Effective Health Care

Dental Care for the Elderly Population

Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

The nominator is interested in a study examining the needs, facilities, and programs available to assist with the availability of dental services and the needs of underprivileged older adults in the urban areas of the western United States. Primary research about access to healthcare is outside the purview of the EPC program, which is focused on developing evidence reviews to inform healthcare decision-making. No further activity will be undertaken on this topic.

Topic Brief

Topic Name: Dental Care for the Elderly Population **Topic #:** 0711

Nomination Date: 010/17/2016 **Topic Brief Date:** October 2016

Nominator: Individual

Summary of Nomination: The nominator is interested in primary research to help the low socioeconomic, inner-city, elderly population with their dental needs. The nominator asserts that there is a large influx of homeless, aging individuals and that their poor dental health is contributing to comorbidities such as diabetes and pulmonary issues. The nominator believes that research into this field may increase the opportunities for care in this population.

Proposed Key Questions
None provided.

Background and Clinical Context
Medicare does not cover most dental care; however emergency dental services may be covered in a hospital setting by Medicare Part A.[1] A national initiative called Healthy People 2020 provides 10-year objectives for improving the health of the American people. One of the many goals of the Healthy People 2020 initiative is to, "Improve the health, function, and quality of life of older adults."[2] This includes increasing the number of dentists with geriatric certification.

Selection Criteria Summary

Selection Criteria	Supporting Data
1. Appropriateness	
1a. Does the nomination represent a health care drug, intervention, device, technology, or health care system/setting available (or soon to be available) in the U.S.?	Yes, this nomination represents a healthcare intervention.
1b. Is the nomination a request for a systematic review?	The nominator is requesting primary research.
1c. Is the focus on effectiveness or comparative effectiveness?	The nomination does not focus on effectiveness or comparative effectiveness.
1d. Is the nomination focus supported by a logic model or biologic plausibility? Is it consistent or coherent with what is known about the topic?	This nomination represents a biologic plausibility.
2. Importance	
2a. Represents a significant disease burden; large proportion of the population	This topic represents a significant problem.
2b. Is of high public interest; affects health care decision making, outcomes, or costs for a large proportion of the US population or for a vulnerable population	This topic could affect health care decision making.
2c. Represents important uncertainty for decision makers	Yes, this topic represents important uncertainty for decision makers.
2d. Incorporates issues around both clinical benefits and potential clinical harms	This nomination addresses benefits.
2e. Represents high costs due to common use, high unit costs, or high associated costs to consumers, to patients, to health care systems, or to payers	This nomination represents a high cost to healthcare systems.

References
1. Medicare. 2016. Dental Services. Department of Health and Human Services. Internet: https://www.medicare.gov/coverage/dental-services.html
2. Healthy People 2020. 2016. Older Adults. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Internet: https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/older-adults