



COMPENDIUM OF ABSTRACTS 2025

National Oral Health Research Priorities



COMPENDIUM OF ABSTRACTS 2025 NATIONAL ORAL HEALTH RESEARCH PRIORITIES

Research Projects and Publications
of Oral Health Personnel
in Malaysia

Oral Health Programme
Ministry of Health Malaysia
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Compendium of Abstracts 2025: National Oral Health Research Priorities

This compendium, curated under the National Oral Health Research Initiative (NOHRI) Executive Committee, serves as a platform for disseminating research findings and clinical experiences that contribute to the advancement of oral health knowledge, practice and policy in Malaysia. It brings together a collection of abstracts from research studies, case reports, case series, conference presentations and scientific publications that are aligned with the National Oral Health Research Priorities framework.

The compendium aims to facilitate knowledge sharing among researchers, clinicians, academicians and policymakers, while promoting evidence-informed practice, innovation and collaboration within the oral healthcare community. By showcasing current research activities and clinical observations across diverse areas of oral health, it also provides valuable insights into emerging issues, research gaps and opportunities for future investigations.

The National Oral Health Research Priorities encompass seven key research domains:

1. Oral Health Conditions (inclusive of several subdomains)
2. Public Oral Health Intervention and Empowerment
3. Access to Oral Healthcare
4. Traditional and Complementary Medicine (TCM) in Oral Healthcare
5. Oral Tissue Engineering (OTE) and Regenerative Dentistry
6. ICT Support Systems for Oral Healthcare (Information and Communication Technology)
7. Digital Technologies in Dentistry

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46. YOUNG ADULTS' EXPERIENCES OF DENTAL ANXIETY: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY QUALITATIVE STUDY OF TRIGGERS, AVOIDANCE, AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

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Dental anxiety is a clinically significant condition that shares core features with specific phobia, including anticipatory fear, autonomic arousal, and behavioral avoidance. Particularly prevalent among young adults, dental anxiety contributes to delayed treatment, deteriorating oral health, and psychological distress. Despite various intervention efforts, limited research has examined the emotional, cognitive, and contextual factors underlying dental anxiety through a multidisciplinary lens. This qualitative study explored the lived experiences and clinical insights of young adults, dentists, and mental health professionals in managing dental anxiety. Using Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis, data from focus group discussions with 18 dentists and in-depth interviews with 16 high-anxiety young adults (MDAS ≥ 19) and 4 mental health professionals (clinical psychologists and psychiatrists) were inductively analyzed with NVivo software. Ten interrelated themes emerged across five core domains: (1) psychological mechanisms including autonomic symptoms and anxiety-driven behaviors; (2) trauma-related conditioning rooted in early dental experiences; (3) cognitive-affective patterns shaped by trust, fear of the unknown, and perceived control; (4) intervention preferences emphasizing visual tools and empathic delivery; and (5) behavioral and systemic outcomes such as treatment avoidance and increased resource demands. Findings support trauma-informed, multidisciplinary care models incorporating early screening, sensory-adapted environments, and structured psychoeducation. Dental anxiety should be reframed within broader mental health frameworks to enhance psychological safety, improve engagement and reduce long-term burden.

Keywords: Dental anxiety, specific phobia, young adults, qualitative study, avoidance behavior, sensory processing sensitivity, trauma-informed care, Malaysia

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