Introduction to Geriatric Dentistry

Geriatric Statistics

- In 2001, U.S. population was estimated to be 278 million. Approximately 12.6 % of the population is 65 years or older.²
- In 2015, U.S. population projection is 312 million. Approximately 14.7% of this population is 65 or older.²
- In 2030, U.S. population will increase to 350 million. Approximately 20% of this projection will be 65 or older.²

Classifications of Geriatric Dental Patients

Community indwelling

- Functions independently
- Has finances to handle dental treatment

Long term care facility

- Difficult access to dentists
- Difficulty in financing dental treatment
- Medicare does not cover dental

Geriatric Dental Concerns

Teeth Decay

- Increases between ages 55 75
- Elderly are keeping teeth longer

Combination of constant assault by everyday activities such as bruxism, chewing, and difficulty in daily oral hygiene increases incidents of caries.¹

Treatment of decay indicated by extent of decay

- Fillings
- RCT
- Crowns
- Dentures
- Implants

Geriatric Dental Concerns: Cavities



Geriatric Dental Treatment: Fillings



Geriatric Dental Treatment: Root Canal



Geriatric Dental Treatment: Crowns



Geriatric Dental Treatment: Dentures





Geriatric Dental Treatment: Implants



Gingivae

Gingivitis: inflammation of gums

Periodontitis: loss of attachment of tooth root to bone

- Between the ages of 35-44, there is normally 22% loss of attachment
- Between the ages of 65-75, there is normally 55% loss of attachment
- For 75 years or older, three is normally 65% loss of attachment¹

Between Treatment of gums can vary from simple maintenance (cleanings) every six months to periodontal surgical procedures

Periodontal Health



Periodontal Structures



Oral and Systemic Health

Chronic periodontal infections from oral gram-negative bacteria are sources of endotoxins. Endotoxins gaining access to systemic circulation can illicit systemic inflammatory response.

Treatment of periodontitis infections shows metabolic management of poorly controlled diabetes mellitus.⁵

Maintaining good oral hygiene in LTC facilities show reduction of death and fever due to pneumonia.⁶

Periodontitis and oral infections can be related cerebrovascular diseases, myocardial diseases and stroke.⁴⁵

Side effects of medications: Calcium channel blockers will cause gingival enlargement. 500 medications are related to reduction of salivary flow leading to higher caries incidence, difficulty in digestion and chewing.³

In Conclusion ...

There are no "gero-dontologists".

Mandatory Continuing Education for present clinicians Dental school curriculum and rotations Collaborations with other health care practitioners

Reference

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