

## The Mobile Gerontological Dental Team - an example of best practice

### Pokretni gerontostomatološki tim - primjer dobre prakse

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Increase in the share of the elderly population within the general population requires an adaptation of dental care and poses a challenge to existing methods of oral health care. (1)

As early as 2006, the Dental Polyclinic Zagreb recognized the need for analyzing the oral health status of the elderly population in the city of Zagreb through a voluntary project called “Oral Health in the Third Age”. Since then, the Polyclinic started conducting preventive examinations in the nursing homes for the elderly and disabled. The examination results of 1,836 patients, residents of the nursing homes, clearly demonstrated the urgent need for comprehensive dental treatment.

In 2018, the city of Zagreb acknowledged the problem and became involved in co-financing the project, giving rise to the “Mobile Gerontological Dental Team.” The preparatory phase lasted for the first eight months of 2018 and involved the procurement of equipment and material-technical resources for effective dental treatment in nursing homes for the elderly and disabled.

The Mobile Gerontological Dental Specialist Team is capable of providing quality dental services after dental examinations of the residents in nursing homes for the elderly and disabled. The project was initially conceived for the treatment of immobile residents but later expanded to a mobile team that addresses the needs of all nursing home residents. From the project’s inception, there has been a great demand for prosthetic treatment. Since 2021, a specialist in dental prosthetics has been part of the team.

The treatment of nursing home residents takes place by appointment in case of emergencies and regularly, according to prior arrangements with the head nurses of individual nursing homes.

Despite the pandemic years, the project shows growth and justifies all the conclusions drawn from the “Oral Health in the Third Age” project.

Through this project, we have truly made a significant leap forward in caring for the oral health of the elderly population in the city of Zagreb, greatly improving their phonation, mastication, social interaction, and overall quality of life in nursing homes for the elderly and disabled. The idea is for this project to become the basis for expanding the concept on a national level in the coming years.

#### LITERATURE

1. Chung J. Delivering Mobile Dentistry to the Geriatric Population—The Future of Dentistry. *Dent J (Basel)*. 2019;7(2):62.