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The Maine Gerontological Society
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Hot Topics in Aging

Providing you with quick information on the latest in aging issues

The National Institute of Mental Health has a newsletter that provides in depth information on a variety of topics relating to mental health. This edition provides information regarding the elder and suicide. <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/older-adults-depression-and-suicide-facts.shtml>

Discussions by Elders and Adult Children About End-of-Life Preparation and Preferences is available at www.cdc.gov/Pcd/issues/2008/jan/07_0141.htm. (***Preventing Chronic Disease, 2008;5(1)***)

A recent article in the Journal of the American Medical Association reinforces the belief that lifestyle changes improve health, therefore increasing life expectancy. The report indicated that the combination of a Mediterranean diet, nonsmoking status, moderate alcohol use, and moderate physical activity were associated with a more than 50 percent decrease of all-cause and cause-related specific mortality.” (<http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/292/12/1433>)

Smiles for Seniors is available at <http://www.oda.org/gendeninfo/smiles.cfm>. Smiles For Seniors is a comprehensive and informative program designed to help educate caregivers, health professionals and those who serve older adults, covering issues that can make oral hygiene difficult for semi-dependent or aging adults and those who care for them. For example, assistance with daily oral hygiene is often needed for adults who have a loss of strength, mobility or dexterity or have experienced illnesses such as a stroke, Parkinson's disease or Alzheimer's. The program contains easy-to-understand information and suggestions on how to maintain a daily oral hygiene regimen for semi-dependent older adults, including those with dentures.

The program materials are available in print, VHS or CD-ROM format. There is a \$10 shipping and handling charge but the program itself is free. Program materials cover issues such as:

Common signs of dental disease	Nutritional needs of older adults
Dry mouth	Health conditions that may make brushing or flossing difficult
Denture issues	Possible effects of medications on oral health

Last months *Older Americans Report* identified a toolkit to assist senior caregivers in talking about the care that their loved one might need. The kit may be downloaded by going to www.agis.com/caregiverkit/caregiverkit.pdf.