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Dental-care Utilization Patterns and Factors Associated with Regular Dental Check-ups in Elderly

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to investigate dental care utilization patterns in the elderly and to evaluate factors associated with regular dental check-ups in this age group. A total of 211 elderly people (50 men, 161 women) aged between 60 and 98 years were investigated. A cross-sectional survey by questionnaire was carried out on visitors to the Mihama Ikiiki Plaza (an institution for the elderly) in the city of Chiba, Japan between July and September, 2008. Items on the questionnaire included self-reported oral status, use of dentures, use of regular medication, oral problems, cleaning of teeth/dentures and dental care utilization patterns. The results showed that 135 (64.0%) of the responders had visited a dentist in the past year, 185 (87.7%) had visited the same dentist and 85 (40.3%) had had regular dental check-ups. A stepwise multiple logistic regression analysis adjusting for age and sex revealed that the factors associated with regular dental check-ups were significantly higher ADLs (odds ratio (OR)=0.439 in the partially insured and 0.192 in the fully insured in comparison with healthy subjects, $p=0.0012$), visiting the same dentist (OR=11.978 in comparison with not visiting the same dentist, $p=0.0183$) and cleaning teeth/dentures three or more times per day (OR=1.962 in comparison with cleaning them two or fewer times per day, $p=0.0368$). In this study, a higher ADL, visiting the same dentist and cleaning teeth/dentures three or more times per day were associated with having regular dental check-ups in the elderly. The best predictive factor for regular dental check-ups was a high ADL in the elderly.

Key words: [Dental visits](#), [Same dentist](#), [Regular dental check-ups](#), [Elderly](#), [Health behaviors](#)

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