Oral health care in retirement homes – introduction of an interdisciplinary training course for dental hygiene students

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Aims:

Against the background of the demographic change and the oral health status of residents in retirement homes it seems important to extend dental activity to fields beyond the dentist’s chair. Health care professionals should be faced with these fields sometime. Therefore, the German praxisHochschule developed a training course for dental hygiene students to improve their knowledge in the field of geriatric dentistry and put it into practical use.

The main learning objectives are:

- Students have the competence to critically assess medical devices and measures
- Students acquire the abilities for result-oriented interdisciplinary and patient-centred communication.

Material und Methods:

Initially students are invited to develop a training program about oral health care in elderly people for geriatric nurses which is later presented in a retirement home. To determine and assess the recommended measures and devices students have to conduct a systematic review of the scientific literature and discuss their findings with their fellow students and the tutor.

After presenting the training course in the retirement home dental hygienists and geriatric nurses are working together on selected patients. They create an individual prophylactic concept for the preservation of the inhabitant’s oral health and assist each other in case of interprofessional problems.

Results:

Since 2013 this training program is part of the undergraduate study course dental hygiene and preventive management offered by the German praxisHochschule. Evaluation results show a high acceptance of the course by both dental hygiene students and geriatric nurses. Dental hygienists show high levels of learning outcomes particularly with regard to communicative competences and scientific methodology.

Conclusion:

The introduced training course helps preparing students for the demographically related challenges of the health care system in the future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Level of evidence</th>
<th>References</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denture cleaning</td>
<td>Brushing with non-abrasive denture cleaner outside the mouth</td>
<td>High (Ia/B)</td>
<td>De Souza et al. 2009 - Panzeri et al. 2009 - Gornitzky et al. 2002</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Annually professional cleaning using ultrasonic device</td>
<td>Weak (III)</td>
<td>Muqbil et al. 2005</td>
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Abb. 1: Checklist for scientific literature review

Abb. 2,3: Communication Training.

Abb. 4,5: Interdisciplinary cooperation between dental hygienists and elderly care nurses.

References
