

## EDITORIAL



## Quality of Life Assessment should be Part of Oral Health Evaluations in Day-to-day Practice

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### INTRODUCTION

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity."<sup>1</sup> Quality of Life (QoL) is a crucial and often required measure of an individual's general well-being. The QoL is an established term incorporating different facets of life like physical, psychological, social, economical, spiritual, cognitional, and sexual dimensions. An interference in any one aspect will in turn disturb the other domains and these interactions influence the overall QoL.<sup>2</sup> Oral health is a part of overall health and is essential to QoL.<sup>3</sup> A comfortable and functional oral cavity allows an individual to achieve his/her social roles and day-to-day activities without any physical, psychological,

or social hindrances.<sup>4</sup> Any problem associated with oral cavity may cause pain, difficulties in eating, speaking, and appearance and finally results in decreased self-confidence and social communication.<sup>5</sup>

Oral health-related QoL (OHRQoL) is an essential part of general health of an individual. The WHO has acclaimed OHRQoL as an integral component of the Global Oral Health Program.<sup>6</sup> The OHRQoL is a multidimensional creation comprising of a subjective appraisal of oral health, functional well-being, emotional well-being, expectations and satisfaction with care, and sense of self of an individual.<sup>7</sup> This suggests that OHRQoL can be cast-off to assess the influence of oral health discrepancies in general well-being and QoL of an individual. Moreover, assessment of OHRQoL definitely has major implications for dental practice and research.

There are different instruments to measure OHRQoL. The most popular among these are: Oral Health Impact Profile, Chronic Oral Mucosal Disease Questionnaire, University of Washington Quality of Life Questionnaire, and OHRQoL-UK. Few other instruments are also available, namely European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer, Oral Impacts on Daily Performances, and Dental Impact on Daily Living. Researchers have tried to develop disease-specific QoL instruments to assess oral health and are still developing new instruments rapidly as per the requirement. Furthermore, these instruments can be categorized into generic instruments measuring overall oral health and specific instruments to measure specific oral health conditions.<sup>8</sup> Also, most of these available instruments estimate only prevalence of consequences of oral health on QoL and failed to apprehend the importance of their effects on overall life of the patients.

Thus, OHRQoL can be considered essential because of its insinuations for oral health discrepancies and approach to oral care. Unfortunately, because of minimal dental professionals in developing countries, there is often a lack

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of dental services, especially in rural locations, whereas high cost may sometimes limit the treatment access in developed countries. Finally, assessment of the effects of oral disparities on QoL should be part of the evaluation of oral health in an everyday practice along with thorough clinical examination to best describe the sense of well-being or symptoms of dental patients or their ability to execute day-to-day activities. Development of disease-specific QoL instruments is the need of the hour to effectively manage the patients.

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