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OHRQoL among Orang Asli Children in Cameron Highlands


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Objectives: To assess the oral health status, oral health-related behaviours and oral health-related quality of life (OHRQoL) of Malaysian Orang Asli (OA) children in Cameron Highlands (CH), Malaysia and to identify factors associated with OA children’s OHRQoL. Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted on 249, 11-12 year-old OA primary school children in CH. Children were clinically examined and completed a validated self-administered questionnaire which comprised items on demographic information, oral health-related behaviours and the Malay Child-OIDP index. Results: The response rate was 91.2%. Prevalence of dental caries in permanent and primary teeth were 61.6% and 41.4%, respectively with mean DMFT of 1.36 and dft of 1.01. Majority (62.6%) of the children had a CPI 2 (calculus on tooth surface) while 33.4% had bleeding on probing (CPI 1). Majority of children brushed their teeth at least twice per day (83.7%), consumed sugary foods at least once a day (80.1%), and chewed betel quid at least once a day (67.4%). More than half of children (58.6%) had at least one oral impact on their daily life. Eating was the most common performance affected (35.2%). The severity of impacts was high on cleaning teeth (2.6%) and doing homework (1.8%) and low on emotional stability and eating. Most (80.4%) children with impacts had 1-3 daily performances affected. The main oral conditions causing impacts were gum bleeding (66.2%), toothache (56.4%) and fractured tooth (52.6%). Three factors, i.e. dft score >3, father’s salaried occupation and frequency of eating sugary foods >3 times a day had significant associations with OIDP score when all other factors were standardized. Conclusions: OA children in CH have high levels of dental caries and periodontal problems. Oral impacts were prevalent but not severe. OA children’s OHRQoL was significantly associated with caries in primary teeth, father’s occupation and frequency of sugary foods intake.