

SS1-5 Taste Perception and Secretion of Saliva in the Elderly

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Gustatory disorder is one of the most common complaints in the elderly. In Japan, the number of patient with gustatory disorder has been increased as the increase of elderly population in recent years. Because gustatory disorder of the elderly causes not only the loss of taste sensation but also health problems, their gustatory disorder should be treated. We have surveyed the prevalence and the causes of gustatory disorder in the elderly. The prevalence was about forty percent, and their low sensitivity had relation to systemic disease, medication and hyposalivation. Impairment of umami taste is often found in our elderly patients with gustatory disorder and is associated with the low satisfaction of dietary habit and the health problem, such as weight loss. Furthermore, in these patients, hyposalivation has been often traced. Recently, we have confirmed that the salivation from minor salivary gland as well as from major salivary gland have increased by umami stimulation. Thus, umami stimulation might be applied to the treatment of dry mouth of the elderly by the increase of salivary flow to ease gustatory disorder.