



The Effect of Parental Presence on the Level of Fear and cooperation of Young Children in Pediatric Dentistry

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Abstract

Fear and anxiety from dental procedures could reduce the child's cooperation during the treatment. Many parents are eager to accompany their children to the treatment room. This action not only makes the children more aggressive and disobedient but also interferes with the continuity of the treatment. In other words, the presence of parents can increase the child's behavioral disorder.

Keywords: *Fear and Anxiety; Parents Accompaniment; Aggressive; Disobedient; Child's Behavior*

Introduction

Pediatric dentists in addition to promoting good oral health for children, try to provide a positive outlook for children following a dental appointment. Therefore, they prefer to try to reduce children's anxiety and fear by applying different methods. Methods such as tell, show and do, relaxation, distraction, and parental intervention can be included [1,2].

Of course, there are more aggressive methods that can be applied by using physical restraints, such as covering the child's mouth with hands. Due to the advancement of pediatric dentistry, minimally invasive methods have become more popular.

The presence and absence of parents are some of the less invasive methods that most pediatric dentists use as a powerful tactic in which if the child does not cooperate, the parent is asked to leave the treatment room. In the case of the necessary cooperation, as a reward, the parent is asked to be present in the room [3].

In this article, we look through some of these researches.

Overview of some studies

The controversy about whether the presence or absence of parents and the possible effect on the child's behavior during dental procedures have led several researchers to address this issue.

In the first study, Kotsanos and his colleagues found that the parental attendance method was successful in the first dental treatment [4]. Certo believes the presence of parents can psychologically increase the feeling and security and improve the child's behavior [5].

For the first session, it has been suggested that one of the parents be present in the treatment room so that it reinforces the child's encouragement [6-9].

In another study of children whose behavioral problems were due to separation from their parents, researchers found that the presence of parents increased children's behavioral problems, and thus resulted in the dentist failing to control the child [10].

Of course, it should be noted that the differences in recent research and other studies can be due to the cultural and educational differences, parental behavior with children, and the studied indicators of fear, anxiety, and cooperation, in which the cultural differences are at the top of these issues.

Parental fear

Some of the children behave normally when their parents do not present in the exam or treatment rooms. Parents who visit the dentist should keep their anxiety to themselves so avoid passing their fears to their children [6].

Many parents are afraid of dental offices. They might have bad dental experiences from the past that could transfer their unintentional anxiety and fear to their children. When children do not show enough cooperation, the terrified parents may react so badly that affects their child's behavior. In another word, they may quit their cooperation [6,11].

Advantages and disadvantages of parental presence

Sometimes, parents begin to interfere with the dental work when they see the crying children [12]. The presence of parents can force them to repeat the dentist's instructions to their children, which in addition to disturbing the relationship between the two, causes the children to divide their attention, and focus between the parents and the dentist. As a result, the child will not be able to follow the dentist's instructions properly, and the children would be in a confusing situation.

On the other hand, the dentist is not able to raise his voice because it may upset the parents. Therefore, most pediatric dentists believe that the presence of parents in the waiting room may prevent them from interfering in their dental affairs. As a consequence, they and their patients will also be more relaxed. Hence, more relaxation of the dentist will have significant and positive effects on children's behavior [12]. Furthermore, the process will go on smoothly.

Finally, the absence of parents in the treatment room can increase a sense of independence, self-confidence, and adaptation to

the environment in children, which can be accompanied by encouragement of children by the dental team too.

Conclusion

Children are often afraid of the dental office environment, which makes it difficult for a dentist to easily examine and then treat a child. Various factors can affect the child's behavior and his cooperation during dental treatment, the presence and absence of parents and parental fear are among the important issues in this regard.

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