Ancient teeth question origin of men

Dr Chris Beard from the Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan, U.S.A., unveiled the jawbones found in 2005. The Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh, USA, has featured the jawbones found in 2005, which were dated as the earliest hominid in the world. The jawbones found in 2005 featured greatly enlarged canine teeth that distinguish the animal, also called Ganiela megacantina, from prosimians, a family of earlier and primitive primates that had evolved in Africa and the Asian continent. Dr Beard said. Recent paleo-anthropological research has focused on evidence that early Asian anthropoids had not evolved from primates in Asia. The jawbones found in 2005 featured greatly enlarged canine teeth that distinguish the animal, also called Ganiela megacantina, from prosimians, a family of earlier and primitive primates that did not evolve into monkeys or apes. Heavy dental abrasion also indicated that Ganiela used its canine teeth to open tough tropical fruits and extract the nutritious seeds contained inside, a type of feeding adaptation that has never been documented among prosimian primates.

“These findings show that early Asian anthropoids had not evolved from primates in Asia,” Dr Beard said. Recent paleo-anthropological research has focused on evidence that early Asian anthropoids had not evolved from primates in Asia. The jawbones found in 2005 featured greatly enlarged canine teeth that distinguish the animal, also called Ganiela megacantina, from prosimians, a family of earlier and primitive primates that did not evolve into monkeys or apes. Heavy dental abrasion also indicated that Ganiela used its canine teeth to open tough tropical fruits and extract the nutritious seeds contained inside, a type of feeding adaptation that has never been documented among prosimian primates.

Malaysia takes on shortage of dentists

PENANG, Malaysia: As a first step to establishing a National Oral Health Center, the Health Ministry of Malaysia has announced the formation of a Center of Excellence for dentistry in several hospitals nationwide. The center will be opened in stages later this year and cover various disciplines, such as mouth-cancer screenings and dental surgery, Health Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai told reporters at the Malaysian Dental Association’s AGM held in George Town last week.

The Health Minister added that the center will be crucial for dental experts in his country to enhance their specialization in line with current technological advancements. As oral health is becoming more complex, there is need for expertise and specialization, he said. This year, the government has already given out 56 scholarships to students in selected fields of dentistry compared to 29 last year.

Malaysia is facing a shortage of dentists and needs to increase their numbers in order to cope with the increased demand for dental care. According to ministry figures, only 60 per cent of posts for dental officers in the Health Ministry were filled in 2008 and only 56 per cent of all dental specialists posts. The Health Minister said that his ministry aims to triple the number of dentists and increase the ratio of dentists to the population from slightly over 1,8,000 to 14,000 by the year 2017.

On 51 December 2008, there were 5,410 dentists in Malaysia, of which 241 were specialists.
Micronesia study confirms oral health benefits of xylitol

Claudia Salwiczek
DTI

Recently, the use of a xylitol syrup rinse was confirmed to be effective protection against tooth decay. Researchers, who conducted a study in the Republic of the Marshall Islands where the caries rate is two to three times that of the typical American or European community, found that 16 ml of xylitol syrup could prevent up to 70 per cent of decayed teeth. The findings were presented in the July issue of the Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine, and demonstrate the first evidence (to the authors’ knowledge) that xylitol is “effective for the prevention of decay in primary teeth for toddlers.”

Scientists in Finland first discovered the beneficial uses of xylitol in dentistry in the early 1970s. Studies led by Profs. Kauko K. Mäkinen and Arje Schein at the Institute of Dentistry at the University of Turku proved that xylitol, which occurs as a sugar in the fibres of many fruits and vegetables, inhibits the adhesion of the caries-causing oral bacteria Streptococcus mutans.

Xylitol is widely used in a number of dental care products, including chewing gum, toothpaste and mouth rinses.

Beijing targets health

The government of Beijing has announced a ten-year plan for raising the average life span of its citizens through increasing health awareness and the improvement of health care services. Further objectives are to reduce obesity rates in primary and middle schools, as well as to lower mortality rates amongst pregnant women and babies, city officials told reporters at a press conference in August.

Improved dental hygiene will also be a point of focus, they said.

Living conditions and lifestyles have changed rapidly in major Chinese cities like Beijing and Shanghai. An unhealthy diet rich in sugars, low exposure to fluoride in general and a lack of tradition in personal care and oral hygiene are major factors in increasing dental caries incidence rates. Growing tobacco consumption and excessive use of alcohol have also increased the risk of periodontal disease and oral cancer. Beijing has invested US$2 million in recent years on caries prevention programmes but needs to do more to improve oral health status amongst its citizens. According to the third national oral epidemiological survey in 2008, over 90 per cent of people in the city suffer from some form of oral disease.

Fang Laiying, director of the Beijing Municipal Health Bureau, said that the municipal government hopes to improve the health of locals comprehensively through the plan’s implementation. He said the incidence of chronic, non-infectious diseases has been on the rise in recent years, including high blood pressure, diabetes and coronary disease. The municipal government will work intensively to achieve the plan’s objectives, through popularising health information, such as correct toothbrushing, and advocating healthy food, tobacco control and more exercise. Efforts will also be made to further dental health care, eye care, personal health awareness, and safeguard the health of mothers and infants.

Laiying added that a committee for health promotion with personnel from 16 governmental departments had been set up by the municipal government to oversee the efforts of urban districts, suburban counties and relevant government departments in implementing the plan. The funds necessary for implementing the plan will be provided for in the city monetary budget, he said.

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Children’s toothbrushing and oral care products like chewing gum (2013 Photo Gallery)