

## Oral health care behaviors of Thai adolescents in the Thailand 4.0 Era

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This survey aimed at assessing oral health care behaviors, dental health perception and needs for dental services of Thai adolescents. Adolescents were students aged 15-21 years old studying in senior high schools or vocational colleges or university. Method used a multi-stage sampling design. Instrument was a questionnaire designed and tested. Samples were drawn from 13 provinces representing 13 health areas. Data collection was done in December 2016-June 2017. A total of 4,295 adolescents completed questionnaire. Data was analyzed into two groups age 15-17 and 18-21 years old. By half (49.8%) were young teens 15-17 years old which 40.7 % were male and 59.3 % were female. Among the 18-21 years group, 29.3 % were male and 70.7% were female. Results showed that most of adolescents brushed their teeth 2 times a day i.e. after wake up in the morning (> 95%) and at bedtime (>85%). Female brushed more than male. Less than 10% brushed their teeth after meals either breakfast or lunch. The 3 highest ranks of perceived dental health problems were dental caries (23.9-41.3%), toothache or sensitive teeth (17.6-25.4%) and problems related to appearance and personality such as yellow teeth, having space between teeth and bad smelling. Teenagers stated had no dental health problems (17.4-27.4 %) were in younger group, and male more than female. The highest rank of the need for dental service were calculus removal and whitening their teeth (42.7-51.0%), wearing brace (orthodontic treatment) 33.4-49.0 % while the least was dental prosthesis. In conclusion adolescents concerned most about their appearance and personality. Normally oral health promotion program was designed according to the dental health status. However, to design the program for adolescents should consider their interest and perception to make it more attraction for the target group.

Key word: teenager, adolescent, Thailand, oral health, behavior