A Comparison of the Anticaries Effectiveness of Daily and Weekly Rinsing with Sodium Fluoride Solutions: Final Results After Three Years

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ABSTRACT

Children in a fluoride-deficient area rinsed their mouths either weekly with a 0.2% NaF solution, weekly with a 0.1% NaCl solution (placebo) or daily with a 0.05% NaF solution. Rinses were conducted in school under the teacher's supervision. Examinations for dental caries were made by two PHS examiners. After three years, incremental caries scores for Examiner I showed that subjects in the weekly and daily F rinse groups developed 37.7% and 47.4% fewer DMFS than controls. Corresponding findings for Examiner 2 were 23.5% and 33.6%. For both examiners combined, each regimen of F rinsing was effective in controlling decay, but the observed difference between the two F rinses, was not statistically significant. The weekly regimen takes less school time and requires less effort than daily rinses, and costs an average of only 75 cents per child per year, whereas costs of the daily procedure are four times higher. Because of these practical considerations and the lack of clear-cut difference in effectiveness between the two F rinse procedures, the weekly method is preferable as a cost-effective way to reduce children's tooth decay in a public health program.