

A STUDY OF PREVELANCE OF PARAFUNCTIONAL HABITS AMONG ORTHODNTIC PATIENTS

G. M. SWARNAMALI AND N. NAGARATHNE*

*Department of Basic Sciences, *Division of Orthodontics, Faculty of Dental Sciences,
University of Peradeniya*

A study was conducted to establish the prevalence of parafunctional habits and to investigate its relationship to the socioeconomic status, awareness of the child and the parent regarding the dental consequences of the habit and effects of the habit on the development of the malocclusion.

The sample studied consisted of 175 children and their parents who attended the orthodontic unit, Faculty of Dental Sciences for orthodontic consultation. All the children and their parents were interviewed by the first author using a structured questionnaire. Orthodontic examination was carried out to assess the occlusal irregularities developed.

The data analysis was done to estimate the prevalence of parafunctional habits and to identify the variables which showed significant relationship with the habit. Results showed 44.6% of the children were engaged in some form of parafunctional habit. There was no statistically significant relationship with the habit and socioeconomic status of the child and parent. Statistically significant relationship was seen between the habit and the awareness of the child with regard to the consequences of the habit on dental development ($P= .020$). Out of the occlusal irregularities developed, increased over jet showed weak association with the habit ($P= .049$). Development of the anterior open bite showed highly significant relationship with the habit ($P= .002$). There were 55 (31.4%) of the parents who attempted to stop the habit by advising the child and 11 (6.3%) who applied bitter things or medicines on fingers. Only 7 (4%) of the parents have punished the children in order to stop the habit.

As the prevalence of the habit among the population studied is very high, and also it is associated with the development of anterior open bite, it is advisable to educate parents through primary health care workers regarding the importance of braking the habit in early stages of development of the permanent dentition.