Self-reported bad breath in HK adolescents: Prevalence and association with socio-demographic characteristics and self-rated health

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Background

Halitosis or bad breath is an understudied dental public health problem with adverse effects on social and mental health.

Objectives

• To assess the prevalence of self-reported halitosis in HK Chinese adolescents
• To investigate the association of halitosis with socio-demographic characteristics and self-rated health

Methods

- **Data source**: Hong Kong Student Obesity Surveillance (HKSOS) project.
- **33692 secondary school** participants in 2006-2007 completed questionnaire (mean age 14.8, 44.9% boys)
- **Question**: Health problems in past 30 days including halitosis.
- **Data Analysis**: Chi-Squared test for bivariate associations and logistic regression to calculate adjusted odds ratios (AOR).

Results

- **1 in 20** Hong Kong Chinese adolescents reported HALITOSIS.
- Adolescents who reported HALITOSIS were 2 times as likely to report poor or very poor self-rated health.

Conclusion

- 5% of HK adolescents reported halitosis in past 30 days.
- Halitosis is associated with disadvantaged socio-demographic characteristics and poor self-rated health
- More detailed investigation on the risk factors and effects on HK adolescents are required.

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