospital

2) Division of Pediatric Dentistry, Department of Oral Health and Development Sciences, Tohoku University Graduate School of Dentistry

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Abstract Since 1972, we have been conducting an annual clinical dental examination for young children at 13 nursery schools in the north district in Sendai, Japan. In the present study, we have included the results of examinations conducted in 1997 and 2002, and analyzed the time trends in caries experience of the primary dentition over a 30-year period from 1972 to 2002. The caries experience in the primary dentition markedly decreased in 1977 and remained stable for about 15 years, but in 1997, it markedly decreased again and continued to decrease in a linear fashion until 2002. The time trends in caries experience in the primary dentition in each age group were further analyzed by ascertaining caries experience in each tooth type. The results showed that, in 2 to 4-year-old, the decrease of caries experience for the primary maxillary incisors, canines and first molars seemed to stop decreasing in 2002, but for the 5-year-old, the caries experience for the maxillary incisors and canines and the maxillary and mandibular first and second molars markedly decreased from 1997 to 2002.

Key words Caries experience, Epidemiology, Nursery school children, Primary teeth, Time trends

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