Older adults’ oral-health crises targeted

Oral Health America Wisdom Tooth Project aims to reverse dental-care/knowledge gap

By Jennifer Gilbert, Oral Health America

Older adults — the most rapidly growing segment of the population in the United States — are facing a crisis when it comes to oral health. According to a 2013 Harris Interactive survey commissioned by Oral Health America, 23 percent of older adults have not seen a dental provider in five years, 70 percent do not have dental insurance, eight out of 10 uninsured seniors could not pay for a major dental procedure and 33 million live where dentists and clinics are scarce.

Oral Health America, a national nonprofit that aims to change lives by connecting communities with resources to increase access to care, education and advocacy for all Americans, is working to turn these statistics around through the Wisdom Tooth Project™ (WTP), a program that focuses entirely on older adults.

The WTP recently launched www.toothwisdom.org, a first-of-its-kind web portal providing oral-health information and local and national resources for older adults, caregivers and oral-health professionals.

At the same time, the WTP released ‘A State of Decay,’’ a biennial publication that evaluates states on five leading indicators of adult oral health: adult Medicaid dental benefits, inclusion of older adult strategies in state oral health plans, edentulism, dental health professional shortage areas and community water fluoridation.

The report garnered local and national media attention when more than half of states failed to achieve a rating of 50 or greater. Regional symposia also unite diverse groups of health professionals and community leaders with the aim of inspiring strategic change to improve the oral health of older adults.

The WTP’s latest endeavor is “Tooth Wisdom: Get Smart About Your Mouth,” a health education program designed to enable older adults who are aging at home to improve their oral health through daily self-care and increase their knowledge about oral health.

To ensure the program is scientifically accurate and accessible, an older adult advisory committee has been assembled, composed of professionals who attended last year’s “Collaborative Health Care for Older Adults: A Symposium for Creating Inter-professional Community Models” and have a continued interest in geriatric oral health. The committee meets regularly to discuss the education program and offer recommendations.

To learn more about Oral Health America and the WTP, you can visit www.oralhealthamerica.org and www.toothwisdom.org.
NiteBite provides preventive incentive

By Keystone Industries Staff

Many goals of minimally invasive, preventive oriented dental practices can be realized using the unique treatment advantages of NiteBite. The device helps ensure your patients’ dental health investment by reducing the need for future treatments.

With the NiteBite in place, the jaws’ opening reflexes achieve a “non-contacting” introral relationship. Wear facets and wear patterns, worn down and loose teeth, broken teeth and broken restorations are prevented when the NiteBite maintains the jaws at a fully rested, non parafunctional, relaxed and centered relationship.

According to the manufacturer, the NiteBite’s ease of use and five-minute fitting and insertion by dentist or hygienist provides immediate relief for patients and also creates profitable return for the practice. That’s why the manufacturer calls the NiteBite “a practice builder.”

Using the NiteBite early in a treatment plan can immediately reduce TMD symptoms. Many patients will appreciate instant comfort and relaxation as the NiteBite eliminates the damages of stress, tension and the parafunctional occlusal and muscle problems of grinding and clenching. The NiteBite will reduce pain in and around the head and neck — eliminating muscle spasms and nighttime clenching, grinding and bruxism.

The success of periodontal treatment is protected by preventing bruxism. Post-operative stabilization is enhanced because the teeth do not touch at night when the jaw opening reflex is triggered by the NiteBite.

“Hot” or endodontically involved teeth can easily be disassembled with the aid of the NiteBite. Grinding and clenching at night are reduced or eliminated. Post-operative temporo-mandibular reflex is triggered when the jaw opening reflex at night the teeth do not touch.

The NiteBite in place, the jaws’ opening reflexes improve as the NiteBite eliminates electrical muscle spasms and nighttime clenching. The NiteBite will reduce pain in and around the head and neck — eliminating muscle spasms and nighttime clenching, grinding and bruxism.

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