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Did you know that by 2030, the number of people over 65 is expected to double to about 71 million? An important and sometimes overlooked component of an older adult's general health and well-being is oral health problems that can cause pain and suffering and difficulty in speaking, chewing, swallowing and maintaining a nutritious diet. As a dental professional, you play a key role in the quality of life for older Americans.

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CARING FOR THE ELDERLY: SPECIAL CARE DENTISTRY



The country is aging. There are more older adults than ever before, and there is no one-size-fits-all way to describe this cohort. As the population ages, its heterogeneity increases. Older adults are less like each other than any other age group.

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What do YOU think?



How do you meet the oral health needs of your aging patient base and what unique oral health concerns/trends do you see in this patient population?

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[View responses](#) to last issue's question: *What aspect of leadership do you find most challenging?*

Hot Button

ADA ORAL HEALTH INITIATIVES FOR OLDER AMERICANS



There are several ADA initiatives currently underway to help enhance the oral health of older Americans, including newly developed resources for dental professionals, a special task force and a corporate partner program.

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TAKING CARE: PROFESSIONALLY AND PERSONALLY



The toll of caretaking has been in the news again, this time documenting the conventional wisdom that people who've cared for an ill spouse are likely to experience serious illness, and often even death, in the months after the death of a spouse. The dynamics of this aren't yet clear, but it's not hard to see—restless nights, chronic stress punctuated by crises, loneliness as a partner slips into dementia or self-absorption, self-neglect, haphazard meals and abandoned routines.

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CARE FOR OLDER ADULTS GRANTEES MAKING PROGRESS

The ADA Foundation's Access to Oral Care for Older Adults Grants Program passed the half-way mark of its first grant year. Each of the six non-profit organizations chosen to receive program support has reported significant progress in meeting their proposed objectives.

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