



FEAR LEVELS FOR DIFFERENT DENTAL PROCEDURES AMONG GENERAL POPULATION

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ABSTRACT

Aim and Objective: To assess the fear level of patients for different dental treatments.
Background: Studies reveal that One in four people have fear of dental treatments or visiting the dentist. Women tend to report more dental fear than men, and younger people tend to report being more dentally fearful than older individuals.
Conclusion: It is essential for a dentist to be familiar with the reasons or stimuli that evoke fear among the patients in order to establish a successful practice.

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INTRODUCTION

Modern day dentistry consists a wide range of procedures which may be cosmetic, reparative or restorative. Such procedures evoke wide range of fear among the patients. Fear is the emotion aroused by danger or pain, whether real or imagined. When a fear becomes irrational and uncontrollable, it becomes a phobia. Fear is vital response to physical and emotional danger which is essential to protect oneself from legitimate threats. Fear, especially in the dental environment, commonly known as dental fear has a psychological and physiological etiology. Fear is also a learned response from observing family, friends, society, and role models. Dental fear may develop as a result of a previous traumatic experience in a non-dental or dental context. [1][4] For example, bad experiences with doctors or hospital environments may lead people to fear white coats and smell of antiseptics. Dental fear is associated with reduced treatment, as they are related with cancellation of appointments and act as a barrier for obtaining treatment. Hence, a survey was conducted to find out the fear level of different dental procedures among a random group of 100 people.

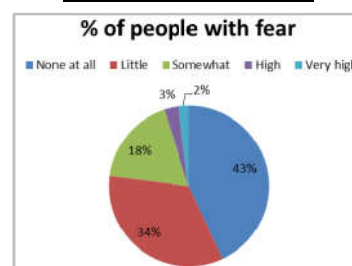
MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this research, a survey was conducted among a random group of 400 people which consisted of 168 males and 232 females. The age group of the participants varied from 15 years to 73 years.

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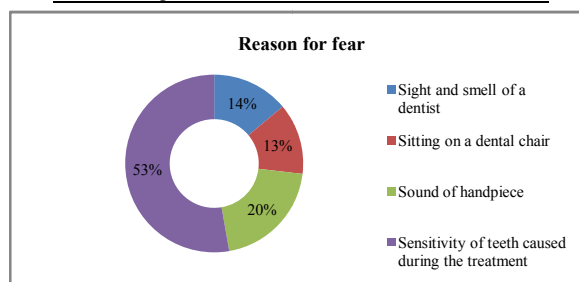
Scaling

Fear levels	Number of people
None at all	172
Little	136
Somewhat	72
High	12
Very high	8



Reason for fear

Reason for fear	Number of people
Sight and smell of a dentist	52
Sitting on a dental chair	48
Sound of handpiece	76
Sensitivity of teeth caused during the treatment	196



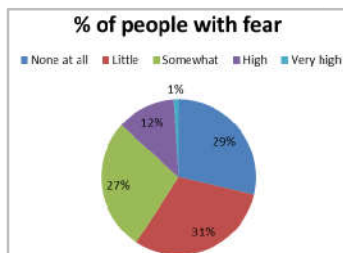
Fear Levels For Different Dental Procedures Among General Population

Data analysis

The survey was conducted using a self-made questionnaire partly based on kleinknecht fear survey^[2]. From the survey, the following data was collected.

Tooth extraction

Fear levels	Number of people
None at all	112
Little	120
Somewhat	108
High	48
Very high	4



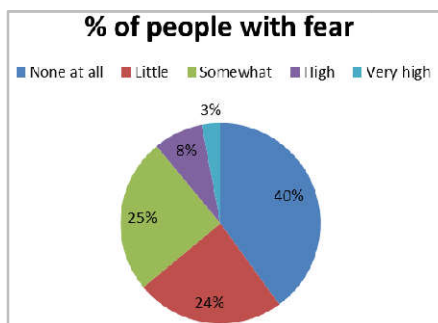
Reason for fear

Reason for fear	Number of people
Sight and smell of a dentist	32
Sitting on a dental chair	44
Sight of syringe or needle	120
Sight of forceps	60
Pain	208
Bleeding or sight of blood	112



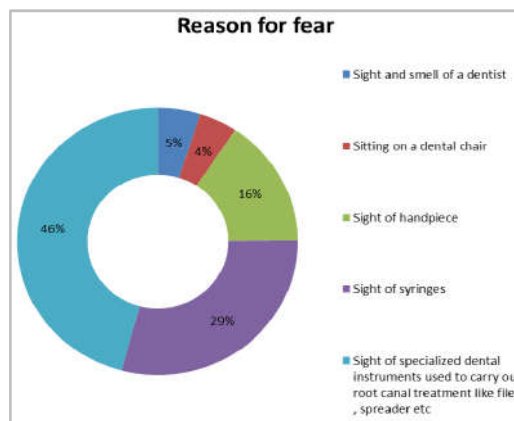
Root canal treatment

Fear levels	Number of people
None at all	160
Little	96
Somewhat	100
High	32
Very high	12



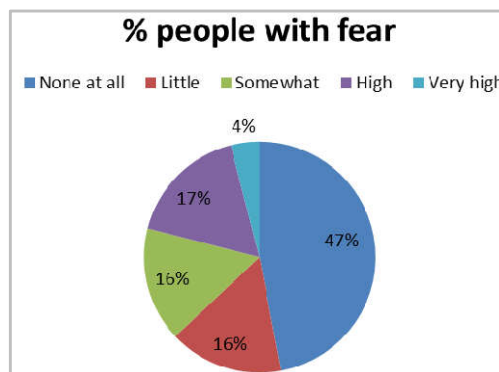
Reason for fear

Reason for fear	Number of people
Sight and smell of a dentist	20
Sitting on a dental chair	18
Sight of handpiece	64
Sight of syringes	120
Sight of specialized dental instruments used to carry out root canal treatment like files, spreader etc	188



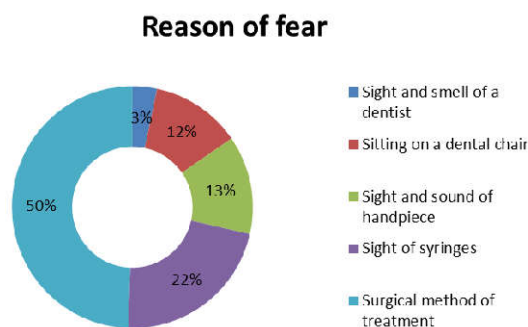
Dental implants

Fear levels	Number of people
None at all	188
Little	64
Somewhat	64
High	68
Very high	16



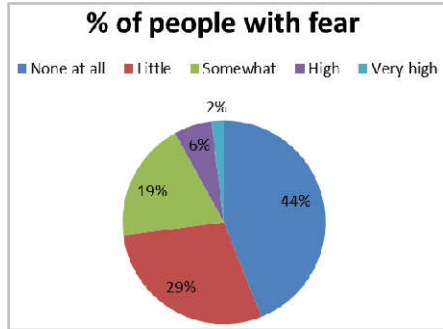
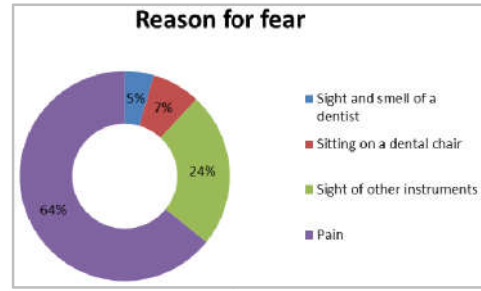
Reason for fear

Reason for fear	Number of people
Sight and smell of a dentist	12
Sitting on a dental chair	44
Sight and sound of handpiece	48
Sight of syringes	80
Surgical method of treatment	180



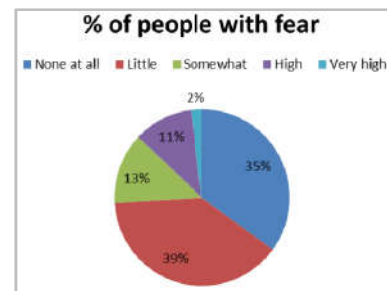
Dental restorations such as fillings

Fear levels	Number of people
None at all	176
Little	116
Somewhat	76
High	24
Very high	8



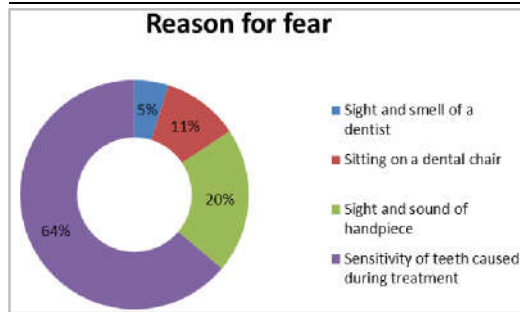
Local anesthesia administration

Fear levels	Number of people
None at all	140
Little	156
Somewhat	52
High	44
Very high	8



Reason for fear

Reason for fear	Number of people
Sight and smell of a dentist	16
Sitting on a dental chair	36
Sight and sound of handpiece	68
Sensitivity of teeth caused during treatment	212

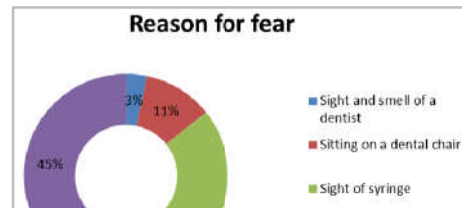
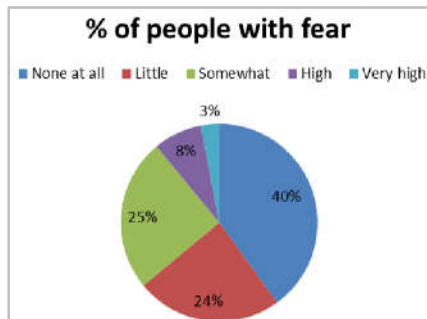


Reason for fear

Reason for fear	Number of people
Sight and smell of a dentist	12
Sitting on a dental chair	40
Sight of syringe	148
Pain	164

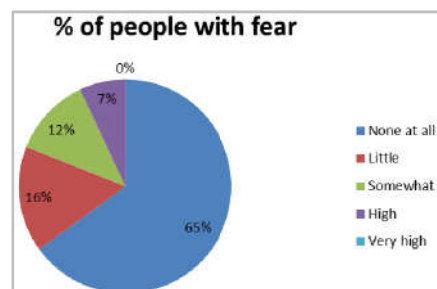
Orthodontic treatment

Fear levels	Number of people
None at all	160
Little	96
Somewhat	100
High	32
Very high	12



X-ray

Fear levels	Number of people
None at all	260
Little	64
Somewhat	48
High	28
Very high	0



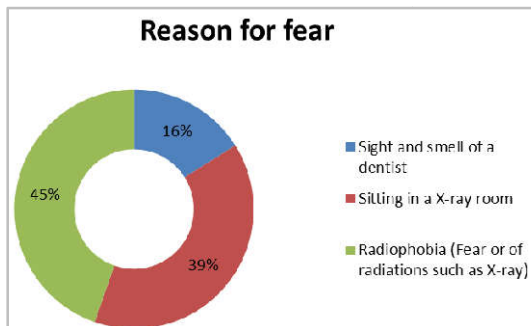
Reason for fear

Reason for fear	Number of people
Sight and smell of a dentist	12
Sitting on a dental chair	20
Sight of other instruments	64
Pain	172

Fear Levels For Different Dental Procedures Among General Population

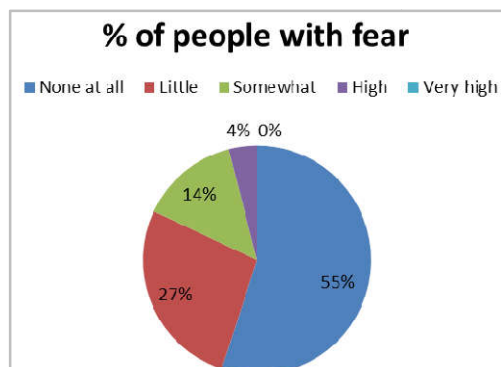
Reason for fear

Reason for fear	Number of people
Sight and smell of a dentist	36
Sitting in a X-ray room	88
Radiophobia (Fear or of radiations such as X-ray)	100



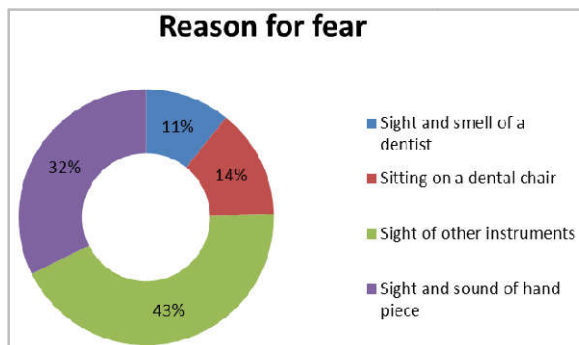
Application of pit and fissure sealants

Fear levels	Number of people
None at all	220
Little	108
Somewhat	56
High	16
Very high	0



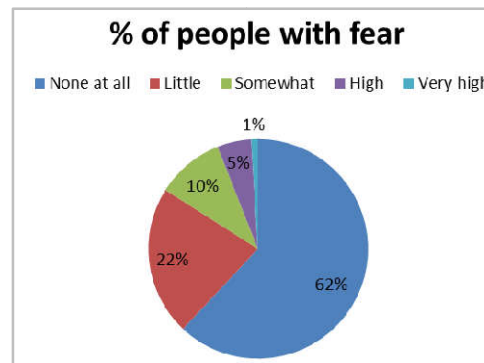
Reason for fear

Reason for fear	Number of people
Sight and smell of a dentist	28
Sitting on a dental chair	36
Sight of other instruments	112
Sight and sound of hand piece	84



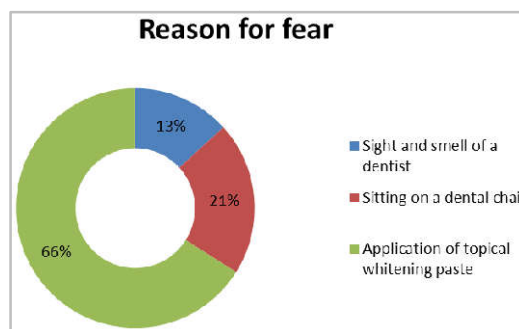
Tooth whitening and fluoride application

Fear levels	Number of people
None at all	248
Little	88
Somewhat	40
High	20
Very high	4



Reason for fear

Reason for fear	Number of people
Sight and smell of a dentist	28
Sitting on a dental chair	44
Application of topical whitening paste	140



DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to assess the fear levels for different dental treatments. From the survey taken various inferences can be drawn. Scaling had very low fear levels, only a mere 3% and 2% showed high and very high fear levels respectively. The main reason for fear being the sensitivity of teeth caused during the treatment. 53% of the people of the sample polled for this reason during the survey. 20 % of the people of the sample also felt sound of handpiece as major stimuli for fear. Smell and sight of dentists and sitting on a dental chair were too named as reasons for fear. For tooth extraction the fear levels were moderate. Main reasons for fear being sight of blood, syringes and pain. Local anathesia administration, X- rays, Tooth whitening, Dental restorations, dental implants and orthodontic treatment all had very low fear levels.

Importantly, a significant group of people under 17 years along with some elderly felt the sight of a dentist and smell of anesthetic to be major stimuli for dental fearing leading to skipping of appointments and poor oral health.

Also sight of syringe, forceps and other specialized instruments like spreader were found to evoke fear among the patients. Hence, to provide comfortable treatment to patients and to on general improve public oral health it is absolutely vital for dentists to know the stimuli that evoke fear and accordingly carry out the procedure. For example, while syringes and other dental instruments maybe kept hidden from patients sight. Improvements in the dental handpiece may be made inorder to reduce the sound. Usage of scented antiseptics can aslo is encouraged. Therefore, if managed properly dental fear can be significantly reduced which indirectly may lead better public oral health.

CONCLUSION

Dental fear is common issue among the general public which may stimulate the patient to skip appointments and behave erratically during the treatment. Dentists shouldn't misinterpret such behavior. Considering the prevalence of dental fear among the population it is vital for a dentist to be familiar with the reasons or stimuli that evoke fear among the patients in order to establish a successful practice.

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