



Clinical nursing practice and oral-systemic health



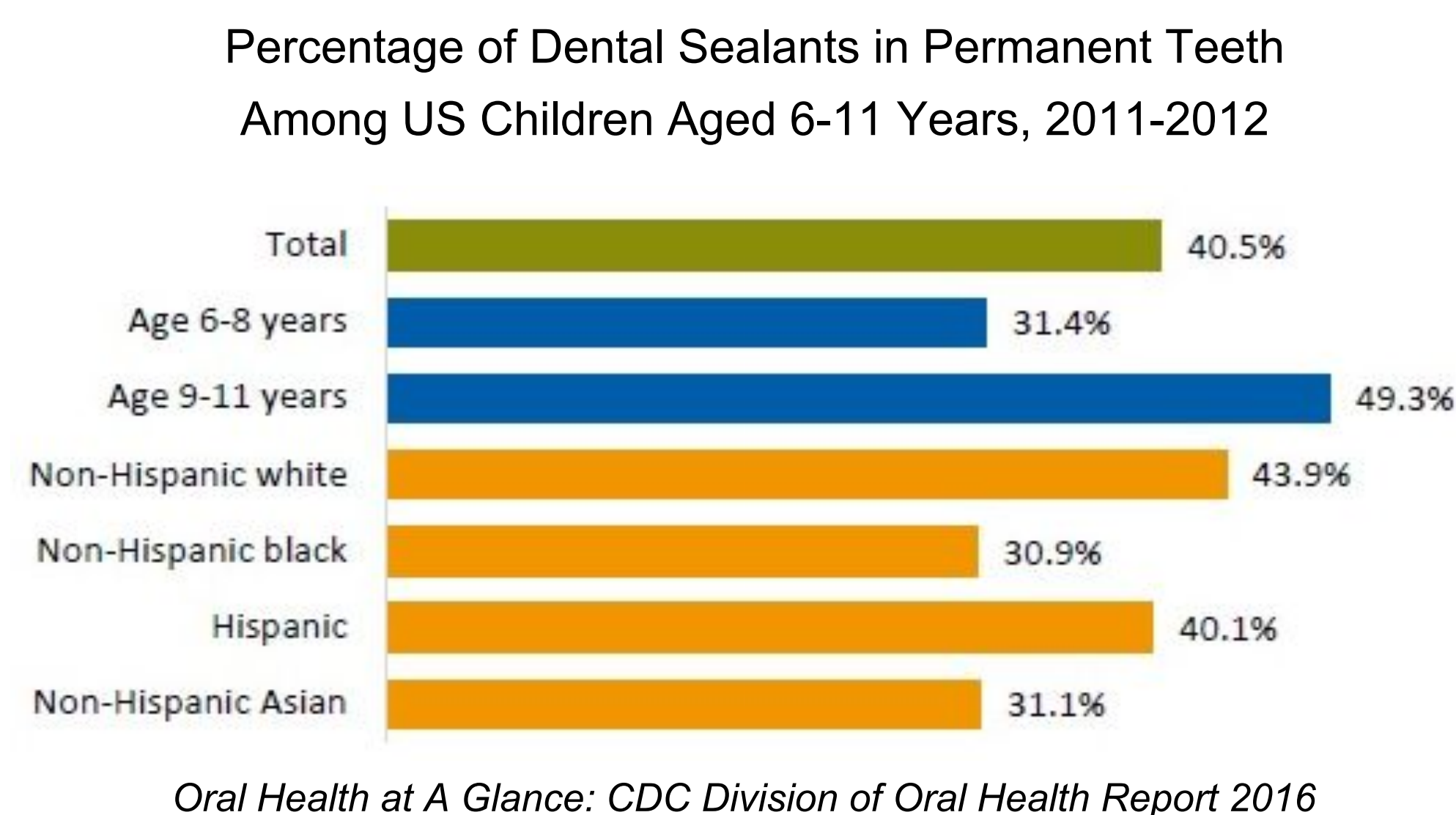
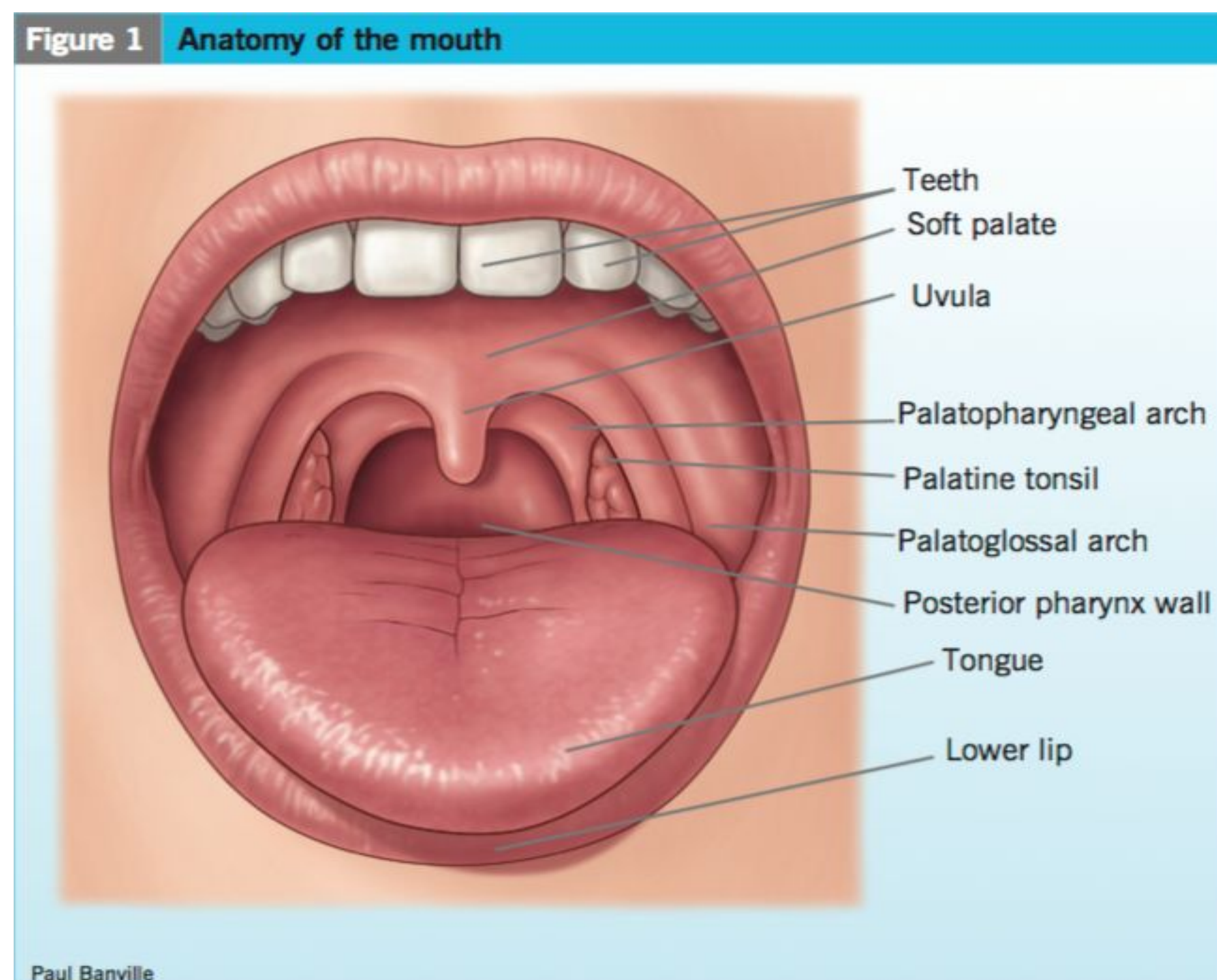
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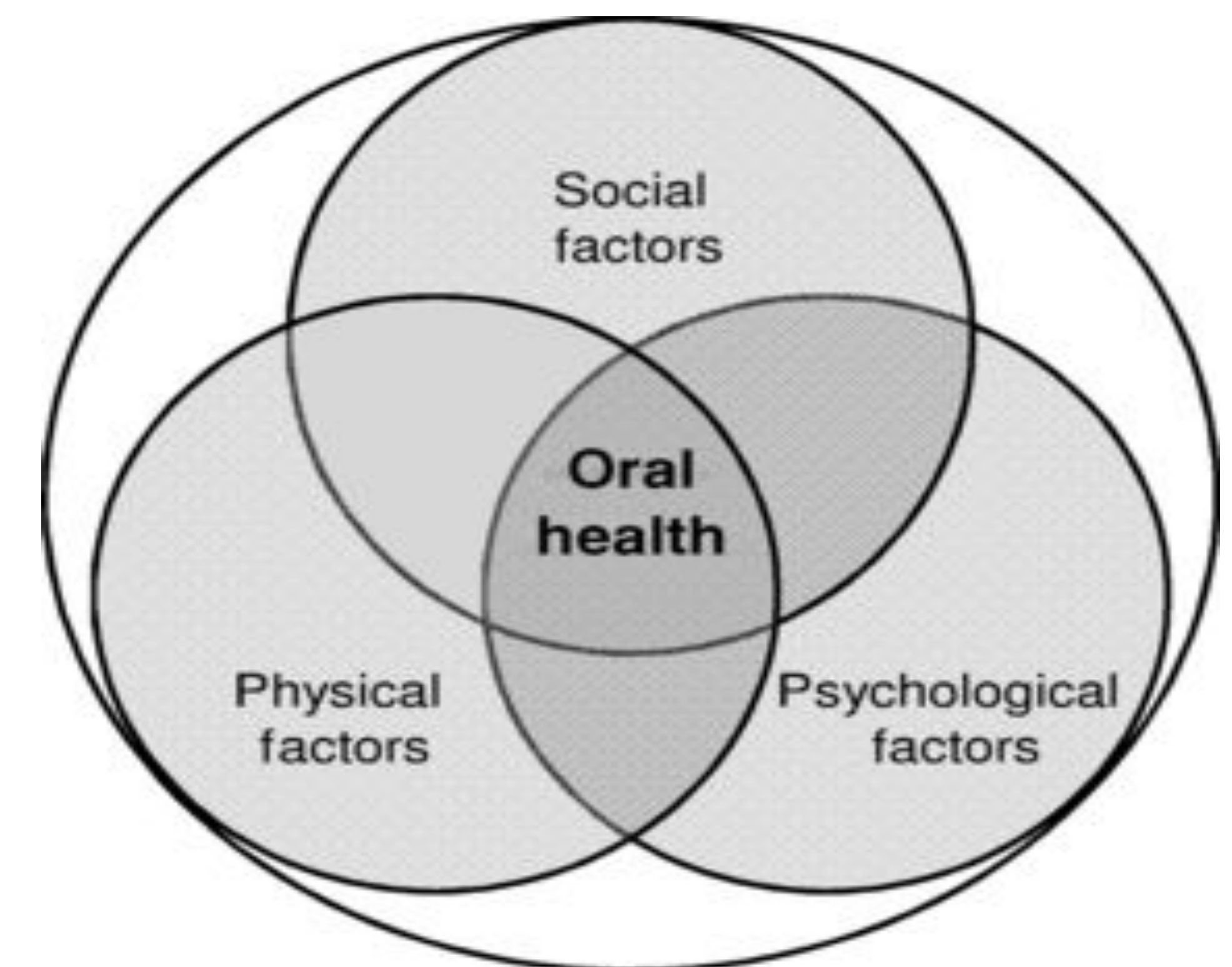
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Abstract

The goal of this research project is to examine the link between oral and systemic health and continue to explore oral health in general, since research is lacking in this field. This project will help identify gaps in current literature and help further research on the connection between oral health and its effect on overall systemic health. Research will be focused on peer-reviewed journals in the health profession and social-science literature. Oral health will be researched at all ages, beginning in infancy and extending all the way to older adults and the elderly population.



Oral Health at A Glance: CDC Division of Oral Health Report 2016



Components of oral health based on Sheiham The Gerodontology Society and John Wiley & Sons.

Literature Review

Research shows an overwhelming amount of evidence that oral health has detrimental effects on systemic health. Oral health, and lack thereof, is associated with nosocomial infections, pneumonia, poor nutritional status, metabolic syndrome, and chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease. The elderly population is the most at risk for developing complications due to poor oral health. Strategies to help improve oral care include providing education not only to nurses, but also to caregivers of the elderly.

In addition, education or oral care should be implemented early in the nursing education, and more content should be provided during nursing school so students have a solid background before entering practice.

Majority of the observed population were geriatrics, nurses, caregivers and dental hygienists. Two of the studies observed the interactions between nurse practitioner students, dental students and dental residents.

Method

A literature review was conducted of articles published 2005-2017.

Nursing Implications

The main nursing implication from research on oral health indicates that there is a lack of education within the nursing profession on oral health assessment. Daily oral hygiene is a known nursing responsibility, however, in a study by Dahm, Bruhn, and LeMaster only 1 in 3 nurses expressed they received adequate training. In addition, a best practice assessment and formal guideline does not exist, which makes oral care difficult. Nurses also face other barriers to care, such as time constraints, understaffing, and lack of supplies. Studies show nurse-provided oral care was directed towards patients' comfort rather than microbial removal. There is a need to implement interdisciplinary training between nurses and other professionals, such as dental hygienist and speech and language pathologist to promote quality oral care.

Conclusion

Education on proper oral assessment and the standards of oral care provision should be implemented in the nursing curriculum. A study done by the New York University (NYU) School of Dentistry and NYU School of Nursing showed pediatric nurse practitioner students demonstrated knowledge and provision of core oral health competencies when they were cross-trained with dental students. Oral mucosa monitoring should be implemented as part of the nursing assessment, especially if comorbidities and poly-pharmacy are present. Smiles for Life (SFL), a free online accessible oral health curriculum approved and accredited by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) is an evidence-based resource available to nurses. Although dental didactics, clinical experience and case presentation achieved coordinated high quality healthcare, additional research needs to be conducted on how the resources can be utilized and implemented into the daily nursing practice.

Box 1 Why oral health is important

- It affects general health and personal wellbeing.
- Oral disease can cause pain and suffering with significant morbidity.
- It helps the mastication of a healthy diet.
- It is important for communication, socialisation and appearance.
- It affects quality of life.

(Adapted from NHS Health Scotland 2010)

Table: Medications That Alter the Protective Mechanisms of the Oral Cavity

Analgesics (particularly opioids)	Antihypertensives
Anticholinergics	Antispasmodics
Anticonvulsants	Diuretics
Antidepressants	Inotropic agents
Antiemetics	Sedatives
Antihistamines	Steroids

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