

School Preventive Oral Health Programme

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Abstract: Dental caries is still a problem in Thailand. Preventive care at school age is the most appropriate time since the children start to learn how to care for themselves and permanent teeth start to erupt. Founded in 1982, Pratumnaksuankularb school locates in the inner and outer royal court of the Royal Grand Palace. There are about 800 students studying in pre-primary children centre, kindergarten, and primary level. In addition, there is a centre for children with hearing problems. A school preventive oral health programme is set up as part of a dental curriculum to have dental students carried out a project from problem assessment, priority setting, writing project proposal, carrying out the planned activities until project evaluation.

The objective of the programme is to provide preventive and promotive care to primary school children. A group of dental students first carried out a survey to assess the oral health status, associated factors, and the needs for preventive care. Subsequently, the problems were analysed and preventive measures were selected with the priority given to primary preventive for permanent teeth. The plan was developed and consisted of preventive services, health education, and improve school environment for better oral health. Incremental care concept was adopted in order to overcome the problem of limited time for the large amount of needs. The preventive service, using mobile unit, included placing sealant to all newly erupt permanent teeth that have deep pit and fissures, scaling, topical fluoride application to high risk students, and perform preventive restorative resin restoration. All other treatments were referred to health centre. Oral health education was given to the student, using various methods and teaching media. All children were taught about tooth brushing, and later practice brushing using basic fuschin. A school fair was organized to stimulate the children's attitude toward good oral health care. This includes story telling, educational games appropriate for each school level, and a contest for the best oral health award.

The program was evaluated at the end of school year. Sealant retention was measured to be 73.0% complete retention, 25.6% partially loss, and 43.6% of children has improved oral hygiene. The evaluations for improvement in knowledge were assessed each time the education was given by asking questions at the end of the session. If the majority of the students give wrong answers, the correct answers were told to the students again.