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Rate of reformation of tongue coatings in young adults

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Abstract

Background: Reviewing the literature, no study on the rate of regrowth of tongue coatings after tongue cleaning was found. Therefore, the purpose of this study in young adults was to study the rate of reformation of tongue coatings after mechanical removal.

Material and methods: Thirty-five dental students participated in the present study. Following preparatory study instructions, baseline examinations were carried out followed by 3 days of observation. At baseline, tongue coating scores (prescraping) were obtained followed by tongue scrapings and determination of the wet weights of the coatings. A second tongue coating score was then obtained within 5 min of the first score (immediate post-scraping). The subjects returned for repeated tongue coating scores after 1 and 2 days and for final examination after 3 days, which included both tongue coating scores (prescraping and immediate post-scraping) and determination of the wet weights of the coatings.

Results: Prior to scraping the tongue at day 0 (baseline), mean tongue coating amounted to a surface extension of 33% of the entire dorsum of the tongue. Scraping the tongue reduced the score to 9%. On average, tongue coating scores had returned to baseline levels on day 2. The mean wet weights of tongue scrapings at days 0 and 3 were similar and amounted to 0.09 +/- 0.07 and 0.09 +/- 0.06 g, respectively.

Conclusion: If tongue cleaning is to be recommended, the results of this study in dental students indicate that tongue cleaning should be performed on a daily basis.

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