A Questionnaire Study on Evaluation of Reason for Delay in Orthodontic Treatment in A Patient's Point Of View- A Cross-Sectional Study

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ABSTRACT

Objective
The purpose of this cross-sectional study is to determine the reasons for the delay in orthodontic treatment from the patient’s point of view.

Materials and methods
Thirty patients undergoing fixed orthodontic treatment participated in this cross-sectional study. A pre-structured questionnaire was divided into two parts (Part A consists of demographic details while Part B consists of treatment-related questions) is sent through email and the patient was asked to fill out the form online. The final data were expressed in percentages.

Result
About half of the patients faced delays in treatment. From the patient’s point of view, 36.7% of patients responded that the doctors are the cause for delay in treatment whereas 40% of patients opposed the view. 53.3% of patients followed the appointment 46.7% were satisfied with their schedule 30% were not satisfied with the appointment dates and 26.7% didn’t follow the schedule. More than 80% of patients are aware that not following the appointment dates will influence their treatment plan. The discomfort felt during or after treatment prevents 30% of the patient from continuing their treatment. Post-procedural instructions are followed by most of the patients - 80.3%.

Conclusion
Many reasons contribute to the delay in orthodontic treatment, but it all plays a minor role. Patient’s responsibility for their treatment schedule and cooperation with the doctor plays a vital role. If the patient is convenient with the appointment schedule and satisfied with the treatment plan and procedure, it becomes easier to follow the plan and overcome the delay in treatment.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Improving dental and facial expression has always been the major goal of orthodontic treatment. Patients are more concerned about their aesthetic correction. Orthodontic treatment involves regulating the growth pattern, correction of malocclusion, and aesthetic correction. The duration of orthodontic treatment depends on the treatment plan but it is influenced by many additional factors. The delay in orthodontic treatment has been one of the common queries among orthodontic patients. Especially younger individuals expect their treatment to be completed soon(1). This delay in treatment got its hike during the COVID-19 pandemic. This
article aims to determine the reason for the delay in orthodontic treatment under normal circumstances from a patient’s point of view.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This investigation was done with the patients undergoing orthodontic treatment in the postgraduate dental hospital. Informed consent was obtained from study participants. Data was collected from 30 patients in different stages of fixed orthodontic treatment. Data was collected with the help of pre structured questionnaire in English language. The patient was asked to fill out the Google forms online sent to them through Email.

The questionnaire consisted of 20 questions in two parts. Part A (1-4) includes demographic data in descriptive type. Part B (5-20) includes multiple-choice questions regarding the delay in orthodontic treatment. The patient was asked to fill out the forms in their opinion without any external influence.

Part A (1-4) – Demographic data

This included personal details such as the Name of the Patient, age, gender, and email ID.

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<th>NOS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>47</td>
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| GENDER ANALYSIS:-- | |
|---------------------||
| GENDER              | NOS | PERCENTAGE |
| Male                | 19  | 63.3%      |
| Female              | 11  | 36.7%      |
| Transgender         | 0   | 0%         |

Part B (5-20) – multiple choice questions regarding delay in orthodontic treatment

1. Is the treatment got completed within scheduled time period

30 responses
2. Do you think the reason for delay in treatment is doctor

- Yes: 36.7%
- No: 40%
- Maybe: 23.3%

3. Do you think the patient can be the reason for delay of treatment

- Yes: 36.7%
- No: 23.3%
- Maybe: 40%

4. Did you follow appointment dates as scheduled by your doctor

- Yes: 53.3%
- No: 29%
- Maybe: 20.7%
5. Did your doctor gave you appropriate treatment at planned appointment date
30 responses

- Yes: 56.7%
- No: 30%
- Maybe: 13.3%

6. Are you satisfied with the given appointment schedule
30 responses

- Yes: 46.7%
- No: 23.3%
- Maybe: 30%

7. Did you follow the post procedural instructions given by Doctor
30 responses

- Yes: 83.3%
- No: 10%
- Maybe: 7%
8. Did you know that, not following the appointment dates will influence the treatment plan

30 responses

- Yes: 86.7%
- No: 13.3%
- Maybe: Unknown

9. The discomfort you feel during and after treatment is resisting you from coming to next appointments

30 responses

- Yes: 60%
- No: 30%
- Maybe: 10%

10. Do you face any financial crisis on receiving treatment

29 responses

- Yes: 60.2%
- No: 39.8%
- Maybe: Unknown
11. Is Transportation to hospital convenient
30 responses

Yes: 70%
No: 16.7%
Maybe: 13.3%

12. Is your communication with your doctor is good?
30 responses

Yes: 83.3%
No: 10%
Maybe: 6.7%

13. Do you think the progress of the treatment is appreciable
30 responses

Yes: 80%
No: 13.3%
Maybe: 6.7%
Results
From the collected data, it is obvious that 60% of patients faced delay in orthodontic treatment, and 20% of patients received their treatment without delay. Further questions investigated on reasons behind the above problem.
From the patient’s point of view, 36.7% of patients responded that the doctors are the cause for delay in treatment and 23.3% of patients pointed themselves as the primary reason. 40% of patients opposed the view
Discussion
An orthodontic treatment plan is influenced by the patient’s characteristics and clinical decisions. Doctors decide the treatment plan based on diagnosis and predict the treatment duration. It includes both Patient and Doctor cooperation. Delay in orthodontic treatment is influenced by many factors. To control the treatment delay, estimating the treatment goals is essential. It is recommended to ask patients about their expectations(6).

The discomfort felt during or after treatment prevents 30% of the patient from continuing their treatment. Studies show that orthodontists underestimate the amount of pain undergone by patients during and after treatment (7). Younger patients expect their treatment to be completed faster. Most of the patients lose interest in the delay in treatment. Reminders through telephone improved the appointment failure in patients (4).

Missed appointments, loose brackets and bands, and poor oral hygiene are all patient cooperation factors that contribute significantly to delays in treatment (8). Transportation to hospitals and the financial crisis hasn’t been a big issue. Recent studies regarding delays in orthodontic treatment due to the COVID-19 pandemic, transportation, change in location, and restrictions found to be the bigger problem. They faced many orthodontic emergencies. It had a great impact on the treatment plan(2,3).

The drawbacks of this study include, They are made to limit their answers within the given questionnaire. Patients were not given a chance to give descriptive answers. It fails to address the doctor’s view on delayed treatment which may strongly influence the treatment plan.

III. CONCLUSION
Many reasons contribute to the delay in orthodontic treatment, but it all plays a minor role. Patient’s responsibility for their treatment schedule and cooperation with the doctor plays a vital role. It is obvious that the patient is satisfied with the treatment and appreciates good treatment progress. Examination of the progress of treatment should be documented at every visit. Motivating patients regarding treatment outcomes is important. Good communication between doctor and patient rectifies the inconveniences. Treatment-related decisions must be shared with patients. The primary reason can either be the Doctor or the Patient, but scheduling comfortable appointment dates, times and patients following it is important.

Despite all the efforts made by orthodontists and patients, absolute control of orthodontic treatment time is impossible. If the patient is convenient with the appointment schedule, and satisfied with the treatment plan and procedure, it becomes easier to follow the plan and overcome the delay in treatment.

REFERENCES


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