INTRODUCTION
Fluctuating asymmetry and enamel hypoplasia have been referred as physiological stress indicators. It is possible that other dental variations, such as hypodontia, can reflect physiological stress as well. Dental agenesis, characterized by the congenital absence of teeth, can happen as the manifestation of a genetic syndrome or even occur as a single event; some authors have referred that they can be of aid in determining the socioeconomic status (SES).

The most commonly missing teeth are the third molars and the upper lateral incisors; usually, agenesis is more prevalent in females. For studying the SES and its relationship with agenesis, two different groups of teeth must be considered: those formed (partially or completely) in utero, and those formed after birth. Third molars are formed and developed after birth, and so may reflect the environmental variables that directly say respect for the individual in question.

Objective
This study aims to assess third molar agenesis features, in different SES groups, on a Portuguese population.

METHODS
Orthopantograms (OPTs) from 595 subjects (301 belonging to a high SES, and 294 to a low SES) were assessed (mean age=17.73 years, minimum=9, maximum=30, standard deviation=5.462). Third molar agenesis was assessed and differences between groups were evaluated using chi-square test; fluctuating asymmetry in hypodontia was assessed, in each group, using Wilcoxon test. The level of statistical significance established was 5%.

RESULTS
Statistical significant differences were found, in females, in the prevalence of the agenesis of third upper right molar (more frequent in the lower SES group), and of the third lower left molar (more prevalent in the upper one) (p=0.005 and p=0.028). Agenesis of the dental pair 38/48 displayed fluctuant asymmetry in both groups, whereas in the lower SES group, it was also present in upper third molars (p<0.001, in all cases).

CONCLUSIONS
Results suggest that SES can affect third molar agenesis prevalence; fluctuant asymmetry seems to be more prevalent in the lower SES, as it affects all third molars.