



Children's Perception About a Pediatric Dentist as a Superhero or Villain

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Editorial

Children have different views about pediatric dentists and different perceptions about their personalities. If you have ever talked to these children, you will find that they live in a fantasy world and have a special conception of anyone and everything. They most often analyze the dentist's dressing, his talking, gestures, and behaviors in their mind. Sometimes in the children's world, the group of dentists is considered as kind and loving people in the society, and in some cases, they are considered as hard-hearted and disgusting people. According to a study was published in the European Journal of Oral Sciences, 50% of young children looked at the dentist as a superhero, but 30% of children named the dentist as a monster and a villain. The perception of some children in this study was remarkable: different metaphors were used by children to describe dentists into the following categories: artistic, protective, and alleviative, chaotic, and unlovable, restorative, scary, scientific, and educative. Unfortunately, some parents and relatives in the presence of the child might call the dental procedure a terrible task. They create a monster from a dentist and explain the steps in such a way that it frightens the child. This would change the mentality of a child toward the dentist. Therefore, kids might go to the dentist

with more fear and anxiety. At this time, they would gain different perspectives about the dentist's character [1].

In conclusion, this study reveals the correlation between a dentist and a child can affect clinical outcomes. These relationships can be evaluated in pediatric cases with dental anxiety, dental phobia, and the dentists who are under stress. On the other hand, children's perceptions about dentists may affect their oral health and their behaviors when referring to the dental office. Moreover, these perceptions and behaviors can influence dental management and treatments (Table 1). The possible use of these metaphors by children is to build better relationships with pediatric dentists. However, the study had a few limitations such as the exclusion of parental and environmental factors but investigating these factors may have a great impact on children's dental behaviors. Moreover, these results give the idea of how children perceive dentists. Understanding a child's perception could diminish anxiety, improve dentist-child interaction, and eventually lead to improving treatment outcomes. Consequently, a child's perception of the pediatric dentist needs to be better understood and investigated [2].

Table 1:

Category	Percent of Children	Metaphor	Main Theme
Restorative	18.60%	Repairman, architect, worker	Dentists use complicated restorative materials; they clean decayed or broken teeth with their hands and machine tools.
Artistic	18.30%	Artist, sculptor, painter	Dentists are like artists because both professions increase aesthetic beauty and make people feel more beautiful.
Protective and alleviative	17.60%	Painkiller, superhero, Batsman	Dentists eliminate toothaches and rush to help in difficult times.
Scary	13.90%	Monster, tyrant, murderer	Dentists are scary because they pull teeth, the needles they use are very frightening and they don't explain treatments.
Chaotic and unlovable	13.20%	Joker, villain, wizard	Dentist's work is complicated; they use too many instruments and operations are chaotic and complex.
Scientific	9.70%	Scientist, doctor, genius	Dentist is difficult and related to medicine and human anatomy.
Educative	8.70%	Parent, teacher, psychologist	Dentists discuss oral health, how to brush and foods that harm teeth.

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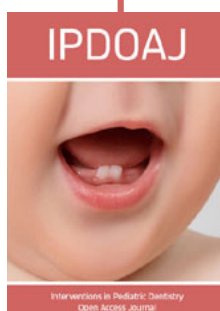
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