Survey and evaluation of therapeutic toothpastes and mouthrinses in periodontics

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Numerous oral health products in the market claimed and exaggerated therapeutic effects on periodontal diseases. The purpose of the present survey was to collect and evaluate the therapeutic toothpastes and mouthrinses in periodontics. Thirty-eight toothpastes and 25 mouthrinses were collected from supermarkets and drugstores surrounding Taipei area. The safety, efficacy, composition, advertising, labeling, cost, and manufacturer of the products were evaluated. Results indicated that therapeutic agents of most toothpastes were chlorhexidine, tricolsan, fluoride and potassium nitrate. Many toothpastes and mouthrinses claimed therapeutic effects on gingivitis, plaque or calculus reduction, dentinal hypersensitivity, and even periodontitis. There was great variation in the price of the market products. Toothpastes or mouthrinses which claimed therapeutic effects were usually more expensive. Less than 20% of the products did not exaggerate their therapeutic effects. Only 17% toothpastes had warning label and 71% listed shelf life. Only 26% has both inner and outer warning labels and up to 12% of the labeling used foreign languages. The mislabeling of therapeutic mouthrinses was also very common. 35% of the manufacturers were from Europe and 32% of the warning labels were unclear or not present. The majority of the active ingredients of mouthrinses were chlorhexidine, cetylpyridinium, essential oils, and phenolic compounds. The labeling for efficacy of the mouthrinses varied from treating malodor to periodontitis. In addition, the manufacturers of Taiwan’s toothpastes and mouthrinses were from all over the world. The safety and efficacy of the products may have not been evaluated and should be standardized. According to the most current literatures, there are no oral health products that may prevent or treat periodontitis. The exaggerated labeling on the prevention or treatment of periodontitis should be corrected in order not to mislead the consumers. It is important for the government and dental organization to set up the guidelines and regulation for oral chemotherapeutic products in Taiwan and educate consumers the correct knowledge in periodontal disease prevention and therapy. (Chin J Periodontol 6:183-195, 2001)

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