

Assessment Of Anxiety In Patients Attending Baqai Dental Teaching Hospital Karachi-A Cross Sectional Study

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ABSTRACT:

Objective: The objective of the present study was to assess the anxiety levels in patients visiting Dental teaching Hospital by using Corah Dental anxiety scale. (DAS)

Methodology: A cross-sectional study was conducted on patients attending Out Patient Department of Oral Diagnosis Baqai Dental College between June 2017 - Jan 2018. A simple random sampling technique was used for the study purpose. The sample population included patients attending OPD of Oral Diagnosis Department for routine dental checkups, scaling, filling, root canal treatment and extraction. Descriptive statistics were obtained and the mean standard deviation was calculated. Chi-square test was done to compare association of dental anxiety among male and female patients visiting Baqai Dental College. Data was analyzed using SPSS software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, Version22).

Results: Based on severity of dental anxiety, 46.4% , 34.8% and 15.2% males were found to be moderately, highly and extremely anxious respectively whereas 53.6% , 65.2% and 84.8% females were found to be moderately , highly and extremely anxious.

Conclusion: The present study concluded that female patients were found to be more anxious than males. Therefore dental surgeons should take adequate measures to manage level of dental anxiety amongst patients visiting dental teaching hospitals of Karachi.

Key Words: Corah's Dental Anxiety Scale, Dental anxiety, Fear, Phobia

INTRODUCTION:

Dental anxiety is defined as an unpleasant complexed emotional state of anxiousness related to an expected encounter associated with a stimulus of fear¹. It is often stated as a cause of irregular dental visits, delayed pursuing dental treatment or even avoidance of dental treatment² and therefore leading to worsen oral health. ^{3,4} Worldwide dental anxiety is considered to be one of the utmost commonest type amongst several other types of anxieties.^{5,6} Mehrstedt et al ⁷ and Crofts-Barnes et al ⁸ have reported that those experiencing high levels of dental anxiety are amongst those with the poorest oral health related quality of life. B Mehboob⁹ showed 27 % of the patients were found to be dental phobic.

But the findings of another study revealed that dental

anxiety was reported only among 3% percent of the patients¹⁰.

Gender, age, objects and situations are possible factors of dental anxiety⁶. It has also been observed in various studies that dental instruments could be one of the main reason for causing dental anxiety when it is placed in a mouth results in gag reflex¹¹.

Regarding gender, females have been consistently identified as having high levels of dental anxiety when compared to male patients¹². Hagglin C et al ¹³ conducted a research on middle-aged and elderly women and reported that both dental anxiety and regular dental attendance declines with increasing age. The oral health of dentally anxious women who visited the dentist regularly was better than those who visits irregularly¹⁴. Z Morse¹⁵ revealed that anxiety was greatly experienced by females and in individuals undergoing dental extraction. Stabholz A et al¹⁶ showed that females were very anxious when undergoing Root canal treatment¹⁶. Poor oral hygiene results in shame and avoidance for the patients to visit the dentist and seeks dental treatment only when experiences pain with unbearable symptoms¹⁷. Dentists must assess levels of patient's anxiety in order to provide quality treatment. Lower levels of anxiety is managed by creating a friendly environment and reassuring the patient. Similarly moderate levels of anxiety was managed by coping strategy whereas pharmacological management is necessary for extremely phobic/ anxious patients¹⁸. The rationale of the present study was to assess dental anxiety in adult patients and their association with age, gender, past dental history and frequency of dental visits. Dental anxiety has a widespread effect on an individual's personality and therefore it is of utmost importance for dental surgeons to identify anxious patients and manage them accordingly.

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Received: 05-10-18
Accepted: 13-11-18

METHODOLOGY:

A cross-sectional study was conducted on patients attending Out Patient Department of Oral Diagnosis Baqai Dental College between June 2017 to Jan 2018. The Ethical Committee of Baqai Medical University approved the study design and all the respondents were provided to sign a detailed consent form.

A simple random sampling technique was used for the study purpose. The sample population included patients who attended Out Patient Department of Oral Diagnosis Department for routine dental checkups, scaling, filling, root canal treatment and extraction. Patients who had impacted teeth, severe periodontal disease and with the history of anxiety disorders were excluded from the study. The sample size was calculated by taking 50% prevalence rate and computed using Open Epi version 3.03a at 95% confidence interval and $\alpha = 5\%$. The sample size calculated was 384. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section included the demographic profile and the second section included the Dental Anxiety Scale (DAS). The questionnaire included four questions that were used to measure the anxiety level due to certain dental procedures and situations. These include the following:

- a) If you had to go to the dentist tomorrow for a check-up, how would you feel about it?
- b) When you are waiting in the dentist's office for your turn in the chair, how do you feel?
- c) When you are in the dentist's chair waiting while the dentist gets the drill ready to begin working on your teeth, how do you feel?
- d) Imagine you are in the dentist's chair to have your teeth cleaned. While you are waiting and the dentist or hygienist is getting out the instruments which will be used to scrape your teeth around the gums, how do you feel?

Each question has five points Likert responses. These responses range from relaxed coded as 1 to so anxious coded as 5¹⁹. Assessment of the level of anxiety is calculated by summation of points of scale items as following: lowest score 8 means no anxiety, 9 - 12 means moderate anxiety, 13 - 14 means high anxiety, and 15 - 20 means severe anxiety/ phobic²⁰.

Descriptive statistics were obtained and the mean standard deviation was calculated. Chi-square test was done to compare association of dental anxiety among male and female patients visiting Baqai dental college. Data was analyzed using IBM SPSS software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, Version 22).

RESULTS:

The sample consisted of 144 males and 240 females aged 18-35 years. Based on severity of dental anxiety, 46.4% , 34.8% and 15.2% males were found to be moderately, highly

and extremely anxious respectively whereas 53.6% , 65.2% and 84.8% females were found to be moderately , highly and extremely anxious. A statistically significant association was found between gender and levels of anxiety (p-value 0.000). Mean DAS was found to be 2.73. (Table 1). Seventy (83.3%) of the female respondents and 14(16.7%) of males were very anxious when asked about the visit scheduled for next day. Forty six (90.2%) of females and 5(9.8%) of males were very anxious about waiting for the turn on dental chair. Twenty nine (82.9%) of the females and 6(17.1%) of males were found to be very anxious about waiting for turn to get the teeth drilled. Twenty seven (93.1%) of the females and 2 (6.9%) of males were very anxious about their teeth to be cleaned. (Table 2).

DISCUSSION:

Fear is considered to be an inevitable thrilling, a response to some external stimuli in which individual is afraid without clear reasons²¹. The result of the present study was done to assess the level of dental anxiety in patients visiting dental teaching hospital. Karachi. Levels of dental anxiety was calculated by using Corah's Dental Anxiety Scale. The present study reported mean DAS to be 2.73 in a sample of patients attending dental teaching hospital. Anzar W²² in a study reported mean DAS to be 9.3 in local sample population of Karachi. Olszewska et al²³ calculated mean Dental Anxiety Score (DAS) to be around 10.5 in their study on Krakow's residents. Iqbal M in a study reported that mean score for DAS was 8.74²⁴.

In this present study females were found to be more anxious than males. Results from this study reported that 106(84.8%) of females were found to be severe anxious and 19(15.2%) males severely anxious. 16(27.6%) of the females and 42(72.4%) of males were found to be not anxious. Wahid U et al²⁵ in a study reported that 24(9.3%) of the female respondents were found to be severely anxious, 9(7.4%) highly anxious, 127(49.2%) moderately anxious and 88(34.1%) non anxious. Six (4.8%) of the male respondents were found to be severely anxious, 61(48.8%) moderately anxious and 58(46.4%) non anxious.

Jafarzadeh et al²⁶ in a study showed that females were found to be more anxious than males. Anzar W²² in a study reported that females were more anxious as compared to men. Similar findings were reported by Stabholz A et al²⁷, Malvania²⁸, Cristospher et al.²⁹ Sardar KP et al³⁰ in a study also reported that females were found to be more anxious than males. The reason behind is the difference in brain chemistry of male and female as the fright and flight response in females are more readily active partly due to action of estrogen and progesterone³¹.

Corah's Dental Anxiety Scale consists of 4 items with 5 point Likert responses¹⁹. The first item was related to patients' anxiety level that was scheduled for the next day. Iqbal M²⁴ in a study reported that 100(43.5%) of the respondents were

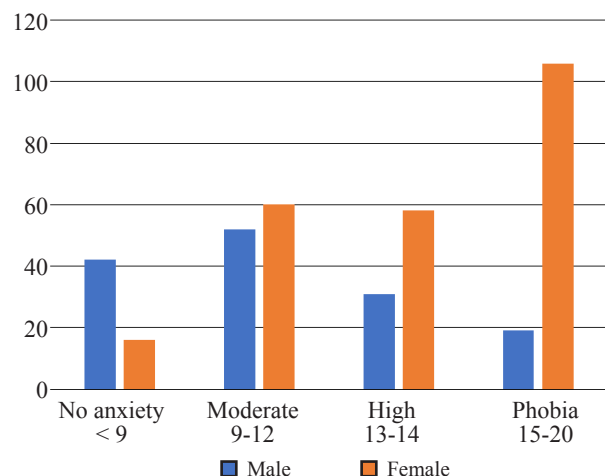


Figure 1: levels of Dental anxiety scale amongst patients

DAS Items	n	Mean ± SD	Mean DAS
Anticipation for checkup for the next day	384	3.63 ±1.112	2.73
Waiting in the dentist office	384	3.06 ±1.238	
Waiting for the dentist to start drilling of tooth	384	2.99 ±1.146	
Waiting for the dentist to clean the teeth	384	3.04 ±1.116	

Table 1: Descriptive study (Mean and standard deviation of DAS)

	Gender	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4
Relaxed	Male	20(80%)	35(68.6%)	29(69%)	29(76.3%)
	Female	5(20%)	16(31.4%)	13(31%)	9(23.7%)
A little uneasy	Male	18(54.5%)	42(53.2%)	47(51.1%)	45(51.1%)
	Female	15(45.5%)	37(46.8%)	45(48.9%)	43(48.9%)
Tense	Male	41(47.7%)	36(35.3%)	45(40.2%)	40(37.4%)
	Female	45(52.3%)	66(64.7%)	67(59.8%)	67(62.6%)
Anxious	Male	51(32.7%)	26(25.7%)	17(16.5%)	28(23%)
	Female	105(67.3%)	75(74.3%)	86(83.5%)	94(77%)
So anxious that I sometimes break out in a sweat or almost feel physically sick	Male	14(16.7%)	5(9.8%)	6(17.1%)	2(6.9%)
	Female	70(83.3%)	46(90.2%)	29(82.9%)	27(93.1%)

Table 2: Percentage of patients DAS score

found to be relaxed, 96(41.7%) little uneasy, 18(7.8%) were tensed, 14(6.1%) were anxious and 2(0.9%) were very anxious. Wahid U et al²⁵ reported that 43% of the respondents were relaxed. The present study reported that 25(6.5%) of the respondents were found to be relaxed and 156(40.6%) were found to be anxious that their checkup would be unpleasant and painful.

The second question was related to how you would feel while waiting for the turn in dental office. Iqbal M²⁴ reported that 74(32.2%) were found to be relaxed, 104(45.2%) little uneasy, 31(13.5%) tensed, 19(8.3%) anxious and 2(0.9%) very anxious. Wahid U et al²⁵ reported that 44% of the respondents felt a little uneasy while waiting for their turn in dental office. The present study reported that 79(20.6%) felt a little uneasy, 102(26.6%) tensed, 101(26.3%) anxious and 51(13.3%) very anxious. The anxiety and fear can be managed by placing Brochures, leaflets or handouts illustrating different dental procedures in the office. The ambiance of the waiting area should be made relaxing by

playing ambient music while the patient waits their turn²⁵.

Some people enclose painful encounters with the dental drill; thinking of the sound of the hand piece alone will make them anxious. The third question was related to patients' anxiety level regarding the drill ready for the treatment to be initiated. Iqbal M²⁴ reported that 78(34.2%) felt a little uneasy, 76(33.3%) tense, 24(10.5%) anxious and 12(5.3%) very anxious. Wahid U et al²⁵ reported that 28% felt little uneasy, 25% tensed. The present study reported that 92(24%) felt uneasy, 112(29.2%) tensed, 103(26.8%) anxious and 35(9.1%) very anxious. Electric driven handpieces should be used as they produces less sound. Adequate maintenance of dental handpieces are mandatory for their proper working²⁵.

The fourth question was related to the cleaning of the teeth. Wahid U et al²⁵ reported that 32% felt a little uneasy. Iqbal M²⁴ reported that 80(35.1%) felt a little uneasy, 49(21.5%) tensed, 29(12.7%) anxious and 7(3.1%) very anxious. The present study reported that 88(22.9%) felt a little uneasy,

107(27.9%) tensed, 122(31.8%) anxious and 29(7.6%) very anxious. This could be managed by explaining the procedure and showing videos of the procedure in the waiting area. Effective counselling also helps a patients to calm down their fears²⁵.

LIMITATIONS: Limitations of this study were small sample size.

CONCLUSION:

The present study concluded that female patients were found to be more anxious than males. Therefore dental surgeons should take adequate measures to manage level of dental anxiety amongst patients visiting dental teaching hospitals of Karachi.

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