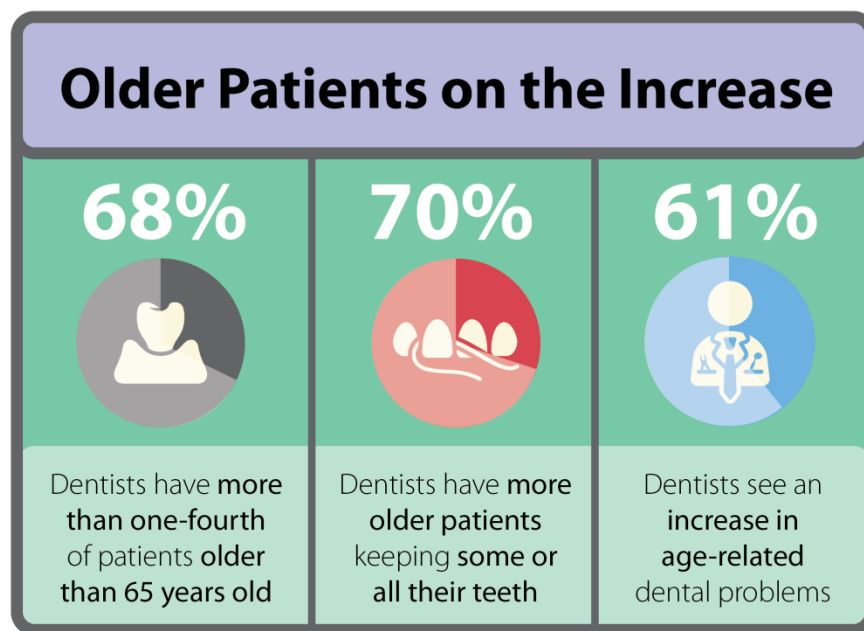


Quick Poll Results—Our Aging Patients

Dentists are seeing more patients who are over age 65 and with those patients come special health needs. Many—but not all—National Dental PBRN dentists feel equipped to handle the challenge, our May 2016 Quick Poll found.

In the poll, 44 percent of respondents said that 26-50 percent of their patients are over 65. Another 19 percent said most (51-75 percent) patients are over 65.

The good news: tooth loss is becoming less common among older patients, the poll showed. More than 50 percent of the 278 respondents said they now have more patients over 65 who retain some or all of their teeth, compared to 10 years ago.



However, almost two-thirds (61 percent) of the respondents see an **increase** in the prevalence of age-related oral diseases, such as dry mouth, root cavities, and receding gums. About one-third (34 percent) said they are seeing about the same percentage of these conditions.

Just over 40 percent of the respondents report having adequate medicines, equipment, and techniques to predict, prevent, and treat these age-related diseases. However, 36 percent said they don't feel equipped, and 22 percent said they weren't sure.

On the sensitive topic of end-of-life care, about half of the respondents are confident that they can correctly identify end-of-life trajectories and help their patients and the patients' caregivers decide when the patient should switch to palliative care. However, many of the respondents wrote in comments that they grapple with how to discuss treatment planning with the caregivers. Many respondents felt that having set guidelines for end-of-life care would help practitioners and patients.

To continue the conversation, go to Quick Poll Results in the [Member Forum](#).