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ABSTRACT  
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## **INVESTIGATING THE TASTE PREFERENCES OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN AND JUNIOR SCHOOL CHILDREN IN SELECTING MEANS OF HYGIENE WITH THE PURPOSE OF CORRECTING INDIVIDUAL PREVENTIVE MEASURES**

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**Introduction.** Children don't strongly believe oral hygiene care is a necessity up to a certain age. Due to various reasons, toothbrushing is carried out regularly only thanks to the parent's control. The child's positive attitude to this process is formed gradually and the result depends on many factors. A significant role belongs to the properties of hygiene products. Unpleasant taste sensations may greatly affect the duration of toothbrushing, stimulate vomiting, and generally contribute to the abandonment of the procedure. Aim. Investigating the taste preferences of preschool children and junior school children in selecting means of hygiene with the purpose of correcting individual preventive measures.

**Materials and methods.** Parents and their children who visited the supermarket in order to purchase toothpaste as well as patients of the dental clinic were interviewed. Information about most preferable taste of hygiene products for children was collected. Also, the available range of hygiene products allowed to take into account the preferences of children and follow the recommendations of the dentist at the same time.

**Results.** The two hundred and eighty parents of preschool children and junior school children were interviewed, as well as 219 children of the same age. It is established that all parents try to follow the children's desire when choosing toothpaste. Thanks to the variety of hygiene products, it is possible to simultaneously follow the dentist's recommendations and the child's taste preferences when buying. Some of the younger school children 28 (12,7%) do not refuse the mint paste, usually used by adults in the family, although they love strawberry chewing gum and toothpaste. Another 81 children (36,9%) in this group indicated they preferred berry pastes only and ask parents not to buy pasta with mint. Strawberry and banana taste of toothpastes is preferred by 64 (29,2%) of preschoolers, vanilla taste - 17 (7,76%) of children and spoke against mint paste. Indifferent attitude or difficulties with the final choice of taste were identified in 10 (2,19%) of junior school children and 19 (8,67%) preschool children.

**Conclusion.** When planning preventive measures, it should be taken into account, that preschool and junior school children prefer toothpastes with strawberry taste. Mint taste of hygiene means is perceived as "bitter" because children's taste is more intense than adults.