

# The Issue of Dentophobia among Young Adults during the Pandemic

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**Abstract:** *We intend to present the results of an on-going study started in pandemic concerning dentophobia as a health problem. Our aim was to correlate the level of health education with the feeling of fear of dentistry and anxiety in young population during the pandemic. We used an anonymous online questionnaire on a group of 45 subjects aged 18-55. The results of this on-going study up to this stage show that despite the pandemic, there is a concern of young adults about oral hygiene and dental issues as part of the overall health of the subjects investigated. The need to implement psycho-educational dentistry programs still exists.*

**Keywords:** *dentistry; dentophobia; psycho-education; pandemic.*

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## **Introduction**

Dental pathology can be associated with many organic disfunctions like pain, anxiety, speech disorders, digestive disorders and so on (Burlea et al., 2010, Lupu et al., 2015)

The fear of the dentist, also called dentophobia or odontophobia, remains a reality, regardless of the age of the people who develop this disorder (Saatchi et al., 2015).

Dentophobia is a type of phobia that can have particularly serious effects on the general health of affected individuals (Nikka, 2020).

Dental phobia is a pathological, excessive and irrational fear of the dentist, caused by a certain procedure or dental instrument, it can start at any time - in childhood, adolescence, adulthood or even later (Ravishankar, 2020).

Dentophobia can be sensitized, but cannot be controlled without specialist help.

People suffering from dentophobia avoid visiting the dentist's office even if they suffer from serious gum disease, minimizing suffering being part of the avoidance process, although oral health is affected (Alyami et al., 2020).

Dental phobia is based on a particularly strong fear, and specific reactions can be triggered in the absence of physical stimulus (Cebotari & Tohati, 2019).

Individuals feel more than just the inconvenience of going to the dentist because dentophobia involves severe anxiety and fear of the dental chair (MacLeavy, 2020).

For many of these people, this leads to the avoidance of routine check-ups (Loue & Lamb, 2020; Sandu, 2019), endangering their oral health.

## **Purpose**

The working hypothesis was the analysis of young adults' perception of dentophobia during the period of restrictions imposed by the pandemic and to see if the pandemic could prevent accessibility to the dentist.

## **Methodology**

This ongoing study consisted of investigating a number of 45 subjects aged between 18 and 55 years regarding dentophobia during the pandemic.

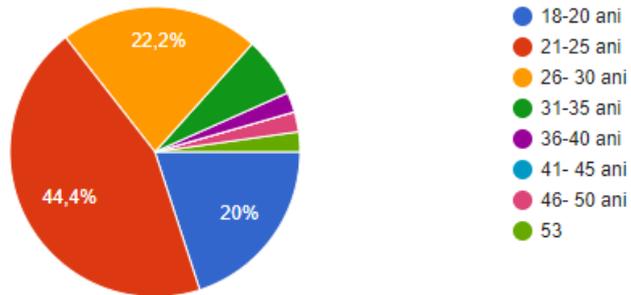
The working method used was the anonymous online questionnaire.

## Results

Of the total number of subjects participating in this study, those aged between 21 and 30 years old represented a significant percentage, 66.6%.

### Vârsta

45 de răspunsuri

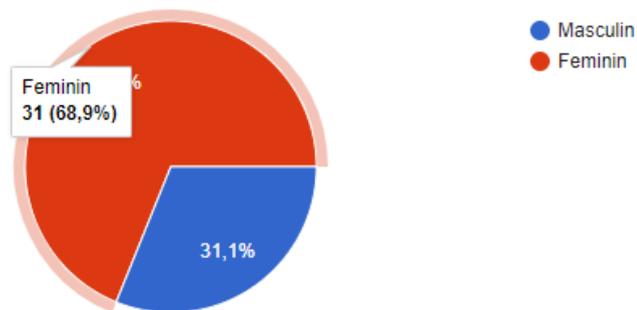


Source: authors' own contribution

The gender distribution showed that out of the total number of subjects investigated, 68,9% were female.

### Gen

45 de răspunsuri

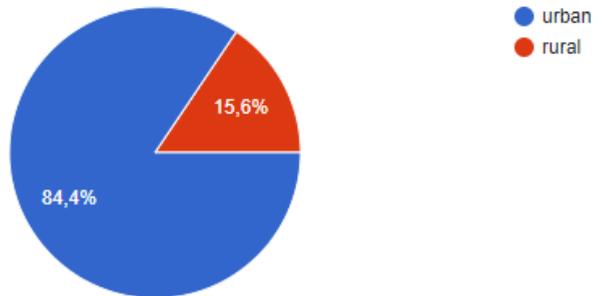


Source: authors' own contribution

Distribution of subjects by environment of origin shows that of the 45 subjects, 84,4% said they were from the urban environment

### Mediul de proveniență

45 de răspunsuri

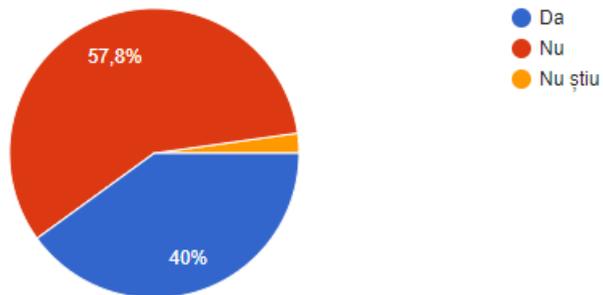


Source: authors' own contribution

Of the 45 subjects investigated, 40% said they have dental problems.

### 1. Aveți probleme dentare?

45 de răspunsuri

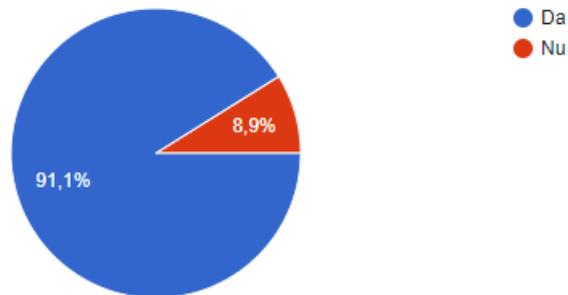


Source: authors' own contribution

A percentage of 91,1% of those investigated stated that they have been to a dental office at least once.

## 2. Ați fost vreodată la o consultație stomatologică?

45 de răspunsuri

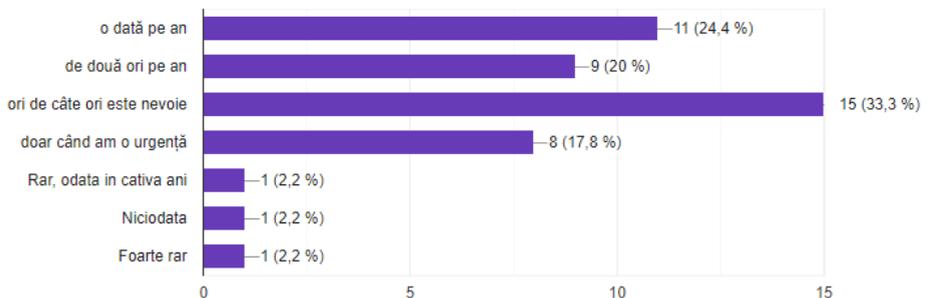


Source: authors'own contribution

Of the 45 subjects investigated, when asked how many times a year they go to the dentist's office, 33.3% stated that they go as many times as needed, 24,4% said that they go once a year, 17,8% stated that they only go when they have an emergency and 2,2% said they never go to the dentist.

## 3. De câte ori pe an mergeți la cabinetul stomatologic?

45 de răspunsuri

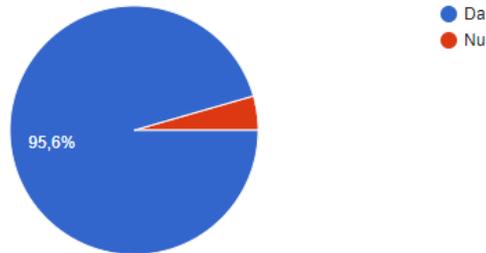


Source: authors'own contribution

At the question 'Do they consider it regular for health to consult a dentist for prevention?' 95.6% of the subjects answered affirmatively.

4. Considerați că este benefic pentru sănătate consultul periodic la medicul dentist, în scop de prevenție?

45 de răspunsuri



Source: authors'own contribution

All of the 45 participants in this study considered that oral hygiene is important for health.

5. Considerați că igiena orală este importantă pentru sănătate?

45 de răspunsuri

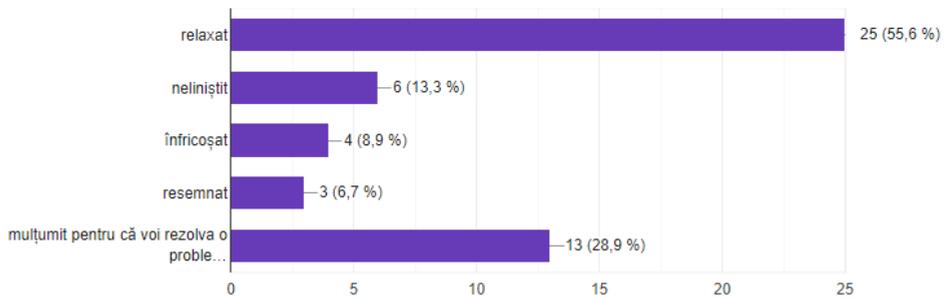


Source: authors'own contribution

Asked how would they feel if they were to go to the dentist, 55,6% of them said they would feel relaxed and 28,9% satisfied that they will solve a problem.

6. Dacă ar fi să mergeți la medicul dentist în curând, cum credeți ca v-ați simți?

45 de răspunsuri

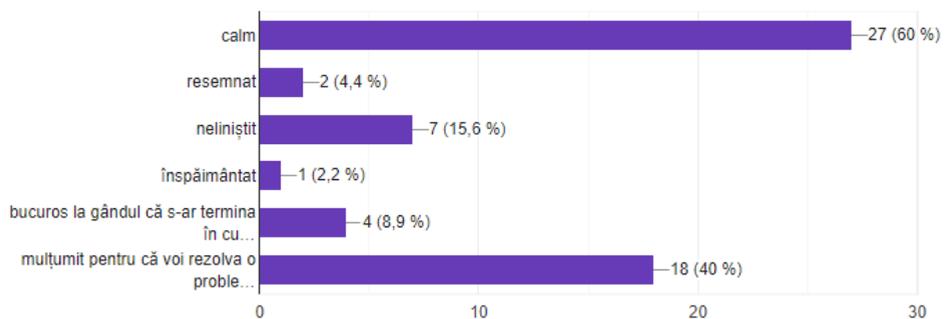


Source: authors'own contribution

Asked how do they think they would feel if they were in the waiting room before the consultation, a percentage of 60 % of the investigated subjects would feel calm and 40% of them said that they would be satisfied solving a health problem.

7. Dacă v- ați afla în sala de așteptare, înainte de consult, cum credeți ca v-ați simți?

45 de răspunsuri

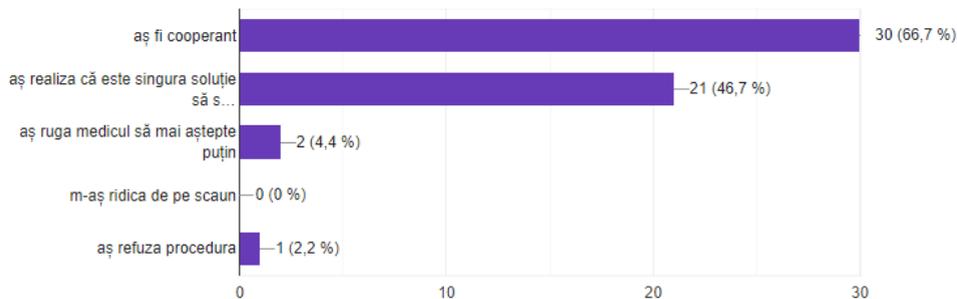


Source: authors'own contribution

At the question 'Imagine that you are in the dental chair before the local anesthesia. How do you think you would react?' 66,7% of those investigated said that would be cooperative, 46,7% they said they would realize it was the only solution for the problem.

8. Imaginați-vă ca sunteți pe scaunul stomatologic, înainte de anestezia locală. Cum credeți că ați reacționa?

45 de răspunsuri

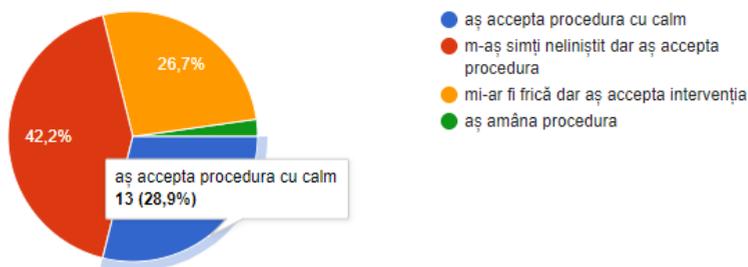


Source: authors'own contribution

Asked how would they react if they if you should have a tooth extraction, 28,9% said that they would accept the procedure calmly, 42,2% of the subjects said that they would feel uneasy but they would accept the procedure, 26,7% declared that they would be afraid but they would accept the procedure.

9. Dacă ar trebui să faceți o extracție dentară, cum ați reacționa?

45 de răspunsuri

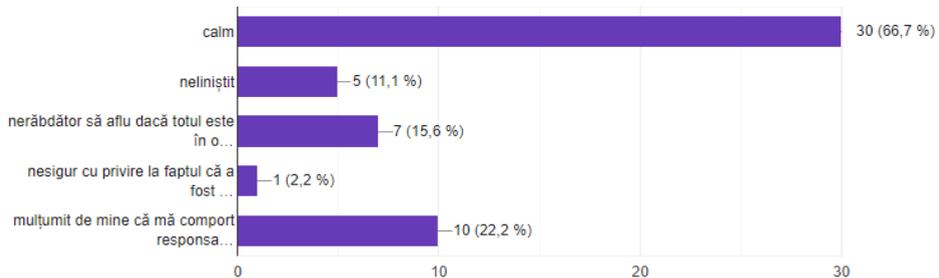


Source: authors'own contribution

The responses of the question 'If you were in the dentist's office for a routine checkup, how would you feel?' showed that 66,75% of the answers was that they would feel calmly and 22,25 of the investigated subjects said that they would feel satisfied that they behave responsibly towards themselves,

10. Dacă ați fi la cabinetul stomatologic pentru un control de rutină, cum v-ați simți?

45 de răspunsuri



Source: authors' own contribution

## Conclusions

A significant percentage of the young adults investigated are responsible for oral hygiene.

The percentage of subjects who stated that they would feel scared or would refuse the dental consultation is small.

The fact that all those investigated consider that oral hygiene is important for health shows that the issue of dentophobia would have a chance to reduce its impact at the community level so that young adults can contact the dentist in time.

The pandemic does not seem to minimize the importance of oral health for the investigated group.

Psychoeducation programs on dentophobia and oral health are still a challenge for mental health professionals.

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