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Oral Diseases in the Elderly, A Study in Ile-Ife, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT To highlight oral diseases found in an elderly Nigerian population. The records of 494 elderly patients were retrospectively reviewed. The presenting complaints, relevant extraoral and intraoral findings, clinical diagnosis and investigations carried out were recorded. The ages ranged from 55 years to 120 years with almost half (44.0%) in the 60 to 69 year age group. Pain was the commonest presenting complaint (66.2%). Attrition was present in only 8% and was not related to age or sex. Coronal and root surface caries was present in 12.8% and 0.8% respectively and caries was significantly commoner in females and those who were presenting for the first time ($p < 0.05$ and 0.01 respectively). Chronic periodontitis was the most prevalent oral disease (73.9%) and appeared to worsen with age, and decline with the state of the oral hygiene ($p < 0.05$). Denture sore mouth was present in only females ($p < 0.01$). Majority of the elderly (96.0%) had more than 20 teeth while only 16 (3.2%) were edentulous. Squamous cell carcinoma was found in 11 patients and it affected significantly more males than females ($p < 0.05$). Significant differences exist in the pattern of oral diseases in Nigeria when compared with the findings in other countries. Such differences might be due to socio-cultural, genetic and environmental factors.

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