

**Oral Disease Briefing Document**  
**Presented to the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities**  
**September 20, 2007**

**Oral disease**, defined broadly, includes dental and periodontal infections, mucosal disorders, oral and throat cancers, developmental disorders, injuries, and other chronic and disabling conditions. The most common oral diseases are dental caries (tooth decay) and periodontal diseases.

**CRITERION #1: PREVALENCE / INCIDENCE**

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- Dental caries is the most common disease among children.
- In 2005, 59% of Washington's 2<sup>nd</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> graders had dental caries; 20% had untreated decay.
- The prevalence of dental caries and untreated decay remained stable from 2000 and 2005.
- Data from 2004 revealed that 70% of Washington adults age 18 years and older visited a dentist in the past year; while 69.3% had their teeth cleaned in the past year.
- In 2004, 39.1% of adults age 65 and older had lost six or more of their natural teeth due to tooth decay or gum disease and 16.1% had lost all their teeth.
- In 2004, 733 Washington residents were diagnosed with oral and throat cancer; the incidence rate was 11.9 per 100,000.
- From 1992-2004, the incidence rate for oral and throat cancer decreased by 1.1% per year.

**CRITERION #2: SEVERITY**

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- In 2004, there were 171 deaths among Washington residents from oral and throat cancer for a mortality rate of 3.1 deaths per 100,000.
- The oral and throat cancer mortality rate has remained level from 1992-2004.

**CRITERION #3: DISPARITY**

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- Dental caries prevalence among 2<sup>nd</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> graders was significantly higher among Native Americans (77.3%), Hispanics (72.2%), and Asians (67.9%) than for whites (55.0%). The prevalence for African American children was 59.5%. The prevalence of untreated decay were significantly higher for all minority groups relative to white children, with the highest prevalence among Native American children at 37.0%, more than double the prevalence of 16.3% among white children.
- The Index of Disparity for dental caries prevalence among 2<sup>nd</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> graders was 25.9%.
- The incidence rates for oral and throat cancer were 14.6 per 100,000 for American Indian/Alaska Natives, 11.3 for whites, 10.3 for blacks, and 8.0 for Asians/Pacific Islanders.
- The Index of Disparity for oral and throat cancer rates was 50.9%.
- Non-Hispanics had a higher incidence rate for oral and throat cancer than Hispanics.
- Mortality rates for oral and throat cancer did not vary by race/ethnicity.
- The incidence rate and mortality rate for oral and throat cancer was higher for Washington males than for females.

**The Index of Disparity** is the average of the difference in rates between the racial/ethnic group with the "best" rate and all other racial/ethnic groups.

*Keppel KG et al., Measuring progress in healthy people 2010. Statistical Notes, no 25. NCHS, 2004*