
Data Sources and Methods

Between October 2001 and January 2002, oral health assessments were carried out with Peel children in senior kindergarten and grades 2, 4, 6 and 8 in accordance with the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care guidelines.

The number of children to be surveyed was calculated using Epi Info 6.04b. The prevalence estimates of caries among children in Ontario from the 1994 *Dental Indices Survey* were used as the best estimate for Peel for the sample size calculation. The estimated sample size requirements for each municipality for the 2001/2002 survey were 2,002 for Mississauga, 1,720 for Brampton and 1,297 for Caledon. Caledon was over-sampled to account for the smaller school population.

Schools in each of the municipalities were numbered consecutively. A random number table was then used to select schools from the list until the school population within each reflected the sample size requirement.

Parents were informed of the school-based dental survey through letters sent home with children at the beginning of the school year and prior to the screening. Parents had the option to exclude their children from participating in the dental screening or any of the dental services provided. A child could also refuse to participate in the survey.

During the survey period, every child in the selected school in senior kindergarten and grades 2, 4, 6 and 8 who had given consent had an oral assessment by dental hygienists from the Region of Peel Health department. The oral health assessments followed the 1997 Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care protocol. In this survey, examiners were calibrated for all the oral health indicators. Only cases of health conditions which were obvious were recorded. When in doubt of the presence of disease, the disease was not scored.

Data were entered into Epi Info 6.04b and analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) Version 11.0.0. To adjust for over-sampling in Caledon and other population discrepancies of the sample by municipality, a weight was applied to data for the final analysis. Confidence intervals for the statistical comparisons between municipalities were calculated using Epi Info 6.04b in order to adjust for clustering of the sample.

A total of 4,027 children in senior kindergarten and grades 2, 4, 6 and 8 were surveyed for this study: 1,622 from Brampton, 602 from Caledon and 1,803 from Mississauga. However, for this report, only children aged five, seven, nine, 11 and 13 were included in the analysis. All other ages were excluded.