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Tooth Loss and Risk Indicators in Older Adults in Central Thailand

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Background: Tooth loss is a common oral health conditions among older people both in Thailand and nationwide. Research on risk indicators of tooth loss is essential in solving problem of tooth loss among older Thai people.

Objective: The purpose of this study was to evaluate risk indicators of tooth loss in a group of older Thai adults.

Methods: The samples in this cross-sectional analytic study comprised a total of 472 adults, aged 60-93 years, residing in several provinces of central Thailand during 2012. They volunteered to participate in the study and received both oral examination and interview. Two calibrated dentists performed the oral examination while the interview was done by two well-trained interviewers. Information in the interview consisted of background information, health information and behaviors as well as oral health conditions and behaviors. Data analysis was performed for descriptive and univariate logistic regression. A multivariable logistic regression was built to find a set of risk indicators associated with tooth loss, adjusting for confounding variables.

Results: Of the 472 older Thais examined, 51.7% had lost more than 12 teeth. Findings from the final multivariable logistic regression revealed that tooth loss was associated directly with age and denture wearing, with the adjusted odds ratio (aOR) (95% CI) being 1.092 (1.046-1.139) and 4.086 (2.274-7.342), respectively. Tooth brushing and scaling were associated indirectly with tooth loss, with the adjusted odds ratio (aOR) (95% CI) being 0.554 (0.385-0.797) and 0.264 (0.095-0.735), respectively. Several oral health conditions were also related indirectly to tooth loss including decayed teeth, shallow and deep periodontal pockets as well as severe debris deposit.

Conclusion: The findings of this study show that several factors are associated with tooth loss among older adults in central Thailand. Thus various actions are needed to effectively approach this problem.

Keywords: Tooth loss, Risk indicators, Older adults, Central Thailand