In regards to early childhood caries (ECC), is the disease more prevalent in children that consume frequent snacks in-between meals or children that rarely snack?

**DISCUSSION**

- Difficult to select articles based on age and sample size.
- The data was generally consistent, but varies on the precision of results.
- Future research should establish the most common of these risk behaviors and investigate the effectiveness of interventions to prevent or counteract them.

**WHY IS IT RELEVANT?**

Early childhood caries (ECC) affect populations across the world. In the United States alone, the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey found that 23% of children aged 2 to 5 years had dental caries in primary teeth, and 14% of children aged 2 to 6 had untreated decay in primary teeth. The same study also found: untreated tooth decay was more prevalent in children aged 12 to 19 had caries in permanent teeth, with 15% experiencing untreated tooth decay.

**CONCLUSIONS**

- Frequent consumption of sugars in-between meals is a high risk factor to microbial etiology and ECC.
- Snacks containing large amounts of sugar increase the risk of caries due to prolonged contact between sugars in the consumed food or liquid and cariogenic bacteria on the susceptible teeth.
- The presence of visible plaque accumulation and reported consumption of sugared drinks were associated with prevalence of caries.
- Severity of ECC was associated with gender and with presence of plaque.
- Other risk factors included living in areas of low socioeconomic status, lack of preventative approaches, and limited access to dental care.

**REFERENCES**