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A survey on the risk factors for the prevalence of dental caries among preschool children in Japan

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Abstract The etiology of dental caries has been suggested to be multifactorial. We conducted a cross-sectional study to investigate the contribution of the risk factors for dental caries, surveying a total of 645 preschool children at medical check-ups. Among 10 factors investigated in this study, salivary flow, amount of Lactobacillus, amount of total Streptococci, amount of mutans streptococci, and daily number of times of sweet soft drinks correlate with the prevalence of dental caries. Multivariate Logistic regression analysis using the five factors that correlated produced only two factors, salivary levels of mutans streptococci and Lactobacillus, which correlated with the prevalence of dental caries. Furthermore, clear dose-response relationships were observed in these two factors. We therefore suggest that cariogenic bacteria are the most important risk factor for dental caries among preschool children in Japan.

Key words Lactobacilli, Mutans streptococci, Preschool children, Risk factors, Saliva



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