

Research & Table Clinic Day 2020 Structured Abstract

TITLE: Quality of Dental Care at Long-Term Care Facilities

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OBJECTIVES:

To examine whether direct access to dental hygienists in long-term care facilities would improve the oral health of the residents.

METHODS:

After a research question was formulated, a PubMed search via Augusta University Greenblatt Library database was initiated using “dental care and long-term care facilities” as key search words. Afterwards, a more narrowed search was then applied to include only articles that were peer-reviewed, published within the last 5 years, and published in reputable journals. The search was then fine-tuned once more to exclude any and all literature reviews related to the research topic.

RESULTS:

Many residents are independent and are able to brush their teeth without assistance, however, they may have impaired manual dexterity which leads to ineffective tooth brushing. Within recent years it has been noted that there has been a decrease in tooth loss and edentulism in the older population, and an increase in the retainment of natural teeth. However, this leads to a higher chance of poor oral hygiene. The main concern for residents in LTCFs was ill-fitting or loose dentures. This causes issues with chewing and eating hard foods. Due to a lack of dental access, LTCFs need to be aware of the importance of regular examinations of dentures. Other oral issues of concern were active tooth decay, broken teeth, sensitivity, toothache, and dry or sore cracked lips.

CONCLUSIONS:

For future studies, instead of training current staff to educate residents and perform tooth brushings, more facilities should be mandated to contain a program in which the residents receive regular assessments and dental care by a dental hygienist.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. To understand the importance of regular dental care amongst long-term care residents.
2. To identify elements of care that could be wholly met by a dental hygienist in long-term care facilities.
3. To identify main areas of dental concern amongst residents of long-term care facilities.