

news item ...

The preliminary results for the 2009 Adult Dental Health Survey have recently been released and suggest that despite the difficulties of the current economic climate there may at least be some cause for optimism within the dental profession.

Evidence from the largest ever survey of the nation's dental health indicates that the proportion of adults attending the dentist for regular check ups has increased in all three participating countries, with the most significant increase being in Wales, up from 39% in 1978 to 69% in 2009.

However, patient anxiety remains a key issue for the profession, with 12% of all adults (who had ever been to the dentist) classified as having extreme anxiety. Within this figure extreme anxiety is even more prevalent in women (17%) and younger - 16 to 24 year old - adults (15%).

The Adult Dental Health Survey 2009

A series of more detailed reports are due to be published in March 2011 but here's a brief summary of some of the key findings:-

- **Over the last 30 years the proportion of adults in England who had no natural teeth has fallen by 22 percentage points, from 28 per cent in 1978 to 6 per cent in 2009.**
- **94% of adults were dentate.**
 - 86% had 21 or more natural teeth
 - There were clear differences by different socio-economic groups with 91% of adults from management/professional occupations having 21 or more natural teeth compared to only 79% of adults from routine/manual occupations
 - The average number of teeth was 25.6
 - The average number of sound and untreated teeth was 17.8
 - 71% had no visible coronal caries
- **The proportion of people who were edentate varied by country but had improved.**
 - England 6% (28% in 1978)
 - Wales 10% (37% in 1978)
 - Northern Ireland 7% (33% in 1979)
- **Over 60% of adults said they attended the dentist for regular check ups.**
- **12% of all adults who had ever been to the dentist were classified as having extreme anxiety.**
 - 17% of women, 8% of men
 - 15% of adults aged 16 to 24
 - 9% of adults over 85.

Background to the Survey

The survey has been carried out every 10 years since it commenced in 1968.

It was commissioned by the NHS Information Centre for Health and Social Care and conducted on behalf of the relevant senior government health bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Scotland did not participate on this occasion.

The survey was managed by the Office for National Statistics in conjunction with other bodies and dental experts.

A total of 13,400 households took part in the survey between October 2009 and April 2010.

Aims of the Survey

Establish the condition of the natural teeth and supporting tissues.

Investigate dental experiences, knowledge about and attitudes towards dental care and oral hygiene.

Examine changes over time in dental health, attitudes and behaviour.

Monitor the extent to which dental health targets set by the Government are being met.

You can read the full survey at:
<http://www.ic.nhs.uk/pubs/dentalsurvey09>

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