

Losing teeth raises older adults' risks for physical and mental disability

September 13 2016

Maintaining good oral health may help older adults prevent a variety of health problems and disabilities. However, the effect of tooth loss on physical or cognitive health and well-being is unknown.

In a study published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, researchers explored this connection. To do so, they examined information from the Japan Gerontological Evaluation Study (JAGES) project.

In their study, the research team examined information from more than 60,000 community-dwelling people aged 65 and older who did not meet the Japanese criteria for needing long-term care.

The participants were given questionnaires to complete. They answered a number of questions, including providing information about:

- How many teeth they had
- Their medical and mental health history
- How many falls they had over the last year
- Whether they smoked or drank alcohol
- Their body weight
- How well they were able to perform common activities of daily life

The researchers learned older adults who have significant [tooth loss](#) are less functional when compared with people who lose fewer teeth.

The research team suggested that it is essential that [older adults](#) receive the support they need to maintain good oral health self-care practices, and that they receive adequate dental care.

More information: Yukihiro Sato et al, Tooth Loss and Decline in Functional Capacity: A Prospective Cohort Study from the Japan Gerontological Evaluation Study, *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (2016). [DOI: 10.1111/jgs.14324](https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.14324)

Provided by American Geriatrics Society

Citation: Losing teeth raises older adults' risks for physical and mental disability (2016, September 13) retrieved 10 February 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-09-teeth-older-adults-physical-mental.html>

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