

Dental Appointments and Related Fear and Anxiety among the General Population during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract : The rapid spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has enlisted dental offices in high-risk places. A cross-sectional survey was carried out among the general population aged 17 and above in Shiraz, Fars, Iran. The patients' demographic features were recorded and analyzed against questions regarding fear, anxiety, and attitude toward dental appointments. The Dental Anxiety Scale (DAS) questionnaire was used for the evaluation of anxiety levels. Among a total of 760 participants, the average age was 32.33 ± 11.27 years, while 242 (31.8%) were male and 357 (47%) were single. Based on the anxiety scores, 336 (44.2%) participants had mild anxiety, 215 (28.3%) had moderate anxiety, 74 (9.7%) had high, and 135 (17.8%) had severe anxiety. The majority of participants used masks (93.8%) and disinfectants (79.9%) during dental visits, and the most emphasized policies during dental visits were using disposable face masks by the personnel (83.6%) and controlling the number of visitors in the office (81.8%). Only 226 (29.7%) reported that they hadn't postponed their dental visits. Our findings demonstrated that anxiety in people increases toward dental treatments during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in decreased dental appointments. Dentally anxious people were more likely to be female and married couples. Being female and older age are possible risk factors for developing a fear of dental procedures.

Keywords : Covid-19, anxiety, fear, dentistry, dental care

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