

Effect of caries preventive measures in children highly infected with the bacterium *Streptococcus mutans*.

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The number of *Strep. mutans* in saliva samples was examined in 101 13-14-year-old children, 53 in a control and 48 in the test group. All in the test group with 2.5×10^5 *Strep. mutans* per ml saliva were treated with 1 per cent chlorhexidine gel, once a day, for 14 days when the number of *Strep. mutans* was greatly reduced. Saliva samples were then examined in the test group every 4th month and all children with *Strep. mutans* levels above 2.5×10^5 were treated. A few selected children had fissure sealants applied to the occlusal surfaces. After 3 years, the mean number of new carious lesions was 9.6 in the control group and 4.2 in the test group. In the children with 10^6 *Strep. mutans* at the start of the study, the corresponding figures were 20.8 compared with 3.9. **Thus a reduction in caries activity can be achieved by controlled antimicrobial treatment.**

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