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Assessing the need for anesthesia and sedation in the general population.

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Dionne RA ; Gordon SM ; McCullagh LM ; Phero JC

Pain and Neurosensory Mechanisms Branch, National Institute of Dental Research, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Md. 20892-1258, USA.

The authors used a national telephone survey to examine the relationship between dental anxiety and the use of pain and anxiety control measures in the general population. Nearly 30 percent of respondents reported being somewhat nervous, very nervous or terrified about going to the dentist. There was a threefold difference between the reported use of anesthesia and sedation and respondents' preference for these treatment modalities. These data suggest that fear of dentistry is still prevalent and that patients who are fearful would seek oral health care more regularly if general anesthesia or conscious sedation were more readily available.

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