Anxious people have worst teeth, study shows

Daniel Zimmermann

HONGKONG/LEIPZIG, Germany: People with anxious personalities are more likely to have poor oral health and related dental problems like gum disease, according to a new study from New Zealand that has confirmed. Researchers from the University of Otago recently investigated the anxiety levels of 1,057 participants aged between 15 and 52. They found that dentally anxious people had almost twice the amount of decayed, missing or filled tooth surfaces by the age of 52 as people who are not dentally anxious.

In the study, participants were classified into three groups: those who had always been dentally anxious, those who had developed dental anxiety as adolescents, and those who had developed dental anxiety as adults. The first group had more tooth decay at age 5 and early experience of dentists. The second group had more tooth decay from the age of 15. The third group had lost teeth between the ages of 26 and 32. In addition, a ‘recovery’ group was discovered of people who had been dentally anxious at age 15 but had ceased to be so by the age of 52.

The findings will help dental professionals better understand what makes people dentally anxious, and inform them that some people can grow out of it, one of the researchers said.

In countries like New Zealand and Australia approximately 15 per cent of all people suffer from some form of dental anxiety.

Bollywood teams up with dental show

Claudia Salwiczek

HONGKONG/LEIPZIG, Germany: Bollywood’s biggest Gen-next star Deepika Padukone recently joined forces with the Indian Dental Association (IDA) and Wrigley India for an oral-care marathon at the World Dental Show 2009 in Mumbai. The former model, who had her big break as an actress in the 2007 feature Om Shanti Om, became an ambassador for Orbit sugar-free chewing gum in early 2009 and has represented the brand at public events since then. She is also the first actor in India to have partnered with a manufacturer to promote the oral health benefits of chewing gum.

The record 24-hour long dental check-up, called Mumbai Smiles – IDA fights against the Tooth Decay, aimed to provide free dental check-ups to underprivileged locals who cannot afford to visit a dentist on a regular basis, including school children, elderly people, and temporary workers. People with symptoms of systematic conditions, such as diabetes or cardiovascular diseases, were examined by dental and medical experts from the University of California, San Francisco (US). The event was accompanied by an online campaign throughout October.

“Dental care in India remains a neglected area and tooth decay has become common at a comparatively young age,” Dr Paramjit Singh, President of the IDA, said. “Through this initiative here at the World Dental Show, our organisation and Orbit sugar-free chewing gum is trying to generate awareness on dental health and oral regime.”

The World Dental Show, organised by the IDA, is one of the biggest dental shows in India. According to the organiser, more than 20,000 visitors, including 18,000 dentists, attended the first show held in early October. The event is supported by the Association of Dental Industry and Trade of India and the University of California, San Francisco. The next show is scheduled for October 2010.

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