

## Adolescent brushing and its association with parents' socio-economic status

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Sir,

Tooth brushing is an effective method of cleaning smooth surfaces of the teeth and disturbing plaque colonies where accessible.<sup>[1]</sup> Studies showed that children's oral health is associated with parents' socio-economic status (SET).<sup>[2,3]</sup> Oral hygiene is considered one of the primary health care (PHC) components in Iran. In terms of the brushing practice and its importance in dental caries prevention, the current study was conducted to investigate brushing rate and its relation with parents' EST among female high school students in Gorgan city, northern part of Iran, 2011.

In a cross-sectional study, 300 eligible 11<sup>th</sup>-grade female students were selected through cluster sampling. We randomly selected 5 high schools and recruited all students in every high school. Data were collected through individual interviews using a valid and reliable questionnaire, which included family income, maternal education, father's education, mother's and father's occupation, weight, height, family size and the question toward brushing. Data were analyzed using Chi-square test in SPSS 18 software.

Results of the study showed that 62% brushed on a regular basis, 27.7% brushed irregularly and 10.3% never brushed. The rate of brushing was influenced by income ( $\chi^2 = 21.37$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ), parents' education ( $\chi^2 = 29.44$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ) and father's occupation ( $\chi^2 = 31.42$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). Students who had a better economic status, having had higher-educated parents and employed fathers brushed significantly more than others. Students who had a low income, low-educated parents, and unemployed or collar workers as their fathers brushed significantly less than other students.

A large percentage of students don't regularly brush, which is consistent with other studies in this area.<sup>[4,5]</sup> Today's female students are tomorrow's mothers who have a great influence on their children's home care habits like brushing. Therefore, we recommended appropriate intervention especially educational

intervention for increasing the rate of brushing among high school female students. In this regard, we should pay more attention to students whose fathers have poor economic status and are illiterate, less educated, unemployed and collar workers.

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