

# Effectiveness of sign language-based cartoon oral health education for hearing-impaired children

<b>Submission date</b> 14/08/2025	<b>Recruitment status</b> No longer recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered <input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
<b>Registration date</b> 18/08/2025	<b>Overall study status</b> Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input type="checkbox"/> Results
<b>Last Edited</b> 18/08/2025	<b>Condition category</b> Oral Health	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Record updated in last year

## Plain English summary of protocol

### Background and study aims

This study aimed to improve oral health awareness among hearing-impaired children. Many children with hearing impairments face challenges in understanding traditional health education. To address this, a 10-minute cartoon film was developed in Unified Arabic Sign Language that teaches children about teeth, common oral health problems, and good oral hygiene practices such as brushing, flossing, rinsing, and healthy diet habits. The film included animations, subtitles, sound effects, and clear sign language interpretation to make learning easier and more engaging.

### Who can participate?

Children aged 6–12 years

### What does the study involve?

Children in the study were randomly assigned to either the intervention group, who watched the educational film, or the control group, who received no film during the study period but were offered it afterwards. Oral health was measured using standard dental exams to check plaque and gingival health, and children also completed a questionnaire to assess their knowledge. Toothbrushes were given to all participants at the start. Assessments were conducted at the beginning, at six weeks, and at twelve weeks after the start.

### What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

Possible benefits: Children may benefit from improved knowledge of oral health and better oral hygiene practices. The educational film, adapted to their communication needs, provides accessible information that can help prevent oral diseases such as dental caries and gum disease. Possible risks: The study involved minimal risk. Risks were limited to routine oral examinations (mild discomfort during plaque and gingival assessments). No invasive procedures were performed, and toothbrushes were provided to promote safe hygiene practices.

### Where is the study run from?

Damascus University, Syria

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?  
January 2021 to April 2022

Who is funding the study?  
Damascus University, Syria

Who is the main contact?  
Dr Hasan Alzoubi, dr.hasan.alzoubi.93@gmail.com

## Contact information

### Type(s)

Scientific, Principal Investigator

### Contact name

Dr Alemar Ghannam

### Contact details

Damascus University  
Mazze  
Damascus  
Syria  
0000  
+963933173023  
Alemar.ghannam.2222@hotmail.com

### Type(s)

Scientific

### Contact name

Prof Mayssoon Dashash

### Contact details

Damascus University  
Mazze  
Damascus  
Syria  
0000  
+963966956753  
mdashash@yahoo.com

### Type(s)

Public, Scientific

### Contact name

Dr Hasan Alzoubi

### Contact details

Damascus University  
Mazze

Damascus  
Syria  
0000  
+963943647659  
dr.hasan.alzoubi.93@gmail.com

## Additional identifiers

### EudraCT/CTIS number

Nil known

### IRAS number

### ClinicalTrials.gov number

Nil known

### Secondary identifying numbers

UDDS-2370-18042022/SRC-353

## Study information

### Scientific Title

A randomized controlled trial assessing the effectiveness of sign language-based cartoon oral health education on hearing-impaired children

### Acronym

SLICE

### Study objectives

To evaluate the impact of oral health education on increasing awareness among children with hearing impairments, and to explore the potential of modern technologies—specifically sign language-based cartoon films—in enhancing educational experiences, improving oral hygiene practices, and preventing oral diseases.

### Ethics approval required

Ethics approval required

### Ethics approval(s)

Approved 18/04/2022, Biomedical Research Ethics Committee of Damascus University (University Presidency Building, University Campus, Baramkeh 23J89, Damascus, 00000, Syria; +963 1133923012; president@damasuniv.edu.sy), ref: 2370

### Study design

Single-center interventional randomized controlled trial

### Primary study design

Interventional

### Secondary study design

Randomised controlled trial

**Study setting(s)**

Care home

**Study type(s)**

Prevention

**Participant information sheet**

See study outputs table

**Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied**

Oral health awareness and oral hygiene practices among children with hearing impairments  
Prevention of dental caries and periodontal diseases

**Interventions**

Children in the intervention group received oral health education through a 10-minute sign language-based cartoon film titled "Oral Health", developed in Unified Arabic Sign Language with subtitles, animations, and sound effects. The film was designed according to Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning and covered topics such as tooth anatomy, functions, common oral diseases, and oral hygiene practices. It was shown on a laptop in short, engaging segments to minimize cognitive overload. The control group received no intervention during the study period but was offered the same educational film after completion. All participants underwent oral examinations at baseline, 6 weeks, and 12 weeks, with plaque and gingivitis assessed using the Silness-Löe indices. Toothbrushes were provided to all children at baseline.

Participants were randomly allocated into intervention and control groups using a computer-generated random sequence. Allocation concealment was achieved through sequentially numbered, sealed opaque envelopes prepared by an independent researcher not involved in recruitment or assessment.

**Intervention Type**

Behavioural

**Primary outcome measure**

Oral health knowledge scoring measured using a structured questionnaire designed for hearing-impaired children at baseline and 12 weeks

**Secondary outcome measures**

Secondary outcome measures were assessed at baseline, 6 and 12 weeks:

1. Plaque accumulation measured using the Silness-Löe Plaque Index (PI)
2. Gingival health measured using the Silness-Löe Gingival Index (GI)

**Overall study start date**

15/01/2021

**Completion date**

30/04/2022

**Eligibility****Key inclusion criteria**

1. Children diagnosed with hearing impairment
2. Proficient in sign language sufficient to understand classroom instructions

**Participant type(s)**

Patient

**Age group**

Child

**Lower age limit**

6 Years

**Upper age limit**

12 Years

**Sex**

Both

**Target number of participants**

90

**Total final enrolment**

90

**Key exclusion criteria**

1. Presence of systemic illnesses (neurological, cardiac, metabolic, or developmental disorders) that could interfere with communication, comprehension, or oral hygiene practices, as reported by parents and verified by medical records when available
2. Prolonged absence from school during the study period
3. Ongoing orthodontic treatment
4. Non-cooperative behavior, defined as a score of 1 ("definitely negative") or 2 ("negative") on the Frankl Behavior Rating Scale during the initial dental screening, based on caregiver interpretation and clinical observation

**Date of first enrolment**

14/02/2021

**Date of final enrolment**

23/07/2021

**Locations****Countries of recruitment**

Syria

**Study participating centre**

**Department of Pediatric Dentistry**

Damascus University, Mazzeh

Damascus

Syria  
0000

## Sponsor information

### Organisation

Damascus University

### Sponsor details

Baramkeh

Damascus

Syria

0000

+9631133923012

president@damasuniv.edu.sy

### Sponsor type

University/education

### Website

<https://www.damascusuniversity.edu.sy/>

### ROR

<https://ror.org/03m098d13>

## Funder(s)

### Funder type

University/education

### Funder Name

Damascus University

### Alternative Name(s)

University of Damascus, , DU

### Funding Body Type

Government organisation

### Funding Body Subtype

Universities (academic only)

### Location

Syria

# Results and Publications

## Publication and dissemination plan

Planned publication in a peer-reviewed journal

## Intention to publish date

01/09/2025

## Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

Contact for dataset access: Dr Hasan Alzoubi, Damascus University (email: dr.hasan.alzoubi.93@gmail.com)

Type of data: De-identified participant-level data, including oral health questionnaire responses and clinical indices (Plaque Index, Gingival Index).

Timing of availability: Available upon request following publication of the primary study results, from 01/09/2025 onwards.

Consent: Written informed consent for participation and data use was obtained from caregivers /parents of all participants.

Data anonymization: All data will be de-identified and anonymized prior to sharing, in compliance with institutional and GDPR-equivalent standards.

Restrictions: Data sharing will require a data-sharing agreement and may be subject to additional ethical review.

Additional comments: Data will be provided in commonly used formats (Excel, CSV, SPSS) to facilitate secondary analyses.

## IPD sharing plan summary

Available on request

## Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
<a href="#">Participant information sheet</a>			18/08/2025	No	Yes