

## Oral health and care at the Intensive Care Unit

### Abstract

Hospitalized patients at Intensive Care Units are exposed to chances of infectious diseases contraction, mainly the pulmonary ones, caused by respiratory pathogens that are found at the buccal cavity, considering oral care maintenance disabilities by means of preventive and minimum intervention dentistry. Dental surfaces, prostheses, tongue and ICU equipments that are in contact with the mouth represent reservoirs for these pathogens, and hygiene care and focus of infection elimination can provide positively influence at the critical patient quality of life and welfare. This article objective was, by means of a literature review, approach the dentist assignments importance as an integral member of the ICU health care team, the activities, oral care and the relation between oral and systemic conditions. It was used as inclusion criteria: published articles in portuguese and english, indexed in LILACS, SciELO and PubMed databases, published during the period of 2006 to 2015 and legislation about the theme, totalizing 20 references. It was concluded that oral hygiene disability at ICUs is a risk factor for developing systemic diseases, mainly the respiratory tract ones; and that the dentist participation at the critical patient treatment is fundamental to the health promotion at the hospital environment.

**Descriptors:** Dental Service, Hospital. Intensive Care Units. Pneumonia, Ventilator-Associated. Dental plaque. Oral Health. Quality of Life.

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