

# “Caregivers perception on association between oral health and dementia: a focus group study”

## INTRODUCTION

In the United Kingdom (UK), estimates show that there are around 850,000 people live with dementia, and 700,000 friends and family are caring for a person with dementia<sup>1</sup>. Professional carers and family members play a vital role in supporting people with dementia in their oral care. Recent evidence reported in literature it has been shown that poor oral health (tooth loss and periodontal disease) could increase dementia risk<sup>2,3</sup>. Similarly, dementia could lead to poor oral health<sup>2</sup>.

## OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study is to explore the perceptions and experiences of professional and family carers on association between oral health and dementia when caring for people with dementia.

## METHODS

**Design:** Qualitative focus group study.

**Eligibility:** Caregivers of people with dementia above the age 18.

**Sampling design:** Purposive sampling.

### Recruitment Procedure

- ✓ An invitation letter and information sheet explaining the purpose of the research were sent out through email or by hand to the community leader or care home manager.
- ✓ Each focus group session lasted for average 70 minutes and had different participants.
- ✓ The focus group were audio-recorded during the focus group and throughout the session, brief field notes were taken.

### Data collection:

- ✓ 3 focus groups with 16 participants in each group.
- ✓ Used focus group topic guide and short questionnaire.

### Data analysis:

- ✓ Audio recording were later verbatim transcribed which were entered into NVivo V.10.
- ✓ Data was analyzed using Thematic Analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006).

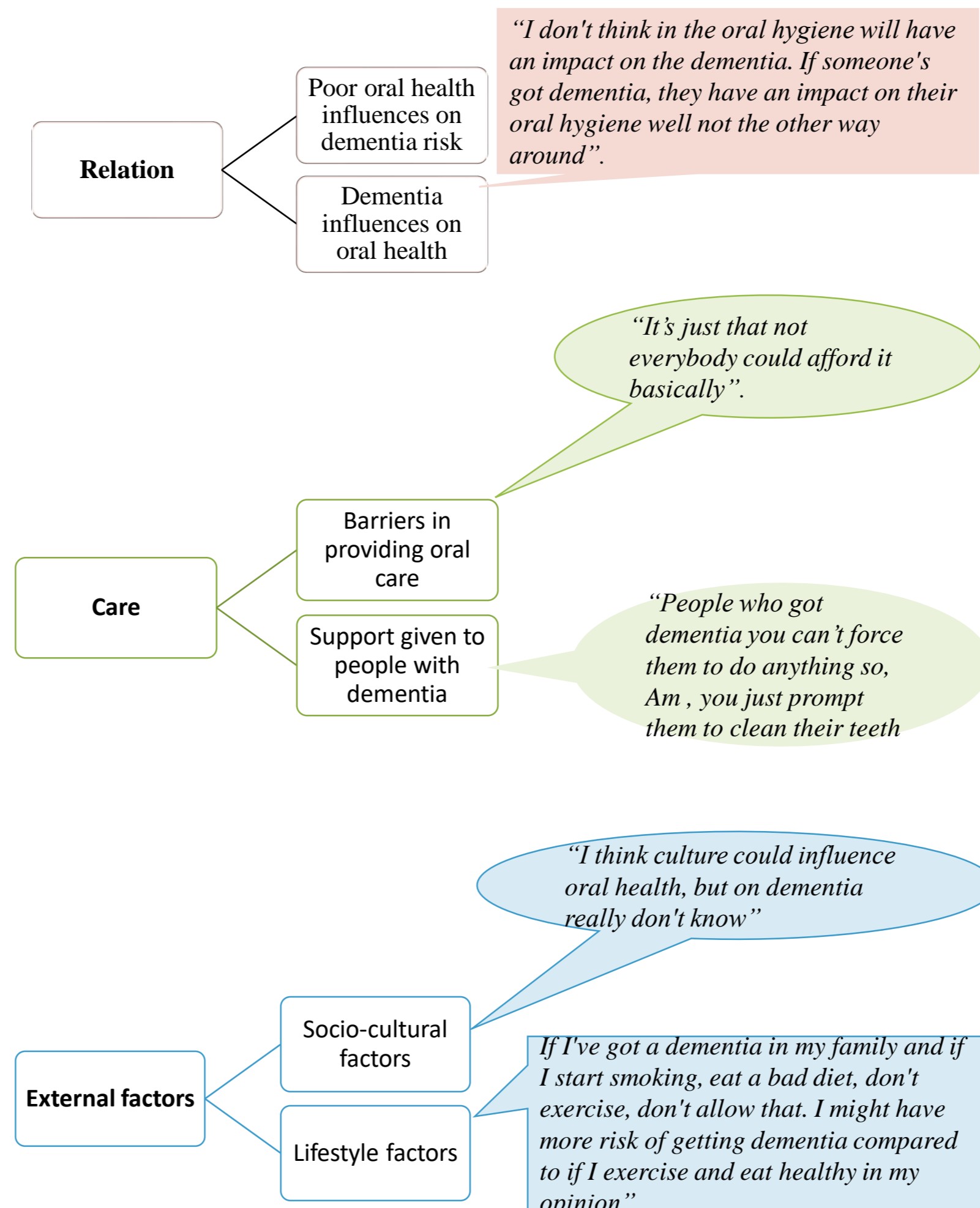
### Ethics

- ✓ Ethics approval was granted by the University of Wolverhampton ethics committee.
- ✓ Informed consent was taken from the participants (caregivers).

## RESULTS

Out of 16 participants, professional caregivers (n=10) and Family caregivers (n=6) ; male (n=5) and female (n=11)

Key themes	Sub-themes	Quotes
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## DISCUSSION

- The perceived view of caregivers on dementia influences oral health was in line with the previous findings<sup>2</sup>, but it was not clear whether poor oral health influences dementia which has been mentioned in recent literature<sup>2</sup>.
- Dementia care: Barriers were linked to behavioral issues, dental care, memory/ cognition loss, physical impairment, personal choice and neglecting oral care were consistent with previous studies<sup>4,5</sup>.
- Some of the common risk factors of dementia and oral health discussed in study were culture, socioeconomic status, smoking, alcohol, diet, genetics, education, exercise were related to present literature<sup>4,5</sup>.

## FUTURE DIRECTION

- To add perception of people with dementia which will further yield more accurate results and test the validity of this research.
- Scope to develop the study further using a quantitative survey or using prospective cohort study to find the causal relation.

## CONCLUSION

- Caregivers perception regarding people with dementia living in institutions or homes have poor oral health was clear.
- Poor oral health can be modifiable risk factor for dementia but caregivers were uncertain about it.

## REFERENCES

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