

**Quality of Care: Quality Improvement of Oral Care**

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Quality improvement is essential in nursing to keep up with the evolving field. The purpose of quality improvement is to identify the field's shortcomings and propose and implement the necessary changes to improve it. Recognizing the system's proponents, such as health professionals, patients, and families, contributes to the ability to ensure the safest healthcare system possible (QSEN Institute, 2020). Control and run charts are techniques used in quality improvement to discern the areas needing improvement (QSEN Institute, 2020). Readers should know that quality improvement is constant in healthcare (QSEN Institute, 2020). The article is a qualitative quality improvement study to determine if oral care is given frequently enough to patients and the resulting disadvantages when it is not (Lv et al., 2023). This study is vital to ensuring that the best care, including oral care, is not overlooked. Based on the evidence, oral care will improve patients' chances of survival.

### **Article Summary**

This article explores the harmful effects of neglecting oral care within the Chongqing Hospital in China. The article reports a cross-sectional study that successfully correlated oral care to survival rates in the Chongqing hospital (Lv et al., 2023). The article relates to the nursing-specific impact of oral care because, if headed, healthcare institutions will incorporate teaching proper oral care to staff, implementing oral care regularly, and observing the results. Quality improvement throughout all care units would improve patients' odds when their health is in question.

### **Introduction**

This article is a qualitative study on the importance of oral care for the survival of patients. The article highlights that patient outcomes suffer when neglecting oral care. Quality improvement in oral care is to aid patients' overall health and wellness. Quality improvement of oral care is significant because a relationship has been detected between patient survival and oral care (Lv et al., 2023).

### **Overview**

The article about oral care flaws within healthcare can affect all hospital units. The effects on nursing are apparent because nurses will implement oral care for the patients. Therefore, nurses will bear the brunt of the changes this research brings. The QSEN competency in quality improvement uses skill in this research article by performing a cross-sectional study and observing its results (QSEN Institute, 2020; Lv et al., 2023). The QSEN competency attitude is to "appreciate that quality improvement is an essential part of the daily work of all healthcare professionals (QSEN Institute, 2020)." When applied to this article and nursing-specific impact, nurses embracing the change will significantly aid the initiative to improve patients' oral care.

### **Quality Improvement**

This research article discusses the oral care of patients within the Chongqing hospital and the results discovered when comparing oral care to survival rates (Lv et al., 2023). This article describes specifically improving oral care within orthopedics and ICU. Quality improvement of oral care is something to implement in all units. The care is most prevalent in healthcare departments where the patient stays for several days or more. Making the change to exemplary oral care for patients will require a pre-implementation stage of educating all healthcare workers about the importance and practical training in oral care. The intra-implementation stage can

include documenting the oral care given to patients to keep track of when the care occurs and hold healthcare workers responsible for completing this care. This research article highlights a significant issue of the infrequency of oral care (Lv et al., 2023). A post-implementation stage includes reporting the oral care frequency and survival rates to reevaluate the relationship. The goal of implementing these steps is to see a climb in the quality improvement of oral care and survival rates in the patients receiving care. Financially, this can affect the hospital by increasing staff education costs and needing to reevaluate the data after implementing the changes. Patient satisfaction should increase with the increase of proper oral care. Nursing satisfaction would likely reduce as the nursing staff would be held accountable more strictly for work they may have yet to perform. Implementing oral care will increase patient and nurse safety due to the emphasis on following policy and proper documentation and taking the extra step to ensure coordinated care.

### **Application to Nursing**

This article highlights the importance of proper oral care within a hospital setting (Lv et al., 2023). The article reports a cross-sectional qualitative study revealing that oral care can improve patient outcomes (Lv et al., 2023). Education on providing proper oral care is essential to maintain a patient's oral health. In future studies, including a study reporting on outcomes across multiple hospitals of the effects of oral care would be valuable.

### **Practice**

The best nursing practice for oral care includes covering the patient's chest with an absorbent towel, using a toothbrush to clean the care recipients' teeth, tongue, and gums, and applying a moisturizing substance to the patient's lips. The patient should then rinse their mouth

with water and spit into a provided container. If the patient is unable to rinse and spit, administer suction. If the patient uses dentures, remove the dentures, and clean the patient's gums and mouth. The dentures should be brushed outside of the mouth and rinsed.

### **Education**

The main issue is that oral care, often overlooked by healthcare workers engaged in caretaking, causes oversights hindering the quality of care. Nursing programs teach oral care. A significant concern is that oral care taught early in nursing education, may become forgotten years after. Staff education on oral care includes teaching nurses the verifiable reasoning for the care and hands-on application of oral care. The best way to ensure oral care becomes routine is to reiterate the teachings and enforce documentation.

### **Research**

Numerous research studies have occurred due to the evidence of oral care's effect on healing. It is known to have several noticeable effects, such as tooth decay and cavities. This study also determined that poor oral care can lead to ventilator-associated pneumonia (Lv et al., 2023). In further research, it would be advantageous to survey patients to determine how frequently and the quality of oral care they received. The overall priority should be determining the extent of poor oral care's effect on patients across several healthcare institutions. Taking these steps will help to determine how much certain facilities lack in oral care candidly.

### **Conclusion**

Quality improvement is ever-changing in the healthcare field. Patients who seek healthcare deserve the best treatment and attention possible. Quality improvement uses data to monitor outcomes and aims to improve the quality and safety of healthcare systems (QSEN Institute,

2020). Quality improvement aligns with the chosen article because the prognosis was researched compared to oral care. The articles' aim was "To understand the **oral care** status of elderly inpatients in various departments, analyze the existing problems, and provide a basis for further improving the oral care practices and promoting the oral health of elderly patients" (Lv et al., 2023, p. 110). Therefore, the article's aim has prevailed.

## References

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[https://qsen.org/competencies/pre-licensure-ksas/#quality\\_improvement](https://qsen.org/competencies/pre-licensure-ksas/#quality_improvement)

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