Dementia and Oral Health

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www.gerodontology.com
Aim of the society is to improve, preserve and protect the oral health of older people.
For example….

www.gerodontontology.com/guidelines.html
Guidelines for the development of local standards of oral health care for people with dementia

J Fiske, H Frenkel, J Griffiths, V Jones
Gerodontology (2006) Vol 23 Supplement 1
Available at www.gerodontology.com/guidelines.html
Guidance for care staff and nurses

Essence of Care (DoH)
England 2010
www.dh.gov/en/Publicationsandstatistics

Fundamentals of Care (WG)
Wales 2003
www.wales.nhs.uk/documents/booklet-e.pdf

Working with Dependent Older People to achieve Good Oral Health
NHS Quality Improvement Scotland 2005
www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org
1. I have personal choice and control or influence over decisions about me
2. I know that services are designed around me and my needs
3. I have support that helps me live my life
4. I have the knowledge and know-how to get what I need
5. I live in an enabling and supportive environment where I feel valued and understood
6. I have a sense of belonging and of being valued part of family, community and civic life
7. I know there is research going on which delivers a better life for me now and hope for the future
Older people have more fillings and crowns and more likely to wear dentures.

The impact of dementia on oral health can be devastating – and is preventable!
Safeguarding adults living with dementia
Oral hygiene care for residents with dementia: a literature review (2005)

As dementia progresses

- Increase in decayed teeth, gum disease, pain and oral pathology
- Eating, nutritional and swallowing problems,
- Need for support with mouthcare
- Resistive behaviour
- Not wear dentures
Case study Inaba et al (2011) Psychogeriatrics

- Care home resident living with dementia became verbally and physically aggressive, biting carers and own hand, spitting and hitting
- NAD after repeated physical examinations and blood tests over many months
- Dental examination – 3 carious teeth, removed under GA
- Abrupt disappearance of all anti-social behaviour
How do we ensure good oral health for people living with dementia?

- Oral health and care included within dementia strategies, policies, guidance
- Oral health is part of health risk assessment
- Information at diagnosis regarding oral health and dementia (early diagnosis information packs)
- Robust referral and integrated care pathways to appropriate dental care (general and specialist)
- People living with dementia and their carers should be made aware of the need for good oral health and trained in mouthcare including advocacy
- Dementia awareness training for dental teams
- Dementia friendly accessible dental care and environments
“With all the plans you need to make about the future, we know it's a busy time but...

...Please take time to think about caring for your mouth.

Keeping your teeth, and gums healthy is important.

Make an appointment at your dentist very soon for a check-up, and for advice on preventing problems in the future.

If you don't have a dentist you can attend at your local Community Dental Service.

Ask your Memory Clinic care team for details of your nearest Community Dentist.”

www.sigwales.org
How do we ensure good oral health for people living with dementia?

• Avoid sugary food and drinks in between meals.
• Brush teeth and gums twice daily with a high fluoride toothpaste.
• See the dental team regularly
• Oral health risk assessments and care plans in care homes
• Provide effective support for mouthcare
‘This is me’

Guidelines for making Communication Passports
Revised June 2009

Acknowledgement
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**Care-resistive behaviour**

- Refusal, not opening mouth
- Needing prompting
- Not understanding caregivers' instructions
- Not able to rinse or spit
- Biting toothbrush or caregiver
- Physical/verbal aggression
- Not permitting removal/insertion of dentures

Dementia friendly dental care?

(EHE Environmental Assessment Tool Kings Fund 2013)

- Noise reduction
- Even lighting
- Matt, even coloured flooring
- Clear sight lines
- Discrete security measures
- Artworks/photos of seasons or local scenes
- Signs giving the names of the practise
- Handrails
- Appropriate seating in waiting area
- Age appropriate magazines
- Easy read and large font information
- Accessible parking and toilets
- Hoists or dental wheelchair tippers
Transport

- Use of public transport for people living with dementia
- Cost of taxis
- Rural areas and public transport
- No families or carers support to bring them to clinic
- Physical and psychological stresses of transportation and unfamiliarity
- Hospital transport - long waits before being picked up/no facilities for food/drinks in dental surgeries. Often left at dental surgeries without any support.
Domiciliary care should be a routine option, not a last resort, for patients whose circumstances make it impossible, unreasonable or otherwise impractical to receive that care at a fixed centre.
Preventive advice for people living with dementia

• Dietary advice – the effects of sugary drinks and food
• The need for effective oral hygiene
• Fluoride supplementation
What do people living with dementia think about oral health care?

The oral health needs of more vulnerable older people often remain unmet, uptake of oral health care is poor, and is now considered an international public health issue.

The Future?

- Equity with Wales and Scotland for free dental examinations for people over 60 years
- Easy access to dental advice and care
- Dementia friendly dentistry – general and specialist
- Dementia friendly transport and accessible buildings
- Dementia friendly dental care environments
- Oral health Care Assessments as part of the overall assessment (SAP, Unified Assessments)
- Mouthcare assessments and care plans in care homes
- Integrated care planning with dementia teams
- Training and education for both people and carers living with dementia as well as the dental teams
- Oral health promotion and prevention programmes
- Digital technology for people living with dementia
- Health Care Assistants with recognised competencies in mouthcare
- Fluoridation (Slade et al 2013)
Further information

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