

NORTHWEST GNA DECEMBER 2018 NEWSLETTER

Tip of the Week: Tooth Talk

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“An oral audit conducted at Health Sciences Center in Winnipeg revealed that 92% of patients feel oral hygiene is important while they are an in-patient. Yet oral hygiene is being conducted, on average, 56% of the time. Of that 56 %, most of the oral care was due to patients taking the initiative to clean teeth themselves. An overwhelming number of patients they feel terrible if their teeth are not clean.

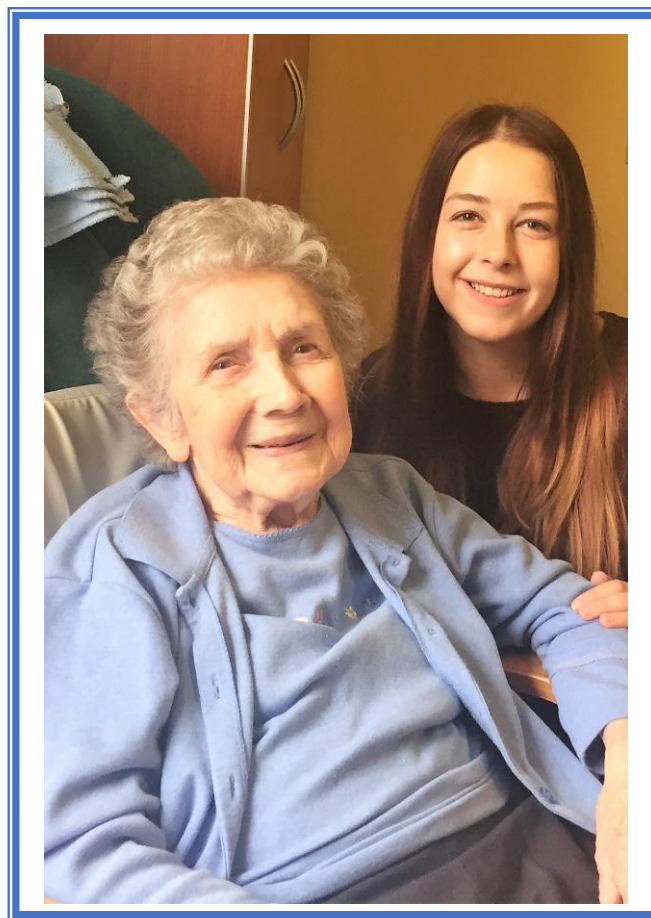
Poor oral care can lead to increased risk of infection. This can often lead to increased length of stay and cost to the hospital. So, remember as you brush your teeth patients want to do the same, not only to look and feel good but also for the sake of their health.

RNAO Best Practice Oral Health: Nursing Assessment and Intervention. <https://rnao.ca/bpg/guidelines/oral-health-nursing-assessment-and-intervention>

Appendix K of the RNAO Best Practice Guideline for oral health provides excellent tips for ensuring safe effective mouthcare to individuals experiencing behavior/communication/dementia problems. For example, persons biting down on the toothbrush/caregiver could be related to medications behavior issues or movement disorders such as tardive dyskinesia, MS and Huntington's. The guideline has excellent for use of assist devices such as the use of a mouth-prop.

Gillette J.(2018). **Caries arresting approaches for aging and medically complex patients.** California Dental Association Journal, 46; 93-96.

This article states that there are 20% of adults aged 75 years or older with untreated dental caries. Having healthy teeth supports health by improving quality of life, socialization, ability to eat and maintain nutritional status. Challenges of treating individuals with cognitive impairment increase the risk of developing dental caries and the treatment choices to improve dental status. The article goes on to talk about chemotherapeutic agents such as silver diamine



fluoride that can arrest the progression of dental caries when individuals cannot tolerate dental procedures.

The case studies indicate improvement in the quality of life with minimally invasive dental treatment. This highlights the need for a multidisciplinary approach to mouth care.

Reviewed by: Michelle Proudfoot and Cathy Schoales

Highlights from the North

Improving Oral Care at William A. “Bill” George Extended Care

Oral care is a common concern in long-term care homes in the North West LHIN. The William A. George (Bill George) Extended Care Unit in Sioux Lookout is a Best Practice Spotlight Organization designate through the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario. As part

of their designation, they decided to implement the *Oral Health Nursing Assessment and Intervention* best practice guideline (BPG). The Bill George Extended Care Unit, a 20-bed facility, is one of the most northern long-term care homes in Ontario.

The oral care team at Bill George Extended Care started the Oral Health BPG by doing a gap analysis on the recommendations. An identified priority was improving the oral assessments of their residents. They met this recommendation by activating an oral assessment in their electronic charting systems so that residents are assessed on admission and every quarter. Now, 100% of residents have oral assessments.

Improvements to tracking now ensure oral care happens at least twice daily as per the BPG recommendations. The Bill George Extended Care Unit also added a toothbrush station to their spa room to allow for oral care during bathing or showering. Another task was labeling dentures and other oral care supplies. We got rid of mouth swabs, which can be a swallowing hazard if the sponge is bitten off. We collaborated more closely with a local dental hygienist, who helped us with education on oral conditions, such as 'dry socket'.

Overall, many benefits were noted in the residents after implementing the Oral Health BPG—increase in appetites, improved effect, as well as fewer outbreaks. It was definitely worth the time and effort to implement this BPG.

Story by Sue Anderson and Heather Woodbeck

NW Chapter News

Northwest GNA AGM was held on December 6, 2018, at Lakehead University in the Braun Building, BB1045 from 1800-1930. Welcome to new Education Chair Ide Costa. Thank you to Kristien Jones-Bonofiglio, outgoing chair for her outstanding contributions to the chapter.

Upcoming Events

GNAO Provincial Annual General Meeting April 25, 2019, Toronto, ON. Webcast information to follow

CGNA, Conference, Older Persons Climbing Mountains: Journeys and Transitions. May 2-5, 2019, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Board Members of Northwest GNA

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More on this topic

Ek, Kristina; Browall, Maria; Eriksson, Monika; Eriksson, Irene; (2017). **“Healthcare providers’ experience of assessing and performing oral care in older adults”** International Journal of Older People Nursing, DOI: 10.1111/open.12189

This was an excellent article regarding a study conducted in Sweden. Findings were that oral care was an important part of daily care for older adults but was often neglected due to time constraints or feelings of inadequacy because of lack of preparation or education on the part of the staff members. In addition, some patients did not cooperate with attempts at oral care putting them at risk for health concerns. Some health problems were malnutrition because of chewing and swallowing problems, pneumonia or psychological issues such as social isolation due to inability to communicate well. Comments on poor oral health having serious consequences for older adults and that health care providers must become better at preventing and detecting poor oral health; health care providers identified their own lack of knowledge and their own attitudes as important factors in promoting oral care; final recommendation was to develop and improve educational programs and research, practice and policy in the area of oral health in older adults.

Reviewed by: Michelle Proudfoot