



**DENTAL SPA – THE FUTURE IN CONVENTIONAL DENTAL PRACTICE.**

<sup>1</sup>Harsh Rajvanshi\*, <sup>2</sup>Himanshu Thukral, <sup>3</sup>Rajratna Sonone, <sup>4</sup>Ahmad AL Nashar, <sup>5</sup>Megha Das, <sup>6</sup>Radhika Lamba

<sup>1</sup>Post Graduate Scholar, Department of Public Health, Manipal University, Manipal, Karnataka.

<sup>2</sup>MDS – Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon, New Delhi.

<sup>3</sup>MDS - Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon, Pune.

<sup>4</sup>Researcher - The Scientific Research Center of Al Andalus University for Medical Sciences, Syria.

<sup>5</sup>BDS – ITS Dental College, India.

<sup>6</sup>Tutor – Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, ITS Dental College, Greater NOIDA, India.

**\*Corresponding Author: Dr. Harsh Rajvanshi**

Post Graduate Scholar, Department of Public Health, Manipal University, Manipal, Karnataka.

Article Received on 28/01/2016

Article Revised on 15/02/2017

Article Accepted on 07/03/2017

**ABSTRACT**

Dental Spa is a concept in practice of Dentistry where the clinician employs use of techniques not associated with Dental care to relieve the anxiety and fear of the patient. There are clinics who claim to be Dental Spa by adopting several protocols taken from a Day Spa facility. This concept is becoming common in developed countries; however, it is still new in many developing nations. This paper discusses the concept, history and current scenario of Dental Spa treatment along with a brief mention about the techniques involved in the same.

**KEYWORDS:** Dental Spa, Alternative Medicine, Dental Anxiety, Dental Fear, Massages.

**INTRODUCTION**

Dental Spa or Spa Dentistry is a practice of Dentistry that involves services that are not usually associated with Dental care. To ease the fear and anxiety often associated with Dental visits, Dentists across the world have created welcoming and relaxing environments for their patients by adopting the pampering amenities and services of day Spas. These emerging Dental practices often are termed "Dental Spas" or "Dental day Spas." Facilities such as paraffin wax treatment, aromatherapy, massage therapies, music, reflexology, entertainment, complimentary beverages and snacks are some of the provisions included in a Dental Spa facility.<sup>[1]</sup>

It was noted by the American Dental Association that the consumers coined the term 'Dental Spa'. There is no defined criterion for a clinic or facility to be recognized as a Spa. Hence, it is not possible to determine how many such facilities actually exist in the world.<sup>[2]</sup> A definition was proposed by Lynn Watanabe DDS of the Dental Spa in Pacific Palisades, California, and the Day Spa Association in the year 2003 as "a facility whose Dental program is run under the strict supervision of a licensed Oral Health Care Provider, which might be a Dentist or an Independent Dental Hygienist. Services are provided that integrate both traditional and non-traditional Dental and Spa treatments (such as massage therapy, skincare and body treatments)."<sup>[3,4]</sup>

**History**

It has been widely known that the practice of Dentistry hailed from the 'Barber surgeons' who performed a few Dental procedures along with male grooming.<sup>[5]</sup> Before the science of understanding and treating a toothache came into practice, the ancient Chinese and Greek civilizations often employed techniques to relax the patient who suffered from toothaches.<sup>[3]</sup> The term 'Spa Dentistry' (synonymous to Dental Spa) was used in the 18th century to describe Dental practitioners in Bath England.<sup>[6]</sup>

1994 – London's leading newspaper – 'The Guardian' recognized the Atlanta Center for Cosmetic Dentistry as one of the first modern age Dental Spa.<sup>[7]</sup>

1996 - Lorin Berland DDS, began providing a massage therapist on staff.<sup>[8]</sup>

1999 – The New York Times reported that several Dentists in the Long Island area were using distraction techniques to relax the patients during Dental procedures. These techniques primarily included massages.<sup>[9]</sup>

2001 – Salt Lake Magazine reported that Dental Spa in Sugarhouse provided patients with complimentary services along with the Dental treatment in the form of temple massages, hand treatments, eye masks etc. to relax the patient.<sup>[10]</sup>

2002 – The Los Angeles Times reported employment of a full-time esthetician and full-time massage therapist by a prominent Dentist by the name of Lynn Watanabe, DDS in Pacific Palisades, California.<sup>[11]</sup>

## DISCUSSION

In a survey done by American Dental Association (ADA) in 2003 reported that more than 50% of the 427 practicing Dentists offered some sort of Spa or office amenity. In another survey in 2005, it was reported that 5% of the 152,000 members of the ADA had officially declared themselves as 'Dental Spas'.<sup>[12]</sup> In 2007, ADA reported that one in every 20 Dentists in the United States of America offers some kind of Spa service or amenities to their patients.<sup>[1]</sup> These Dental Spas are also taking playing an important role in the promotion of Medical tourism. The advertising of these packages often includes exotic experience in locations like Thailand. Several internet packages are shown to offer services in the form of Dental Spas at these locations. However, there is a concern of sidelining of Ethical concerns with such practices that are mostly profit-driven in the tourism industry.<sup>[13]</sup> In 1978, Holistic Dental Association was formed as Alternative Dentistry body focusing on the mind-body connection and the Dental patient's well being.<sup>[14]</sup> Today, Spa Dentistry is recognized by the International Medical Spa Association and the Day Spa Association. However, like Cosmetic Dentistry, the American Dental Association does not recognize it as an official branch. One of the most important components in the success of these Spas is the identification and treatment of Dental anxiety. It is one of the chief reasons why people avoid going to the Dentist.<sup>[15]</sup> The first known study on Dental fear was done in the year 1954.<sup>[16]</sup> Since the year 1960, several strides have been made in the field of Dental anxiety to relieve the stress using different types of behavioral tools and methods.<sup>[17-19]</sup> Most of which are currently used in the concept of Spa Dentistry. This is a relatively newer field in the lesser developed nations around the world. The concept is slowly catching up and gaining popularity in the light of its benefits to both the clinicians and the patients. In some South East Asian countries like India, there is a provision of undergoing training programmes under different levels to be certified in the discipline of Alternative Medicine.<sup>[20]</sup> This training includes courses like Reflexology, Yoga, Naturopathy, Acupuncture, Electro-homeopathy, Holistic medicine etc. These skills can be employed successfully in relaxing the Dental anxiety of the patients in clinical settings by a trained Dentist.

## REFERENCES

- Glick M. One-stop shopping. The Journal of the American Dental Association.138(3): 282-3.
- Growing Number of Oral Health Care Providers Offer Patient-Pampering Amenities [press release]. Am Dent Assoc October 23, 2003.
- Dental+Spa=Blackjack. American Dental Association 147th Annual Scientific Session; October 19, 2006; Las Vegas. 2003. Day Spa Association Glossary.
- Taylor JA. History of Dentistry: Lea & Febiger; 1922.
- Fawcett T. Spa Dentistry: practitioners in 18th century Bath. Dental historian: Lindsay Club newsletter. 1996; (30): 28-43.
- The Atlanta Center for Cosmetic Dentistry in Georgia is one of the first of these new Dental Spas. The Guardian. January 2003.
- Dalin J. For me, probably the first step in Spa Dentistry came in 1996 when I brought a massage therapist into the office. Dental Economics [Internet]. April 1, 2005. Available from: <http://www.rdhmag.com/login/index.html;jsessionid=3AB6D263C47AB65BEBEC053607ECD8AE2>.
- Open Wide, and How About a Massage? New York Times [Internet]. July 11, 1999. Available from: <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/07/11/nyregion/open-wide-and-how-about-a-massage.html?pagewanted=1>.
- Salt Lake Magazine. October 1, 2002.
- Los Angeles Times. August 12, 2012.
- Spa Dentistry. AGD Impact - The Academy of General Dentistry. Aug/Sep 2004.
- Saniotis A. Changing ethics in medical practice: a Thai perspective. Indian Journal of Medical Ethics. 2007;4(1):24-5.
- Holistic Dental Association 1978 [cited 2017 February 16]. Available from: <http://holisticDental.org/about-us>.
- Smith TA, Heaton LJ. Fear of Dental care: are we making any progress? The Journal of the American Dental Association. 2003; 134(8): 1101-8.
- Shoben EJ, Borland L. An empirical study of the etiology of Dental fears. Journal of Clinical Psychology. 1954.
- Kroeger RF. How to overcome fear of Dentistry: Heritage Communications; 1988.
- Kroeger RF. Managing the Apprehensive Dental Patient: A Management Guide for the Dentist and Staff for Effective Practice Building and Internal Marketing: Hermetician Pr; 1987.
- Weinstein P, Milgrom PM, Getz T. Treating fearful Dental patients. Journal of Dental practice administration: JDPA: official publication of American Academy of Dental Practice Administration, Organization of Teachers of Dental Practice Administration, American Academy of Dental Group Practice. 1987;4(4):140-7.
- Indian Board of Alternative Medicine: Government of West Bengal; 1991 [cited 2017 February 16]. Available from: <http://altmedworld.net/>.