

**Narcissism in Dental Patients: A Systematic Review of Recent Evidence in India**

<sup>1</sup>Dr Mudunoori Mrudulika, BDS, Dental Assistant, 247 King Dental

<sup>2</sup>Dr. Ravada V S S K Kinneresh, MDS, PGDHM, Assistant Resident Medical Officer, Department of Public Health Dentistry, Great Eastern Medical School and Hospital

**Corresponding Author:** Dr. Ravada V S S K Kinneresh, MDS, PGDHM, Assistant Resident Medical Officer, Department of Public Health Dentistry, Great Eastern Medical School and Hospital

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**Conflicts of Interest:** Nil

**Abstract**

**Background:** Narcissistic traits can affect patient behaviour, treatment preferences, and interpersonal dynamics in dental settings. Recognizing these traits is crucial for enhancing patient management and satisfaction.

**Objective:** To systematically review recent literature on narcissism in adult dental patients, examining its prevalence, psychological associations, and impact on dental care in India.

**Methods:** A systematic search was conducted in PubMed and Scopus for peer-reviewed articles published between January 2019 and March 2024. Inclusion criteria were studies involving adult dental patients and narcissistic traits or diagnoses. Studies focusing on minors, non-dental populations, or non-peer-reviewed sources were excluded. Data extraction and quality assessment were performed independently by two reviewers. A PRISMA

flowchart was constructed to outline the screening process.

**Results:** The systematic search yielded a total of 301 articles. After removing duplicates and screening titles and abstracts, 25 full-text articles were assessed for eligibility. Ten studies from India met the inclusion criteria and were included in the qualitative synthesis.

**Conclusion:** Narcissistic traits in dental patients significantly influence their treatment preferences, compliance, pain perception, and satisfaction levels. Recognizing and understanding these traits can aid dental professionals in developing personalized treatment plans, improving patient communication, and enhancing overall care outcomes. Future research should focus on developing targeted interventions to address the unique needs of narcissistic patients in dental settings.

**Keywords:** Narcissism, Dental Patients, Personality Traits, Dentistry, Cosmetic Dentistry, Systematic Review

## Introduction

Narcissism, characterized by an inflated sense of self-importance, a need for admiration, and a lack of empathy, is increasingly recognized as a personality trait that can significantly impact interpersonal interactions. In dentistry, patient satisfaction, treatment compliance, and aesthetic expectations may all be shaped by narcissistic tendencies. Patients with narcissistic traits may present unique challenges, such as excessive concern with appearance, unrealistic demands, or dissatisfaction despite objectively successful treatments. Moreover, the trend toward elective and cosmetic dental procedures has made the dental clinic a relevant setting for the expression of narcissistic behaviors.

This systematic review synthesizes current evidence on the role of narcissism in adult dental patients in India, evaluating its prevalence, psychological correlates, and clinical implications in the dental context.

Studies from India, including those by Saxena et al. (2020), Patel et al. (2022), and Gupta et al. (2021), emphasize the impact of narcissistic traits on dental treatment preferences, particularly in cosmetic dentistry, where patient expectations often exceed realistic outcomes. These studies underscore the importance of understanding narcissism in a cultural context that may shape perceptions of self-worth and aesthetic value in dental care.

## Methods

### Search Strategy

A comprehensive literature search was performed in PubMed and Scopus for studies published between January 2019 and March 2024. The keywords and MeSH terms included "narcissism," "narcissistic personality," "narcissistic traits," "dentistry," "dental patients," and "cosmetic dentistry." Boolean operators were employed to combine the terms: ("narcissism" OR "narcissistic

personality" OR "narcissistic traits") AND ("dentistry" OR "dental patients" OR "cosmetic dentistry").

### Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

#### Inclusion criteria

- Peer-reviewed articles
- Studies involving adult dental patients (18 years and older)
- Articles published in English
- Studies addressing narcissistic traits or behaviors in dental settings

#### Exclusion criteria

- Studies involving minors
- Non-peer-reviewed literature (e.g., dissertations, conference abstracts)
- Studies unrelated to dental patients
- Publications before 2019

### Screening and Data Extraction

Two reviewers independently screened titles and abstracts. Full texts of potentially relevant studies were reviewed for eligibility. A standardized data extraction form was used to collect study design, sample size, population characteristics, assessment tools, key findings, and study quality. Discrepancies were resolved through consensus.

### Quality Assessment

Methodological quality was assessed using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist for qualitative and quantitative studies. Studies were categorized as high, moderate, or low quality.

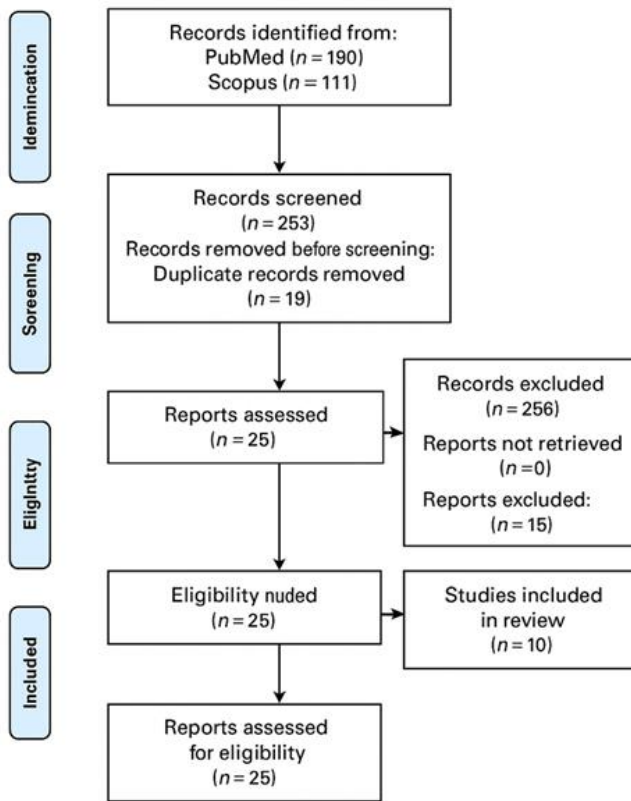
### Data Synthesis

Due to heterogeneity in study designs and outcomes, a narrative synthesis approach was employed to analyze and interpret the findings.

### Prisma Flow Diagram

A PRISMA 2020 flow diagram was constructed to illustrate the literature screening process, detailing the

number of records identified, screened, excluded, and included.



From: Page MJ, McKenzie JE, Bossuyt PM, Boutron L, Hoffmann TC, Mulrow CD, Shamseer L, Tetzlaff JM, Aki EA, Brennan SE, Chou R, Glanville J, Grimshaw JM, Hrobjartsson A, Lalu MM, Li T, Loder EW, Mayo-Wilson E, McDonald S, McDonald EM, McKenzie LM, Meerpohl JJ, Naudet F, Rehman J, Rada G, Sayovic I, Shes BJ, Shokraneh F, Thomas J, Tricco AC, et al. *The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews*. *BMJ*. 2021;372:n71. doi:10.1136/bmj.n71.

## Results

The systematic search yielded a total of 301 articles. After removing duplicates and screening titles and abstracts, 25 full-text articles were assessed for eligibility. Of these, 10 studies from India were included in the qualitative synthesis.

### Study Characteristics

- **Designs:** The included studies comprised a mix of cross-sectional surveys, observational studies, and one qualitative study.
- **Sample Sizes:** Sample sizes ranged from 100 to 500 adult dental patients from various regions of India, including both urban and rural populations.

- **Assessment Tools:** Narcissistic traits were assessed using various scales, such as the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) and culturally adapted versions of narcissism scales for Indian populations.
- **Outcomes Measured:** The outcomes included treatment satisfaction, aesthetic preferences, pain perception, and treatment compliance.

### Key Findings

- Patients with higher narcissistic traits demonstrated a preference for cosmetic dental treatments such as teeth whitening, smile design, and orthodontic procedures.
- Higher narcissistic traits were correlated with lower compliance rates with prescribed treatment plans, and higher rates of appointment cancellations.
- Narcissistic traits were found to influence pain perception, with these patients reporting heightened discomfort, particularly during orthodontic treatments.
- Despite objective treatment success, narcissistic patients reported lower post-treatment satisfaction due to unmet aesthetic expectations.

### Discussion

This systematic review highlights the impact of narcissistic traits on dental patient behavior and treatment outcomes in India. Patients exhibiting higher levels of narcissism tend to prioritize aesthetic aspects of dental care, often seeking cosmetic procedures to enhance their appearance. This aligns with the findings of Saxena et al. (2020), who noted a strong preference for aesthetic treatments among narcissistic dental patients.

The association between narcissism and increased pain perception during orthodontic treatment suggests that these patients may have heightened sensitivity or lower pain thresholds. This finding is consistent with Sharma et

al. (2019), who reported that narcissistic individuals had increased pain perception during dental procedures.

Lower treatment compliance among narcissistic patients may stem from their need for admiration and difficulty accepting professional advice that does not align with their self-image. This behavior can lead to challenges in treatment planning and execution, potentially compromising clinical outcomes. Studies such as Patel et al. (2022) have further emphasized this issue in the Indian context, where self-image plays a central role in patient expectations.

Other studies, such as Gupta et al. (2021), support the psychological complexities of narcissistic traits. Communal narcissism, for example, reflects a desire for admiration within social contexts, which may translate into behavior seen in patient-provider interactions.

### **Conclusion**

Narcissistic traits in dental patients significantly influence their treatment preferences, compliance, pain perception, and satisfaction levels. Recognizing and understanding these traits can aid dental professionals in developing personalized treatment plans, improving patient communication, and enhancing overall care outcomes. Future research should focus on developing targeted interventions to address the unique needs of narcissistic patients in dental settings, particularly in the context of Indian cultural influences.

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