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ASSESSMENT OF BLOOD CONTENT IN SALIVA DURING THE MIXED DENTITION STAGE

THESIS

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Introduction

Introduction

The mixed dentition period is defined as the stage in which both primary and permanent teeth are found at the same time in the oral cavity. This stage usually starts at about 6 to 7 years of age, when the first permanent teeth, mainly the first molars and central incisors begin to erupt. By about 10 to 12 years of age, this stage ends, when the last primary tooth completes its physiological shedding (Foster, 1982).

It is generally agreed that the processes of shedding of primary teeth and eruption of permanent teeth are usually associated with some degree of gingival irritation and bleeding. Mechanical irritation to the underlying tissue by the uneven, sharp, partially resorbed roots ends of primary teeth is accompanied with some gingival enlargement, bleeding and discomfort. Moreover, mechanical trauma to the gingiva overlying the crowns of the erupting permanent teeth may provoke bleeding. The sharp incisal edges of anterior permanent teeth and the cusp tips of the posterior permanent teeth piercing through the gingiva, in the presence of mechanical trauma from the opposing teeth may contribute to further bleeding (Kitamuira et al., 1984).

Although the presence of blood group substances has been identified normally in the saliva, bleeding which accompanies the process of shedding and eruption of teeth during the mixed

dentition stage may contribute to additional amounts of blood in saliva. Since it is well known that saliva contaminated with visible and occult blood is one of the major pathways of disease transmission, children harboring communicable infectious diseases during mixed dentition stage may represent a potential source of infection to the dentist and to other patients. This in turn has lead to the necessity of developing a cheep, easy and reliable method of screening to detect occult blood in saliva using occult blood test in order to ensure proper disinfection and sterilization (Kitamuira et al., 1984).

Aim of the work