

# Holistic Methods to Overcome Dental Anxiety



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*A Senior Honors Project by*

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# Introduction

- As many as 75% of adult Americans have some degree of dental anxiety<sup>[1][4]</sup>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qw89dKbeU64>

# Background

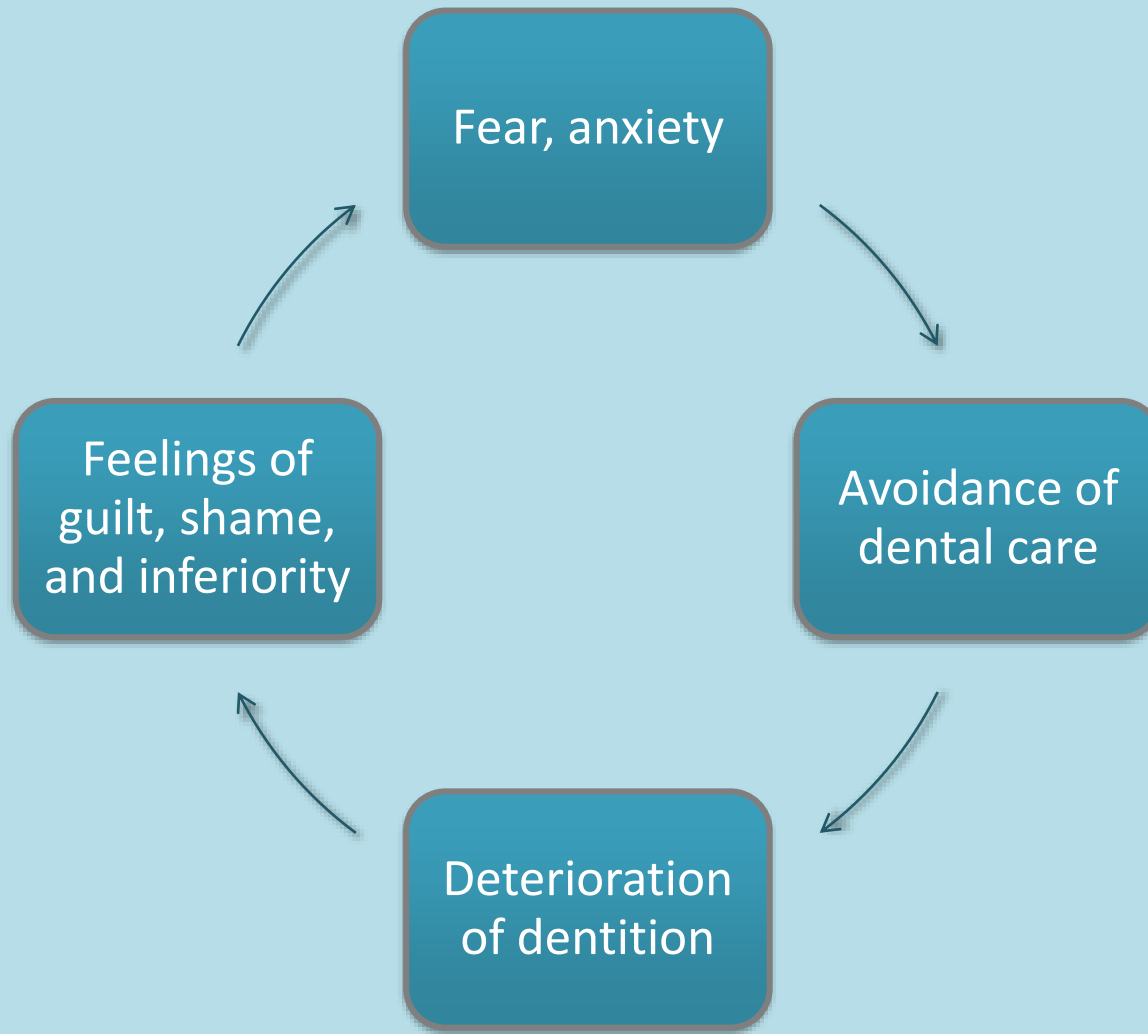
- Defining dental phobia, fear, and anxiety<sup>[2]</sup>
  - **Phobia**: strong irrational fear of something that presents no or little danger.
    - Results in a change of lifestyle
  - **Fear**: response to a known danger
  - **Anxiety**: response to an unknown danger



# Background

- Endogenous and exogenous dental anxiety<sup>[3]</sup>
- Seattle's ranking<sup>[5]</sup>
  - Type I: simple conditioned fear
  - Type II: fear of catastrophe
  - Type III: generalized anxiety
  - Type IV: distrust of dentist

# Background



# Methods

- 6 general dentists were interviewed
- Random and convenience sampling
- Questions posed to invite discussion
  - Used probes
- Data collected by handwritten notes

# Methods

- Interview questions
  - Why do you think the majority of society has a fear of dentists?
  - Do you use guided imagery to assist in relaxation?
  - What stress management/relaxation techniques do you encourage your patients to use?
  - Have you received any formal training in relaxation techniques?
  - What stress management/relaxation techniques do you use on a daily basis?

# Results

- Emergent themes
  - Importance of doctor-patient relationship
  - Type I anxiety prevailing
    - Strong familial link
  - Distraction
  - Environment factors
  - Education



# Results

- Other key notes
  - Hand relaxation
  - Innovative equipment



Image courtesy of Google Images.

# Conclusions

- Big take-home message
- Future work proposal
  - Survey patient population
  - Hand relaxation connection
- Unexpected benefits

# References

- <sup>1</sup> Bracha HS, Vega EM, Vega CB (2006). Posttraumatic dental-care anxiety (PTDA): Is dental phobia a misnomer?. *Hawaii Dent Journal* **37** (5): 17-9.
- <sup>2</sup> Dental Fear Central. What is Dental Phobia? 2013. <<http://www.dentalfearcentral.org/fears/dental-phobia/>>.
- <sup>3</sup> Gale, E. (1972). Fears of the dental situation. *Journal of Dental Research*, *51*, 964-966.
- <sup>4</sup> Kleinknecht RA, Thorndike RM, McGlynn FD, Harkavy J (January 1984). "Factor analysis of the dental fear survey with cross-validation". *J Am Dent Assoc* **108** (1): 59–61.
- <sup>5</sup> Milgrom, P., Weinstein, P., Kleinknecht, R., & Getz, T. (1985). *Treating Fearful Dental Patients*. Reston, VA: Reston Publishing Co.