

## ORAL HYGIENE HABITS AMONG THE STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NIŠ IN SOUTHERN SERBIA – A PILOT STUDY

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Oral hygiene is one of the most important factors which affects the status of general health in all patients. These factors may affect the individual's oral hygiene habits: age, gender, education, level of awareness and socioeconomic status. Oral hygiene habits among the students who live in southern Serbia have been rarely investigated. The aim of this study was to investigate oral hygiene habits among the students of the University of Niš, southern Serbia.

The study involved 249 students (53.83% male and 46.17% female), and each participant completed the study questionnaire.

Average age of the participants was  $21.67 \pm 2.00$  years. The prevalence expressed in percentages was as follows: 100% used toothbrush and toothpaste for oral hygiene, 77.51% used dental flossing, 40.96% used mouthrinse solutions, 63.45% brushed their teeth twice per day, 69.88% used combined toothbrush movements, 20.88% used vertical toothbrush movements, 9.24% used horizontal toothbrush movements and 54.62% changed their toothbrushes every 3 months. A significantly high percent (92.37%) of students used chewing gum and 59.84% consumed sweets every day, but a significantly low percent of students were active smokers (17.67%), former smokers (11.24%) and drugs users (13.65%). The percentage of nail biters among the students was 41.31%.

The study may highlight the interactions between oral hygiene and related habits. Further research is needed to develop good oral hygiene skills for achieving and maintaining good oral and dental health.

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