



Dental health among adults in contact with domiciliary care dental care services in England

During 2009/10 and 2010/11 a survey of the dental health of adults in contact with domiciliary care dental services was undertaken by 25 primary care trusts (PCTs) across England. The survey comprised a simple clinical examination and a questionnaire which were carried out in volunteers' homes. This summary compares the headline findings with those of the national Adult Dental Health Survey (ADHS) 2009.

Out of 599 volunteers, 15 (3%) did not give consent to the examination, 27 (5%) were unable to co-operate with the examination from the start and 370 (62%) took part in the examination. Of those who took part 91% had a full examination and 9% had a partial examination (2% withdrew consent and 7% were unable to co-operate).

Five hundred and seventy-six (96%) volunteers took part in the questionnaire, 68% of whom completed the questionnaire themselves and 32% had the questionnaire completed by someone else on their behalf.

Table 1. Age distribution of volunteers

Age band	Domiciliary care volunteers	ADHS volunteers
18 – 24	1%	9%
25 – 34	1%	14%
35 – 44	2%	18%
45 – 54	4%	18%
55 – 64	7%	17%
65 or over	79%	24%
Not answered/Don't know	2%	0%
No reply recorded	25 volunteers	-
Total	599 volunteers	9,663 volunteers

The presence of any natural teeth

In the 2009 ADHS 94% of adults in England were dentate (having some natural teeth) and 6% were edentate (having no natural teeth), of the volunteers in the survey in contact with domiciliary care 68% were dentate and 183 (31%) were edentate. The average number of natural teeth was 15, which was lower than the findings of the 2009 ADHS (table 2).

Table 2. Average number of teeth by age band

Age band	Domiciliary care volunteers	ADHS volunteers
18 – 24	27	29
25 – 34	23	29
35 – 44	24	28
45 – 54	21	26
55 – 64	16	23
65 or over	14	19
Not answered/Don't know	15	-
Total	15	25

Pain

Overall 9% of dentate adults in England who took part in the ADHS reported having a problem or pain in their mouth at the time of examination, compared with 14% of the domiciliary care volunteers. In the ADHS, 70% of dentate adults reported never or hardly ever feeling dental pain in the previous 12 months and 8% reported feeling dental pain fairly or very often. Among those in contact with domiciliary care volunteers 65% reported never or hardly ever feeling dental pain in the last 12 months and 11% reported feeling dental pain fairly or very often.

PUFA – which relates to open pulp, ulceration, fistula and abscess – is a recently developed index of clinical consequences of untreated dental caries (tooth decay). It provides a measure of extensive dental caries which is causing significant problems in need of early attention.

Overall in England 7% of dentate adults had at least one PUFA symptom. Among the domiciliary care volunteers 9% had at least one PUFA symptom.

Oral hygiene

In England 75% of dentate adults said that they cleaned their teeth at least twice a day, 22% said that they did this once a day, 2% less than once a day and 1% said they never cleaned their teeth. Among the domiciliary care volunteers 43% reported that they brushed twice or more a day, 41% said they brushed once a day, 11% less than once a day and 3% said they never cleaned their teeth.

Presence of dental calculus (tartar)

In the ADHS of 5,570 examined dentate adults 69% had one or more sextants with calculus, with an average of 1.8 sextants affected. In the survey in contact with domiciliary care, of 342 examined adults with calculus data collected, 71% had one or more sextants with calculus, with an average of 0.4 sextants affected.

Reported treatment

In England in the ADHS, 90% of dentate adults reported having a check-up during their last course of treatment; 50% had their teeth scaled and polished; 47% received advice on looking after their teeth; 34% had an X-ray and 28% had their teeth filled.

Among the domiciliary care volunteers 81% of adults reported having a check-up during their last course of treatment; 18% had their teeth scaled and polished; 8% received advice on looking after their teeth; 5% had an X-ray and 16% had their teeth filled.

Oral Health Impact Profile (OHIP)

Of dentate adults in England in the ADHS 30% experienced physical pain occasionally or more often in the previous 12 months, 20% experienced psychological discomfort and 39% of dentate adults reported experiencing at least one problem concerning their oral health.

The same proportion of volunteers in contact with domiciliary care (30%) reported experiencing physical pain occasionally or more often in the previous 12 months, 14% experienced psychological discomfort and 49% reported experiencing at least one problem concerning their oral health.

Oral Impact on Daily Performance (OIDP)

Overall in the ADHS, 33% of dentate adults reported having at least one oral health problem that caused difficulty with eating, speaking, relaxing, being sociable or doing normal jobs in the past 12 months. In the survey of those in contact with domiciliary care 48% reported having at least one oral health problem that caused difficulties.

Summary

As would have been expected the age profile of the adults in contact with domiciliary care differed from that of the ADHS such that older age groups were far more strongly represented. This could account for the reduced proportion of volunteers who were dentate. Less than a third of those who use domiciliary care services were edentulous and this has implications for the provision of dental treatment on a domiciliary basis.

Adult users of domiciliary care were disadvantaged as they had fewer teeth present than their same age ADHS peers. A slightly larger proportion reported having pain fairly or very often and had one or more PUFA signs. A considerably larger proportion reported having at least one problem that caused difficulties.

This group were less likely to report the inclusion of radiographs (X-rays), fillings or the receipt of information on self-care in their most recent course of treatment.

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