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Incorporating oral health into nursing curriculums: a systematic review**Vandana Bhagat, Ha Hoang, Len Crocombe and Lyn Goldberg**

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Statement of the Problem: The oral health of older people in residential aged care has been widely identified as poor. The growing number of age care residents, especially those who have retained their teeth has raised concerns for policy makers when addressing service gaps in the provision of effective and timely oral care. Nurses play an important role in providing oral health care to older people but currently, it is a low priority. This study synthesized the evidence on incorporating oral health education into the nursing curriculum and evidence on the current attitude and knowledge of nursing students towards oral health.

Method: Three (3) databases PubMed, CINAHL & Scopus were searched using keywords: Oral care, oral health, oral hygiene, nursing students, nurse educators, curriculum, knowledge and attitudes. Inclusion criteria were: (1) published between 2008-2018, (2) studies written in English, (3) participants being nursing students or nursing educators, (4) based in organization of Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) countries. Selected articles were assessed using the mixed methods appraisal tool and data extracted were thematically analyzed.

Findings: Few nursing schools incorporated an oral health module in their curriculum adopted the Interprofessional Education (IPE) model. This model focusses on teaching nursing students about oral-systematic health connections, with the nursing students working with, learning from and contributing to the knowledge of dental and allied health professionals. There was poor oral health knowledge and an inconsistent attitude towards oral health practice among nursing students.

Significance: The incorporation of oral health knowledge and effective care into regular nursing education and practice and adoption of IPE model may contribute to improvement in the attitude of nursing students towards maintaining the oral health of older people in residential aged care.

Biography

Vandana Bhagat is currently working as a Dentist from India and has completed her Master's degree in Advanced Health Services Management from Griffith University, Australia. She is currently a PhD candidate in the Centre of Rural Health at University of Tasmania, Australia.

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