

Evaluation of the prevalence of dental fear and anxiety in 4-11 years old children referred to the pediatric's offices in Ardabil since 2022

Abstract

Introduction: Usually, it is not easy for children who need dental services to attend a dental office. Dental fear causes the patient to visit the dentist only in emergency situations. Once the child's fear is identified, the dentist can use various behavior modification techniques and induce a positive dental attitude towards the next visit. It is important that we know the prevalence of dental fear and anxiety in society and provide solutions to reduce it, according to the level of anxiety in children. Therefore, this study was designed with the aim of investigating the prevalence of dental fear and anxiety in children.

Materials and Methods: The statistical population included children aged 4-11 years old in Ardabil city who visited pediatric's offices during 2022. Dental fear and anxiety of children were measured by three standard scales FIS (Facial Image Scale), CFSS-DS (Children's Fear Survey Schedule-Dental Subscale) and Frankle scale. Data analysis after collection was done using SPSS 21 and Chi-2 test and the significance level of the test was considered 0.05.

Results: The prevalence of dental anxiety based on Frankle scale, FIS index and CFSS-DS questionnaire was 24.2%, 14% and 21.7%, respectively. The most important factors causing dental fear and anxiety in children based on the questions of the CFSS-DS questionnaire were injections, the noise of dentist drilling and tooth cleaning, respectively. The age of children had a statistically significant relationship with the level of dental anxiety, and children in the age group of 4-7 years showed a higher level of dental anxiety ($P=0.001$). Based on gender, in the age group of 7-11 years, the number of anxious boys was significantly more than girls ($P=0.005$). According to the Frankel index, in the age group of 7-11 years, the frequency of people who were in the anxious group was higher in the first and second children of the family ($P<0.001$). Also, the lack of previous visit to the dentist was more related to dental fear and anxiety ($P=0.007$).

Conclusion: Regarding the effect of age and dental visit history on the fear and anxiety and the cooperative behavior of children in the dental visit, increasing parental awareness of regular visits from birth is expected to improve children's oral health and reduce children's treatment needs. Reduction of negative dental experience in children prevents the increase of dental anxiety in older age.

Keywords: Fear, Anxiety, Dental fear, Dental anxiety