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The use of anxiolytic medications to supplement local anesthesia in the anxious patient.

Compend Contin Educ Dent. 2005; 26(3):183-6, 188, 190; quiz 191, 209 (ISSN: 1548-8578)

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Local anesthetic failures in dental patients can have many causes, including anatomical variations, technique, and anxiety/fear. By understanding the mechanisms responsible for failed local anesthesia, patients can be treated more comfortably. The interaction of anxiety and fear is discussed. Oral sedation dentistry is highlighted as a way to reduce anxiety/fear and the patient's perception of pain. Profound anesthesia can be accomplished more easily in relaxed patients with diminished or eliminated anxiety/fear.

PreMedline Identifier: 15813572
