

# DENTAL SERVICE SATISFACTION AMONG INSTITUTIONALIZED ELDERLY

Hatem E. Amin\*

## ***ABSTRACT***

Patient satisfaction with dental treatment is one of the measurements that can be used to assess quality of oral health care services. Institutionalized elders make up an increasingly larger segment of patient population in dental practices which have significant dental needs and greater dental barriers. Being service providers, dental professionals should satisfy their elder patients. This study investigated satisfaction with dental services among institutionalized elders receiving dental care on their own expenses and the most important influencing factors. The study was performed on 122 institutionalized elders in Tanta city. Of whom, only 110 dental patients completed the questionnaires and were included in the study. A modified 14-item Dental Satisfaction Questionnaire was used to assess elder's satisfaction with dental services. The subjects were asked to express how they agreed or disagreed with each of the 14 statements. These were transformed and recoded to indicate level of satisfaction from +2 (very satisfied) to -2 (very dissatisfied). Overall satisfaction was estimated by summing up the 14 scores. Also patients filled out another questionnaire containing socio-demographic items, reasons for seeking dental treatment and factors of satisfaction/dissatisfaction. Of the 110 patients, 27.2% were very satisfied with dental services 48% were satisfied, 0.9% were neutral, 18.1% were dissatisfied and 5.4% were very dissatisfied. Subjects were most satisfied with availability, accessibility and quality of dental services and least satisfied with pain management and cost of care. The females and the lower educated elders were more satisfied than males and higher educated subjects ( $p < 0.05$ ). Meanwhile, age and marital status had no significant effect on dental satisfaction ( $p > 0.05$ ). The major reason for seeking dental care were refilling, periodontal problems, dental caries and prosthetic rehabilitation with no significant difference on dental service satisfaction. The most important components of satisfaction were "dentist-patient relationship" and "technical competence of dental personnel". The most prominent complaints were "long treatment span" and "disorganized service system". Institutionalized elders should be included in the activities of oral health care programs to increase their satisfaction and to show that oral diseases, discomfort and disfigurement are not an inevitable sequence of aging.