

Quit for a better smile: A case report on successful smoking cessation through motivational interviewing in dental practice

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Smoking remains a major risk factor for oral diseases and treatment failure, particularly in dental implant therapy. Dental settings offer a unique opportunity for targeted behavioural interventions, with dental professionals serving as frontline agents of tobacco control. **Aim:** To present a successful case of smoking cessation using motivational interviewing in a dental setting, highlighting its impact on treatment outcomes and quality of life. **Materials and Methods:** A 39-year-old male with a 26-year smoking history and low nicotine dependency (Fagerström score = 1) was referred to a smoking cessation program by a prosthodontist to improve implant prognosis. The patient was managed through four structured counselling sessions grounded in motivational interviewing principles: partnership, empathy, evocation, and respect for autonomy. Oral hygiene education, dietary counselling, and financial cost awareness were included to support behavioural change. Progress was monitored using carbon monoxide- (CO) breath analysis, Fagerström scores, and self-reported behaviour. **Results:** The patient successfully quit smoking, confirmed by a final Fagerström score of 0 and 0 ppm CO level. Motivated by the fear of implant failure and financial burden, the patient remained abstinent throughout dental implant surgery and reported improved general health, taste perception, self-confidence, and aesthetics. Full oral rehabilitation was completed without complication. **Conclusion:** This case illustrates the effectiveness of brief, patient-centred smoking cessation interventions in dental practice. Integrating behavioural counselling into routine dental care supports both oral health outcomes and broader public health objectives. Dental professionals should be empowered and trained to contribute meaningfully to tobacco cessation efforts, especially in multidisciplinary treatment contexts.

Keywords: Smoking Cessation, Motivational Interviewing, Dental Public Health, Tobacco Control, Oral Health Promotion