Oral Health status of an Elderly population in Nairobi, Kenya

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Abstract:

Objective. To provide data on the oral health status of the elderly in Nairobi, Kenya. Design. This was a semi-structured cross sectional survey followed by a clinical oral examination. Subjects and Methods. Two Nairobi suburbs, Waithaka and Riruta, were selected. The residents of the two locations are of urban low to middle class socioeconomic status. Presence of plaque, calculus, bleeding on probing, recession, mobility of teeth, carious teeth and root caries were all recorded in individuals of 45 years and over. The condition of the oral mucosa was also noted. Results. A total of 289 respondents were interviewed. Of these, 182(63%) were from Waithaka location and 107(37%) were from Riruta location. Majority of the respondents were females 203(70.2%), with only 86(29.8) males participating in the study. The mean age was 60.6 years with a SD =12.6 and a range of 45-115 years. 142(50%) of the respondents had experienced dental problems especially when chewing. 246(85.1 %) reported cleaning their teeth out of whom 132(53.9%) did it once a day, 51 (20.8%) twice daily while 47(19.2%) only occasionally. 150(61.2%) used a commercial toothbrush while 87(35.5%) used the traditional chewing stick. 146(59.3%) used toothpaste, 72(29.3%) used nothing while 26(10.6%) used salt as the dentifrice of choice. The oral examination showed presence of plaque tn 249(89.9%), calculus in 237(85.6%), gingival inflammation in 212(77.4%) and recession in 227(82.5%) of the respondents. Dental erosion was only found in 2(0.9%) individuals and abrasion cavities in 31 (13.6%) cases. On examination of the oral mucosa, 224(88.9%) had no visible abnormality. 9(3.6%) had an abscess, 5(2.0%) had leukoplakia, 5(2.0%) had smoker's palate, 4(1.6%) aphthous ulcers, 7(2.5%) were edentulous and 2(0.8%) had oral candidiasis. When the teeth were examined, 57(19.7%) had no caries experience. The mean DMFT was 7.173. The missing teeth component accounted for 1168(56.3%) of the total DMFT, while the Filled component was the least at 39(1.9%). The mean root caries experience was 0.817, n = 289 with 230(79.6%) having no decayed or filled roots. The mean number of mobile teeth was 3.291(n = 289) while the highest number of mobile teeth found in a single respondent was 22. Conclusions. This study group of the elderly exhibited, poor oral hygiene, gingival inflammation and periodontal breakdown measured by recession and mobile teeth. In addition, there was a high DMFT of 7.173 mainly due to the missing teeth.