



Oral Health Surveys: Basic Methods

World Health Organization

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Now in its fourth revised edition, this widely used manual describes basic methods for conducting oral health surveys. Designed to assist epidemiological surveyors and planners of oral health services, the book presents standardized methodologies for collecting and reporting data on oral diseases and conditions and for estimating future demands on oral health care services. Chapters advocate use of a practical and economic sample design approach supported by a description of diagnostic criteria that can be readily understood and applied in all countries. Recommended survey methods, which have been used by over 130 health administrations throughout the world, have proved their capacity to yield reliable, useful, and internationally comparable data on oral health status and treatment needs.

New in this edition are sections on the evaluation of extra-oral conditions, the oral mucosa, enamel opacities/hypoplasia, loss of periodontal attachment, and dentofacial anomalies. The book also features detailed instructions for using the WHO oral health assessment form in its updated version. Use of this standardized form, which is strongly encouraged by WHO, is supported by a computer data processing service available on request.

The book has seven chapters. The opening chapters explain general principles for designing basic oral health surveys and offer advice on how to organize and conduct a survey. Chapter three describes ways of ensuring that the data collected are as consistent and reliable as possible. The importance of training examiners to make consistent clinical judgements is repeatedly emphasized. Guidelines for implementing the survey are provided in chapter four, which offers practical advice on topics ranging from the responsibilities of personnel and ways to avoid mistakes, through recommended instruments and supplies, to simple measures for ensuring that examination areas are efficiently organized.

The fifth and most extensive chapter provides detailed instructions for gathering, coding, and recording the data needed to complete each of the assessment form's 15 sections. Information includes recommended procedures for conducting the clinical examination, clear explanations of relevant codes, and descriptions of the criteria for their use. The practical value of this information is enhanced through the inclusion of numerous illustrations and six pages of colour plates.

The remaining chapters describe the assistance that can be obtained from WHO and explain how survey reports should be prepared and presented. A list of 38 tables that can be prepared by WHO from data collected in the survey is provided in an annex.

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