

Patients preference towards dentist's attire in Pediatric Dentistry- A short study

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INTRODUCTION

In modern society, the need for dental paediatric oral health care is increasing. The success of pediatric dental practice is not only dependent on the technique applied or the technical skills of the pediatric dentist but also on their patients, their attitudes, and behavior in the operatory.

The biggest hindrance in reaching out to the children is their anticipated trait anxiety. Dental anxiety has a very early onset in childhood and of exogenous origin.

According to the three-pathway theory of Rachman, children may develop an anxious response by conditioning by modelling or from information. The factors which influence anxiety vary greatly, appropriate clothing of the dentist possibly contributes to dentist's empathy. Barrett and Booth reported a negative aspect of the traditional white coat attire, and observed that children regard formally-dressed doctors as competent but not friendly. Short in the year 1993 through his study found out that How a clinician dresses may be important in determining the success of the patient-clinician relationship

It is widely accepted that colours also have a strong impact on our emotions and feelings. In some studies, it has been seen 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. In current dental practice, dentist's wear a number of attires including the white coat which has been age old and scrub suit which come in different colours. Other attires include surgical gowns and PPE kits for more invasive procedures.^[1-3]

In the present study child's preference towards the dental attire was evaluated by displaying a series of pictures comprising of a dental surgeon in various clinical outfits to assess the outfit which will be most pleasing and comforting for the child.

METHODOLOGY

This study was done in the Department of Pediatric Dentistry, Thai Moogambigai Dental College and Hospital, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. The study was completed over a span of 14 days in March 2022 from initial design to the tabulation of the results. Forty children were randomly selected ranging from age group of 5 to 12.

Six different outfits were selected for the study which were used regularly for various dental diagnostic and operative procedures.

Formal Attire- Group A

Half hand White Coat- Group B

Full hand White Coat- Group C

A Purple coloured Scrub Suit- Group D

A blue coloured Surgical gown- Group E

A white coloured PPE kit- Group F

In all the outfits, Gloves, surgical face mask and head cap was included.



A



B



C



D



E



F

The selected pictures were printed in form of photographs and were attached in a cardboard, where they were placed adjacent to each other and displayed to the test subjects.

After showing the pictures, children were asked several questions regarding which attire they prefer.

The questions included –

1. Which doctor in the picture makes you least scared?
2. Which doctor doesn't makes you anxious?
3. Which doctor would you like to be treated with?
4. Which doctor would you consider as most friendly?

Upon asking these questions, a decision was made upon the patients choice of the attire and one photograph was selected.

After confirming the child's selected attire, a decision

was made and was entered in the data sheet and were calculated.

RESULTS

As the results described in the table 1, 50 percent children belonging to age group 5 and 7 choose half hand coat and the other half chose surgical gown. 75 percent of children from age group 6 chose half hand coat, 50 percent age group belonging to 8 years chose scrub suit and 60 percent of age group 9 chose formal attire, 50 percent of children belonging to age group 10 chose formal attire and half hand coat. 66.7 percent children belonging to age group 11 chose half hand coat. 37.5 percent children belonging to age group 12 chose surgical gown. 65.2 percent female population chose half hand coat. 47.5 percent male population chose formal attire

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of age based preference of dentist attire

		A	B	C	D	E	F		
		N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)		
Age	5	Count	0 (0)	1(50)	0(0)	0(0)	1(50)	0(0)	2(100)
	6	Count	1(12.5)	6(75.0)	0(0)	1(12.5)	0(0)	0(0)	8(100)
	7	Count	1(25.0)	2(50.0)	1(25.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	4(100.0)
	8	Count	1(16.7)	2(33.3)	0(0.0)	3(50.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	6(100.0)
	9	Count	3(60.0)	2(40.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	5(100.0)
	10	Count	2(50.0%)	2(50.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	4(100.0)
	11	Count	1(33.3)	2(66.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	3(100.0)
	12	Count	2(25.0)	2(25.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	3(37.5)	1(12.5)	8(100.0)
Total		Count	11(27.5)	19(47.5)	1(2.5)	4(10.0)	4(10.0)	1(2.5)	40(100.0)

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of gender based preference of dentist attire

			A N(%)	B N(%)	C N(%)	D N(%)	E N(%)	F N(%)	
Gender	F	Count	3(13.0)	15(65.2)	1(4.3)	3(13.0)	1(4.3)	0(0.0)	23(100.0)
	M	Count	8(47.1)	4(23.5)	0(0.0)	1(5.9)	3(17.6)	1(5.9)	17(100.0)
Total		Count	11(27.5)	19(47.5)	1(2.5)	4(10.0)	4(10.0)	1(2.5)	40(100.0)

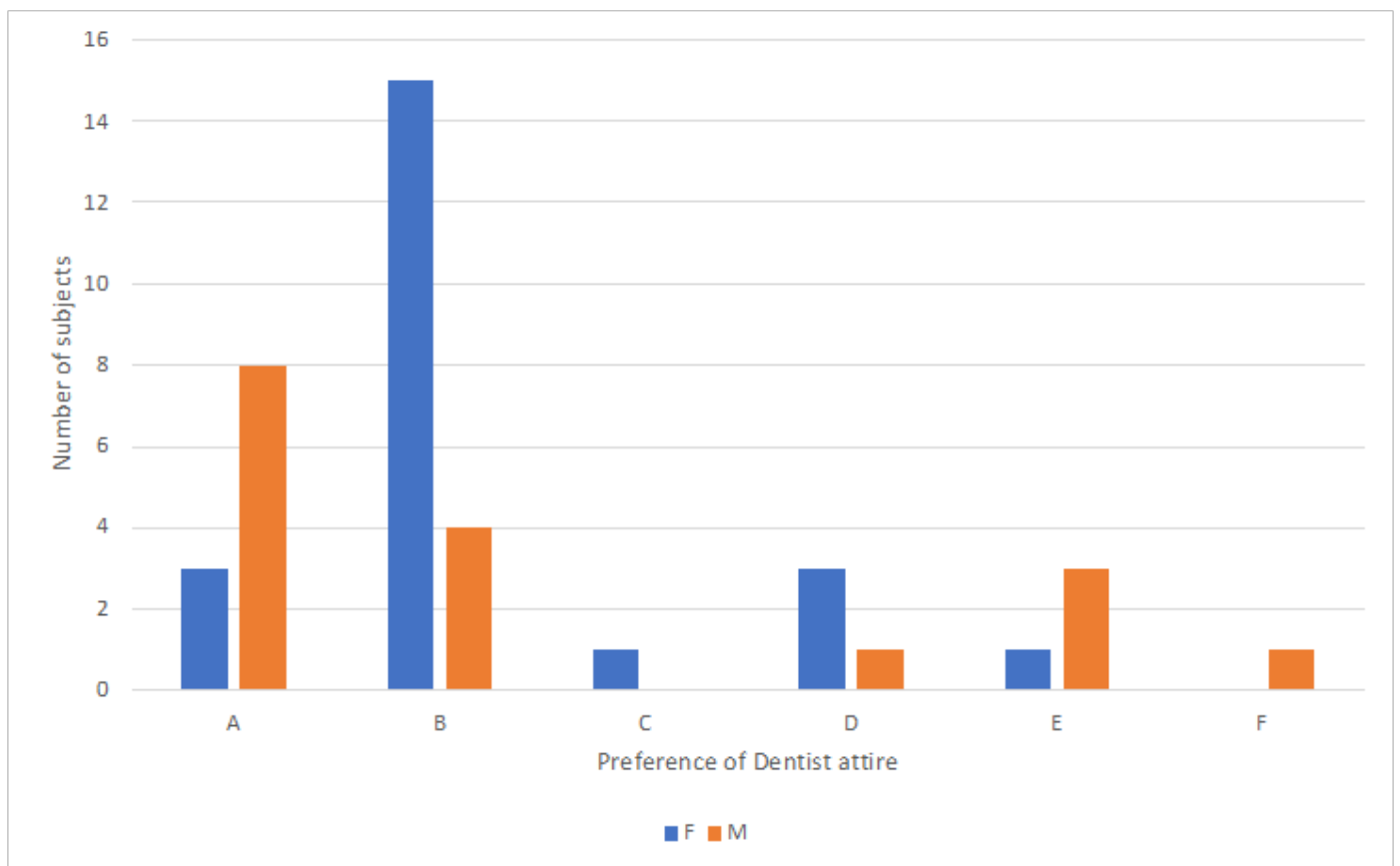


Figure 2: Age and Gender based distribution of subjects preference towards dentist's attire

DISCUSSION

Out of 40 children selected, 22 were Female and 18 were Male.

In general girls display higher levels of fear and anxiety when compared to that of boys (Ollendick, King, & Muris, 2002). Lewinsohn, Gotlib, Lewinsohn, Seeley, and Allen in the year 1998, examined gender differences in the prevalence of anxiety disorders in a community sample of 1,079 adolescents and concluded that girls are more prone for current and lifetime diagnosis of phobic and other anxiety disorders than the counterpart. In a study done by Peter Muris et al. the results indicated that gender difference emerged early in life. At the age of 6 years, girls were twice as likely to experience an anxiety disorder than were boys. According to Ollendick, Yang, Dong, Xia, & Lin, 1995- explanation for the finding that girls are more fearful and anxious than boys has to do with individual differences in gender role orientation which implies that girls and boys are socialized to develop gender-linked feminine and masculine behaviors, traits, and skills. Fearfulness and anxiety are inconsistent with the masculine gender role and such emotions are less accepted by boys, who are always expected to behave in a brave manner and display active and coping behavior. [4] However, in the present study, no gender based assessment was done.

George M. Michaels in the year 1924, conducted a study to assess the colour preferences based on age conducted on 535 pupils. The results revealed that

- (1) There are at least 4 colours which are definite -they are Blue, Red, Yellow and Green.
- (2) Violet and Orange are considered unreliable
- (3) Evidence shows that environment and social status have correlation with the development of preference for colours.
- (4) Above the 6-year age is a more dependable factor in the preference of color
- (5) The variability and unreliability of the aesthetic selection of the 6-year group is so great that it cannot be with the judgments of the rest of the groups.
- (6) Blue, Red and Green are the most reliable colour[5]

In the present study, An age group of 5 to 12 years was taken for the study without any consideration of the gender. Age group below 5 years was not considered capable of a valid selection of colour.

D. Mistry et al. in the year 2009 conducted a study to

asses children and parental attituded towards dental attire. It was concluded that Parents favoured white coats for its professional look but for children Formal attire or casual attire was favourable.[2]

Therefore, in the present study formal attire was taken for group A. The results revealed that out of 40 children, 11 children chose formal attire out of which 3 were female and 8 were male.

Haridas et al. in the year 2018, conducted a study to assess children's preferences for different kinds of dental attire and to investigate and relate the influence of age, socioeconomic status, effect of media, and the previous exposure to a dental setup on children's preferences. It was concluded in the study that White coat was the most preferred attire by children followed by scrubs with cartoons and formal attire. Plain scrub was the least preferred. Age and socioeconomic status have definite influence on the preferences of children as lower class and higher age groups showed more inclination toward white coat. Past dental experiences and effect of media showed no significant effect on children's preferences.[6]

In this study Half hand White coat and Full hand white coats were taken. The results revealed that 18 children selected half hand white coat out of which 14 were female and 4 were male. For full hand white coat, 1 selection was done by a female child. Justifying the above study, White coat was the most preferred dental attire selected by the patients contradicting the age old white coat fear and explaining children's development towards positive feelings towards health care providers.

Diana Ram et al. in the year 2018 conducted a study To compare the preferences of children and their parents in three countries, regarding the gender and attire of pediatric dentists.

It was concluded that Children's preferences for the attire of pediatric dentists reflected the common wearing apparel for dentists at the clinics they attended. According the study, child favoured scrub suits over white coats.[7]

However our present study correlated with the findings of the study done by Haridas et al. where scrubs were favoured secondary to white coats. In our study, 4 children selected scrub suits out of which 3 were female and 1 were male.

Another important factor to be considered is the presence of female predilection towards purple or pink colour. This can be because of that colour pink was associated with positive emotions to the same

extent as blue and red. Women further associated more positive emotions with pink than did men. It was concluded that some commonalities (blue) and gender differences (pink and red) exist in absolute colour preferences.[8]

In our study purple coloured scrub was used.

In a study done by Katz et al.(1922) it was found out that at every age group, blue colour was the most selected colour. In his study, 2500 pupils were tested from kindergarten to college and 47% of the test samples selected blue colour as the most favourable one.[9]

In our present study, a blue coloured surgical gown has been chosen which was preferred by 4 children out of which 1 was female and 3 were male.

It can be believed that the selection of surgical gown has been solely done because of the colour preference by the children.

After the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, health individuals attire has changed rapidly. To prevent getting infected by the saliva and other fluids and to prevent cross-contamination, health care individuals often resort to PPE kits. Dental surgeon being the most prone to getting in contact with saliva and other fluids have also resorted to PPE kits. However PPE kits are not favoured by not only the adult patients but also the pediatric population.[10] In our study PPE kit used received 0 selection by the patients and is considered as the least preferred attire.

CONCLUSION

It was concluded from the study that preference of the child not only varies from different age groups but also at different ages.

In our study most of the children preferred Half hand coats, secondarily formal attire and scrubs and Surgical gown and least population preferred PPE Kits.

Most of the females preferred half hand coat whereas majority of males selected formal attire.

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