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## Seniors face 'battleground of pain'

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At least one in two senior Australians are delaying dental appointments, the majority revealing they can't afford the vital treatment.

The damning new Australian Dental Association survey comes as hospital emergency presentations for painful dental issues among over 65s are projected to soar in the next three years.

Dental is set to be reignited as a federal election issue,

with the Greens expected to push for it to be included in Medicare if they are in the balance of power.

"They (seniors) can't get to the dentist regularly because they can't afford it so their mouths become a battleground of pain and infection management," ADA president Dr Chris Sanzaro said.

"16,000 seniors were admitted to hospital for treatment of painful dental

issues in 2022-23. That figure is expected to rise to 22,630 by 2027-28, representing a 42 per cent increase from an already unacceptable level."

The association's annual study of 25,000 people found that 55 per cent of people 65 and over had delayed seeking dental treatment in the past 12 months.

Of these, two in three revealed affordability was the main issue.