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Oral care for and aging population: Evolving concepts of clinical and home oral care for seniors

In North America, Asia and Europe, the adult population is aging, and the prevention and treatment needs of this aging population are changing. In this Keynote address, Dr. Ratcliff reviews identified needs of the growing senior (adults +55 and older) population from selected research studies, examines implications for the changes in oral care practices in clinics, in home oral care and in home oral care products. Key issues to be examined include: The lack of medically measurable standards for oral health care (OHC) in many assisted care facilities, the apparent disparity in OHC among seniors as indicated by the prevalence of adult caries and DMFT scores in elderly patients, despite the recommendations of professional associations, the recommendation, prescription and use of fluoride treatments like pastes, varnishes and oral rinses with senior populations, is not consistent across senior populations receiving OHC, there is great variability in oral health literacy (OHL) among certain senior populations, yet the validity, feasibility and benefit of OHL instruments on intake have limited implementations, and seniors tend not to complete treatment plans. Quality audits of senior compliance with treatment plans can improve standards of OHC. We can conclude that OHC to seniors can be improved through better establishment of treatment standards, use of OHL instruments, quality audits and consistent use of high quality home oral care products to address the twin problems of adult caries and oral mucositis as well as lower the risk of broad systemic diseases among elderly populations.

Biography

James L Ratcliff is Chairman and CEO of Rowpar Pharmaceuticals, Scottsdale, AZ, makers of the CloSYS and Dentists' Choice brands of oral care products. He was a Professor and Senior Scientist at the Center for Higher Education at the Pennsylvania State University (1990-2000), Professor of higher education at the Iowa State University (1979-1989), President of Performance Associates Consultants (1976 to present), Associate Professor, Florida Atlantic University (1977-1978) and Assistant Professor, Washington State University (1975-77). He is an author of over two dozen books and over hundred articles and has consulted with universities, research centers and higher education agencies on six continents. He is also a Co-Inventor with Elena Young of a patent application entitled, "Method for prevention and treatment of oral fungal infections".

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