

Fear of Anesthesia in Dental Practice-Who is More Anxious?

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Dentistry has come far ahead in terms of science and technology relevant to gadgets and tools used by clinicians for performing the various procedures. However, one major issue, which by and large persists and is faced by the dental professionals across the globe, is the 'fear and anxiety of injections during dental procedures. The dentists are day in and day out struggling with this issue, especially the ones who are handling anxious patients in their dental practice. Managing such anxious patients in dental practice is certainly not an easy job.

The literature is full of several techniques/procedures proposed for handling such patients with each having its own set of advantages and limitations. While the psychological ones may not work in all the cases, the pharmacological ones may have their own set of issues, especially related to the permissions to be taken from the concerned physicians before advising any such pre-medications to the patients.

While most of the papers published talk about the fear of the patients, very few mention about the anxiety of the dentists before/during the procedure of administering local anesthesia to their patients. Is it not true that many dental professionals, for one reason or the other, try to avoid giving local anesthesia to their patients? The reasons for this could be manifold, for instance, the lack of confidence in giving anesthesia, the anxiety of the complications involved in case an error happens, fear of adverse effects of the drug etc. One can imagine a situation wherein a fearful patient and an anxious dentist are trying to manage a situation during the procedure of local anesthesia. There are high likely chances of a catastrophic incident which could turn eventful.

While much is known about the management of anxious dental patients, less has been talked about the anxiety levels of the dentist while performing the herculean task of administering local anesthesia to the patient. Probably the fear of creating a complication of anesthesia related procedure and then not being able to handle the situation, creates the anxiety in the dentist's mind when it comes to giving an injection to the patient. While it may sound simple to look at, it may not be so easy to analyze the issue quantitatively and qualitatively because of the subjective criteria involved.

We must analyze closely the remedial measures which may be taken to inculcate the level of confidence in the mind of the dental professionals pertaining to local anesthesia issues, which in turn shall reduce the anxiety levels related to the same. This would probably come from the in-depth understanding of the anesthetics and the procedure involved in the process. A thorough knowledge of the topic and the meticulous training can be the keys to open the door of this mind lock.

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