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MODULE 15

Oral Health Across the Lifespan

Part 4: Oral Health and Older
Adults

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Oral Health and Older Adults

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss factors that contribute to oral health disparities in older adults. Consider social, economic, geographic, ethnic and racial factors in your discussion.
2. Describe the oral-systemic connections associated with the chronic health problems associated with aging. What is/are the common pathophysiological mechanisms that affect both the oral and physical health of your patients? Consider local and systemic infections, hospitalizations, oral effects on diabetes, or medications effects on the mouth.
3. How might addressing oral health for older adults be cost effective for the health care system as a whole?
4. Discuss how non-dental members of the health team can contribute to improving the oral health of older adults.
5. Plan changes you would make in a primary care office to offer more effective oral- systemic care for older adults. Consider services such as oral health screenings, oral health exams, anticipatory guidance, and referrals. Consider education levels of patients, cultural issues, financial resources, and access issues.