

## Oral health knowledge and behaviours of people experiencing alcohol and other drugs (AOD) dependence: A potential role of AOD clinicians in promoting oral health

Prakash Poudel<sup>1,2,3</sup>, Ariana Kong<sup>2,3</sup>, Stephanie Hocking<sup>1</sup>, Gilbert Whitton<sup>1</sup>, Ravi Srinivas<sup>2,4</sup>, Wenche S. Borgnakke<sup>5</sup>, Ajesh George<sup>2,3,6,7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Drug Health Services, South Western Sydney Local Health District, Cabramatta NSW, Australia

<sup>2</sup> Centre for Oral Health Outcomes & Research Translation (COHORT), School of Nursing & Midwifery, Western Sydney University, South Western Sydney Local Health District, Ingham Institute of Applied Medical Research, Liverpool NSW, Australia

<sup>3</sup> Australian Centre for Integration of Oral Health (ACIOH), Liverpool NSW, Australia

<sup>4</sup> Oral Health Services, SWSLHD, Liverpool NSW, Australia

<sup>5</sup> Department of Periodontics and Oral Medicine School of Dentistry, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor Michigan, United States of America

<sup>6</sup> University of Sydney, Camperdown NSW, Australia

<sup>7</sup> La Trobe University, Bundoora Victoria, Australia

Presenter's email: [prakash.poudel@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:prakash.poudel@health.nsw.gov.au)

Theme: Other AOD Issues

Sub Theme: Health services & systems

**Introduction / Issues:** People who use alcohol and other drugs (AOD) are at greater risk of oral diseases.<sup>1,2</sup> However, little is known about their oral health knowledge, attitudes, and practices. This study reviewed the scientific evidence on this topic among patients accessing in- and out-patient AOD-related services, as well as roles of AOD clinicians in promoting oral health.

**Method / Approach:** A scoping review<sup>3</sup> of published peer-reviewed and grey literature from 2000 onwards was undertaken across eight databases. The findings were synthesised into a narrative summary.

**Key Findings:** Nineteen papers were included. The reported compliance of recommended oral health behaviours, like daily toothbrushing twice (4-100%) and flossing (15-57%) and yearly dental visits (32-57%), varied widely. Some people who use AOD services were aware of the importance of oral health, although there were considerable knowledge gaps around the AOD use and oral health. No studies explored the role of AOD clinicians nor discussed about oral health programs with their involvement.

**Discussions and Conclusions:** There is an opportunity to educate people who access AOD services about their oral health risks, promote good oral hygiene behaviours, and facilitate access to dental services. Improving oral health among people who access AOD services is vital to improve their overall health and quality of life. A preventive oral health program in the AOD setting could improve oral health. Further research is needed to explore potential roles of AOD clinicians and a needs assessment with care providers and patients would be helpful to guide the development of such program.

### References

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