



**Media Release:**

**TAKING THE ORAL HEALTH MESSAGE TO WHERE THE ELDERLY ARE - ONLINE**

A web-based program is aiming to change the way older people access information about dental health.

The project, led by the Oral Health CRC and funded by the BUPA Health Foundation, will provide support resources for an innovative, interactive program hosted in existing community groups. The resources aim to improve oral health knowledge, attitudes and preventive behaviour in older adults.

A/Prof Rodrigo Marino said the ability to access and use health information is a fundamental skill that helps people maintain their own health.

“Older adults are the fastest growing group of internet users, with research indicating that they are increasingly using the internet for health information”, said A/Prof Rodrigo Marino.

“We know that after people retire, their dental health tends to deteriorate. This project aims to challenge that trend, by using the internet to deliver a program tailored for the dental needs of older people.”

The project will take place over the next 18 months, with pilots starting in social clubs and community centres shortly.

“We want to start by knowing how older people access health information online. From there we’ll be talking to older people about how we can make it easier for them to find and use the information that can make a difference to their oral health,” said A/Prof Marino.

“Recent studies suggest a link between oral health and systemic diseases including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, some cancers, respiratory diseases and rheumatoid arthritis.”

“By maintaining their oral health, older people can improve their overall health.”

The web based oral health promotion program is led by the Oral Health CRC and generously supported by the BUPA Health Foundation.

**More information**

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