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Some features of Romanian children behavior regarding dental care

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Background: Dental anxiety, due to physical and mental discomfort occurred during the dental procedures and the disregard of some bad dental habits and incipient symptoms, will lead on a long term to sidestep behaviour towards the dentist and the dental clinic. These features led to a study of the Romanian children behaviour regarding dental care of individuals coming from an average social-economical environment, in strong connection with the anxiety generated by the eventual painful procedures performed at the dental clinic.

Methods: 100 Romanian parents were asked about their children (aged 5-10 years) behavior regarding: attendance to prophylactic dental advice, existence of bad dental habits, anxiety and avoiding attitude (including their causes) against dental treatments. There were used: 1. A Pedodontics questionnaire, including demographic and general medical data; 2. Wright questionnaire to identify the child's behavior before and during his treatment on dental surgery.

Results: After processing the 2 questionnaires the following behavioural features were revealed: 1. Only 7% of the children aged 5-10 years had a prevention visit to the dentist. 2. 65% of the children had bad dental habits (thumb finger habits, pacifier, lip habits, tongue thrust, mouth breathing, nail biting, bruxism, self mutilation) without being aware of their severity, while the perception of the dental pathological disorders was an adequate one in 88% of the cases. 3. Children's anxiety against the dental chair was recognized and anticipated by their parents in 92% of the cases, comparing with children's anxiety towards other medical procedures (25% of the cases).

Discussions: 1. There is a low rate of dental prevention periodical visit in the case of Romanian children, although there are many dental clinics. 2. Many children have unhealthy dental habits due to the poor education in this direction. 3. Dental anxiety continues to be a very important topic due to the higher rate of occurrence comparing with other medical procedures.

Conclusions: Despite the progress, the dental care is still an issue in many communities worldwide, especially among disadvantaged groups in developed and developing countries. Supporting the dental care at individual and community level, starting with antenatal period and continuing with prevention for children and teenagers, represents a cost-efficient strategy to reduce the dental condition, and to keep a healthy dental care of the future grown up. It is an efficient strategy to convince parents of the early awareness on the dental care prevention. Having in view all these aspects, besides the psycho-emotional factors like dental anxiety, improving prevention methods should be of high priority for health programs, at individual and community level, by making people aware about the importance of dental care and the risk factors.

Biography

Gabriela Iorgulescu holds a PhD in Medical Psychology from Carol Davila University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Romania. She has extended her valuable service as an Assistant Professor at the same university for the past 6 years. She is the President of Romanian Academic Society of Behavioural Science and Member of several prestigious national and international medical and psychology associations, such as: Society of Behavioural Medicine (USA), European Health Psychology Society (Germany). She is the author of 2 books. One of them include: *"Dental and Medical Psychology Concepts"*, was awarded with the "University Book Diploma".

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