



THE CRYSTALS OF A GEODE ARE HIDDEN UNDERNEATH THE SURFACE” - A CROSS SECTIONAL SURVEY OF CHILDREN'S PREFERENCE FOR DENTIST'S APPEARANCES

Dental Science

Dr. Shweta Chandak	Professor and HOD, Department of Pedodontics and Preventive Dentistry, SDKS Dental College and Hospital, Nagpur, Maharashtra.
Dr. Niharika Gahlot*	Post graduate Student, Department of Pedodontics and Preventive Dentistry, SDKS Dental College and Hospital, Nagpur, Maharashtra *Corresponding Author
Dr. Milind Wasnik	Senior lecturer, Department of Pedodontics and Preventive Dentistry, SDKS Dental College and Hospital, Nagpur, Maharashtra
Dr. Miranda George	Post graduate Student, Department of Pedodontics and Preventive Dentistry, SDKS Dental College and Hospital, Nagpur, Maharashtra
Dr. Sneha Khekade	Post graduate Student, Department of Pedodontics and Preventive Dentistry, SDKS Dental College and Hospital, Nagpur, Maharashtra

ABSTRACT

Introduction: In Pediatric Dentistry, dental fear and anxiety are the main compromising factors for the treatment success and overcoming this problem remains a significant challenge. Continuously there is a debate regarding dental attire, whether it is white coat, coloured coat, clinical gown, shirt and tie, casual wear or informal wear.

Aim & objectives: To identify the children's preference on dentist's attire, the relationship between the dentists' attire and dental anxiety and the past experiences of children to the dental treatment with relation to dentist's attire.

Methodology: A cross-sectional survey was conducted with 1000 patients between 5-15 years of age who presented to the Department of Pediatric Dentistry. Preference for dentist's attire was determined by showing photographs of male and female dentist in different attires to the children. Children's anxiety levels were assessed using Frankl's behaviour rating scale with four items to be rated from 1 (definitely negative) to 4 (definitely positive).

Conclusion The use of child-friendly colours in attires may help in relieving dental anxiety and aid in better communication and can improve the child-dentist relationship, so as to provide a good quality dental treatment.

KEYWORDS

dentist's attire, white coat, dental anxiety, past dental experience

INTRODUCTION

In Pediatric Dentistry we come across patients of all ages and personalities as well as with their parents. The aim of Pediatric clinicians is to develop a relationship of trust with the children and their parents. In Pediatric Dentistry, dental fear and anxiety are the main compromising factors for the treatment success, and overcoming this problem remains a significant challenge.¹ The study by Brosky et al. considered dental attire or appearance accompanied by other factors to encompass professionalism, defined as 'an image that promotes a successful relationship with a patient'.² It is often difficult to provide quality health care services in a hectic and demanding clinical environment that meets all expectations.³ In dental practice, children often do not co-operate for dental procedures due to the fear of dentist and the dental treatment.⁴ As a Pedodontist, we should more focus to ease fear and anxiety of the child in the dental operatory. The use of child-friendly colours in the pediatric dentist attires may help in relieving his anxiety and aid in better communication to make him comfortable to the dental procedure.⁵

Although the white coat has been an accepted symbol of medical staff for more than 100 years, originally to give 'a cloak of scientific validity' for their treatments, to represent purity and cleanliness, health professionals' attire has changed over the years.² Continuously there is a debate regarding dental attire, whether it be white coat, coloured coat, clinical gown, shirt and tie, casual wear or informal wear. According to various psychologists there is importance of appearance and interpersonal relationships. the behaviour of the child in the dental clinic is affected by the behavior of the dentist, personality of the dentist, fear of the unknown and past traumatic dental experiences.¹ Some earlier studies quoted that colours such as red, blue, yellow, green, black, and white were hypothesized to be associated with anger, happiness, sadness, surprise, disgust, and fear, respectively.¹³

AIM & OBJECTIVES

- To identify the children's preference on dentist's attire
- To identify the relationship between the dentists' attire and dental anxiety

- To identify the past experiences of children to the treatment and dentist's attire.

METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional survey was conducted with 1000 patients between 5-15 years of age who presented to the Department of Pediatric Dentistry in Swargiya Dadasaheb Kalmegh Smruti Dental College and Hospital, Nagpur. An explanatory letter including the purpose of research was given to the parent in order to obtain their consent. They were divided into three groups: i.e. 5-7 years, 8-11 years and 12-15 years. Photographs were taken in different attires of male and female dentist with standardised physical stance, hairstyle and facial expression. White apron, coloured apron, traditional wear and casual wear were the four attires which were included in the study. Preference for dental attire was determined by showing photographs to children. Children's anxiety levels were assessed using Frankl's behaviour rating scale with four items to be rated from 1 (definitely negative) to 4 (definitely positive).



Fig.1. Photographs of male and female dentist in different attires

Table 1: Code of attire

W A. M 01	White apron male 01	T W. M 05	Traditional wear male 05
W A. F 02	White apron female 02	T W. F 06	Traditional wear female 06
C A.M 03	Coloured apron male 03	C W. M 07	Casual wear male 07
C A.F 04	Coloured apron female 04	C W. F 08	Casual wear female 08

DATA SHEET-1

The crystals of a gem are hidden underneath the surface. A cross-sectional survey of children's preference for dentist appearance.

S. No.	Name of the patient	Age/sex	Past dental visit	Previous experience	Parent's occupation	Monthly income	STATUS	Attire preference	Preference on mask/glove
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									
13									
14									
15									
16									
17									
18									
19									
20									
21									
22									
23									
24									
25									

Fig.2: Data sheet

RESULTS

A total of 1000 children participated in the study belonging to age group 5-15 years. The mean age of the children participated in the study is 10.

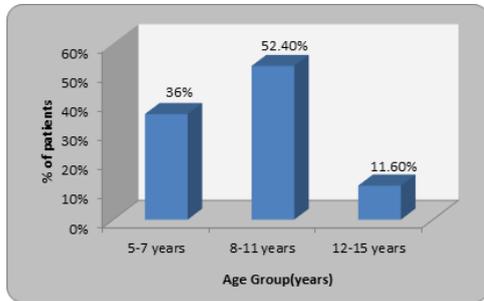


Fig 2. Percentage of boys and girls participated in each group

Maximum children participated in the study belonged to the second age group i.e 8-11 years and most of them were boys.

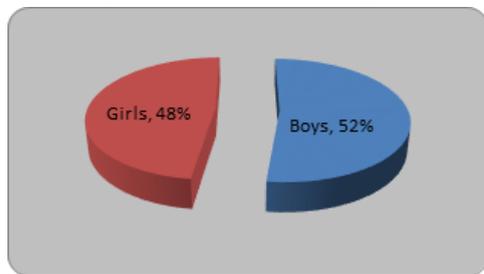


Fig.3. Percentage of Boys and Girls

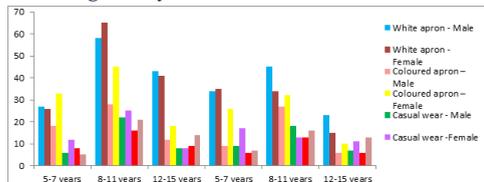


Fig.4. Preference of dentist's attire

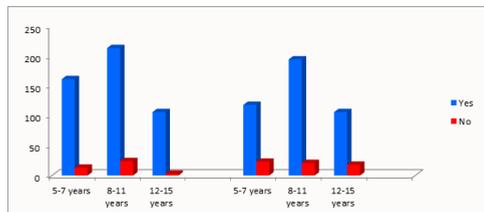


Fig 5. Preference of mask and gloves

The chi square test is 6.524. The p-value is 0.01. The result is significant.

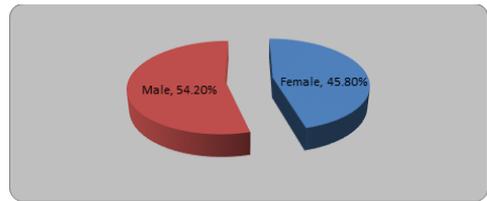


Fig 6. Most preferred gender of dentist

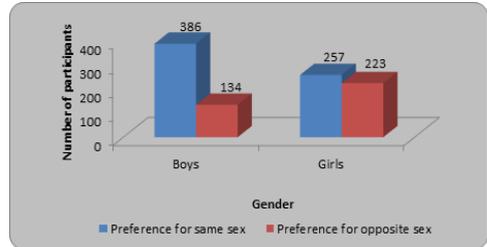


Fig 7. Preference for same sex or opposite sex of the dentist

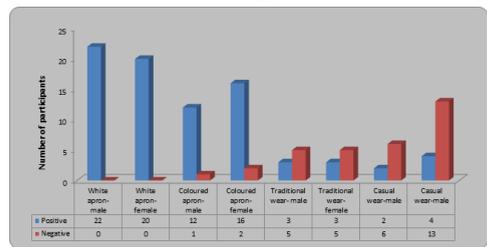


Fig 8. Preference of attire based on previous dental experience of the child

DISCUSSION

Male dentist wearing white apron was the most preferred attire followed by female in white apron and coloured apron. Younger age group children preferred their dentist to wear regular outfit and middle and older age group preferred their dentist to wear white coat. In a study, it is observed that 56% of patients favoured doctors wearing white coats. The appearance of the clinician is considered to have an effect on a patient's impression of the dental environment. Pediatric patients were influenced by the first impressions of dental students and that anxiety levels were affected by the attire of the dental-care provider. Children do have strong perceptions and preferences related to their dentist's appearance. Patients believed a dentist should wear a white coat for easy identification, with older patients more likely to be in favour of a white coat than younger patients. Children aged 12–15 years were not affected by dental attire; informal attire as a way of making young patients more comfortable in their surroundings. In contrast, children may have negative impressions about informal attire. Out of the total children participated in the study around 10.2% do not prefer dentist wearing mask and gloves as they become more anxious with its sight. In a study, majority of the patients preferred the use of a mask. Recommended the concept of 'Child friendly attire' in anxious children to enhance easy first communication. In our study, majority of children prefer male dentist over female dentist. In a study, there was a contradictory finding that is most of the children preferred to get treated by a female dentist. Female dentists were more preferred over male dentist. In our study, there was preference towards the dentist of same sex in overall population.

Children associate past experience with the dentist identity which is represented by their attire and dental anxiety occurs in most children due to negative cognitive experience. Same gender preference existed both in males and females. This may be due to the cultural component in the Indian population. Some studies showed that there was an inclination towards the female dentist. Furthermore in previous studies, parents' preferred female dentists to treat their child, whereas children preferred a dentist of the same gender.

CONCLUSION

As a Pedodontist, our role is to ease fear and anxiety. The use of child-friendly colours in attires may help in relieving dental anxiety and aid

in better communication. Younger age group prefers the female dentist wearing coloured apron and casual wear, middle and older age group prefer male dentist wearing white apron followed by coloured apron. Consideration and alteration in the attire for different age groups can improve the child-dentist relationship, so as to provide a good quality dental treatment.

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