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Each month we highlight a recent publication, recent study results, or other important information from the nation's network.

National Dental PBRN Article of the Month

The Prevalence of Questionable Occlusal Caries Lesions: findings from The National Dental PBRN

The December 2012 issue of the *Journal of the American Dental Association* featured an article entitled "The prevalence of questionable occlusal caries lesions: findings from The National Dental PBRN".

In this publication, the authors describe the prevalence of questionable occlusal caries (QOC), which can be defined as clinically suspected caries with no cavitation or radiographic evidence of occlusal caries. A total of 82 dentist and hygienist practitioner-investigators (P-Is) from the United States and Denmark in The National Dental PBRN participated. When patients seeking treatment had at least one unrestored occlusal surface, P-Is quantified their number of unrestored occlusal surfaces and instances of QOC, if applicable. P-Is also recorded information about characteristics of patients who had QOC and had provided informed consent.

The authors found that overall, 6,910 patients had at least one unrestored occlusal surface, with a total of 50,445 unrestored surfaces. Thirty-four percent of all patients and 11 percent of unrestored occlusal tooth surfaces among all patients had QOC. Patient- and surface-level QOC prevalences varied significantly according to region (P < .001 and P = .03, respectively). The highest percentages for patient- and surface-level prevalence occurred in Florida and Georgia (42 percent and 16 percent, respectively).

This is the first study in which investigators have quantified the prevalence of QOC in routine clinical practice. The authors concluded that these results document a high prevalence overall, with wide variation in prevalence among the network regions.

Click here to view the PubMed abstract.