**RACHEL: THINK THIS MAY BE THE SUN (NON IRISH – CHECK TO SEE IF THE SAME AS THE NATIONAL ONE, IF SO JUST IGNORE THIS ONE)**

**By NICK McDERMOTT**

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Match of decay

Bad teeth footie stars play worse

**TOP footballers are struggling for form due to their dodgy teeth, experts claim.**

Four in ten have decay and one in 20 gum disease — linked to heart troubles, a study shows.

More than 80 per cent have at least one filling and half have dental erosion.

*Seven per cent say dental troubles affect their game.*

Researchers quizzed 187 aces from eight clubs including Man Utd and West Ham.

Thirty-seven per cent had rotting teeth, compared to the national average of 30 per cent among young men.

Researcher Prof Ian Needleman, of University College, London, said: “Sports drinks and high-energy food can harm teeth. Pain can make it harder to train, interrupt sleep and reduce confidence.”

Ex-Liverpool star Luis Suarez, was famed for his teeth — and for nibbling rivals.