

Parental perception of caries risk versus frequency of dental visits

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Introduction

- Dental caries in the pediatric population is one of the most prevalent chronic diseases of childhood in the United States
- Prevalence of dental caries in primary dentition was 14.1% from 2011-2012 and 12.2% from 2017-2020 (NHANES Survey)
- Decayed primary teeth have a prevalence of 10% in the United States and decayed permanent teeth have a prevalence of 3%
- Parents' perceptions, values, beliefs and practices regarding oral health care and dental caries have a significant impact on oral health of children

Methods

Inclusion Criteria:

- Children aged 0-6 years old who present to pediatric dental clinic for comprehensive exam or recall visit
- Languages spoken by parents: English or Spanish
- All races, ethnicities, and genders included in study
- ASA classification: I, II, III

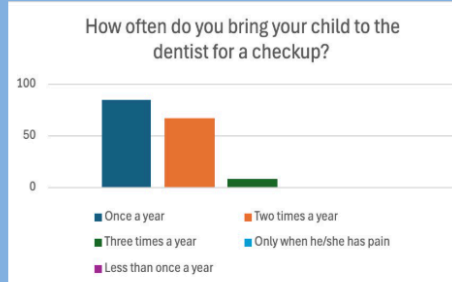
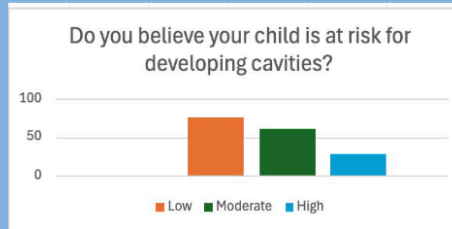
Exclusion Criteria:

- Children outside of 0-6 year old age range
- Parents who speak languages other than English and Spanish
- Not given to parents of children at treatment visits

Results

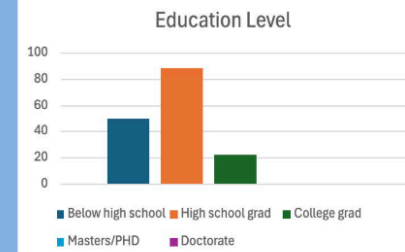
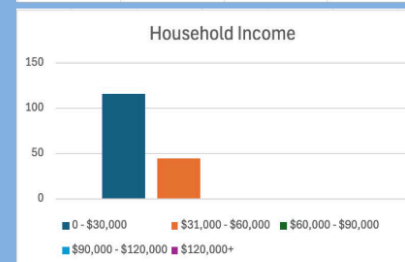
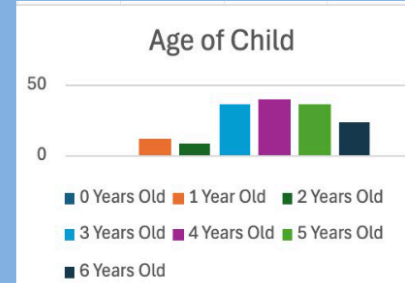
- Perceived low risk patients have higher odds of coming to the dentist 2x per year compared to high risk and moderate risk patients.
- Perceived moderate risk patients are more likely to come to the dentist 1x per year.
- High risk patients have higher odds of coming to the dentist 2x per year, though the data is inconclusive.
- Data was not calculated for 3x per year group due to small sample size
- The chi-square statistic is ~24.5 with $p < 0.05$ indicating a statistically significant relationship between perceived caries risk and visits to the dentist per year.

Data



Risk	Odds of 1x/year	Odds of 2x/year
Low	0.38	2.6
Moderate	2.5	0.4
High	0.75	1.33

Demographics



Discussion

- Most parents answering survey are high school graduates or below high school graduates- highlighting the lack of education and probable lack of health literacy
- Significant reporting bias on how parents answer questions; more likely to say they bring their children to the dentist 2x per year if this is what they perceive to be the "correct" response
- Limitations on what parents perceive as low, moderate, high risk compared to AAPD guidelines and definitions of caries risk

Conclusion

- Overall, parents who identify their child as low risk are more likely to bring their child to the dentist twice a year, versus those who identify as moderate risk are more likely to bring their child 1x per year
- Parents require more education on caries risk assessment; what defines low, moderate, high risk for caries
- Very few parents view their children as "high" risk for caries despite the fact that most patients presenting to BronxCare Pediatric Clinic are high risk for caries
- Significant discrepancy in parental views vs. actual caries risk for children in accordance with AAPD guidelines

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