



## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

September 22, 2008

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### Taking Careful Measures of Oral Quality of Life

**OAK BROOK, ILL** – To assist researchers in evaluating oral quality of life, Delta Dental Plans Association funded a study that was published in the Center for Disease Control’s April 2008 issue of *Preventing Chronic Disease: Public Health Research, Practice, and Policy*. Nancy R. Kressin, PhD, Judith A. Jones, DDS, MPH, Michelle B. Orner, MPH, and Avron Spiro III, PhD, conducted the study.

The purpose of the study was to develop a comprehensive means of measuring oral quality of life, which is the association between perceived physical and mental well-being compared to a patient’s clinical status. Prior tools for measuring oral quality of life relied heavily on clinical observations, which failed to monitor the affect of oral conditions on patients’ social or psychological comfort.

Similar to conventional evaluation methods, an oral exam was administered to subjects in order to observe the association of their dental status on an individual’s oral quality of life. Researchers also supplied subjects with an oral health-related quality of life questionnaire.

By analyzing the results of these evaluations and investigating previous studies and sources related to the oral quality of life, researchers were able to generate two questionnaires measuring the impact of oral health on overall well being. The questionnaires evaluate specific measures in the oral quality of life categories of impairment, physical comfort, distress, worry, social roles of subjects, and denture experiences. While both questionnaires are termed “brief,” a six-item instrument acts as the subset of a 12-item questionnaire. Furthermore, researchers suggest that the six-item questionnaire be used to compare groups of people, while the 12-item questionnaire be used for individual assessment.

Delta Dental anticipates using these instruments to assess and modify the affect of current plan options on subscribers’ oral quality of life, as well as for comparison with uninsured individuals. Follow-up measurements according to these questionnaires could be compared to initial measurements in order to determine changes in oral quality of life.

The two questionnaires developed through the oral quality of life study are to be posted on Delta Dental’s Web site ([www.deltadental.com](http://www.deltadental.com)) for subscriber use.

Delta Dental Plans Association, based in Oak Brook, Ill., is a national network of independent not-for-profit dental service corporations specializing in providing dental benefits programs to 51 million Americans in more than 93,000 employee groups throughout the country.

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