Poster Presentation

Oral Health Approach to Patients with Dementia

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Background and Aim

Dementia is a severe public health issue that affects millions of people in the world. The large number of individuals diagnosed with dementia results in the common presence of these patients in a dental medicine environment.

There is an urgent need to develop functional performance algorithms that are validated and tested in the treatment of dementia patients at the dental clinic.

Figure

Research Methodology

Poster based on the authors' article entitled "Oral Health Approach to Patients with Dementia", published in Acta Scientific Dental Sciences (ISSN: 2581-4893) in 2021:

- PubMed platform
- ResearchGate platform
- 33 bibliographic references.

Keywords: Alzheimer's disease, dementia, communication, gerodontology, geriatric dentistry, dental care, cognitive impairment, dementia friendly

Results

Dental Treatment Plan for Patients with Dementia
Start preventive measures as soon as possible
Perform all necessary dental treatments
Professional cleaning of removable or fixed dentures
Control visits every 3 - 6 months
Emotional management of the patient during oral treatments
Educate the legal guardian about the patient's oral hygiene measures

Table 1: Treatment guidelines from Dougall A., *et al.* 2008.

Periodontal health must be assessed at each routine check-up.

An effective communication with the patient is a key factor to achieve an adequate dental treatment. It's suggested an adaptation of the algorithms used in Nursing to the dental clinic in order to seek a "dementia-friendly" treatment.

VERA Algorithm	
V	Validation
E	Emotion
R	Reassure
A	Activity

Table 2: VERA algorithm - description of the stages of action from Blackhall A., *et al.* 2011.

The treatment plan must be consistent with the stage of Alzheimer's and with the patient's willingness to cooperate with regard to the dental procedures.

Alzheimer's disease stages	Recommended dental care
Mild	Early intervention; Treatment is similar to regular treatment, can usually be done in dental office; Treatment is time limited and urgent as the patient's ability to cooperate will deteriorate.
Moderate	The focus should be on maintenance; Treatment may be done in the dental office, with/ without oral sedation; At risk teeth should be extracted or crowned at this stage.
Severe	The focus should be on maintenance; Treatment needs to be provided at patient home/institution, or under deep sedation/ general anesthesia.

Table 3: Dental treatment recommendations according to stage of Alzheimer's disease from Marchini L., *et al.* 2019.

Discussion

The deterioration of oral health in people with dementia has consequences with regard to the health condition and well-being of these patients. The complications associated with the deterioration of oral health might be prevented with an appropriate medical follow-up.

Consequences of oral health deterioration:

- Periodontitis,
- Diabetes,
- Heart disease,
- Pneumonia by aspiration,
- Pain.

Conclusion

The increasing number of people with dementia in our society calls for an adaptation of dental medicine procedures to this 21st century challenge. There is an urgent need to create, validate and test functional performance algorithms to treat patients with dementia at the dental clinic.

Volume 5 Issue 11 November 2021