

Older people's oral health improved through new research

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Toothaches and mouth problems in elderly people are to be tackled in a health initiative launched this month.

The Improving the Oral Health of Older Persons Initiative (IOHOPI), led by Health Education Kent, Surrey & Sussex, has been informed by research by Dr Paul Newton's research into the experiences of older patients and their carers.

Dr Newton, Research Fellow at the University of Greenwich's Centre for Positive Ageing, is an expert in patient empowerment and the management of chronic conditions. His work for the initiative has led to new training and information for carers of people living with dementia.

"Research about identifying and managing dental pain and oral health problems for people living with dementia was lacking – both in the literature and in previous initiatives," Dr Newton says. "We have worked closely with the Older Person's Initiative to make sure the oral health needs of this vulnerable group are addressed."

There are a range of oral health challenges for older people including loosening teeth, dry mouths and difficulty using a toothbrush. These in turn can lead to poor nutrition, low self-esteem and the exacerbation of other conditions including diabetes.

The scheme aims to improve [oral health](#) of [older persons](#) in Kent, Sussex and Surrey. It is starting with those living in care homes by raising

awareness and training carers.

The Centre for Positive Ageing, based in the university's Faculty of Education & Health, brings together 12 research clusters from across the university. It aims to understand and develop solutions to the problems facing individuals like chronic pain and dementia, as well as those confronting society, such as meeting the care needs of a growing older population.

Provided by University of Greenwich

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