

11 February 2011

Inquiry into Caring for Older Australians
Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428
Canberra City ACT 2601

Dear Sir/Madam

Supplementary Submission

Since making my submission I received the following paper which is relevant to this inquiry.

Global oral health of older people – Call for public health action

Community Dental Health (2010) 27, (Supplement 2) 257–268

Two of the authors work with the World Health Organisation and the other 2 are senior academics.

The aim of this report is 1) to provide a global overview of oral health conditions in older people, use of oral health services, and self care practices; 2) to explore what types of oral health services are available to older people, and 3) to identify some major barriers to and opportunities for the establishment of oral health services and health promotion programmes.

From the abstract:

“...health promotion programmes targeting older people are rare and this reflects the lack of oral health policies. Although some countries have introduced oral health promotion initiatives, worldwide there are few population-oriented preventive or curative activities currently implemented that focus specifically on the elderly. Barriers to the organization of such programmes relate to weak national health policy, lack of economic resources, the impact of poor oral health, and lack of tradition in oral health. Opportunities for oral health programmes for old-age people are related to updated information on the burden of oral disease and need for care, fair financing of age-friendly primary health care, integration of oral health into national health programmes, availability of oral health services, and ancillary personnel. **Conclusion:** It is highly recommended that countries establish oral health programmes to meet the needs of the elderly. Relevant and measurable goals must be defined to direct the selection of suitable interventions to improve their oral health. The common risk factors approach must be applied in public health interventions for disease prevention. The integration of oral health into national general health programmes may be effective to improve the oral health status and quality of life of this population group.”

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