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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Researchers Examine Impact of Soda on Children's Dental Health

Dentists analyze sugary drinks and tooth wear; weight screening at the dental office

CHICAGO, January 25, 2016— Just days after the U.S. government released its new dietary guidelines advising Americans to reduce their sugar intake, new research from *The Journal of the American Dental Association* (JADA) shows that sugary drinks are associated with erosive tooth wear among teenagers in Mexico, where sugary beverages are a dietary staple.

“The oral health of children is always top of mind, and we’ve seen recently that sugar is a leading problem when it comes to their overall health and dental health,” said JADA editor Michael Glick, D.M.D. “This study shows an association between high intake of sweet drinks and poor oral health. This issue needs to be taken seriously.”

The study authors issued a food questionnaire to teens between the ages 14 to 19 living in Mexico regarding the intake of fruit juice, sports drinks and sweet carbonated drinks, among other food items. The teenagers were then examined for erosive tooth wear. Results of the study showed that the overall prevalence of erosive tooth wear was 31.7 percent, with sweet carbonated drinks – soda – causing the most erosion.

“While this is an ex-U.S. study, the findings are meaningful to everyone who cares about the health and wellness of children,” said Yasmi O. Crystal, D.M.D., F.A.A.P.D., professor of pediatric dentistry at New York University College of Dentistry. “These findings support calls from the World Health Organization, Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Department of

Agriculture to reduce the intake of added sugars. Limiting the intake of sweetened carbonated beverages can help patients and our health care system as a whole.”

Mexico recently implemented a tax on sugary drinks to limit intake, which resulted in sales of sugary beverages falling as much as 12 percent. The “soda tax” concept has been suggested by political officials in some areas of the U.S. and other parts of the world.

Too much sugar intake and other poor dietary habits can result in not only poor oral health but also, according to leading medical organizations, poor overall health, including obesity. Another article in the February issue of JADA suggests the dental office may be the right place for weight screening, in an effort to promote healthy behaviors and improve weight and oral health status.

For more information about these studies please visit JADA.ada.org. To learn about how nutrition affects the health of children’s teeth, visit MouthHealthy.org/nutrition.

Editor’s Note: Reporters are invited to follow the ADA and ADA News on Twitter @AmerDentalAssn and @ADANews.

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The not-for-profit ADA is the nation’s largest dental association, representing more than 158,000 dentist members. The premier source of oral health information, the ADA has advocated for the public’s health and promoted the art and science of dentistry since 1859. The ADA’s state-of-the-art research facilities develop and test dental products and materials that have advanced the practice of dentistry and made the patient experience more positive. The ADA Seal of Acceptance long has been a valuable and respected guide to consumer dental care products. The monthly *The Journal of the American Dental Association* (JADA) is the ADA’s flagship publication and the best-read scientific journal in dentistry. For more information about the ADA, visit ada.org. For more information on oral health, including prevention, care and treatment of dental disease, visit the ADA’s consumer website MouthHealthy.org.