Whole mouth extractions in children on the rise in the UK

By Dental Tribune UK

LONDON, UK: New data released by the National Health Service (NHS) has painted a bleak picture of the state of oral health in children in the UK, with 322 children under the age of ten undergoing full dental extractions in the period between 2012–2013. The British Dental Association (BDA) warned that full dental extractions are an extreme sign of the epidemic of tooth decay among children, particularly those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

“It’s tragic whenever a dentist has to perform a full clearance on a child, but in many hospitals, it is simply business as usual,” said Dr Mick Armstrong, Chair of the BDA.

“ Tooth decay is wholly preventable, but remains the number one reason for admissions among young children. Sadly, these are just the most extreme examples of an epidemic that’s costing our NHS millions. The sugar levy is progress, but must not mark the end of government interest. Kids in England deserve a real national effort to turn the tables on this unnecessary epidemic of extractions,” Armstrong said.

In response, NHS England stated that “sugary food and drinks is driving the epidemic of tooth decay,” and health providers on Starting Well, a campaign to help children improve their dental health.

Dr Max Davie of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health added that “the leading cause of decay is poor diet. With one in three children obese by the time they leave primary school, cases of tooth extraction are likely to increase unless something is done urgently to prevent it.”

“NHS England is working with the dental profession, local authorities and health providers on Starting Well, a campaign to help children improve their dental health.”