Abstract **Background:** Dry mouth is one of the common complaints of elderly people, and can accompany various disorders. **Aims:** The aim of this study was to investigate the prevalence of subjective feelings of dry mouth and factors associated with it in Japanese community-dwelling elderly women. **Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted. The subjects were 1,286 women aged 75 to 84 years old who participated in a comprehensive geriatric health examination, including a face-to-face interview, questionnaires, and medical and dental examinations. The chi-square test, Student’s t-test, the Mann-Whitney U test, and multiple logistic regression analyses were performed. **Results:** The mean age of the participants was 78.44±2.68 years and the prevalence of dry mouth was 38.8% (n=499). According to multiple logistic regression analysis, a history of heart disease (odds ratio (OR) = 1.46, 95% confidence intervals (CI) = 1.01-1.96), the use of anti-inflammatory drugs and analgesics, (OR=1.43, CI=1.00-2.05), a social role (OR=0.59, CI=0.39-0.89), difficulty in mastication (OR=1.7, CI=1.32-2.20), and difficulty in swallowing (OR=2.18, CI=1.65-2.88) were significantly associated with dry mouth. **Conclusion:** The present study suggests that subjective feelings of dry mouth are significantly associated with oral function, general health status and a social role in Japanese community-dwelling elderly women.

**Key words:** oral dryness, xerostomia, instrumental activity of daily living, comprehensive geriatric health examination