

Abstract

The proportion of the population above the age of 65 is increasing. Adults are retaining their natural dentition much later in life. With the increase in systemic disease seen with aging, their oral manifestations and associated medications, it follows that challenges are posed in terms of maintaining the aging dentition.

Elderly infirm patients may become dependent on other individuals for their care, including their oral hygiene. This care may be provided in the patient's own home, in the home of a family member or in residential care. Within the residential care setting, it has been shown that oral healthcare may not be fully appreciated and addressed in the same way as general health. Nor is the connection between oral and general health fully appreciated. A mutual understanding between the oral and general healthcare professionals is not always apparent and this may prevent the patient being treated holistically.

The general health of aged patients is discussed, along with behavioural, psychological and dental health. Contemporary oral healthcare services and the standard of oral care in residential homes will be explored.