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Self-reported bad breath (halitosis) in HK adolescents: Prevalence and association with socio-demographic characteristics and self-rated health

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 Background
Halitosis or bad breath is an understudied dental public health problem with adverse effects on social and mental health.

 Objectives
• To assess the prevalence of self-reported halitosis in HK Chinese adolescents
• To investigate the association of halitosis with socio-demographic characteristics and self-rated health

 Methods

• Data source: Hong Kong Student Obesity Surveillance (HKSOS) project.
• 33692 secondary school participants in 2006-2007 completed questionnaire (mean age 14.8, 44.9% boys)
• Question: Health problems in past 30 days including halitosis.
• Data Analysis: Chi-Squared test for bivariate associations and logistic regression to calculate adjusted odds ratios (AOR).

 Results
✓ 1 in 20 Hong Kong Chinese adolescents reported HALITOSIS.
✓ Figure 1: Graph illustrating EXCESS RISK of halitosis with different socio-demographic factors
✓ Adolescents who reported HALITOSIS were 2 times as likely to report poor or very poor self-rated health.

 Conclusion
• 5% of HK adolescents reported halitosis in past 30 days.
• Halitosis is associated with disadvantaged socio-demographic characteristics and poor self-rated health
• More detailed investigation on the risk factors and effects on HK adolescents are required.

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