

# Dental Disorders in Older Adults: Challenges and Treatment Approaches

Celia Harty\*

Department of Dentistry, The University of Liverpool School of Dentistry, Liverpool, United Kingdom

## Perspective

**Received:** 26-Dec-2024, Manuscript No JDS-24-156495; **Editor assigned:** 31-Dec-2024, Pre QC No. JDS-24-156495 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 14-Jan-2025, QC No. JDS-24-156495; **Revised:** 09-Mar-2026, Manuscript No. JDS-24-156495 (R); **Published:** 16-Mar-2026, DOI: 10.4172/2320-7949.14.1.002

**\*For Correspondence:** Celia Harty, Department of Dentistry, The University of Liverpool School of Dentistry, Liverpool, United Kingdom, E-mail: celiaharty68@gmail.com

**Citation:** Harty C. Dental Disorders in Older Adults: Challenges and Treatment Approaches. RRJ Dental Sci. 2026;14:002

**Copyright:** © 2026 Harty C, This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

## DESCRIPTION

As the global population ages, dental health among older adults has become a growing concern. More individuals are retaining their natural teeth into old age, but this brings a variety of dental challenges. The prevalence of dental disorders such as tooth decay, gum disease, and tooth loss necessitates a tailored approach to care. This commentary explores the dental challenges faced by older adults and discusses effective treatment approaches.

Older adults experience specific dental disorders that impact their oral health. Tooth decay remains prevalent in this age group due to factors such as reduced saliva production, which lowers the mouth's ability to wash away food particles and neutralize acids. Many older adults also have multiple restorations, which can become decayed over time, and medications that cause dry mouth further increase the risk of cavities. Gum disease, if untreated, can lead to tooth loss and other complications, with risk factors including poor oral hygiene, smoking, and diabetes. It is also linked to systemic health issues such as cardiovascular disease, underscoring the importance of early treatment.

Tooth loss, often resulting from caries and gum disease, remains a significant concern. However, modern dental care can help prevent, manage, and replace missing teeth through implants, dentures, or bridges. Another critical issue is oral cancer, which increases in risk with age, particularly for individuals who smoke or consume alcohol. Regular dental exams play a vital role in early detection, which is crucial for improving outcomes. Dry mouth, often caused by medications or medical conditions, is another common problem, leading to difficulties in eating, speaking, and an increased risk of dental decay and gum disease.

Treating dental disorders in older adults involves addressing unique challenges. Age-related physical and cognitive changes can make it harder to maintain daily oral hygiene routines. Cognitive decline, such as dementia, further exacerbates this issue. Polypharmacy, or the use of multiple medications, can result in side effects like dry mouth or an increased risk of bleeding, necessitating careful management during dental treatment. Systemic health conditions like diabetes, heart disease, and arthritis often complicate dental care, requiring tailored approaches to meet individual needs.

Effective treatment begins with preventive care, including regular dental check-ups to allow for early detection and intervention. Good oral hygiene practices, such as brushing with fluoride toothpaste and flossing, are essential. For individuals with limited dexterity or cognitive impairments, caregiver assistance with oral hygiene can make a significant difference. Dry mouth can be managed with saliva substitutes, hydrating mouthwashes, and lifestyle changes such as drinking plenty of water and avoiding alcohol or caffeine. Sugar-free gum can also help stimulate saliva production, and prescription medications may be prescribed to increase saliva flow.

For those with tooth loss, restorative treatments like dentures, bridges, and dental implants can significantly improve function and quality of life. Professional cleanings, improved oral hygiene, and sometimes surgical procedures are necessary for managing gum disease. Regular oral cancer screenings are essential, particularly for individuals at higher risk, as early detection improves survival rates.

## CONCLUSION

Dental disorders in older adults present unique challenges, but with appropriate care, these can be effectively managed. By addressing issues such as tooth decay, gum disease, and dry mouth through preventive treatments, restorative care, and regular screenings, dental professionals can improve the oral health and quality of life of older adults. Regular dental visits, good oral hygiene, and the careful management of systemic conditions are crucial for ensuring that older adults maintain healthy and functional teeth well into their later years.