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Lay knowledge and attitudes on the management of traumatically avulsed teeth and the use of mouthguards

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Abstract The outcome of replantation of traumatically avulsed teeth depends largely on the immediate and appropriate management. However most dental injuries happen in the home or at school, where immediate treatment is not usually available. The objective of this study was to assess the knowledge and attitudes among guardians and children in Japan about tooth injuries, the management of avulsed teeth, and mouthguards. An 18-item questionnaire (3 general items about tooth injuries, 8 about the management of avulsed teeth and 7 about mouthguards) was distributed to 256 guardians and 92 children at the Pediatric Dental Clinic of Niigata University Dental Hospital. One-third of the respondents reported having had a tooth injury, but most had never been advised about the importance of emergency management in dental injuries. On the other hand, 185 guardians (72%) but only 21 children (23%) indicated an interest in taking an educational course about dental injuries. Approximately 75% of the respondents did not know that avulsed teeth could be replanted. Moreover, less than 20% knew that the best way to store avulsed teeth at home was to soak them in milk. Forty-five percent of those with this knowledge had obtained the information from TV programs, whereas only 10% received it from their dentist. As to mouthguards, while nearly 70% of the respondents knew what mouthguards are, only 13% of the children planned to use a mouthguard while playing sports, whereas 30% of the guardians reported that they would require their children to wear one during sports. This study revealed the need for educational campaigns to increase lay people's knowledge of emergency treatment for avulsed teeth and to encourage children to use mouthguards while playing baseball and basketball.

Key words Lay people, Mouthguard, Replantation, Tooth avulsion, Tooth injuries

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