

Background

In Ireland, policy decisions relating to toothpaste use (2002) and the level of fluoride in drinking water (2007) were taken in response to increasing levels of enamel fluorosis and declining levels of dental caries in Irish children. The impact of these changes has not been evaluated in terms of caries prevention or enamel fluorosis levels.

The aim of the “Fluoride and Caring for Children’s Teeth” (FACCT) study is to evaluate the impact and outcome of the change in policies on the use of fluoride toothpaste and water fluoridation on dental caries and enamel fluorosis in Irish children.

The FACCT study includes clinical measurement of dental caries and enamel fluorosis in a representative sample of 5286 five- and twelve-year-old school-children from fluoridated Dublin and from mixed (fluoridated and non fluoridated) Cork and Kerry. This oral health survey was completed in June 2014.

Parents of participants completed a paper-based survey that included questions relating to their child’s Oral Health Related Quality of Life (OHRQoL)-the Parental-Caregiver Perceptions Questionnaire (P-CPQ) (Thomson et al. 2013). Twelve-year-old participants completed an electronic questionnaire that included questions relating to OHRQoL- the Child Perceptions Questionnaire (CPQ₁₁₋₁₄) (Jokovic et al. 2002; Jokovic et al. 2006).

The Irish language is the first official language of Ireland and the Official Languages Act 2003 promotes its use for official purposes. However, English is much more widely spoken.

The FACCT sample (276 schools) included 15 (5.4%) Gaelscoileanna (Irish-medium schools located in predominantly English-speaking regions) and 12 (4.3%) schools located in the Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking areas defined by government order).

Objective

To construct and utilise Irish-language versions of the fieldwork documents, including the validated English-language instruments Parental-Caregiver Perceptions Questionnaire (P-CPQ) and Child Perceptions Questionnaire (CPQ₁₁₋₁₄).

Methods

Paper-based FACCT consent pack documents comprising an introductory letter to parents, informed consent/assent form, residential history form, medical history form and a parent survey were professionally translated from English to Irish by Ionad na Gaeilge Labhartha at University College Cork.

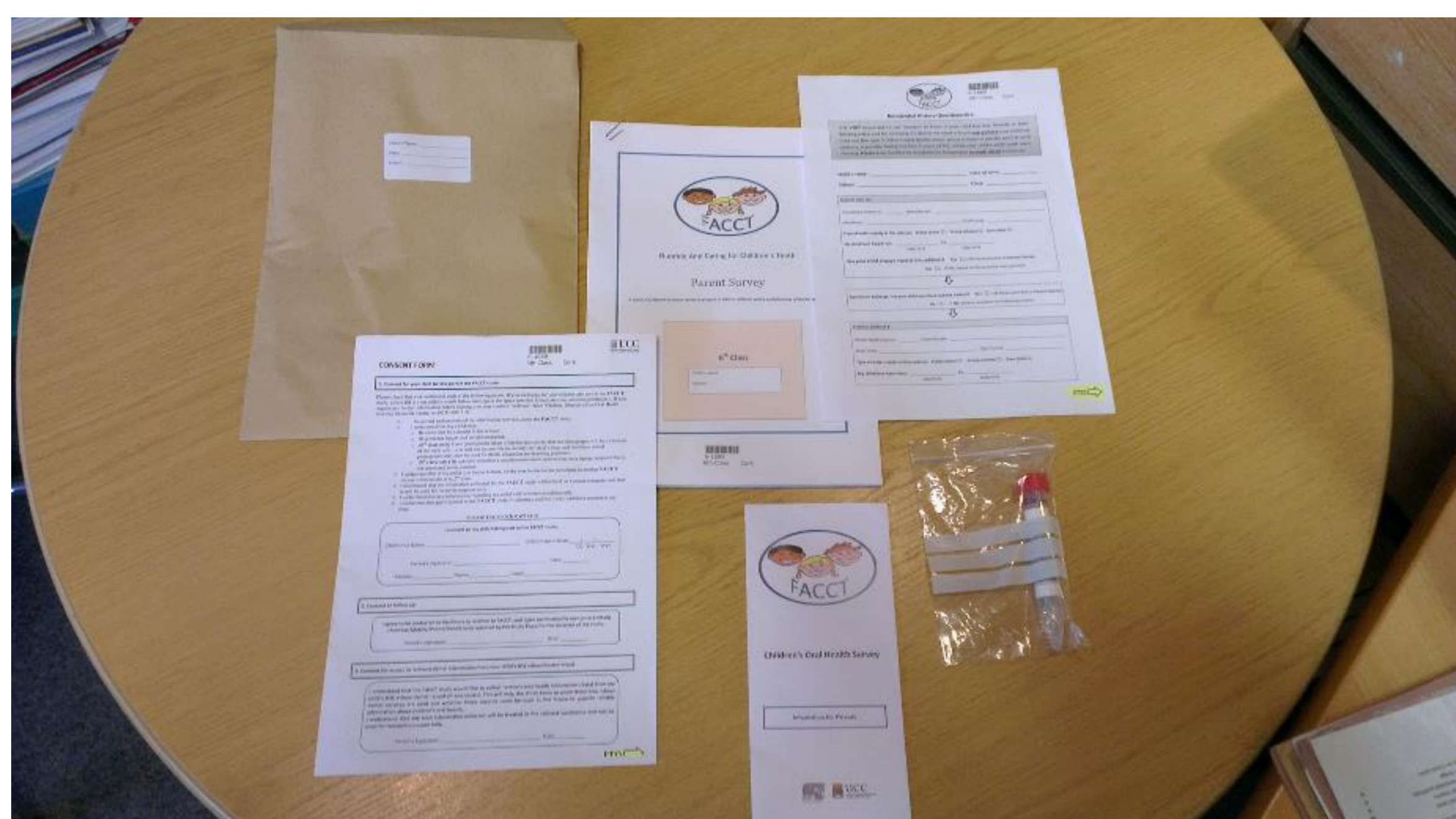
All of the translated documents were verified independently and in duplicate by FACCT study personnel to confirm that the questions were unchanged by the translation process.

The paper-based parent survey and 12-year-old’s electronic questionnaire included questions relating to OHRQoL. In the case of these validated instruments (P-CPQ and CPQ₁₁₋₁₄) an additional safeguard was introduced, the translated questionnaires being back-translated by a second professional translator blind to the original English version. The original English versions and the back translated English versions were then compared. The Irish wording was adjusted where necessary ensuring the meaning of the validated instruments was unchanged by the translation into Irish.

The Irish-language versions of the FACCT consent pack documents were provided on request to Gaelscoileanna (Irish-medium schools located in predominantly English-speaking regions) and to schools located in Gaeltacht areas (Irish-speaking areas defined by government order).

Both English- and Irish-language versions of the electronic 12-year-old’s questionnaire were available in all schools; these were completed by children on dedicated laptop computers in the schools.

Fig. 1. FACCT consent pack documents



Results

Of the 15 Gaelscoileanna (Irish-medium schools located in predominantly English-speaking regions), twelve (80%) requested English consent packs and 3 (20%) requested both English and Irish consent packs.

Of the twelve schools located in Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking) areas, 2 (16%) requested Irish consent packs only; 5 (42%) requested English consent packs only and 5 (42%) requested both English and Irish consent packs.

Table 1. Requests for Irish-language forms by school type.

| School Type | Schools requesting Irish forms only N (%) | Schools requesting English forms only N (%) | Schools requesting both Irish and English forms N (%) | Total N (%) |
|--|---|---|---|-------------|
| Gaelscoil | 0 | 12 (80%) | 3(20%) | 15 (100%) |
| Located in Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking) area | 2 (16%) | 5 (42%) | 5 (42%) | 12 (100%) |
| Total | 2 (7%) | 17 (63%) | 8 (30%) | 27 (100%) |

Of the 138 Irish-language consent packs that were distributed (to 3 Gaelscoileanna and 7 schools located in Gaeltacht areas), only 33 Irish-language consent packs were completed by parents.

Table 2. Number of Irish-language forms distributed and completed by school type.

| School Type | Number of Irish forms distributed to parents | Number (%) of Irish forms completed by parents |
|---|--|--|
| Gaelscoil | 65 | 7 (11%) |
| School located in Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking) area | 73 | 26 (36%) |
| Total | 138 | 33 (24%) |

The Irish and English CPQ₁₁₋₁₄ were administered electronically; the Irish CPQ₁₁₋₁₄ was completed by 33 12-year-olds in 4 Gaelscoileanna.

Discussion

The translation, preparation and distribution of the Irish-language FACCT consent packs was time consuming and resource intensive. However, we have no doubt that the availability of the forms in the Irish language greatly facilitated the participation of these schools.

The principals of the majority of Gaelscoileanna were happy to distribute English consent packs. Only 3 Gaelscoileanna requested both English and Irish packs and the seven Irish-language packs completed by parents in Gaelscoileanna were all returned from one school.

A higher proportion of schools located in Irish speaking areas requested Irish consent packs and a greater number of parents in these schools completed the Irish forms. This is unsurprising and is likely a reflection of the greater ability of many parents living in Irish speaking areas to understand the Irish language.

Conclusion

When conducting a research survey in a bilingual country, considerable resources are expended in complying with legislation and promoting participation of individuals who speak the minority official language.

References

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