

## Oral health related nutritional behavior in elementary students:

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** Iranian 5-6 year old children's dmft index is more than 5 teeth. Nutritional behavior is a major cause of dental caries. Improving oral health behaviors and health diets can hugely decrease tooth decays. On the other hand, children have a penetrable mind during elementary school. Thus, this study was aimed to evaluate the oral health linked nutritional behavior of Saveh elementary students.

**Materials and Methods:** A minimum of 320 first and sixth year grade students were considered the primary sample size from a total of 16 elementary schools. Cluster randomized sampling was used in this analytical-descriptive, cross-sectional study. Ethical approvals and written consents were obtained, and the translated version of WHO's assessment tool (questionnaire) was utilized to collect data. The nutritional behavior of participants was categorized as appropriate and inappropriate conditions. Finally, T-student test was used to analyze the descriptive data and  $p=0.05$  was considered as significant.

**Results:** A total of 388 students participated in this study, amongst which more than three-fourth had appropriate fruit consumption behavior, whereas the least appropriate behavior was related to consumption of sugary tea (43%). On the other hand, almost five-sixth of the students had acceptable habits in terms of syrup and juice consumption. Interestingly, those who had suitable consumption of sweets, had almost significantly better tooth brushing habits ( $p=0.068$ ). On the contrary, those who had more consumption of sugar with tea had significantly more dental visits ( $p=0.046$ ), and had significantly worse brushing habits ( $p=0.05$ ).

**Discussion and Conclusion:** Oral health, nutritional, and health related behaviors are relatively appropriate among Saveh elementary students. Also, dental visits can have a positive impact on students' oral health related behavior.

**Key words:** Nutrition, oral health behavior, health promoting schools, school age, diet, dental visit