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Toothbrushing in Victorian Primary School Breakfast Clubs Pilot study

The aim of 'Toothbrushing in Primary School Breakfast Clubs Pilot Study' was to assess the feasibility of integrating a supervised tooth brushing program into Victorian primary schools with an existing school breakfast program.

The project was delivered by Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV) in partnership with the Australian Red Cross with funding provided by the Alliance for a Cavity Free Future Community Grants supported by Colgate.

School breakfast programs have been developed for children who are most at risk of starting the school day hungry. Supervised school toothbrushing programs have been shown to effectively improve child oral health. It would be safe to say that toothbrushing has not been part of the Victorian primary school culture. Integrating toothbrushing into the school environment via an already established program such as the breakfast club is a cost effective and targeted approach that has potential to reduce caries prevalence rates in children.

Issues such as infection control, demands on school time, cost, acceptance of the program by the breakfast club operators and the overall school community and the benefits of implementing such a program needed to be carefully tested.



Over one hundred children from three Victorian Primary schools participated in the study. Throughout the project a toolkit was developed and trialled for each of the following scenarios:

- A wet program where children brush their teeth at a sink; and
- A dry program where children brushed their teeth whilst sitting at a table.

Highlights

The findings of this research suggest that:

- The integration of a supervised toothbrushing program into Victorian primary school breakfast programs would be feasible.
- The dry program was found to be the more successful program as measured by higher child participation rates and longer brushing times sustained across the course of the program.
- Within both programs the need for volunteer or paid assistance was found to be crucial.
- The toolkits developed were designed to be simple and easy to use.

Further information

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