Oral health-related quality of life of homeless adults
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Abstract
This study assesses oral health-related quality of life among Australian metropolitan homeless adult population and compares against an age-matched, representative sample of metropolitan adults.

Methods
248 homeless participants (age range 17–78 years, 79% male) completed a self-report questionnaire that included socio-demographic, oral health impairment and oral health-related quality of life (OHIP-14) factors. Data for an age-matched, representative sample of metropolitan adults was obtained from Australian second National Survey of Adult Oral Health (NSAOH) conducted in 2004–2006. A cross-sectional study of oral health among Australians aged 15 years and living in all states and territories.

Results cont.
• The proportion of homeless participants reporting toothache in the last year ‘very often’, ‘fairly often’ or ‘occasionally’ was over three times that of the age-matched general population sample (Table 2).
• Seven times as many homeless adults had severe oral health impairment than their age-matched general population counterparts (Table 2).
• The proportion of homeless adults reporting one or more OHIP-14 items ‘fairly often’ or ‘very often’ was 4.6 times that of their age-matched general population counterparts (Table 3).
• The OHIP-14 extent among homeless adults was 15.5 times that of their counterparts (Table 3).
• The OHIP-14 severity score for the homeless adults was 2.6 times that of the population sample (Table 3).

Conclusions
The prevalence of severe oral health impairment, as well as the prevalence, extent and severity of oral health impairment, as measured by OHIP-14, was significantly greater amongst the homeless population. Given the severe disadvantage that this marginalised population suffer it is anticipated that improved oral health status could contribute to improved general quality of life.

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References