

## Sedation in the Dental Clinic: When Is It Really Necessary?

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Despite significant advances in dentistry, dental clinics are still perceived by many patients as places of fear and anxiety. Therefore, understanding and alleviating patients' fear and anxiety toward dental treatment is essential for successful dental care. Dental fear and anxiety are influenced not only by past psychological experiences such as negative or traumatic dental experiences during childhood, vicarious learning from anxious family members or peers, and individual personality traits, but also by factors related to the dental environment itself. These include frightening portrayals of dentists in the media, and the vulnerable position of lying back in a dental chair.

Sedation in dentistry was traditionally applied mainly to pediatric patients with poor cooperation. However, in recent years its application has expanded to adult patients who experience difficulty undergoing dental treatment due to dental anxiety or fear. Among the various sedation methods, nitrous oxide-oxygen (N<sub>2</sub>O-O<sub>2</sub>) inhalation sedation, which can be relatively easily applied in the dental clinic, is widely used as an effective approach to reduce patient anxiety and tension and to improve cooperation during dental procedures. It is also useful for procedures that may cause discomfort despite not requiring local anesthesia, such as scaling.

This lecture discusses the basic principles and clinical applications of nitrous oxide-oxygen inhalation sedation. In addition, the practical use of inhalation sedation equipment in the clinical setting will be introduced. The status of oral and intramuscular sedative agents available in Korea will also be briefly reviewed in order to introduce other sedation methods that can be applied in dental practice.

Good dental treatment involves not only the technical quality of the procedure but also efforts to understand and reduce patients' anxiety and fear. Through this lecture, we aim to consider the practical application of sedation techniques that can help many patients who are afraid of dental treatment.

### Profile

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