

## **Mutans streptococci in Hispanic children in a school dental clinic**

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**Objectives:** This study compared detection of *S. mutans* and *S. sobrinus* in US Born and non-US Born Hispanic children.

**Methods:** The number of decayed and filled teeth and subject demographics including country of birth were recorded from 47 Hispanic children. Separate samples from the dorsum of the tongue, occlusal and interproximal sites of posterior teeth were analyzed by whole genomic DNA probes to 18 species including *S. mutans* and *S. sobrinus*. A subject was considered positive if the species comprised 5% or more of the total DNA probe count in any of the 3 samples.

**Results:** Of the 47 Hispanic children 53% were male, mean age 9 years (range 4-18), 50% were US Born. The mean number of decayed and filled teeth for US born and non-US born was 4.7 vs. 8.4, respectively. *S. mutans* was detected in 98% (46) of the children. *S. sobrinus* was detected in 21% (10) of the children, and it was found more frequently in US compared to non-US born children ( $p < 0.05$ ). *S. mutans* and *S. sobrinus* were detected more frequently from samples from interproximal than occlusal or tongue sites.

**Conclusions:** *S. mutans* was detected in most of our subjects; therefore no differences were observed between US and foreign born Hispanic children. However, *S. sobrinus* (in addition to *S. mutans*) was significantly more likely to be detected in US born Hispanic children than their non-US born peers, although the US born children had a lower prevalence of caries experience and untreated decay. Since *S. mutans* and *S. sobrinus* were detected more frequently in samples from interproximal sites, results also suggest that these sites may be the more sensitive to detect mutans streptococci than the dorsum of the tongue in school-aged children.