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Edentulism and Oral Health in Elderly in India

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We have read the excellent article by Dr Zubair and Kumar in your journal about edentulism and **Dantha** Bhagya Scheme launched by Government of Karnataka to provide dentures to people below poverty line (BPL).[1] These services ae made available in public and private dental colleges of Karnataka. Due to the lack of awareness among people about oral hygiene and oral health, loss of teeth is common in people due to poor socio-economic conditions and increase in cost of dental treatment. Population of aged people is increasing all over the world.

Malnutrition is common in people below BPL This will also cause dental caries and periodontal disease in poor elderly people. Poor oral health is associated with malnutrition.[2] Vitmin D deficiency is associated with higher prevalence of dental caries, periodontitis and gingival inflammation.[3] Vitamin D deficiency is more prevalent in India and other developing countries[4], Dehydration is common in the elderly people and reduced daily intake of water can cause dental caries and periodontitis as observed in a recent large Korean study.[5] Dehydrated teeth enamel are more prone to damage and greater wear.[6] Dehydration damages the roots of teeth and causes cracking.[7] Dehydration often causes spontaneous cracks in dentin.[7] Olive oil can be of help in reducing water evaporation and also to form a protective barrier over the oral tissues.[8] Dehydration is common in elderly people due to decrease in thirst sensation. Daily intake of adequate water helps to promote oral health.[5]

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