

Developing Geriatric Oral Health Network is a Public Health Necessity for Older Adults

Authors : Maryam Tabrizi, Shahrzad Aarup

Abstract : Objectives- Understanding the close association between oral health and overall health for older adults at the right time and right place, a person, focus treatment through Project ECHO telementoring. Methodology- Data from monthly ECHO telementoring sessions were provided for three years. Sessions including case presentations, overall health conditions, considering medications, organ functions limitations, including the level of cognition. Contributions- Providing the specialist level of providing care to all elderly regardless of their location and other health conditions and decreasing oral health inequity by increasing workforce via Project ECHO telementoring program worldwide. By 2030, the number of adults in the USA over the age of 65 will increase more than 60% (approx.46 million) and over 22 million (30%) of 74 million older Americans will need specialized geriatrician care. In 2025, a national shortage of medical geriatricians will be close to 27,000. Most individuals 65 and older do not receive oral health care due to lack of access, availability, or affordability. One of the main reasons is a significant shortage of Oral Health (OH) education and resources for the elderly, particularly in rural areas. Poor OH is a social stigma, a thread to quality and safety of overall health of the elderly with physical and cognitive decline. Poor OH conditions may be costly and sometimes life-threatening. Non-traumatic dental-related emergency department use in Texas alone was over \$250 M in 2016. Most elderly over the age of 65 present with at least one or multiple chronic diseases such as arthritis, diabetes, heart diseases, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) are at higher risk to develop gum (periodontal) disease, yet they are less likely to get dental care. In addition, most older adults take both prescription and over-the-counter drugs; according to scientific studies, many of these medications cause dry mouth. Reduced saliva flow due to aging and medications may increase the risk of cavities and other oral conditions. Most dental schools have already increased geriatrics OH in their educational curriculums, but the aging population growth worldwide is faster than growing geriatrics dentists. However, without the use of advanced technology and creating a network between specialists and primary care providers, it is impossible to increase the workforce, provide equitable oral health to the elderly. Project ECHO is a guided practice model that revolutionizes health education and increases the workforce to provide best-practice specialty care and reduce health disparities. Training oral health providers for utilizing the Project ECHO model is a logical response to the shortage and increases oral health access to the elderly. Project ECHO trains general dentists & hygienists to provide specialty care services. This means more elderly can get the care they need, in the right place, at the right time, with better treatment outcomes and reduces costs.

Keywords : geriatric, oral health, project echo, chronic disease, oral health

Conference Title : ICB 2022 : International Conference on Business

Conference Location : Copenhagen, Denmark

Conference Dates : June 09-10, 2022