

**Årskursus 2008**  
**Temasession: Odontofobi**

# **Dental phobia treatment within the Swedish Dental Insurance System**

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Göteborg University, Sweden**

# **Today's subjects:**

- **Dental phobia treatment within the Swedish Dental Insurance System**
- **The Dental Fears and Research and Treatment Clinic in Göteborg**
- **Treatment results**
- **Patient case**

# **Dental phobia treatment within the Swedish Dental Insurance System**

**The Swedish government decided to establish a Swedish national health insurance support for the treatment of extreme dental fear among adults**

**Dental phobia treatment within the Dental Insurance System started in 1999**

# **Dental phobia treatment within the scope of the Swedish Dental Insurance System is possible if the patient:**

**...has avoided dental care during several years in spite of significant need for dental care**

**... suffers from severe dental fear, according to assessement made by both dentist and psychologist (or psychiatrist, psychotherapist)**

# **Treatment methods accepted:**

- **Relaxation including biofeedback**
- **Hypnosis**
- **Behavioural / cognitive therapy**
- **Conversational therapy**
- **Nitrous oxide sedation**
- **Pharmacological treatment to reduce anxiety**
- **General anesthesia only in exceptional cases (acute problems)**

# **The National Swedish Board of Health and Welfare**

## **Recommendations to the County Councils handling of the Swedish insurance system for dental phobia**

- **The aim of the treatment should be to cure the phobia**
- **The treatment should be carried out by dentists/dental hygienists with documented knowledge of patients with extreme dental fear**
- **The treatment should be made in close co-operation with psychologist, psychiatrist or psychotherapist**
- **A treatment plan (accepted by the patient) including a plan for the phobia treatment should be established and sent to the County Councils Board for Oral Health for approval**

## **Recommendations for the County Councils handling...**

- **A maximum of eight hours phobia treatment is accepted**
- **The National Health Insurance Charge System includes not only the phobia treatment but also the dental care provided during the phobia treatment**
- **Acute dental treatments like extractions and endodontic treatments could be made under general anaesthesia before or during phobia treatment within the insurance system**
- **The patient pays 80-300 SEK per treatment for the phobia treatment as for medical care with a maximum of 900 SEK within the National Health Insurance System**

**Teams working with dental phobia treatment are now present in most Swedish Counties**

**Regulations differs between Counties about what's included in the phobia treatment**

**The County of Västra Götaland:**

**Included in treatment plan:**

- **2 examination/interview visits**
- **a maximum of 8 phobia treatment visits**
- **acute dental care to make phobia treatment possible**

# **THE DENTAL FEARS RESEARCH AND TREATMENT CLINIC (DFRTC)**

**Since 1975 a co-operation between  
the Göteborg University  
(Dental and Psychological Institutes) and  
the Public Dental Service, City of Göteborg**

**Head since start Prof. Ulf Berggren**

**A specialist unit associated with  
the Clinic of Oral medicine**

# **THE DENTAL FEARS RESEARCH AND TREATMENT CLINIC (DFRTC)**

- Has been used as a model for the Swedish national health insurance support for the treatment of extreme dental fear among adults**
- Has trained special dental fear teams in most Swedish counties after that**

# **THE DFRTC**

**Treats            about 300 new adult patients per year**

**Staff :**

- 4 dentists**
- 2 psychologists**
- 4 dental assistants**

**Uses full range of psychological and pharmacological methods for fear and dental treatment**

**Refers all patients when possible to general practitioners**



**First visit=  
Examination 1:**

**Interview dentist**

# Visit 1

- **Self-administred anamnestic questionnaire (touch screen)**
- **Self-administred psychometric questionnaires. DAS, DFS, GFS, HAD... (touch screen)**
- **Interview by dentist**

# **Rationals for the dentist interview**

**Aims: Collect and check information**

**Create a treatment relation**

**Clarify treatment setting and limitations**

**1:st visit: Interview dentist**



**2:nd visit: Interview psychologist**

**Examination**



# **Visit 2: Psychological Interview**

## **Objectives:**

- **Establish a good therapeutic alliance**
- **Investigate and fortify motivation for therapy**
- **Learn about factors that might aggravate or facilitate a good treatment outcome**
- **Investigate expectations**
- **Investigate other psychiatric disorders**

# Examination

**1:st visit: Interview dentist**



**2:nd visit: Interview psychologist**



**3:rd visit: Radiographic examination**



# Visit 3

- **Radiographic examination (Clinic of Oral Radiology)**
- **Consultation dentist and psychologist  
(preliminary evaluation and phobia treatment plan)**

# Examination

**1:st visit: Interview dentist**



**2:nd visit: Interview psychologist**



**3:rd visit: Radiographic examination**



**4:th visit: Adapted oral examination + therapy planning**



# Visit 4

- **Adapted oral examination**
- **Tentative treatment plan  
(incl. calculated costs and medical insurance report)**

## Examination

1:st visit: Interview dentist

2:nd visit: Interview psychologist

3:rd visit: Radiographic examination

4:th visit: Adapted oral examination + therapy planning

## Treatment

**Therapy dentist**  
Acute treatment, Deep sedation...

**Therapy psychologist**



# CHOICE OF THERAPY

influenced by....

- Oral status
- Psychological status
- Patient's preferences

# **Psychological treatment of dental fear at DFRTC**

- **About 60 % of patients at DFRTC enter dental fear treatment**
- **Theoretical base: Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT)**
- **Treatment manual**
- **Broad-based package of interventions**
- **Adapted to individual needs**
  
- **Delivered by psychologists with CBT competence, in collaboration with dental care teams**

# **Psychological treatment: design and delivery**

- **5-7 individual sessions (50 minutes, double sessions when appropriate)**
- **In a dentist room**
- **Video presentations**
- **Cost: medical care rates (80 SEK per session)**
  
- **Followed by 1-3 confirmatory treatments at dentist**

# **Interventions in psychological treatment**

- **Exposure / Systematic desensitization**
- **Cognitive restructuring**
- **Relaxation**
- **Psychoeducation**
- **Self-assertiveness training (when needed)**
- **Applied tension (when needed)**

# Interventions: Exposure

- 1. Assessment of objects and situations the patient fears and avoids.**
- 2. Describe purpose and value of exposure (rational)**
- 3. Generate a hierarchy of feared objects and situations in ascending order of difficulty**
- 4. Conduct graded exposure while patient is encouraged to fully experience the situation**
- 5. Evaluation - is anxiety reaction reduced?**

# **Interventions: Systematic desensitization**

- **A form of exposure technique**
- **Based on the notion that it is difficult to be afraid and relaxed at the same time (reciproc inhibition)**

**In addition to exposure:**

- **Training in relaxation**
- **Gradual exposure while training to keep relaxation**



# **Interventions in psychological treatment**

- **Exposure / Systematic desensitization**
- **Cognitive restructuring**
- **Relaxation**
- **Psychoeducation**
- **Self-assertiveness training (when needed)**
- **Applied tension (when needed)**

# Interventions: Cognitive restructuring

- Investigate dysfunctional and irrational (catastrophic) thoughts
  - specific treatments or instruments
  - the dentist
  - own ability to master/cope
- Question and restructure these thoughts
- Behavioral experiments

# **Interventions in psychological treatment**

- **Exposure / Systematic desensitization**
- **Cognitive restructuring**
- **Relaxation**
- **Psychoeducation**
- **Self-assertiveness training (when needed)**
- **Applied tension (when needed)**

## Examination

1:st visit: Interview dentist

2:nd visit: Interview psychologist

3:rd visit: Radiographic examination

4:th visit: Adapted oral examination + therapy planning

## Treatment

Therapy dentist

Acute treatment, General anaest..

Therapy psychologist

Clinical rehearsals (adapted dental treatment)



# **CLINICAL REHEARSALS**

**(Adapted “tell-show-do” for adults)**

- **Preparatory and “running” information**
- **Increased control**
- **Gradual exposure**
- **Positive reinforcement**

**(Sometimes combined with simple relaxation training or mild sedatives)**

# **TREATMENT GOAL**

**The patient shall be able to manage conventional regular treatments with other dentists**



# FOLLOW UP - TREATMENT RESULT

## DFTRC

## General dental care

Referral

End of  
treatment

2-yr  
follow-up

N<sub>0</sub>

N<sub>0</sub>

N<sub>0</sub>

**Phobia treatment  
(N=50)**

**46**

**39**

**32**

**General anaesthesia  
(N=49)**

**34**

**26**

**15**

# **FOLLOW UP - TREATMENT RESULT**

- **Phobia treatment with psychologist better in the long run**
- **Treatment acceptance similar to ordinary patients**
- **Positive side effects**









QuickTime och en  
TIFF (okomprimerad)-dekomprimerare  
krävs för att kunna se bilden.









# **INTEGRATING PHARMACOLOGICAL AND BEHAVIORAL TREATMENTS**

- **Immediate needs/acute treatments**
- **Accumulated massive needs**
- **Categorical demands**
- **Avoid risks of relapse**
- **Support exposure for highly motivated**

# **CHOICE OF THERAPY**

## **Examples of limitations by regulations**

- I.V. sedation and general anesthesia only in hospital settings**
- Nitrous oxide sedation requires formal post-graduate education**
- Deep sedation considered unethical without trying behavioral methods**
- Hypnosis not allowed for dentists**

## Common cognitions in fearful patients

- "It's easier to avoid fear than to face things that scares you."
- "Dental procedures are always painful and pain must be avoided, no matter what"
- "It's better to suffer in silence and let the dentist get on with his job, than to take a break that will only lengthen the pain."