

Title of Intervention: A Dental Fear Reduction Program

Intervention Strategies: Supportive Relationships

Purpose of the Intervention: To reduce dental fear through relaxation and cognitive therapy

Population: Adult patients applying for treatment of severe dental anxiety

Setting: Dental Fear Research and Treatment Clinic (DFRTC) in Sweden; health care facility-based

Partners: None mentioned

Intervention Description:

- Supportive Relationships: Participants were randomly assigned to one of two psychological therapies, both conducted by the same psychologist. Relaxation Therapy is based on participant's bodily and mental reactions to dental situations. Elimination of stress reactions was achieved by increasing the participant's ability to relax and to maintain relaxation when exposed to dental situations.

Theory: Behavioral Therapy, Cognitive Therapy

Resources Required:

- Staff/Volunteers: Psychologist
- Training: Training in therapy protocol
- Technology: Not mentioned
- Space: Space to conduct therapy sessions
- Budget: Not mentioned
- Intervention: Not mentioned
- Evaluation: Printed questionnaires

Evaluation:

- Design: Randomized comparative study
- Methods and Measures:
 - Baseline data and background information
 - DMFT assessed decayed, missing and filled teeth
 - Questionnaire to assess background data, preferences and beliefs in relation to treatment, general anxiety, fearfulness and dental anxiety reactions
 - Self-report rating scale to assess experiences of tension, pain and feelings of being locked in during dental treatment
 - Dentist rating to assess patients' behavior, cooperation and treatment ability

Outcomes:

- Short Term Impact: Anxiety was more reduced among patients who received relaxation-oriented therapy.
- Long Term Impact: Not measured

Maintenance: Not measured

Lessons Learned: It was shown that the two treatment methods were both effective in reducing dental phobic reactions. Motivation was found to be a significant predictor of successful treatment outcomes.

Citation(s):

Berggren, U., M. Hakeberg, et al. (2000). "Relaxation vs. cognitively oriented therapies for dental fear." J Dent Res 79(9): 1645-51.