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Publication date: 2007

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Link to publication from Aalborg University

Citation for published version (APA):

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The association between use of asthma drugs and the prevalence of hypomineralized permanent first molar teeth in 6 to 8-year old Danish children

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Background
Permanent first molar hypomineralization (PFMH) is a common developmental tooth defect, characterized by an insufficient calcium deposit in the enamel. There is a wide range of lesion types but the more serious ones appear clinically as yellow opacities or lesions with loss of tooth substance. The etiology is sparsely elucidated but asthma drugs have been suspected.

Aim
The aim of this study was to examine the association between redeemed prescriptions of asthma drugs and the prevalence of PFMH among Danish children.

Methods
We performed a cross-sectional population-based study in two Danish municipalities. All children at age 6, 7, and 8 years were included (n=891) and we examined the teeth of 745 (83.6%) of them. We restricted the analyses to the 647 children with eruption of all four permanent first molars. Data on use of asthma drugs from birth until the time of the dental examination were obtained from a prescription database.

Results
A positive association was found between use of both inhaled β2 agonists and inhaled corticosteroids (asthma drugs) and risk of hypomineralizations. Among 47 children with prescriptions of asthma drugs before the age of three years (12.8%), and 9 (19.2%) had lesions with loss of tooth substance, and yellow opacities or loss of tooth substance, respectively. The corresponding figures among 264 children with no prescriptions for either inhaled or per oral asthma drugs were 13 (4.9%), and 30 (11.4%) (Table 1). The prevalence ratios are presented in Table 2.

Conclusions
Children with prescription of inhaled asthma drugs before the age of three have an increased risk for hypomineralization with macroscopic loss of enamel. It is uncertain whether this was a consequence of the drugs, the asthma or both.

Table 1. Number (and %) of children with prescriptions of asthma drugs, according to gender and the type of hypomineralization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of hypomineralization</th>
<th>Inhaled β2-agonists and corticosteroids</th>
<th>No asthma drug prescriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anytime (%)</td>
<td>Before 3rd year (%)</td>
<td>Anytime (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36 (55.4)</td>
<td>29 (61.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>29 (44.6)</td>
<td>18 (38.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesions with loss of tooth substance</td>
<td>5 (7.7)</td>
<td>6 (12.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow opacities or lesions with loss of tooth substance</td>
<td>9 (13.9)</td>
<td>9 (19.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Prevalence ratio (with 95% CI) of hypomineralization in molar teeth among children with use of asthma drugs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypomineralization lesions</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yellow opacities or lesions with loss of tooth substance</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>2.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.86-3.32)</td>
<td>(0.52-3.21)</td>
<td>(0.86-6.41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesions with loss of tooth substance</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.04-6.48)</td>
<td>(0.42-11.39)</td>
<td>(1.16-9.87)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Acknowledgements
Thanks to the dental staff in Støvring and Nibe municipalities who collected the clinical data to this study. The study received financial support from the "Augustinus Foundation"