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TOOTH LOSS AND CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE LINKED

Tooth loss is related to cardiovascular disease, according to a report in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine (December 2005). There is not yet understanding of whether one disease causes the other, only that there is a correlation between the two.

The report used data from the 1999-2002 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey, which contained about 40,000 participants ages 40-79. This study's lead investigator, Catherine Okoro, Ph.D, epidemiologist in the Division of Adult and Community Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, found the following results:

Heart disease was found in 4.7 percent of the respondents without tooth loss, 5.7 percent of those missing 1-5 teeth, 7.5 percent missing 6-31 teeth and 8.5 percent with total tooth loss.

The correlation was found even among nonsmokers. "Smoking has strong relationships to both tooth loss and heart disease," Dr. Okoro told the AJPM. "Nonetheless, when we stratified by age group and smoking status, a significant association remained between tooth loss and heart disease among respondents aged 40 to 59 years who had never smoked."

Continued research is needed to identify linking factors.

Source: <http://www.ada.org/prof/resources/pubs/adanews/adanewsarticle.asp?articleid=1735>