

Diabetes mellitus and its relevance to the practice of dentistry

Diabetes mellitus is a syndrome of abnormal carbohydrate, fat and protein metabolism that results in acute and chronic complications due to the absolute or relative lack of insulin. Globally, it is expected that the number of people with diabetes will increase, and as a result dental practitioners will encounter an increasing number of patients affected by this chronic condition, which may have implications for the provision of safe and appropriate dental treatment. This article aims to provide an overview of diabetes and to discuss aspects of the condition relevant to dentistry. The article also discusses the management of diabetic emergencies in a dental practice setting.

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Gerodontology – how big is the challenge in Ireland?

Précis

Changing patterns of ageing and oral disease require new policies for managing the oral health of older adults. This paper makes suggestions as to how this could be approached.

Abstract

Population trends suggest that the Irish population is ageing, and that this population will have substantial treatment needs. These patients will be better informed than previous generations, and will demand treatment aimed at preserving a natural dentition. This will impact upon delivery of oral healthcare and manpower planning needs to consider how to address the increased demand for dental care. Poor oral health is associated with systemic health problems, including cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease and diabetes mellitus. It also has a negative impact upon quality of life, and the World Health Organisation has encouraged public healthcare administrators and decision makers to design effective and affordable strategies for better oral health and quality of life of older adults, which, in turn, are integrated into general health management programmes. Treatment concepts such as minimally invasive dentistry and the shortened dental arch concept are discussed in the context of these demographic changes and recommendations.

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