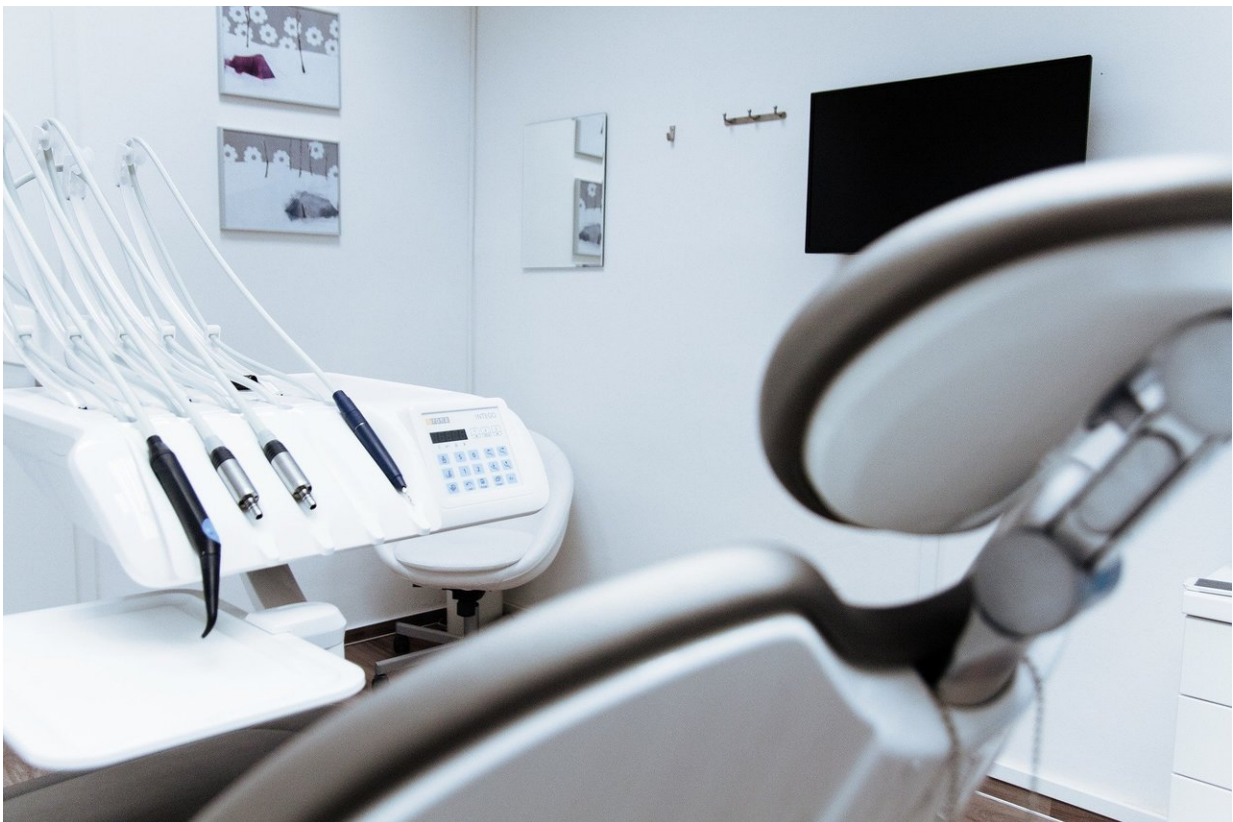


Understanding fear and anxiety related to the dental care experience and dental treatment utilization

March 17 2023



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A symposium exploring the contemporary issues relevant to the conceptualization of dental care-related fear and anxiety and its

measurement across the lifespan was featured at the 52nd Annual Meeting & Exhibition of the AADOCR, held in conjunction with the 47th Annual Meeting of the CADR. The AADOCR/CADR Annual Meeting & Exhibition took place at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland on March 15-18, 2023.

Dental care-related fear and anxiety is commonly associated with dental treatment avoidance, poor oral health, and low oral health-related quality of life, among other deleterious outcomes. The true prevalence of dental care-related fear and anxiety has not been consistently measured, but global estimates of clinically significant levels of this fear/anxiety are around 15 percent. Though studied for many decades, the understanding of fear and anxiety related to the dental care experience and dental treatment utilization has been hindered in part by overly general and imprecise terminology and conceptualizations.

Organized by Cameron Randall of the University of Washington School of Dentistry, the symposium began with the presentation, "Conceptualizing Dental Anxiety: Historical Underpinnings, Contemporary Perspectives, and Current Gaps" by Daniel W. McNeil of the University of Florida, which focused on historical and emerging perspectives on phenomenology and terminology from both dentistry and other health disciplines. Distinctions between stress, fear, anxiety, and panic was described, and the relevance of these distinctions to fully understanding and intervening on these states in the context of dentistry was discussed.

Drawing on these conceptual issues, the second presentation, "Assessment of Child and Adolescent Dental Anxiety: State of the Field and Future Directions" by Cameron L. Randall of the University of Washington, addressed the assessment of dental care-related fear and anxiety in children and adolescents, describing extant literature and critical future directions for improving science and practice.

The third presentation, "Assessment of Adult and Older Adult Dental Anxiety: State of the Field and Future Directions" by Brenda Heaton of Boston University, addressed the assessment of dental care-related [fear](#) and [anxiety](#) in adults and [older adults](#), reviewing existing literature and calling out necessary next steps for the field. The [symposium](#) closed with a discussion and question-and-answer session facilitated by the presenters.

More information: The symposium, "Advancing Dental Fear Research: Conceptualizations, Assessment, & New Directions," took place on Thursday, March 16th, 2023, at 8 a.m.—9:30 a.m. Pacific Daylight Time (UTC-07:00).

Provided by International Association for Dental Research

Citation: Understanding fear and anxiety related to the dental care experience and dental treatment utilization (2023, March 17) retrieved 2 July 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-03-anxiety-dental-treatment.html>

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