3160 Parenting Stress as an Etiological Factor in ECC Development

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OBJECTIVES: Numerous studies have explored the effects of pediatric health on parenting stress, but very little work has been done to explore the opposite and equally as compelling relationship of how parenting stress might affect child health, especially as it relates to oral health. This study examined the association between parenting stress and early childhood caries (ECC) in 97 four- to five-year-old Australian children attending preschools in the North Brisbane, Australia health region. METHODS: Using a cross-sectional study design, clinical examinations were conducted to evaluate the caries status of each child. Two caregiver questionnaires were completed – one soliciting demographic and oral health behavior information, and the other, information on parenting stress. RESULTS: Using SAS 8.0, this study demonstrated a significant bivariate association between parenting stress and ECC experience as measured by dmft; however, the association did not persist in the two-part forward-selection logistic and linear regression models. A negative association between social desirability (defensive responding) and extent of caries was also determined. CONCLUSIONS: Our findings suggest the need to conduct longitudinal studies to give proper consideration to the temporal aspect of caries development and clarify the results obtained by on the relationship between parenting stress and oral health. Further study is also warranted to more clearly elucidate the association between social desirability (defensive responding) in parents and their children's ECC experience.