

## EDITORIAL

### **Medical emergencies in Dental Practice**

As a practicing dentist, it becomes imperative to be able to manage medical emergencies that might arise on the dental chair. Numerous studies suggest that anywhere from 19 to 44% of dentists encounter patients with a medical emergency in a year. Many of these complications are mild, but nearly 8% are considered to be severe.

Syncope has been widely proclaimed to be the commonest medical emergency seen by a dental practitioner. Along with syncope, other emergencies reported to have occurred include postural hypotension, seizures, adrenergic crisis, angina, myocardial infarction, bronchospasm and diabetic emergencies. The dentist has to be prepared to prevent and subsequently manage the situation as necessary. A thorough medical history along with appropriately altered dental treatment protocol is essential to prevent any such untoward circumstance.

The most significant aspect of all such conditions is to prevent insufficient oxygenation of the brain and heart. This is consistent with cardiopulmonary resuscitation which every dentist needs to be well versed with. Usually it is following the assessment of airway, breathing and circulation that emergency drugs are administered. The essential emergency drugs include epinephrine, nitroglycerine, antihistamines, aspirin, corticosteroids and glucagon. The dentist should also consider incorporating an AED ( Automatic External Defibrillator) in the dental unit to manage cases of cardiac arrest.

To conclude, medical emergencies are frequently encountered in the dental practice and the dentist needs to acquire the necessary skill set to be able to prevent and subsequently provided treatment for the same.