

Effects of Chewing Stick on Periodontal Treatment in Saudi Arabian Adults. T.L. AL-KHATEEB,* D.M. O'Mullane. (King Abdulazi; Univ. Jeddah, WHO Collaborating Centre, U.C.C.)

The use of a chewing stick for tooth cleaning is widely practiced in the Islamic world. In Saudi Arabia the most widely used chewing stick (Miswak) is derived from the roots of the Arak tree (*Salvadorea persica*). The aims of this study were firstly to investigate the frequency of use of the Miswak amongst Saudi adults and secondly to estimate the effect of its use on the need for periodontal treatment. A total of 120 subjects (60 males and 60 females) in age groups 35-44 and 65 years and older in each of the cities of Jeddah and Mecca were selected from those attending out-patient clinics in general hospitals (n=480). Subjects were examined in a mobile unit using the C.P.I.T.N. and were questioned regarding use of the Miswak. Of the 36 subjects (30%) aged 35-44 in Jeddah who used the Miswak more than 3 times a day, the mean number of healthy sextants was 5.3 compared with 0.4 in the 30 (25%) who never used it. The mean number of sextants requiring scaling and oral hygiene instruction was 0.1 in the former group and 2.1 in the latter. The figures for 35-44 year olds in Mecca and for those aged 65 years and older in both cities were very similar. **It is concluded that Saudi adults who use the Miswak frequently" require less periodontal treatment, as measured by the CPITN, than these who never use it.**