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Citation	The 20th Annual Scientific Meeting of the International Association for Dental Research (Southeast Asia Division) & 16th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Southeast Asia Association for Dental Education, Malacca, Malaysia, 1-4 September 2005. In Journal of Dental Research, 2005, v. 84 Sp Iss B
Issued Date	2005
URL	http://hdl.handle.net/10722/53789
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Oral health promotion in an elderly home in Hong Kong

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Objectives: To implement an oral health programme for the elders in a care and attention home, and through this, to improve their oral hygiene and gingival health status. **Methods:** The target population was the dentate elders living in a large care and attention home in Hong Kong. The study elders were in a stable general health condition and not having serious dementia. Informed consent was obtained. This study included: (1) a baseline interview and clinical examination of the elders by three calibrated examiners, (2) oral health education and oral hygiene instruction sessions for the elders and individual follow-up after the sessions, and (3) an evaluation two weeks later. In the programme, the use of an electric toothbrush with a rotating oscillating head was introduced, and toothpaste and mouthrinse containing triclosan were given. The plaque index and the gingival index developed by Silness and Loe were used to assess the oral hygiene and gingival status of the elders, respectively, at baseline and at the two-week evaluation. **Results:** Fifty-two elders with a mean age of 82.5 years participated in this study. After implementing the programme, the percentage of elders who brushed their teeth twice daily increased from 42% to 53%, and there was a great increase in the percentage of elders who used mouthrinse, from 8% to 82% ($p < 0.05$). The mean plaque index score of the study elders decreased from 2.0 at baseline to 1.2 at evaluation ($p < 0.05$). The mean gingival index score of the elders also decreased from 1.3 to 1.0 ($p < 0.05$). **Conclusion:** The oral health programme for the study elders was successfully implemented, and that their oral hygiene practices, oral hygiene status, and gingival health status had been significantly improved.

[Behavioral Sciences/Health Services Research](#)

[The Preliminary Program for International Association for Dental Research - 20th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Southeast Asia Division and Southeast Asia Association for Dental Education - 16th Annual Scientific Meeting \(Sept. 1-4, 2005\)](#)