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## DENTAL IMPLANTS AND ORAL HEALTH RELATED QUALITY OF LIFE IN EDENTULOUS PATIENTS

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Overall life expectancy in the world is steadily increasing. Despite a huge disparities across countries, by 2025, there will be 820 million people aged over 65.<sup>1</sup> This poses a considerable challenge in terms of public health and in the development of certain dental health conditions too. Access to care and to prevention of the elderly population, is not always possible for various reasons: mobility, economic conditions etc. Literature shows poor oral health status of this population group measured with various Dental indices and Oral Health-related Quality of Life.<sup>2</sup> The number of edentulous patients requiring replacement will increase in the next 20 years. Awareness of the restorative options to manage edentulous patients will become increasingly important to all dental practitioners. Regarding this current scenario Dental implants are the best solution to propose to the elderly patient. This should be democratized since implant treatment is the most reliable way, to replace missing teeth. It restores the function, comfort, tasting and aesthetics. The assessment of the outcome of a dental therapy is based on four parameters: biologic and physiologic features (health of oral structures, nutrition, chewing, aesthetics), longevity and survival time (of natural teeth, restorations, implants), psychological and social parameters (personal satisfaction from dental treatment, self-confidence, quality of life, perception of body image), financial and economic factors (direct and indirect cost)<sup>3</sup> Dental implants remains a good treatment option to fulfill the above criteria's and the dentist should be sensitized to the functional deficit in the completely edentulous patient and how restorative approaches with implants can improve patient reports of function and quality of life. However our policies always states that the best implant is a natural tooth.

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