

Anxiety and pain management in child dental procedures using unconventional techniques like hypnosis and progressive muscle relaxation

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Anxiety in a dental setting has been cited as the fifth most common cause of anxiety in adults. Dental anxiety is one of the major challenges to good dental treatment. Children are most often affected by such fear and anxiety while undergoing dental procedures.

The most often used practical method to allay fear and anxiety is by using different behavior modification techniques. These techniques have their own limitations such as short-lasting effects and variable efficacy. Another option for management of anxiety is conscious sedation using pharmacological agents or general anesthesia. Both conscious sedation and general anesthesia have their own limitations. The first being requirement of armamentarium and the second being intense training of nurses and doctors. The cost factor is also a deterrent for dentists and patients alike.

In our institution, hypnosis and progressive muscle relaxation have been extensively used. A controlled trial to compare the two has also been carried out. The two techniques were evaluated on children undergoing dental extractions using anxiety and pain scales and physiological parameters.

It was observed that both the techniques were successful in allaying anxiety and pain and the effects lasted throughout the procedure and even later until the next day. The children who underwent hypnosis developed an admirable rapport with the dentist which lasted several weeks.

The anxiety reduction with hypnosis and muscle relaxation was observed in 95% and 100% children respectively. Pain was effectively controlled in 85% children in the hypnosis group and 70% children in the muscle relaxation group. The control group showed anxiety reduction among 20% and pain reduction in 10% children only. The Heart Rate and blood pressure was optimally maintained in the intervention groups. The oxygen saturation was well-maintained in all the children.

Biography

Namita Kalra is currently the professor and head of department in the Department of Pedodontics and Preventive Dentistry at the prestigious University College of Medical Sciences in Delhi. She has more than thirty years of teaching experience and is passionate about her subject and takes pride in the process of teaching. She has nearly 100 national and international publications and has contributed chapters in various textbooks. She has been awarded for her distinguished services by the hospital, state, national body and student alumni. She was awarded the Distinguished Women Award (2020) by the Indian Society of Pedodontics and Preventive Dentistry, Delhi State Award (2013) by the Government of Delhi and the Commonwealth Academic Staff Fellowship in Pedodontics (2010) at the University of Glasgow to name a few. She has keen interest in dentistry for the special child and in the neurobiology of pain and its effective management.