

Dental hypnosis importance of psychosomatic limb of dentistry

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Abstract

Research in the field of psychosomatic medicine is ever expanding, where mental elements significantly influence the onset, manifestation, or remission of a physical illness. The overlooked importance of dental hypnosis in managing dental anxiety, pain, bleeding, salivary flow, etc. is required to be explored further because of its cost effectiveness and preventive approach along with its potential to resolve the psychological issue of the disease, which can be the root cause of all the disorders as discussed in earlier studies.

Keywords: Psychosomatic, Disorder, DCPR

Introduction**Psychosomatic medicine, the mind-body connection**

Psychosomatic medicine is an interdisciplinary medical field exploring the relationships among social, psychological, behavioral factors on bodily processes and quality of life in humans and animals. (Uexkull, Thure von (ed.), 1997.) Some physical illnesses are thought to have a mental component caused by the pressures and stressors of daily life. For instance, it has been proposed that lower back discomfort and high blood pressure may be linked to pressures from daily living. Additionally, according to the psychosomatic theory, mental and emotional conditions can have a big impact on how a physical sickness develops. Psychosomatic disorders, in which mental elements significantly influence the onset, manifestation, or remission of a physical illness, are distinguished from somatoform illnesses, in which mental aspects are the only contributing factor to a physical illness.

Also, emotional well-being influences physical health (Lamers et al 2012), as explained in characterization of certain diseases and syndromes. A syndrome is a set of concurrent things, such as certain emotions with certain group of

physical symptoms or a disease that might not always have a definite cause. For example, Cushing's syndrome is characterized by psychological symptoms like depression, anxiety, loss of emotional control, cognitive difficulties, etc. along with dental implications and other physical signs and symptoms. However, usually in modern medicine, most of physical diseases and syndromes are not linked with their psychological component, at classification, diagnosis and treatment process, which is in contrast with the complementary and alternative medicine.

Similarly, from the ancient eastern viewpoint, every physical disease starts in the mind and then finds its manifestation in the physical body. This may be viewed in comparison to allopathic theory of disease causation and pathology, which seems to give more importance to the role of external agent or environment compared to host factors and psychological response. However, various studies suggest the importance of psychological response or psychological well-being in improving the physical health and overall health promotion. (Birket to Levenson)

Despite the fact that an international team of researchers came up with the Diagnostic Criteria for Psychosomatic Research (DCPR) 20 years ago (Por celli, Piero, and Jenny Guidi. 2015) after realising that there was a substantial amount of evidence in psychosomatic medicine regarding the concepts of quality of life, stressful life events, somatization, and personality, the applied aspects of psychosomatic medicine are still widely unexplored in dentistry in India.

Dental hypnosis and its uses

Hypnosis is a human condition involving focused attention, reduced peripheral awareness, and an enhanced capacity to respond to suggestion. (Hall 2021) Hypnotic dentistry or Hypnodontics or dental hypnosis is also referred to as "Hypnodontia," is defined as the art and science of using hypnosis to experience comfortable and pain-free dental visits. Hypnodontics was first documented in the 1800s, when hypnosis in dentistry was used to help with tooth extraction by reducing anxiety and achieving analgesia in 1829. Recognition by the World Health Organisation in 1983 and India in 2003 has benefited hypnotherapy, with the Delhi University beginning a course in 2007. (Times of India)

A trance is a completely natural phenomena that has long been practised by numerous cultures all over the world. It has been applied to both self and healing others. The patient's willingness and capacity to unwind and enter a trance, as well as the hypnotist's methods and skill for inducing a trance, are the main factors in hypnosis induction. In order for the patient to accept a trance, the hypnotist must provide a framework for communication. This is accomplished through dispelling hypnosis myths, patient expectations of how hypnosis works, and patient confidence in the skill and professionalism of the hypnotist before the patient enters a trance. (Christian 2008)

As the patient lies on the dentist chair, hypnotist uses a special kind of communication to assist the patient to relax psychologically and physically. The patient is practically handing over their mouth for repairs while their eyes are closed and their muscles are relaxed. The patient responds when addressed and keeps all of his natural reflexes throughout this period, even when his mind is preoccupied with the thoughts, he enjoys the most, such as a lovely vacation or other delightful and calming experience. The time dilation brought on by the trance during hypnosis is another enjoyable side effect of treatment. Time appears significantly shorter to a hypnotised patient than it actually is. For instance, patients frequently claim that a session, which in reality required the whole two hours, only lasted 45 minutes. (Christian 2008; London, 1974; Schmierer, 1993)

Hypnosis is utilised to relieve anxiety, fear, and dental phobia, as well as to produce anaesthesia with less drugs. Patients who are difficult to manage or who are unwilling to cooperate, as well as paediatrics, frequently offer the majority of challenges that dentists face on a daily basis. They take longer and necessitate additional attention from the dentist and the assisting staff. There are a variety of reasons why dental patients are afraid, tense, worried, and anxious before, during, and after their appointment.

Interestingly, a review of 19 studies by Venkiteswaran 2021 has shown following purposes of hypnosis:

- i. As an adjunct anxiolytic agent for minor oral surgery
- ii. Reduce the intensity of pain in orofacial and temporomandibular pain
- iii. Reduce anxiety
- iv. Increase compliance of wearing orthodontic headgear
- v. Manage pain arising from tooth hypersensitivity
- vi. Increase pain threshold for pain
- vii. Reduce salivary flow during dental treatment

Further, a number of advantages of using hypnosis in dentistry have been mentioned in the literature and include the following: a) No requirement for specialist equipment, b) The patient remains conscious, c) Non-pharmacological approach so no side effects or associated environmental pollution, d) Combines well with nitrous oxide inhalation sedation (Rosen 1983) and e) Safe.

Although hypnosis is known to aid with cases of gag reflex, the material that is currently accessible is only case reports. Hypnosis may have the potential to be a helpful, affordable, and secure tool for performing dental treatment in patients with severe gag reflexes, but more research is required in this area. In a similar vein, hypnosis should be researched as a potential method for improving motivation to maintain proper dental hygiene, which would help to ward off oral illnesses. We further add that dental hypnosis can serve as a best and a simple psychosomatic treatment and a preventive tool as well to counter wide spectrum of oral health issues.

Conclusion

With ever expanding research in the field of psychosomatic medicine, the overlooked importance of dental hypnosis is required to be explored further because of its cost effectiveness and preventive approach along with its potential to resolve the psychological issue of the disease, which can be the root cause of all the disorders as discussed in earlier studies.

Recommendations and their benefits

Regarding the following clinical difficulties, the diagnostic method led by psychosomatic approach will show its clinical utility in: a) subtyping oral diseases, b) discovering sub-threshold or undiagnosed syndromes, c) assessing the burden of psychosomatic syndromes or diseases, and d) predicting treatment outcomes and identifying risk factors. Therefore, this approach may aid clinicians in identifying clinical disorders that underlie symptom presentation throughout the assessment process, which has significant therapeutic and prognostic implications.

At policy level, there is a need to introduce, at least, basic concepts related to hypnosis in the curriculum of Bachelor of Dental Surgery or at Master level so that dental students can be well equipped by themselves to induce hypnosis. This should be considered by Dental Council of India. Moreover, self-hypnosis should be practiced by dental students for few

months, so that they can cultivate the various benefits which will further substantially help them to polish their soft-skills, interpersonal, intrapersonal and non-verbal communication, chair-side manners and clinical decision-making skills. Furthermore, the above proposed implementation, directly and indirectly will play its role in accomplishing several objectives related to National Mental Health Program as well, as it will: 1) implement cost-effective preventive and positive health promotion method to counter the rising burden of mental diseases through dental practitioners, 2) encourage the application of mental health knowledge in dental healthcare and in social development, 3) promote community participation in the mental health service development, 4) integrate mental health services with dental health services, 5) help to understand dental students the psychosomatic nature of diseases and how to address them, 6) stimulate efforts towards self-help in the community, 7) lead to early detection and treatment of patients if further linked with tele-mental health services, and 8) ensure that everyone has access to minimal mental healthcare in the near future, especially the most vulnerable and poor segments of society. The huge treatment gap is mostly due to a lack of understanding about the signs of mental illness, stigma and myths associated with it, as well as ignorance about the treatments that are available and the possible advantages of getting therapy, which can be addressed by proposed novel approach in this paper.

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