

Hypnosis in Dentistry and Its Use in the IDF

ABSTRACT

Background: Dental phobia is a common phenomenon. It is estimated that around one in ten people experience a significant level of dental fear and, as a result, avoid dental care treatment. It is reported that 17% of IDF recruits showed a high level of dental fear. This article aims to briefly review the current academic knowledge of dental fear and anxiety and how hypnosis is a key instrument in treating phobic patients through a series of case reports.

Methods: Overall review of dental anxiety and retrospective case reports of three soldiers who had dental phobia and could finally be treated thanks to hypnosis after years of neglect.

Results: As shown in three case reports, hypnosis can be a very useful tool for dentists in order to treat patients with dental anxiety. After hypnosis, patients could finish entire complicated treatment plans and experience success, which enabled them to even overcome their phobia.

Conclusions: Hypnosis in treating patients with dental anxiety has a very high success rate, allowing patients to overcome dental fear and complete dental treatment plans without using pharmacological medications. Since the October 7, 2023 terrorist attack, we assume that more soldiers will suffer from dental phobia, and therefore, it is important to establish a special dental center that can provide dental treatments under hypnosis and help patients improve their quality of life.

Keywords: hypnosis, dental anxiety, dental phobia, dental fear

Introduction

Dental phobia is a well-known and common phenomenon[1]. Approximately 6-15% of the world's population suffers from a high level of dental fear and avoidance[2]. It is reported that 17% of Israeli army recruits showed a high level of dental fear[3]. Until 2021, the treatment options for a soldier with dental phobia were only pharmacological, excluding general anesthetics. In this article, we will review the current academic knowledge of dental fear and anxiety and the common ways to handle and treat dental phobic patients, with a focus on hypnosis as a key tool.

Dental anxiety and fear

Anxiety is an emotional state that precedes an encounter with a feared object or situation, whereas fear refers to the actual, or "activated", response to the object or situation. It is generally the case, however, that a person will have a fear response to something that they experience anxiety about. Both fear and anxiety can involve

Authors:

Shany Gonen Sultan, DMD, M.Sc [1] [3]

Moshe Porat-Wojakowski, DMD [2] [3]

[1] Department of Periodontology, Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Medical Corps, Tel Hashomer, Israel.

[2] Department of Oral Medicine, Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Medical Corps, Tel Hashomer, Israel.

[3] "Bina" Program, Faculty of Dental Medicine, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel.

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Corresponding Author:

Shany Gonen Sultan
shany.sultan@mail.huji.ac.il

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