Anxiety Among Children Attending Dental Clinic

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Respected Sir

I would like to bring the attention to a prevailing problem in many dental settings concerning anxiety and fear that children face in dental offices which proves to be a barrier in providing satisfactory oral health care to pediatric patients.

Upon daily basis it is experienced that children attending the dental OPD are agitated by the overall environment. The sight of dental chair and instruments may generate panic among children making them cry or shout thereby interrupting the dental procedure. This can prove to be quite unfavorable for both the dentist and the patient as incomplete procedures may lead to mismanagement and treatment failure.

Dental anxiety refers to marked and persistent fear of exposure to dental environment, this can adversely affect the diagnosis and treatment as well. Dental fear commonly occurs among children aged less than 3 years but is also seen in adolescence, reported maximum frequency at around 11 year olds [1].

In most cases anxiety may be precipitated by identifiable situations or objects. Patients who overthink about their treatment tend to delay their visit to a dentist that can have a negative impact on prognosis of their treatment. Furthermore this situation can lead to lack of coordination between patient and dentist. Dental anxiety causes development of avoidance behavior affecting daily life of an individual [2]. Frequently dental fear is caused by fear of pain by suspense, fear from the instruments, fear of needles, of being cheated, of being criticized, of invasive and long dental operations, of reoccurring of past experiences, of the noises produced during procedure, of blood, of repulsive smells in dental offices, of meeting an unfriendly staff [3].

These problems are caused because of lack of information and awareness. Some solutions which can reduce the fear/anxiety among children are: the dentist has to be extra polite with them, should provide friendly environment, try to distract them with toys or other object likewise, don't show any needles or any other instruments, should provide information and awareness through advertisement etc. [4]. These changes can increase the regular check-ups and would decrease the oral health problems among children increase the regular check-ups and would decrease the oral health problems among children.

REFERENCES


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