

**Risk Factors and Prevalence of Dental Caries among Students at Tubungan Central
Elementary School, Iloilo, Philippines**

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ABSTRACT

Pulpitis has been the leading cause of morbidity among adults in Tubungan, Iloilo for the past three years. Pulpitis may develop from untreated dental caries as this make the deeper layer of the teeth more susceptible to bacterial colonization. Hence, this study aimed to determine the prevalence of and the risk factors associated with dental caries among school-age children in Tubungan Central Elementary School. This study will further investigate the possible causes of the high in prevalence of dental caries, and eventually introduce means of decreasing its morbidity in the municipality. One hundred nineteen students from Grades one to six were included in the study. The dental caries status was determined using the DMFT (Decayed, Missing, and Filled Teeth) index. The dental caries status was determined using the DMFT (Decayed, Missing, and Filled Teeth) index. The nutritional status was assessed using Weight for Age (WFA), Height for Age (HFA), and Weight for Height (WFH) as parameters as parameters. The Oral Hygiene practices, socio-economic status and food intake of the respondents were determined intake of the respondents were determined through an interview schedule. The prevalence of dental caries was 75.6%, with a mean DMFT of 2.97. Grade 2 students had the highest prevalence (95%) and DMFT index (5.9) among the grade levels. The DMFT index of each grade level was found to be significantly different ($p=0.000$). There was no statistical significance between the DMFT indices between males and females, although the mean DMFT of females was higher than males. There is no significant association between the Socio-Economic status of the family and DMFT index of the respondents. Only food rich in cereals and starches had significant association with the DMFT index. It is recommended that the government should intensify the campaigns on Oral health alongside other forms of health education and dietary and nutrition advice.