

DELIVERY OF ORAL HEALTH CARE SPECIAL GROUPS: AGED PERSONS

1 Introduction

- 1.1 There is an increasing proportion of aged persons in the community.
- 1.2 A higher percentage of aged persons is remaining dentate.
- 1.3 Expectations of good dental health during old age are increasing

2 Principles

- 2.1 Medical status, behavioural problems, and attitudes in aged persons affect treatment requirements and treatment planning.
- 2.2 Dentate aged persons with dementia have special needs requiring further research and planning.
- 2.3 Diminished mobility among aged persons, especially those who are homebound, institutionalised or hospitalised, may inhibit access to dental care.
- 2.4 Only dentists have the broad training required to manage the special dental needs of aged persons.

3 Policy

Dental Care for Institutionalised Aged Persons

- 3.1 Whenever possible, institutionalised aged persons should be treated in dedicated dental surgeries.
- 3.2 Suitable care facilities for the dental care of aged persons should be developed within private practice, clinics, and institutions for the care of aged persons.
- 3.3 Whilst the direction and control of dental care in institutions must be by dentists, some of this care may be provided by suitably trained allied dental personnel under the prescription and supervision of dentists.
- 3.4 Staff in institutions should have an appreciation of the need for dental care of aged persons, and should be able to assist in the maintenance of oral hygiene of aged patients.

Education

- 3.5 The dental profession, the community and government must recognise the increasing proportion of aged persons in the community, their changing needs and expectations for appropriate dental care.

- 3.6 Dental Schools should provide educational programmes at undergraduate and graduate levels addressing treatment of the aged community.
- 3.7 Health authorities should develop public educational programmes which encourage the establishment of habits of regular care and their continuance into old age.

Funding

- 3.8 Governments must provide enhanced levels of funding to ensure adequate levels of dental care for aged persons who qualify for public oral health care.
- 3.9 Government health authorities must contribute to population health initiatives to address the oral health needs of aged persons.

Policy Statement 1.3.3

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