

ABSTRACT

Dental Anxiety: A 'Twin Burden' for Patients and Dental Professionals

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Oral health is integral to general health; yet oral diseases are the most widespread non-communicable diseases affecting almost half the world's population. Much has been documented on patient dental anxiety; but there is a dearth of literature on how dentists deal with the problem afflicting themselves as well. Dentists, perceived as guardians of oral health therefore, need to remain vigilant to their own health needs. This study will employ a mixed-method research approach. First, I will survey New Zealand dentists on how they identify and manage anxious patients in their clinical practices. The study's second phase will involve conducting semi-structured interviews (Appukuttan, 2016) with participating dentists to investigate the stress dentists face in treating these anxious patients and then explore their own coping strategies. The study findings could inform the development of evidence-based guidelines and strategies for managing patient anxiety, providing a framework to support dentists. It could also highlight potential areas of improvement in dentist training programmes, thereby strengthening the profession's ability to handle patient anxiety. Furthermore, it could shed light on practical and beneficial self-care and coping strategies for dentists, potentially leading to a healthier work environment and an enhanced quality of life for dental professionals (Newton et al., 2006). In this presentation I will underscore the reciprocal nature of dental anxiety, revealing it as a problem with a profound two-way impact.

References

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