

Aging Population – time to act
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Ethical issues in treating elderly

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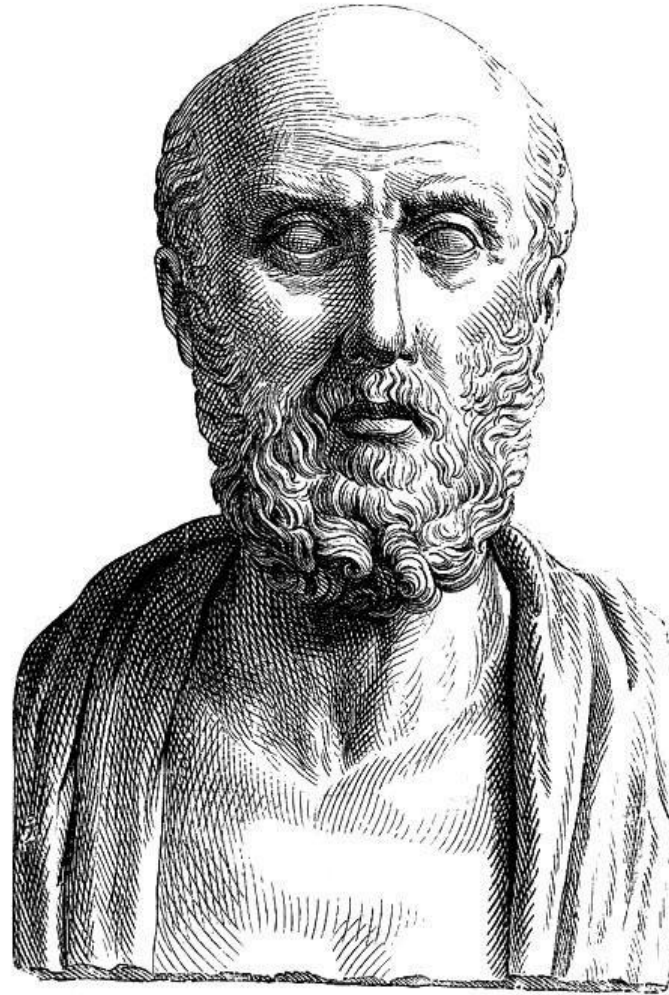
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Should aging patients be treated like human beings?

"Primum non nocere"



Hippokrates

Declaration of Helsinki

- World Medical Association was founded in 1947.
- Preceded by Declaration of Geneva 1948.
- Originally adopted in June 1964 in Helsinki, Finland.
- Seven revisions - most recent in October 2013.



First Question: Where to treat?



Dental office



Special treatment unit



Hospital ward

Should not the dental treatment team attend the elderly where they are?



Nursing home



Care givers home



Hospital ward

?

Second Question: What to treat?



Pain

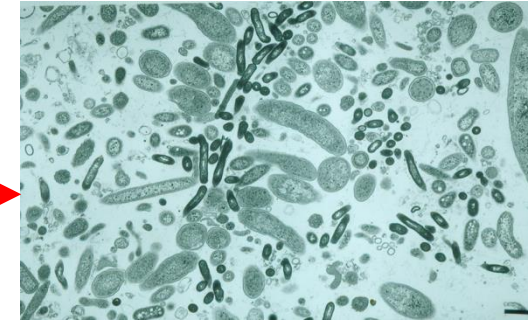
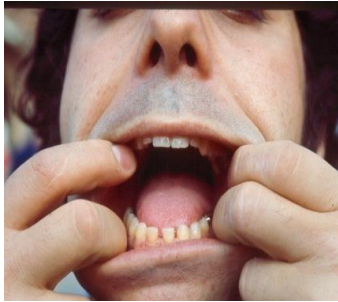


Cancer



Infections

Oral infection – systemic health



- Hematogenic spread of oral infections
- Bacteremia of oral origin
- Medically compromised patients



- Oral biofilm contains thousands of microbial species.
- 1 mg of dental plaque = 10^9 microbes.



The elderly are particularly liable for infection complications

Why is it important to maintain maintain good oral hygiene in the aging and frail?

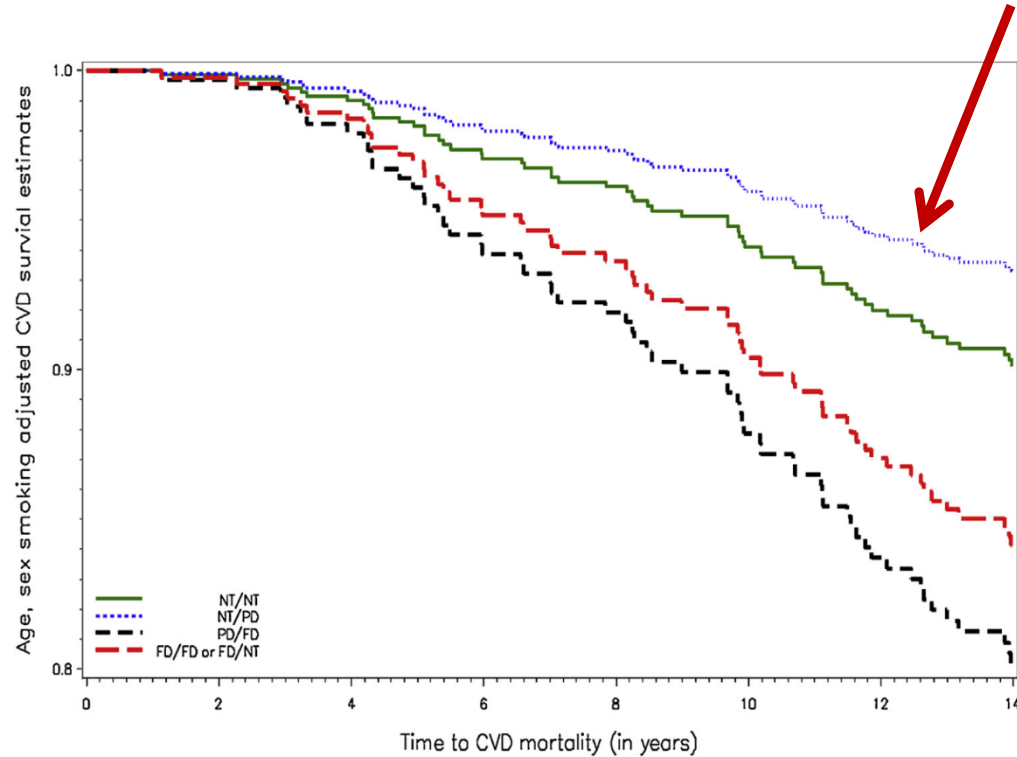


Poor oral hygiene may
be the reason for pneumonia

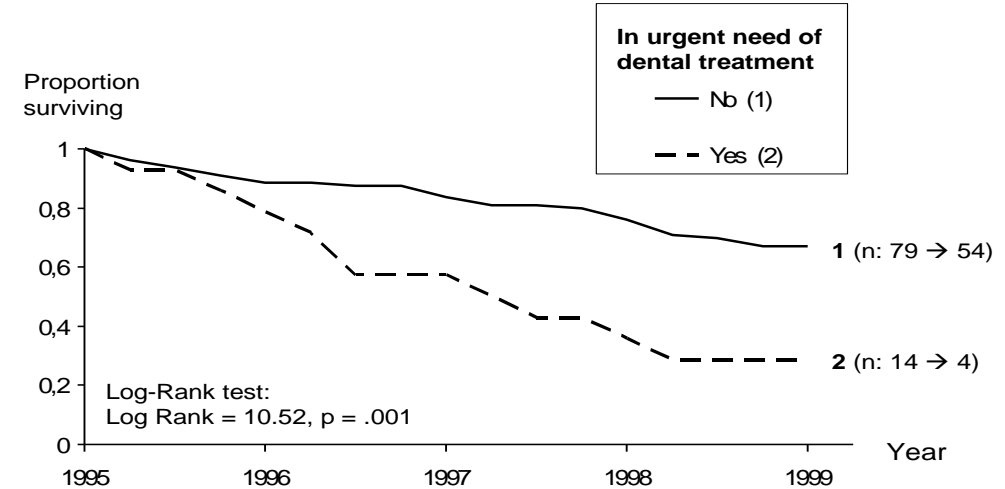


Electric toothbrush is more useful than manual brush in nursing home residents who need assistance with oral hygiene. [Fjeld et al. Eur J Oral Sci 2014;122:142-8.](#)

Oral infections of the elderly reflect in increased mortality



Removable dental prostheses and cardiovascular survival: a 15-year follow-up study. (Janket et al. J Dent 2013;41:740-6).



Hämäläinen et al. Gerodontology 2004; 21:209-215

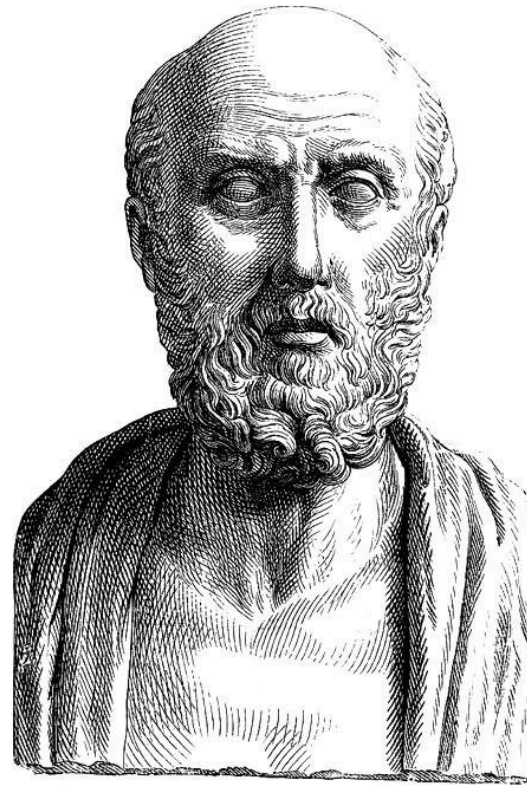
Oral infections as predictors of mortality

Acutely hospitalized elderly had significantly more signs of dental infections than home living elderly (Meurman et al. J Dent Res 1997, 76, 1271-1276)



Third Question: How to treat

"Primum non nocere"



Pondering...



Taking a decision...





Obvious dental treatment need



Eradication of dental infections

Not so easy!



All the patient needs is empathy

**Cancer (including oral cancer) is disease of the elderly
It should be diagnosed at its early stage**



Quality of life

Preserving a healthy mouth contributes to better OHRQoL*

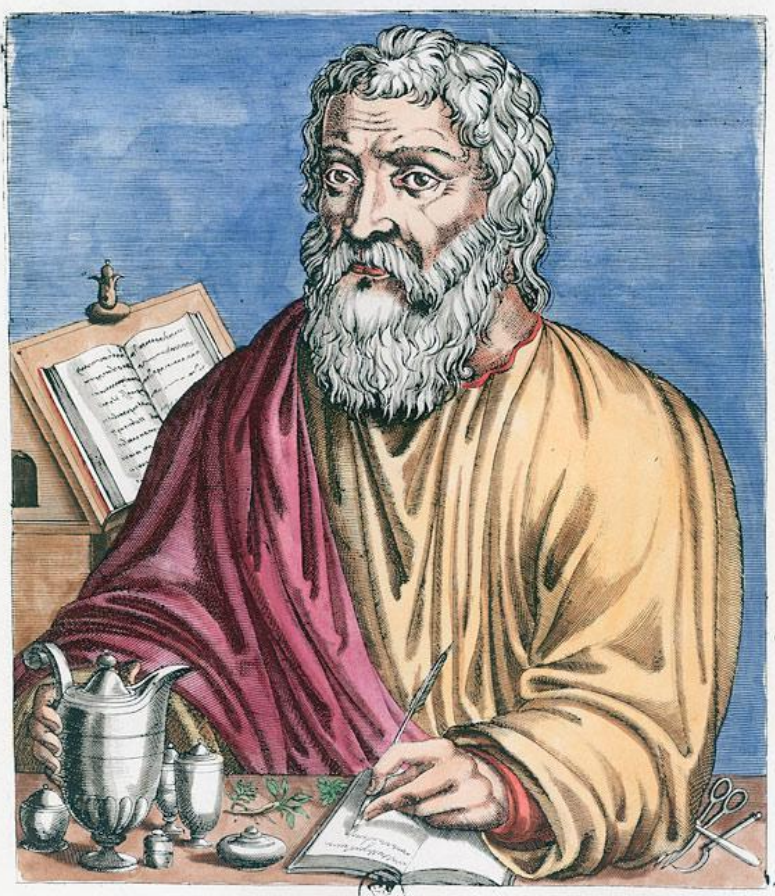


*Shao et al. Health Quality Life Outcomes 2018;16:98.

Objective treatment need – subjective symptoms – prognosis – quality of life



Do no harm!



Hippokrates
ca. 460 – ca. 370 BC



Platane of Hippokrates on the Greek island of Kos



Translational Oral Health Research

- Provides an up-to-date overview of translational research within the field of oral health
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