

Prevalence and surgical morbidity of impacted mandibular third molar removal in the aging population: a retrospective study at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital.

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Abstract

Prophylactic surgical extraction of impacted third molars is not an uncommon practice in Europe and America. This has been justified on the basis that the risk of surgical morbidity increases with increasing age among other reasons. The purpose of this study is to report the prevalence of impacted third molar extraction and associated morbidity in patients = 40 years of age in our institution. A retrospective review of patients = 40 years of age who required surgical extraction of their impacted third molars between April 2001 and March 2006 at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital was carried out. Data collected included patients' age and sex, tooth/teeth extracted, indication(s) for tooth/teeth extraction, types of impaction, and surgical morbidity (intra- and postoperative complications). A total of 6.3% of patients requiring third molar surgical extraction were 40 years or older. No intraoperative complications occurred in any of the patients. Only 3 patients (9.7%) developed minor postoperative complications (infected socket, dry socket) which were reversible and of short duration). Less than 7% of patients requiring surgical extraction of impacted third molars in our institution were 40 years and above. In addition, minor postoperative complications were seen in only 3 patients. Our result does not support prophylactic surgical extraction of third molars based on the assumption that surgical morbidity increases with age.