

## **Good Oral Hygiene May be Associated with Lower Dementia Risk, Study Finds**

Elderly people who brush their teeth at least once a day may be at a lower risk of developing dementia, according to a study published online August 2 in *Journal of American Geriatrics Society*.

Researchers at the University of California in Irvine and Los Angeles conducted a longitudinal cohort study and followed up more than 5,000 residents of a retirement community from 1992 to 2010. Participants' ages ranged from 52 to 105 years at the start of the study, and their mean age was 81 years.

At the beginning of the study, none of the participants had dementia, the authors wrote. Eighteen years later, they used interviews, medical records and death certificates to determine that 1,145 participants had been diagnosed with dementia.

Of 78 women who reported that they brushed their teeth less than once a day in 1992, 21 had dementia in 2010, or about one per 3.7 women, the authors wrote. Among women who brushed their teeth once per day, about one in every 4.5 had developed dementia. This translates to a 65 percent greater chance of developing dementia among those who reported brushing less than once a day, the authors wrote.

According to the researchers, the results for men were less pronounced. Those who reported brushing less than once per day were only 22 percent more likely to have dementia in 2010 than were men who reported brushing at least once a day. This small effect could have been due to chance, the researchers pointed out.

This study was funded by the National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, MD; Earl Carroll Trust, Los Angeles; and Wyeth-Ayerst Laboratories (now part of Pfizer), New York City.

*The Journal of the American Dental Association*, November 2012