

# The Elderly's Limited Awareness of Advanced-Way Dental Procedures Hinders Access to Treatment, Resulting in Persistent Pain and Unmet Dental Needs in Pakistan

Sir,

The elderly population is a segment of society that is often neglected and considered a burden worldwide. This can lead to depression and lack of motivation to continue living among the elderly population. With ageing, this population experiences physical health issues such as bone degeneration, weakness, and dependence on others for daily tasks. This dependence on others for health, nutrition, and other daily life procedures can be challenging as it requires someone's availability.<sup>1</sup>

The modern dental technologies including tele-dentistry or the prophylactic dental care platforms such as the internet of dental things (IoDT), in the era where most of the elderly population in Pakistan are familiar with smartphones,<sup>2</sup> have evolved the easy access to dental practices, by staying at home.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the dental visits have also become convenient for dental prosthetic treatments which are extremely important for the elderly's nutritional balance.<sup>4</sup> The conventional methods were more time-consuming, more financially burdensome due to material cost, more irritating due to impression methods, and required more visits. These methods are now replaced by the use of intra-oral scanners, and the software has made it easier to capture 3D oral structures, evaluate muscular movements, bites, and occlusion simultaneously, reducing patient's discomfort and financial burden.<sup>5</sup>

The innovative practice in the modern era of dentistry has made it easier for the elderly population to visit or have consultations at home. This raises the question: Are elderly population aware of these advancements in dental practices, that could encourage them to avail dental treatments?

I would like to respectfully draw your attention to this domain. More research and studies are required among healthcare providers (HCPs), and to determine how many of the elderly population in Pakistan are availing the advanced technologies. It is also important to determine if HCPs in Pakistan are familiar with such machines, if the incorporation of machine learning or technologies is essential in the curriculum of the Bachelor of

Dental Surgery (BDS), and whether the elderly population is aware of these technologies or not. We need to clarify how social media can spread awareness among the elderly population or if we need other modes to spread awareness.

## COMPETING INTEREST:

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION:

RSAG: Literature review, conception, and design work.

ANB: Letter formatting and literature reviewing.

TSA: Final review and content analysis.

All authors approved the final version of the manuscript to be published.

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Received: February 07, 2024; Revised: April 02, 2024;

Accepted: April 05, 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.29271/jcpsp.2024.06.742>

