

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Study finds facial injuries in the elderly result in longer hospitalizations, increased critical care needs and more commonly result in death**

[Rosemont, IL, February 1, 2014], The United Nations Population Division projects that by 2035, 1 in 5 people are expected to be 65 or older by 2035. While for many this dramatic growth in numbers and proportions is accompanied by an increase in life expectancies and more active and energetic life styles, it may also signal an increase in the number of traumatic facial injuries in this often fragile population. As we age, our bones become less dense and injuries do not heal as easily. In addition, some chronic diseases, like diabetes, affect the healing of bone fractures.

The authors of “Defining Predictable Patterns of Craniomaxillofacial Injury in the Elderly: Analysis of 1,047 Patients,” which appears in the February 2014 issue of the *Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery*, found that patients 65 years of age and older who experienced traumatic injuries of the skull, face and/or jawbone were hospitalized longer, had increased critical care needs, and suffered higher death rates than younger patients.

During their study, the authors reviewed patient records from February 1998 through December 2010. To be included in the study, patients had to be at least 60 years old; (2) have experienced head and/or facial fractures; and (3) had their injuries confirmed by CAT scanning.

Of the 11,084 patients who experienced facial fractures during the study timeframe, 1,047 were older than 60 years and 59% were males. Falls accounted for 50% of these fractures, differing greatly from the causes of facial fractures in younger age groups. Areas commonly fractured included the nose (43%), upper jaw bone (30%), cheek bone (30%), eye socket (27%), and lower jaw bone (18%). This again differs greatly from younger patients.

The authors concluded that their data support the move for improved national medical readiness to better anticipate the needs of elderly patients who experience traumatic head and facial injuries. The medical community needs to update treatment guidelines for these patients.

Read the complete study findings at *J Oral Maxillofac Surg.* 2014; 00:0000-0000. <http://dx.doi.org/00.0000/j.joms.2014.00.000>.

*The Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery* is published monthly by the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons to present to the dental and medical communities comprehensive coverage of new techniques, important developments and innovative ideas in oral and maxillofacial surgery. Practice-applicable articles help develop the methods used to handle dentoalveolar surgery, facial injuries and deformities, TMJ disorders, oral cancer, jaw reconstruction, anesthesia and analgesia. The journal also includes specifics on new instruments and diagnostic equipment and modern therapeutic drugs and devices.