

# Signs of elder abuse to be paid attention by dentists: Bottle tooth decay in an elderly person suspected of being neglected

.....  
Akiko Kumagai <sup>1</sup>

Sachiko Fujita <sup>2</sup>

Koji Dewa <sup>2</sup>

*<sup>1</sup>Department of Reconstructive  
Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery,  
School of Dentistry, Iwate Medical  
University, Japan*

*<sup>2</sup>Department of Legal Medicine,  
Iwate Medical University, Japan*

.....  
**Corresponding author:**

***kumagaia@iwate-med.ac.jp***

POSTER PRESENTATION  
.....

.....  
J Forensic Odontostomatol  
2017 Nov 1; Supp1(35): 75  
ISSN :2219-6749

## **ABSTRACT**

We encountered the unnatural death of an elderly person with dental findings not normally found in the elderly, being a suspected case of neglect. We are planning to report this case to promote cooperation for the prevention of elder abuse by dentists.

The deceased patient was an 83-year-old female who had been brought by her family to a nearby hospital for severe weakness but died the following day. Since it was a suspected case of neglect, the police were notified of it as an unnatural death by the physician who examined her. On medico-legal autopsy of the whole body, emaciation was marked and many pressure ulcers were present on the back and buttocks. In the oral cavity, multiple acute dental caries were noted only in the upper front teeth. There were no caries in the lower front teeth, and the findings were similar to those of bottle tooth decay in infants. Marks of appropriate prosthetic treatment were noted in the upper and lower molar regions. Based on autopsy, the cause of death was judged as undernutrition-associated pulmonary edema. The deceased person had no medical history of dementia. According to her family, they had fed her gelatinous nutrients using a straw, but she did not appear to have received sufficient medical care or welfare support. Based on the state of dental caries observed, she may have been fed like infants, developing bottle tooth decay, and, as judged from the whole body findings, the nutrition had been insufficient, suggesting that insufficient nursing care had led to malnutrition. The autopsy findings also strongly suggested that she had been neglected, but the police did not conclude that this was a case of abuse.