

**BASCD 2023 ABSTRACT #14****Disparities in oral healthcare attendance among Irish adults:  
a cross-sectional study**

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**Background:**

Oral health is an intrinsic component of good overall health; poor oral health is associated with various non-communicable diseases many of which have shared risk factors, including diabetes and cardiovascular disease. The burden of oral diseases on health services is predicted to increase due to population ageing, with the highest need among disadvantaged groups.

**Objectives:**

To examine prevalence of and factors associated with oral healthcare attendance among Irish adults.

**Methods:**

Secondary analysis of the Healthy Ireland Survey 2018, a nationally representative cross-sectional survey of randomly-selected members of the public aged 15 and older, was conducted. The Royal College of Physicians of Ireland granted ethical approval and re-weighting was employed. Prevalence of oral healthcare attendance was calculated with 95% Confidence Intervals (CIs). Multiple logistic regression determined factors independently associated with key responses using Adjusted Odds Ratios (aORs) among the total sample and those aged 50 years and over (50+).

**Results:**

Response rate was 62.0% (n=7,701). Most (78.8%) of the total sample and 70.2% of those aged 50+ reported good oral health; 47.4% and 41.0% respectively had attended dental services in the preceding year. Males (aOR 0.75, 95%CI 0.67-0.83), smokers (aOR 0.87, 95%CI 0.77-0.98) and medical card holders (aOR 0.68, 95%CI 0.61-0.75) were significantly less likely to have attended dental services than their respective counterparts. For those aged 50+, active dental issues (aOR 0.65, 95%CI 0.48-0.88) and lower socioeconomic status (aOR 0.51, 95%CI 0.39-0.68) were associated with decreased odds of dental attendance.

**Conclusion:**

Disparities in oral healthcare utilisation identified in this study suggest potential unmet population oral health needs, especially among older adults. Combined with population ageing and a growing scarcity of dentists available to provide care to disadvantaged groups, such coverage gaps, are key considerations for oral healthcare planning, specifically implementation of Ireland's National Oral Health Policy "Smile agus Sláinte".

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