Abstract

The aim was to study the dentist’s perspective of the treatment of dental fear patients, using a qualitative methodology. Eleven dentists from private and public dental service were selected through a strategic sampling according to sex, age, service affiliation and location of undergraduate education. Data were obtained using one semi-structured in-depth interview with each informant. The interviews were taped and verbatim transcribed. The text was analyzed using qualitative content analysis. A theme “the transforming autodidactic process of caretaking” covering the interpretative level of data content was identified. The first main category that emerged and described the process was “A continuous and changing challenge”, with the subcategories “The emotional demand” and “The financial stress”. The second main category found was “The repeated collection of experience” with the subcategories “The development of resources” and “The emotional change”. The dentists’ experience of treating dental fear patients was considered a demanding self-taught process under continuous transformation. The process involved the creation of an expanding competence and routine platform parallel to a change of connected emotions from frustration towards safety and routine although still considered a challenge.

Keywords: Attitudes, dental anxiety, dentist, emotions, experiences, qualitative research.