



Chapter 10

Traditional and Natural Medicine in Geriatric Dental Care: Integrating Natural and Traditional Medicine With Digital Medicine in the Oral Health of the Elderly

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ABSTRACT

The high demand for health services due to population aging poses a challenge for societies. The elderly present particularities that make them a candidate to use natural and traditional medicine therapies in dentistry. In this sense, with the advances in digital medicine, professionals and patients can access ways of prevention and treatment through tutorials, software, applications, and teledentistry for the purpose

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of using natural and traditional medicine. The chapter presents a review carried out on texts and journals consulted in reference centers and through electronic searches such as PubMed, ScieLo, Medline, and Google in recent years, as well as medical blogs. The goal of the authors is to make visible as treatment possibilities natural and traditional medicine for the elderly in dentistry and its integration to digital technologies for its benefits as a whole.

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization declares that between 2020 and 2030 the percentage of older adults (OA) will increase by 34% (Castillo, 2021). These data transform the social panorama in most of the nations and require numerous researches, with diverse approaches, that address it as a new and complex phenomenon that will modify the agenda of public policies aimed at OA (Álvarez et al., 2021). Health services and specifically dental services are facing the challenge of satisfying the increased demands for this population group care, where a laudable alternative would be the application of Natural and Traditional Medicine (NTM) techniques.

The NTM, according to its name, is considered a current that combines thought and therapeutic action, storing a diversity of concrete expressions, many of them come from ancestral or relatively ancient cultures, the others are much more recent or do not correspond to any tradition. Some resort to entirely natural resources, others to high-tech media. In principle they have to respond to the canons of conventional medical practice (Macías et al., 2019).

Researchers on the subject (Figueredo, 2019; Plain, 2019; Macías, 2019; Rojas, 2022; Juan, 2022; Rodriguez, 2022; Pacheco, 2022), identify the different modalities of NTM with great potential for solving health problems in current medicine, specifically in OA. Rojas (2022) was an example of the epidemiological contingency presented against COVID-19, where clinical trials were carried out that dealt with the use of different NTM therapies; the rates of cure and hospital discharge of patients increased and the number of severe cases decreased. In addition, the aforementioned authors emphasize that its application is very useful in the treatment and prevention of oral health conditions.

Another point to highlight is that the above mentioned natural therapies are in consonance with the recently statements expressed by the International Dental Federation. This has recommended make an organized effort to apply sustainable development measures in the dental field, looking for opportunities in research and development that promote the ecologically responsible use of dental supplies and treatments, tending to reduce the ecological impact of professional practice

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