

CORRELATION OF DEPRESSION AND ORAL HEALTH STATUS OF ELDERLY PEOPLE IN SERBIA

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Background: Depression is one of the most common mental health diseases among people. Retirement, lost partner, multiple diseases are some of the most common factors that contributes to the depression among elderly people. Older people tend to have weaker oral hygiene and more dental prosthetics which also affect their mood, satisfaction and self-esteem. The aim of this research was to determine the correlation of depression and characteristics of oral health in adults older than 65 years in Serbia.

Methods and Objectives: The survey was conducted as a part of the fourth National Population Health Survey in 2019 in accordance with the methodology and instruments of the European Health Survey. It was implemented by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia, in cooperation with the Institute of Public Health of Serbia and the Republic Institute of Statistics. Data on the population aged 65 years and over was analysed with SPSS by descriptive statistical methods and correlation was determinate with chi-square test with p significance less than 0.05.

Results: This research analysed 3705 respondents, 44.9% male and 55.1% female, with mean age of 73.4 ± 6.8 . In the last examined year, 284 (7.7%) of older people had depression, and 3421 (92.3%) did not have depression. Significant correlation was found between depression and subjective oral health of participants, number of missing teeth and presents of total and partial dentures. 36.6% of individuals with depression described their oral health as bad, 42.3% had lost all of their teeth, and 58.5% and 87.7% of them did not have total or partial denture.

Conclusions: Our study suggests that depression has a strong impact on self-perceived oral health and oral health status of elderly people. Loos teeth and inadequate dentures can enhance dissatisfaction of individuals with depression, decrease their oral health quality of life and impact their overall health. Because of that, this issue has strong public health significance and demands multidisciplinary approach.

Keywords: oral health, depression, elderly adults, mental health, Serbia