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CONTACT:
Matt Niner
+1.703.299.8084
media@iadr.org

Stage Setting for Oral Health on the Healthy Aging Agenda

Alexandria, VA, USA – A symposium analyzing the role of oral health in healthy aging was presented at the 103rd General Session of the IADR, which was held in conjunction with the IADR/Pan European Regional Congress on June 25-28, 2025 in Barcelona, Spain.

The World Health Organization defines healthy aging as the process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that supports well-being in older age. Integral to healthy aging is maintaining a healthy mouth that enables individuals to eat, speak, smile, and perform other oral functions without difficulty, discomfort, or pain. Moreover, epidemiological research shows links between oral health and chronic conditions among older adults, with tooth loss suggested as an early marker of physical, and cognitive function decline in later life. With the variations in the underlying structural, social, and health system factors within and between countries, there is need to consolidate multi-country findings and comparatively discuss oral health in aging populations at the global level.

This symposium drew on contemporary knowledge on the determinants of oral health in older populations and its contribution to healthy aging. Speakers gave complementary presentations on new findings from longitudinal studies of middle-aged and older adults from Asian (China, Japan), European (United Kingdom) and North American (United States and Canada) contexts. These discussed the status of oral health inequalities in various aging populations, the associations of oral conditions with other non-communicable chronic diseases and cognitive function, while delving into the roles of structural factors in healthy aging and the underlying socio-biological pathways. The symposium culminated by discussing the methodological and policy challenges for oral health in older populations while highlighting future research directions. Presentations were followed by a moderated panel discussion and a Q&A period.

Organized by Georgios Tsakos, University College London, UK and Ankur Singh, University of Adelaide, Australia, the Symposium, “Stage Setting for Oral Health on the Healthy Aging Agenda” took place on Saturday, June 28 at 8 a.m. CEST (UTC+2).

About IADR

The International Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research (IADR) is a nonprofit organization with a mission to drive dental, oral, and craniofacial research for health and well-being worldwide. IADR represents the individual scientists, clinician-scientists, dental professionals, and students based in academic, government, non-profit, and private-sector institutions who share our mission. Learn more at www.iadr.org.

T +1.703.548.0066
F +1.703.548.1883
1619 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-3406, USA
www.iadr.org • www.aadocr.org