

Author: Raja, Gulrez Hanif

Profession: Dental Surgeon

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Thesis Title: Dental anxiety among children of age between 5 to 10 years visiting a teaching dental hospital in Islamabad, Pakistan

Research Country: Pakistan

Research Institution: Islamic International Dental Hospital, Islamabad, Pakistan

Supervisor: Professor Dr. Ulfat Bashir, BDS (Pak), MCPS, FCPS (Ortho)

Head of Orthodontics Department, Islamic International Dental College and Hospital,
Islamabad, Pakistan. Email: ulfat.bashir@riphah.edu.pk

Abstract:

Background/Objectives: The assessment of dental anxiety among children will aid in dealing with management issues related to dental treatment. There is no study available relating to Pakistan on dental anxiety in children. The aim of this study was to assess the prevalence of dental anxiety in children attending a teaching dental hospital in Islamabad, Pakistan.

Materials and Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted on 252 children aged between 5 to 10 years attending a dental clinic in a dental hospital in Islamabad, Pakistan. Dental anxiety was assessed by using the Faces Version of the Modified Child Dental Anxiety Scale.

Results: In this study a total of 252 children were observed for assessment of dental anxiety. The mean age of the participants was 7.88 ± 1.55 years in which 123 (48.8%) were males and 129 (51.2%) females. Out of these children 150 (59.5%) had previously visited a dentist and 102 (40.5%) had no experience with a dentist before. 38% (95/252) of the children were found to have moderate to severe dental anxiety. Dental anxiety decreased significantly with age ($p=0.0003$). The difference in anxiety levels was not statistically significant between males and females and among different socio-economic status ($p=0.142$).

Discussion: The Faces version of the Modified Child Dental Anxiety Scale (MCDAS_f) was used because it was easier for children to comprehend the facial pictorial expressions and select the appropriate levels of anxiety. Prevalence of moderate and severe dental anxiety was found to be higher in our study population when compared with studies from other countries. As no local study has ever been done on the topic, the results had to be compared with other countries. It was considerably higher than the prevalence of dental anxiety found in similar studies from India and Iran. When compared with the developed countries, the dental anxiety in Pakistani children was higher than reported from Taiwan, Denmark, Sweden and Netherlands. These variations may be explained by different assessment tools used in these studies as well as socio-cultural and geographical differences, low education level and lack of oral health awareness in children and their parents in Pakistan.

Conclusions: This study has highlighted dental anxiety as a potential public health concern regarding children in Pakistan. Assessment of dental anxiety is a useful way to identify anxious dental patients.

Key Words:

Dental Anxiety, Oral Health, Modified Child Dental Anxiety Scale