

Introduction:

Government Dental College and Hospital Mumbai, manages a high patient volume, with around 1000 – 1200 patients daily, including 5-6% children who are treated in the Department of Pediatric and Preventive Dentistry. Many children who visit the department often exhibit fear and anxiety which can be problematic for clinicians thus causing a delay in treating them. To counter this issue, a Sensory Adapted Dental Environment (SADE) Centre has been established since last 1 year. The SADE room is equipped with a multisensory setup, featuring soothing sounds, optimal lighting, gentle vibrations, and pleasant aromas, all of which helps to reduce anxiety in children.

What is SADE?

SADE is based upon the term ‘Snoezelen’ which is a contraction of two Dutch words; ‘snuffles’ which means to sniff out and ‘doezelen’ which denotes to doze. The aim is to regulate sensory responses by using a multisensory adapted dental environment which produces a calming effect.

Children with fear or anxiety may exhibit fearful behaviours during a dental visit related to smell, taste, sound, touch, motion and visual aspect.

Following is the table showing how fearful children exhibit behaviours during a dental visit related to these senses and how the SADE works.

Taste Related Behaviour

- Refusal to allow gloves or paste in mouth due to unpleasant taste

Taste Adaptations

- Flavored mouth rinses and pastes
- Avoidance of strong tastes

Smell Related Behaviour

- Overreaction to odors of perfumes or soaps used by staff members or other patients
- Unpleasant smells of dental materials

Olfactory Adaptations

- Pleasant scents
- Aroma diffusers
- Avoidance of strong smells

Motion Related Behaviour

- Gripping the chair arms, reaching to hold the assistant, or attempting to get up or turn around in the chair.
- Sensitive to movement

Tactile Adaptations

- Friendly immobilization Butterfly Wrap

Noise Related Behaviour

- Fear responses to the sounds of the dental equipment.
- Aversive responses to other people talking or laughing in the dental clinic.

Auditory Adaptations

- Soothing music
- Minimize outside noises.
- Headphones

Visual Stimulus Related Behaviour

- Difficulty tolerating bright light

Visual Adaptations

- Visual Distraction Tools such as slow moving, repetitive visual color effects
- Use of head mounted LED Lamp

Contribution to research:

Professor and Head of Department of Pediatric & Preventive Dentistry presented a scientific paper on SADE at a National level in October 2023 and this was well appreciated. Many other colleges were inspired and considered to implement this concept in their college.

An article titled 'Sensory Adapted Dental Environment: Improving Dental Visits for Children with Developmental Disabilities' was published in the indexed journal Acta Scientific Dental Sciences, Volume 8, Issue 6 in June 2024.

Conclusion:

The Department of Pediatric Dentistry at GDCH Mumbai, has successfully treated **533 patients** in the SADE program, showcasing significant beneficial outcomes. This accomplishment highlights the **institute's distinctiveness** committed to exceptional patient care.