

Addressing a Specific Need in Elder Care

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Taking the time to properly groom (hair maintenance and shaving) to look one's best is a source of pride and signs of independence and self-sufficiency. However, for the elderly, aging, decline in health and disability renders grooming to become increasingly difficult task that is hard to complete without the aid of a family member or caregiver. In a nursing home, group home, long term care facility or a hospital, it is important for service providers to be aware of such a need. This need should be addressed safely and effectively especially to seniors who are bedridden or with disability. And the grooming service must be administered such that the elderly resident/patient does not experience a sense of loss of self-esteem and independence.

In Japan, grooming is well accepted as part of the services for the elderly in health and care facilities. In most cases providing such a service involves someone who is either a trained staff in the facility or a contracted individual with barbing experience. It has been noted that providing such a service without additional training in care for the elderly leads to infection, health/hygiene problems and increasing levels of agitation and potential depression among the care receivers. The paper will address this issue showing that there are significant differences in outcomes when such a need is addressed by a barber with special training to care for the elderly and one without such training. It will show that as a specific need for older persons in aged care facilities, role of a trained barber in elder care is of paramount importance. That is, someone who understands the health condition of the patient/resident in need of such a service. The presentation will further address issues like how to adapt the methods and approaches of a professional barber to meet the needs of bedridden and or handicapped elderly in health and care facilities. In conclusion, the presentation will outline the challenges but demonstrating why grooming services should be considered important in a care setting to promote healthy ageing.