
Evaluation of a Community Dental Sealant Program. C. DORANTES*, A. DASANAYAKE, R. ELLIOTT, T. BUTTS, N. CHILDERS Sch. of Dent. Univ. of Alabama, JEFF. CO. DEPT. HEALTH, Birmingham, AL.

Objectives: School based sealant programs provide services to a population that otherwise may not have access or avoid basic preventive care. The purpose of this study is to analyze existing data from the Jefferson County Department of Health (JCDH) in Birmingham, AL., in order to determine retention rates of sealants on first permanent molars. **Methods:** Data gathered since 1997 from the school based sealant program was analyzed to determine retention rates of sealants in first permanent molars on children who had at least one recorded exam following sealant placement. **Results:** In the 1997-2001 period, the JCDH performed a total of 23,050 exams on children ranging from 6 to 16 years of age. An average of 5.12 sealants per patient were placed by JCDH staff. A retention rate of 48% was observed for an average interval of 34 months between placement and follow up exam. **Conclusion:** These results indicate that a retention rate of 50% over a five year period was present in this population. Although this retention rate may not be ideal, protection due to partial retention may be beneficial. Further study is needed to compare this population to a matched sample of non-participants for caries prevalence.