

Oral Health Behaviour Among the Elderly in Osun State, Nigeria

Boluwaji Reuben Fajemilehin and Eyitope Ogunbodede

College of Health Sciences, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

KEY WORDS Oral health; behaviour; elderly Nigerians; oral hygiene

ABSTRACT Objective: The descriptive study examined the oral hygiene methods utilized by the elderly and recorded reasons for the choice of oral hygiene methods. Setting and Method: The study was conducted in Osun State, Nigeria. A multistage sampling procedure was used for the selection of the traditional core health districts and households, with elderly aged 60 years and above. Data Analysis: Qualitative and quantitative data generated were analysed utilizing descriptive statistical procedures. Main Outcome measure and Results: Findings in the study indicated that the majority of the participants (94%) used the traditional chewing sticks while 183 (61%) combined the use of cotton wool with powder of Chinese plate, salt and ashes as ways of removing plaque. Reasons for the choice ranged from cultural, acceptability, availability, cost, therapeutic effects and a host of others. Conclusion: In conclusion, traditional methods of oral hygiene for cultural reasons will remain a life feature of elderly in Osun State Nigeria, irrespective of improvement in modern oral methods of care.