

## EDITORIAL



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**Anxiety in the dental office during the COVID-19 pandemic.**Gabriela Ciavoi<sup>1</sup><sup>1</sup>Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy Oradea, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania

Discussions and research related to anxiety in the dental office are not recent, in the last 20 years this topic has been discussed more and more intensely. Research is aimed especially in the field of patient anxiety, stress factors related to both the office and treatment itself are identified, and we are constantly looking for ways to lessen this anxiety [1].

Among the stress factors related to dental treatment we mention: the appearance of the office, the doctor's behavior, previous negative experiences related to dental treatment, fear of pain, office equipment, smell, taste of substances, pronouncing "trigger" words (needle, syringe, anesthesia), blood vision and, until a year ago, the fear of contamination in the office or during treatment was on the last positions [2]. It is known that the rules of sterilization and the rigor of this operation have always been paramount in the dental office, so the fear of contacting a disease from or by the patient was almost ruled out.

The fact that following the declaration of the pandemic in March 2020, dental offices were first closed and presented by the authorities as a major source of infection with the SARS-COV-2 virus, induced the state of anxiety regarding the possibility of infection during treatment. Worldwide authorities, through the measures adopted, focused on finding solutions to limit the spread of the virus and its treatment. Major problems, however, with uncontrollable effects in the short, medium and long term have led to the onset and worsening of psychological problems in the entire population.

Indian psychiatrist Debanjan Banerjee outlined some of the ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic affects us. Thus the author identifies: the fear of not surviving a possible infection; increased anxiety due to family separation; the phobia of leaving the

house; desire to take medication; fear of not wearing a mask, even when it is not necessary; the constant feeling of insecurity; uncontrolled abuse of disinfectants; the appearance of fear towards other people; the stress of not coughing or sneezing in order not to be considered ill, the frustration of the medical staff obliged to contact the sick and the fear of becoming a transmitting agent of the disease [3].

Although the psychological effects of the pandemic are still being discussed, its effects can be counted largely retroactively. Against the background of an anxiety given by the situation itself, on the one hand there is the fear of not being infected by the patient and on the other hand not being infected by the doctor. The patient's fear that the economic situation will not allow him a dental treatment overlaps with this. Thus, he gives up on or postpones this treatment, while the doctors fear that their practices will be closed again, or they will not be able to pay their employees.

What can we do? Let's not fall into extreme measures, let's not panic, let's try to look at things realistically, let's look for solutions and not for problems. The more we catastrophize, the higher our anxiety level, in addition to the physical problems we may have, the chances of being able to solve this problem decrease [4]. And in fact it is not even a question of solving the problem but of finding a balance to go through this crisis well. Nobody says that it is easy, but it needs conscious involvement. We need to take things as they are, to think about what we can actually do at this time, how to manage the situation with both patients and employees [5].

We need to make efforts to lower the level of anxiety and there is no shame in calling a specialist in the field (we each have the specialist we trust whether it is the

psychologist, psychiatrist, priest, mentor or the man of the soul). We need to empathize with the patient, to make him feel that we understand his fears and that we will do everything to ensure the safety of his health. Even if we are caught in this collective hysteria related to physical health, we should not forget to take care of mental health, because its effects will be felt later.

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