

KiGGS – The German Health Interview and Examination Survey for Children and Adolescents

Abstract Principal Publication

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Oral health behaviour of children and adolescents in Germany. First results of the German Health Interview and Examination Survey for Children and Adolescents (KiGGS)

Abstract Despite successful prevention and the possibility to directly control oral health by individual behaviour, children are still affected by caries. Aim of this article is to determine the prevalence and the social factors influencing selected aspects of oral health behaviour based on data of the German Health Interview and Examination Survey for Children and Adolescents (KiGGS). Over a period of three years, 17,641 children and adolescents aged 0 to 17 years – a representative sample for Germany – were examined in the nationwide KiGGS study. Based on a written survey and a medical interview, data on oral health behaviour were also collected. 29 % of the surveyed children and adolescents brushed their teeth only once daily or less frequently. This type of teeth brushing behaviour shows a social status gradient (low: 39 %, middle: 28 %, high: 22 %) and is more frequently found in children with a migration background (45 %) than in those without a migration background (26 %). Differences were also found between girls and boys (girls: 25 %; boys: 33 %). In only 8 % of cases, parents stated that their children have a dental check-up less than once a year. However, this information substantially differs from the actual visits to dentists. Here again, differences regarding social status (low: 12 %; high: 6 %) and migration status (migrants: 16 %; nonmigrants: 6 %) were found. According to the parents, 43 % of the 0-to-2-year-olds and 7 % of the 3-to-6-year-olds use pharmaceutical preparations for caries prevention. Relevant differences were found between migrants (5 %) and non-migrants (8 %). These results show that there is primarily a need for social status-specific and culture-specific prevention. To identify starting points for effectively offering preventative measures, a systematic study into the factors causing these behavioural differences is needed.

Keywords Health survey - Children - Adolescents - Teeth brushing frequency - Dental check-up - Caries prevention
