

Mobility impairment: Modifications for dentistry

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There are 49 million people in the US living with a physical disability. The purpose of this presentation first is to explain mobility impairments. They include upper limb disability, manual dexterity, and disability in co-ordination with different organs of the body (from amputation to stroke to SCI). People with mobility impairments have more periodontal disease and more caries than the general population, yet seem completely unaware of their dental disease. Dental professionals are willing to treat these individuals; however, do not feel educated or confident. We have to understand their condition to better manage their appointments. Next, we have to observe the obstacles present from accessibility of the dental office to performance of a safe wheelchair transfer. Once that obstacle is faced, our patients must be kept comfortable in the dental chair to avoid any medical emergency. Informing patients of dental disease and how to creatively modify their risk factors through proper oral hygiene care becomes of utmost importance. Finally since the overall dentist to population ratio is declining, we must consider other avenues to promote oral care in the community for those with special needs such as mobility impairments.

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