

# Training for dental professionals improves confidence in managing patients with dental anxiety in Ireland

## Précis

Reducing barriers to oral care for patients with dental anxiety in Ireland.

## Abstract

**Statement of the problem:** Dental anxiety is common and its impact can be profound. Dental professionals may lack training and confidence to support patients with dental anxiety. In 2017, an educational intervention was provided to dental care professionals designed to improve participants' management of adults and children with dental anxiety. The aim of this study was to measure the impact of the intervention on participants' confidence in managing patients with varying levels of dental anxiety.

**Methods:** Dentists and dental care professionals were invited to participate in a bespoke training day on dental anxiety management. Self-administered questionnaires were completed immediately before and immediately after the educational intervention. Respondents scored their level of confidence in managing patients who are anxious about dental treatment before and after training using a visual analogue scale. Differences were tested using Student's t-test.

**Results:** Fifty-seven participants responded (RR=73.1%). Participants were predominantly female (n=52, 91.8%) and reported seeing a median of 12, 10 and two patients with mild, moderate and severe dental anxiety, respectively, per week. Paired data were available for 40 participants regarding mildly and moderately anxious patients, and for 39 respondents for severely anxious patients. Mean confidence scores increased from pre to post training, increasing by 9.1%, 11.9% and 25.1% for management of patients with mild, moderate and severe dental anxiety, respectively ( $p < 0.01$ ).

**Conclusions:** Training was effective in improving confidence among dental professionals regarding the treatment of patients with mild, moderate and severe dental anxiety. Participants highlighted barriers to oral healthcare for patients with dental anxiety.

**Key words:** Dental anxiety, confidence, training, evaluation

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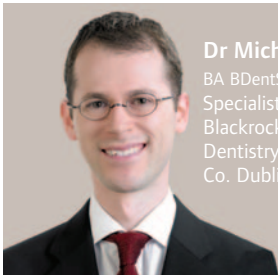
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# Case report: post-maxillary (mouth) cancer: oro-facial and dental rehabilitation using zygomatic implants to support a bar-retained obturator

This case report details the orofacial dental rehabilitation of a 46-year-old man, who had lost significant maxillary bone following a T4N2 oral squamous cell carcinoma. The cancer was treated with surgery and adjuvant chemoradiotherapy. Rehabilitation was based on the placement of four oncology zygomatic implants, which were splinted by a ring-shaped milled titanium bar. This formed the support for a removable obturator, which was retained by precision attachments. The treatment resulted in a large reported improvement in the patient's quality of life, chewing capacity, speech and appearance. The treatment also allows for long-term mouth cancer surveillance in a young man of this age, as the resection site can be easily visualised on removal of the obturator.

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