The effect of orientation passages on patient stress prior to dentistry.

Mead, Philip G.

AB 18 clinic patients underwent 2 dental operations, 1 normal and 1 preceded by orientation passages which emphasized either the disturbing or beneficial aspects of the procedure. Physiological and subjective measures of stress were recorded, and all Ss completed the Denial (Dn) scale of the MMPI. Results demonstrate that (a) Ss showed marked elevations in stress prior to treatment when read a passage concerning disturbing aspects of dentistry, but indicated significantly less stress following a passage that pointed out the beneficial aspects, and (b) Ss who scored high on the Dn scale of the MMPI indicated less overall stress while anticipating treatment than those scoring low. Findings are discussed in relationship to studies of vicarious stress and to stress research as a whole.