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Acceleration in dental development: fact or fiction

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The aim of this investigation was to determine whether an actual acceleration in dental development has taken place over the last 30 years in a European population group, as is so readily observable in relation to body height.

In this study, radiographs of 1038 healthy European children, 516 boys and 522 girls, were evaluated. The methodology and norms given by Nolla (1960) for both sexes were used and compared with the tooth developmental stages in our subjects.

In girls, no difference to Nolla's norms could be detected. However, in boys, dental development has accelerated. This difference was most apparent in the 3- to 9-year-old age group and was statistically significant. Thus, over the last 30 years, a small acceleration in dental development has taken place in very young males.

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