

# Parental Perceptions: Sensory Adaptive Dental Environment on Children with Autism

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## Background:

- Routine dental visits may be difficult for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN)
- Sensitivities to various stimuli including loud noises, bright lights, and smells
- Sensory-adapted dental environments (SADE) is a specialized room with controlled multisensory stimuli that can incorporate touch, smell, taste, sight, and hear which can promote cooperation.
- Aim of the SADE: Enhance relaxation and avert negative or avoidance behaviors in children with autism.

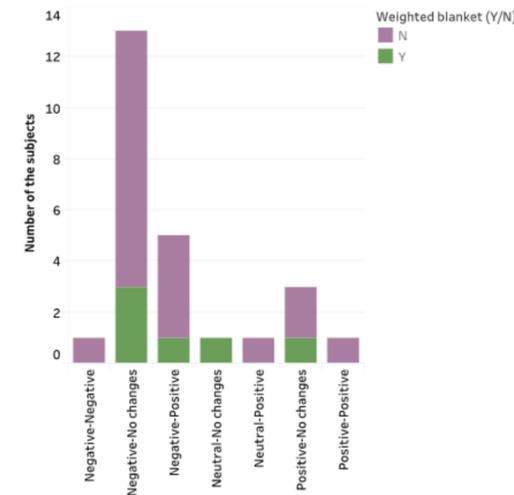
## Purpose

- To investigate parental perceptions of SADE, with the optional use of a weighted blanket and/or music, on children and youth with autism and to determine if there is a positive experience for the parent and their child

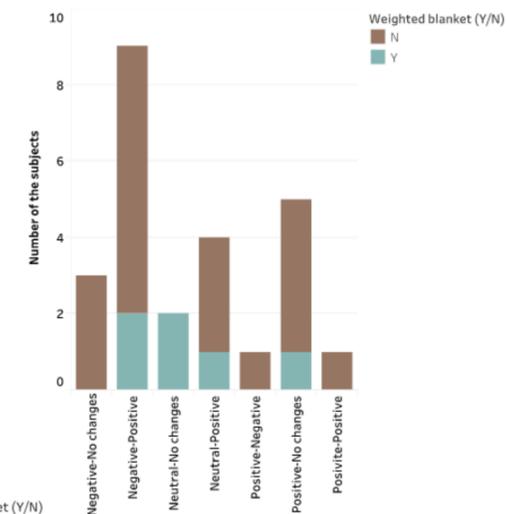
## Methods

- Twenty-five paper surveys administered in either English or Spanish for parents ages 18 or greater with children and youth with autism
- 15 questions about parental perceptions were asked pre-appointment and 15 similar questions were asked immediately post-appointment
- Participants responded on a 5-point Likert scale.
- For each appointment, the parent was offered the option of using a weighted blanket and/or music
- Descriptive statistics like Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used.

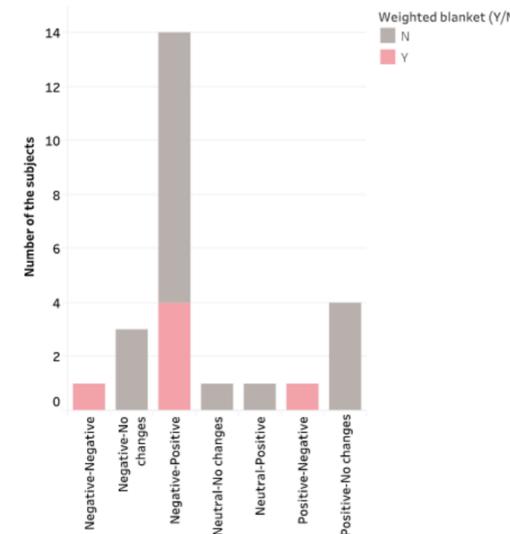
Q1



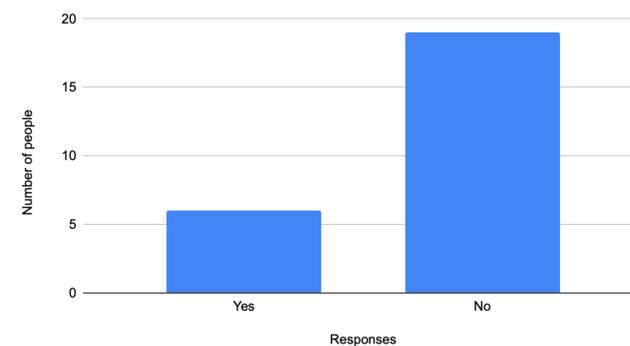
Q6



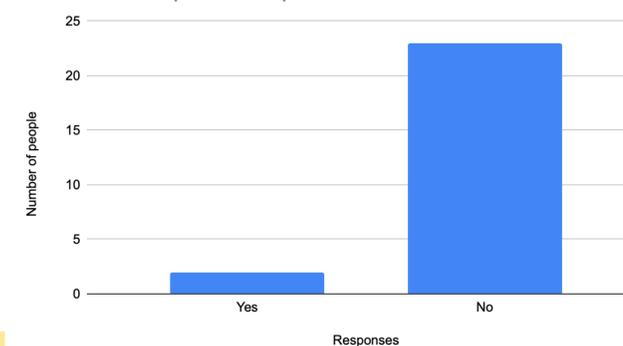
Q9



Number of People vs. Responses for Weighted Blanket Use



Number of People vs. Responses for Music Use



## Results:

- A total of 25 surveys were completed. No significant difference ( $P > .05$ ) was found between the groups that said “yes” to weighted blanket and “no” to weighted blanket amongst the pre and post survey answers.
- There was a statistically significant difference ( $P < .05$ ) between pre and post survey results of the following questions:
  - Q1: “We have to hold my child still during dental appointments”
  - Q6: “My child is happy at dental visits”
  - Q9: “Dental exams are easy for my child”
- The other 12 questions showed no statistical difference
- 6/25 people consented for weighted blanket
- 2/25 people consented for calm music

## Conclusions

- The use of a weighted blanket did not appear to have a difference among parental perceptions for pre-appointment and post-appointment survey answers.
- Parents felt there was a positive correlation of not having to hold their child still as much, their children are happier, and dental exams are easier