

Relationship between Psychosocial Health and Self-Reported Oral Health among Senior Center Participants in Wichita, Kansas

Ashwini Kanade¹, Douglas Parham¹, and Amy Chesser²

¹*Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, Wichita State University;*

²*Department of Public Health Sciences, Wichita State University*

Poor mental health days are defined as, “mean number of days in the past 30 days adults reported their mental health was not good.” According to America’s Mental Health Rankings, the poor mental health days for women above 65+ years old in Kansas is greater (4.3) when compared to men (3.0). Oral health impacts mental health and thus, affects the health of Kansas residents. The definition of health has moved past free of disease and healthy mouth is an essential component of whole-person approach to health care. The relations between oral health and overall health of an individual are explicit and crucial. Poor oral health impacts nutrition, self-image, social interactions, mental and physical health, and health-related quality of life. The purpose of this study was to assess gender differences in psycho-social consequences of oral health at senior centers in Wichita, KS. The GOHAI (Geriatric Oral Health Assessment Index) survey was conducted and socio-demographic information was collected. Results of this survey showed higher impact of oral health on women as compared to men. Psychosocial well-being is an important component of mental health and this study assists to signify the mental health problems due to oral health. According to the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) report (2019), the behavioral health system is in crisis and the behavioral health problems include psychological distress. By improving oral health related quality of life, the psychological well-being and mental health among older adults can be enhanced.