



Impact of Parental Age on Dental Anxiety in Pediatric Patients

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Purpose

- The objective of this study is to evaluate for possible association between parental age (≥ 35 years) and pediatric dental anxiety
- To assess whether parental support during dental visits and parenting confidence influence such relationship

Introduction

- Delayed parenthood has increased globally, potentially influencing parenting behaviors and child outcomes
- Pediatric dental anxiety can negatively impact treatment compliance
- Parental influence, including emotional support, communication and modeling, plays a key role in shaping a child's dental experience
- Older parents may demonstrate greater emotional maturity and coping strategies that could help to reduce child's anxiety
- However, relationship between parental age and pediatric dental anxiety remains unclear

Methods

- An anonymous, voluntary and confidential questionnaire of 20 items was administered to parents of pediatric dental patients aged 4-8 years old, of BronxCare Health System
- Study sample was N=360 parent-child dyads
- Data was collected on parental age, parenting confidence, parental support behaviors during dental visit and child's dental anxiety (parent-reported score)
- Linear regression model was used to analyze for possible relationships between the variables.

Results

- Most parents reported their children having low dental anxiety, with parents ≥ 35 years old reporting slightly lower anxiety scores.
- No statistically significant association between parental age and child's dental anxiety was noted.
- Most parents reported moderate to high confidence in their ability to guide and support their child during dental visit
- Parental support and parenting confidence in guiding and supporting their child during dental visit did not differ by age groups and were not independently associated with reported child's anxiety

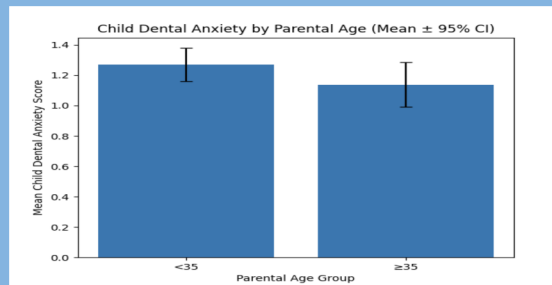


Figure 1. Mean child dental anxiety by parental age group ($\pm 95\%$ CI). No significant difference observed.

Variable	Beta (β)	p-value
Parental Age ≥ 35	-0.12	0.18
Parental Support	-0.05	0.42
Parenting Confidence	-0.03	0.55
Child Age	0.08	0.21
Prior Dental History	0.15	0.09

Figure 2. Multivariable analysis demonstrated no significant association between parental age, parental support, or parenting confidence and pediatric dental anxiety.

Discussion

- Parental age alone may not be a strong predictor of pediatric dental anxiety
- Although children of older parents demonstrated slightly parent-reported lower anxiety scores, this relationship was not statistically significant, suggesting limited clinical impact.
- A trend toward increased anxiety with prior dental experience was observed, suggesting that previous negative or invasive experiences may contribute strongly to the development of dental anxiety
- Other factors, such as child's temperament, previous dental experience and clinical environment may play an important role in the development of child's dental anxiety

Conclusion

- Parental age is not independently associated with pediatric dental anxiety
- Parental support and parenting confidence do not solely explain differences in anxiety levels
- Pediatric dental anxiety appears to be possibly strongly driven by other child-specific and experiential factors rather than parental age alone.

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