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Beyond the Chair: Understanding Patient Experiences in Managing Dental Anxiety

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Abstract

Dental anxiety is a common problem that affects both patients and dental professionals. It causes treatment avoidance and poor oral health outcomes. This study examines dental anxiety management strategies and how well they work to enhance oral hygiene, improve patient comfort, and raise satisfaction levels while receiving dental care. Eight participants who suffered from dental anxiety were interviewed in-depth as part of a qualitative, descriptive phenomenology study carried out in the Bidar District of Karnataka, India. Important discoveries show that dental anxiety is caused by a fear of pain, unpleasant experiences, and unfamiliarity with procedures. The appearance and sound of dental instruments, as well as unpleasant experiences in the past, caused patients to report feeling more anxious, which frequently resulted in long-term avoidance of care. Deep breathing and distraction techniques are two examples of effective management tactics that greatly enhanced oral health behaviour and patient satisfaction, promoting greater participation with dental care. The study calls for a better integration of mental health factors in dental practice and emphasizes the value of patient-centered communication and individualized care in resolving dental anxiety.

Keywords: Dental Anxiety Management, Patient-Centered Care, Dental anxiety

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