

CHILD DENTAL ANXIETY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH PARENTS' ANXIETY

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ABSTRACT

Introduction. Dental anxiety is a common, multifactorial condition with relevant clinical implications for perioperative management and oral health. Recognizing the anxious patient and being able to manage his/her anxiety is a relevant step of dental treatments, allowing to predict and improve patient's cooperation. A relationship between the anxiety of children and parents has been suggested by previous studies, but available data are contradictory and not based on validated anxiety tests.

Methods. 124 children (68 males and 56 females; median age 9 years, IQR 8-10) were enrolled in the study. All patients were accompanied by at least one parent (93 mothers and 31 fathers) who signed the informed consent. Children and parents were administered the Visual Analogue Scale for Anxiety (VAS-A), before and after the first orthodontic examination, and the Modified Dental Anxiety Scale (MDAS), before the orthodontic examination only. Parents were also administered the Italian versions of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) Form Y1 and Y2, before the orthodontic visit. Data were analyzed using Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, Mann-Whitney test and Wilcoxon test.

Results. All scores were significantly correlated to each other in children and in parents. Child pre-examination VAS-A was correlated with parent pre-examination VAS-A. VAS-A increased during the visit in both children and parents. MDAS score was significantly higher in children than in parents.

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