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Explore Residents Oral Health Status and Related Factors in a Nursing Home Setting

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Introduction: The population structure of Taiwan has entered the aged society in year 2018. According to the Ministry of the Interior, the population above aged 65 is 14% (Ministry of the Interior statistics 2017). Oral health of the elderly highly relates to their physical, mental health, systemic disease and quality of life. Also, the condition of oral health may display the significant signs of the elderly health. Moreover, pathological changes of the elderly could be triggered by poor oral health. It is important that the caregivers should implement oral assessment regularly, and providing oral care.

Purpose: This study aimed to assess institutional residents oral health status by applying the Oral Health Assessment Tool (OHAT). A questionnaire was designed to explore the related factors. The oral health assessment tool for non-professionals could provide a successful residential care dental service regularly.

Method: The study was conducted by using the Oral Health Assessment Tool (OHAT) to assess the residents oral health status in a nursing home setting. There are 8 categories including lips, tongue, gums and tissues, saliva, natural teeth yes/no, dentures yes/no, oral cleanliness, dental pain. The OHAT assessment tool including 3-scale (0=healthy, 1= changes, 2=unhealthy) was applied to evaluate participant's oral health status. Researcher analysed data with SPSS for Windows release 20.0 and the accepted level of statistical significance for all analysis work was set as $p < .05$.

Results: The data collected from a nursing home was implemented by two registered nurses during October to November, year 2017. Half of the residential participants were 71-80 years, 20% aged 81-90, and 61.7% were male. The OHAT total scores for the participants showed that 90% scored 1 (changes), 5% scored 0 (healthy), and 3 (unhealthy) respectively. The individual categories of lips (80%), tongue (45%), gums (63.3%), saliva (86.7%), and dental pain (95%) scored 0 (healthy) respectively. Scores were distributed differently for the categories of tongue, natural teeth and oral cleanliness, with tongue (41.7%) scoring 1 (changes), and natural teeth (83.3%) scoring 2 (unhealthy), oral cleanliness (65%) scoring 0 (healthy), 21% scoring 1(changes), 13.3% scoring 2(unhealthy). There are several factors have relation to participants' oral health status such as conscious condition, history of smoking and drinking.

Conclusions: This study demonstrated that residents oral health status were changes, and the need to implement oral health care regularly to maintain oral health status. The OHAT have been developed for use by non-dental professionals with validity and reliability. There is few dentist that can provide dental examinations at most of nursing home on a regular basis in Taiwan. We suggest that the oral health assessment tool should apply constantly.

Biography:

Shere-Er Wang, RN, PhD, Associate Professor and Director of Nursing Department, currently teaches undergraduate nursing students at Ching Kuo Institute of Management and Health. Shere-Er has devoted her mind with passion to nursing education for more than 25 years.

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