

Course name

Oral health care for persons with disabilities

Department/chair

Department of Dental Anthropology

Address of the department/chair

Gundulićeva 5, Zagreb

Mandatory or elective course

Elective course

Year of study

6

Semester

Winter semester

ECTS

1 ECTS

Course leader

Professor Jelena Dumančić

Other teachers on the course

Professor Ivana Čuković-Bagić
Professor Željko Verzak
Professor Dubravka Negovetić Vranić
Professor Vlaho Brailo
Associated professor Ivana Savić Pavičin
Associated professor Božana Lončar Brzak
Assistant teacher Jelena Bagarić

Number of hours

	Winter semester	Summer semester	Total (winter+summer)
Lectures	9	-	9
Seminars	3	-	3
Practicals - clinic	6	-	6
Field work	2	-	2
Total	20	-	20

1 hour = 45 minutes

Description and aim of the course

The course is designed to provide students with basic knowledge and initial clinical experience for understanding of disability and its influence on oral health, and for acquiring skills and positive attitudes that are necessary for delivery of special oral health care to persons with disabilities of all age groups.

Course enrolment requirements

There are no course enrollment requirements for 6th year students of integrated undergraduate and graduate study of dental medicine. The subject is elective and students enroll in it of their choice.

Learning outcomes at the level of the study program to which the subject contributes:

- ☐ Knowledge, skills and competencies related to professionalism, ethics and law
- ☒ Knowledge, skills and competencies related to communication and social skills
- ☒ Knowledge, skills and competencies related to basic knowledge and the ability to gather information from the literature
- ☒ Knowledge, skills and competencies related to the collection of clinical information
- ☒ Knowledge, skills and competencies related to diagnosis and therapy planning
- ☒ Knowledge, skills and competencies related to the therapy, establishment and maintenance of oral health
- ☒ Knowledge, skills and competencies related to preventive measures and health promotion

Course learning outcomes

Knowledge
1. Describe the legal, social and cultural context of people with disability.
2. Describe common disabilities in relation to their impact on oral health and oral function.
3. Describe appropriate methods of communication for people with cognitive, sensory and communication impairments.
4. Discuss behavioural and pharmacological approaches that facilitate dental treatment for individual patients requiring special care dentistry.
5. Discuss strategies of oral health promotion for persons with disabilities.
Skills
1. Provide simple dental services using techniques for special needs patients who can be treated in primary care.
2. Obtain valid consent for treatment of people with communication, cognitive or sensory impairments.
3.
4.
Competencies
5.
6.

Course content**Lectures**

	Lecture Topics – winter semester	Hours
1.	Social and medical models of disability and impairment and special care dentistry	1
2.	Physical disability, prevention and impact on oral health	1
3.	Neurodevelopmental disorders	1
4.	Intellectual disability and common syndromes	1
5.	Sensory disability: sight and hearing loss and communication adjustment	1
6.	Sedation techniques and risks	1
7.	Medically compromised patients – cardiovascular and respiratory disease, epilepsy	1
8.	Dental care for the older persons	1
9.	Hospital dentistry and treatment using general anesthesia	1

1 hour = 45 minutes

Seminars

	Topics – winter semester	Hours
1.	Oral hygiene in persons with disabilities; oral health education for target groups of special needs patients	1
2.	Preventive health care for people with disabilities; minimally invasive dentistry for special needs patients	1
3.	Disability awareness and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities; inequalities in oral health for persons with disabilities	1

1 hour = 45 minutes

Practicals: clinical practicals + field work

	Topics – winter semester	Hours
1.	Clinical practical: informed consent, medical and dental history, exam and diagnosis; treatment planning considering special care; prophylaxis; oral hygiene instruction	3
2.	Clinical practical: oral health care according to treatment plan – preventive and restorative dentistry	3
3.	Field work: visit to institutions for education, rehabilitation and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities – visit to the Typhlological Museum	2

1 hour = 45 minutes

Obligations that students have on the course

Students need to get information on each patient in clinical exercises and keep a written record (diary) of clinical experience.

Description of the method of evaluation of students work on the course

Students are obliged to work in groups and prepare seminar topics using on-line materials, with mentorship of the course leader. Seminar is to be presented in MS Power Point.

Exam

The written form of the seminar will be evaluated as exam. Seminar should include an individual critical review of each student on a given topic, and the presentation and consideration of clinical cases from practicals.

Exam dates

	November	December	January	February	April	May	June	July	August	September
Dates				4.2. 18.2.			17.6.	8.7.	26.8.	9.9.

Literature (mandatory)

1. Nelson TM, Webb JR, eds. Dental Care for Children with Special Needs. A Clinical Guide. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG; 2019. 286 p. (E-book available from prof. Dumančić)
2. Watt RG, Venturelli R, Daly B. Understanding and tackling oral health inequalities in vulnerable adult populations: from the margins to the mainstream. Brit Dent J. 2019;227(1):49-54.
3. Dumančić, J.; Radić Vuleta, M.; Lončar Brzak, B.; Savić Pavičin, I.; Kurpez, T.; Striber, N.; Čuković-Bagić, I. Caries Experience and Oral Health-Related Habits in Blind and Low-Vision Individuals in Croatia. J. Clin. Med. 2025, 14, 5576. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jcm14155576>

Literature (supplementary)

1. Disability Evidence Portal. Evidence Brief. How do we improve access to healthcare for people with disabilities? Available from: <https://www.disabilityevidence.org/questions-evidence/how-do-we-improve-access-healthcare-people-disabilities>
2. Dumančić, J.; Kurpez, T. Vulnerabilne skupine i oralno zdravlje. In Javno zdravstvo i oralna epidemiologija; Savić Pavičin, I., Špalj, S., Eds.; Naklada Slap: Jastrebarsko, 2024; pp 185-191.
3. Nenadić K, Šubarić Ž, Dumančić J, Funtek M. Osobe s oštećenjima vida – naši pacijenti. Priručnik za pristup slijepim i slabovidnim osobama za zdravstvene djelatnike. 2. ed. Zagreb: Hrvatski savez slijepih; Stomatološki fakultet; 2017. p. 12-34.