

Editorial 1

Responsibility of Dental Professionals toward Elderly Population

Bureau of Health Profession defines “elderly” as “a population with health care conditions and needs, which differs significantly from those of younger people, which are often complicated by the physical, behavioral, and social changes associated with ageing. This would include all persons over the age of 60 years, but may include slightly younger people who are subject to similar physical and/or mental conditions.¹ India is a country where there is increase in the number of elderly persons and it is estimated that by the year 2050 it will rise to 324 million.²

As the population ages, elder abuse is increasing and becoming a public issue. Mattoo et al had done a study to determine the prevalence of elder abuse in various outpatient departments (OPDs) of dental and medical hospital along with their parameters and in their result; they found that elder abuse exists among the patients visiting to medical and dental hospitals. The quality of life is affected due to elderly abuse and it could be an important factor in elderly patients showing poor response to medical and dental treatment.³

Dental professionals are in frequent contact with elderly patients and are in a very important position to understand and recognize the problems of such patients. It is the prime responsibility of the dentist to recognize abuse and neglect in their older patients and report such suspicious cases to concerned authority.⁴ Elderly patients had more complicated psychology and are in more need for prosthodontic treatments. A prosthodontist should carefully analyze the psychology of the geriatric patient during the treatment planning for successful treatment outcome of the patient.⁵ There are financial challenges to elderly population and the government must address this and provide good health care facilities to their citizen for their longer and healthier lives.⁶ Dental Council of India should take initiatives and propose certain dental health programmes to the Government of India so that these programmes can be started in dental colleges throughout the country, to provide maximum benefits to the elderly population.



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