



Introduction

The presence of parents in the dental operatory has become widely accepted by clinicians. However, parental involvement can sometimes hinder effective behavior management, and parental anxiety may adversely impact a child's cooperation and increase their anxiety. While some practitioners advocate limiting parental roles or excluding them from treatment areas, evolving societal expectations often necessitate accommodating parental preferences. This study aims to evaluate parental preferences regarding their presence during their child's dental procedures and provide recommendations for clinical guidelines on parental involvement.

Methods

A total of 78 parents/guardians were surveyed using an iPad during their child's dental visit at the East Carolina School of Dental Medicine. However, only 75 responses were included in the data analysis, as some participants did not complete all sections of the survey correctly. Redcap was utilized to collect, store, and analyze the data.

Results

Strong Parental Preference to Stay:

The vast majority (85%) of parents prefer staying with their child during dental treatment.

Figure 1. Parental preferences for wanting to stay in the room during child's dental treatment appointment

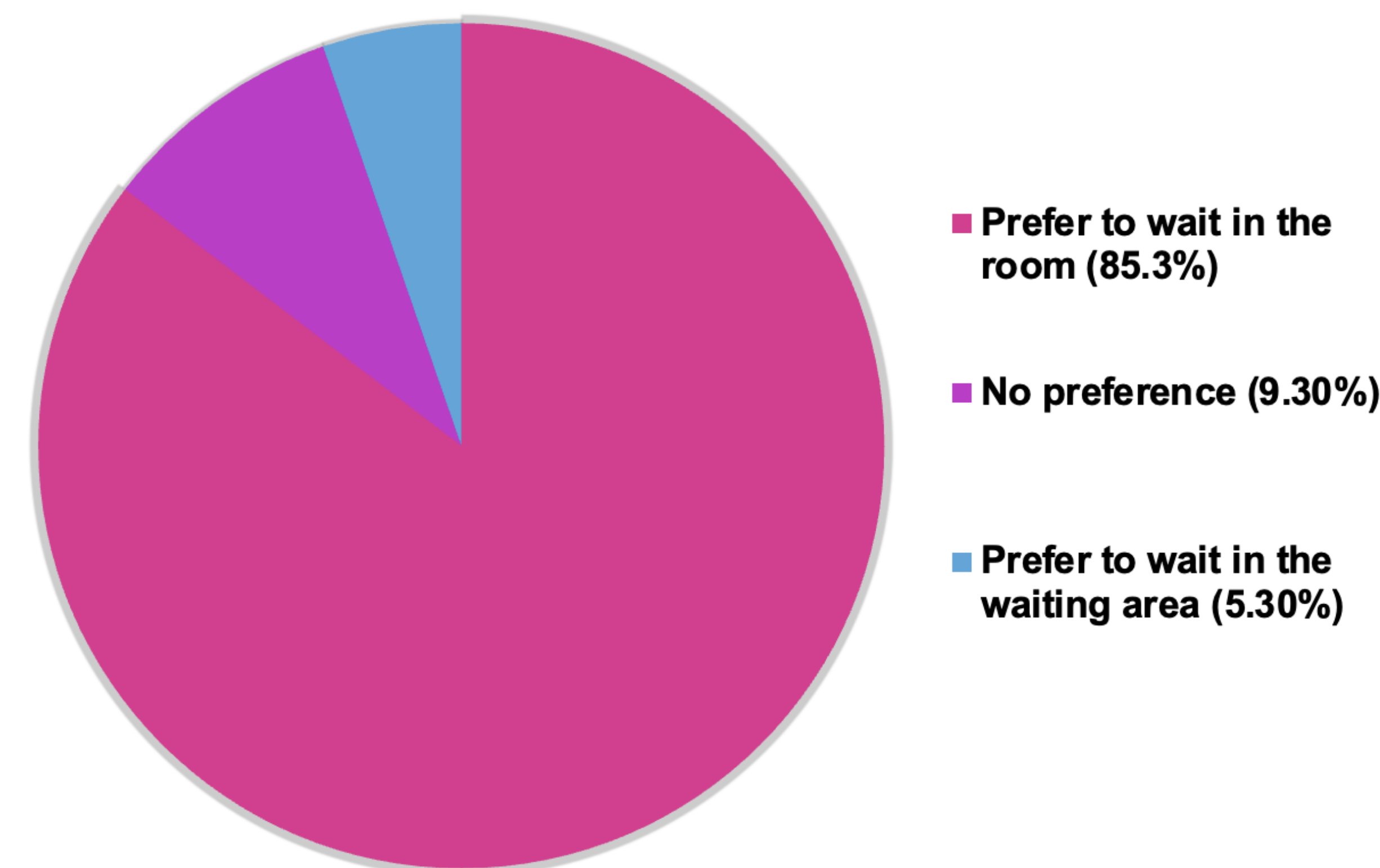


Figure 2. Reasons for wanting to stay in the room.

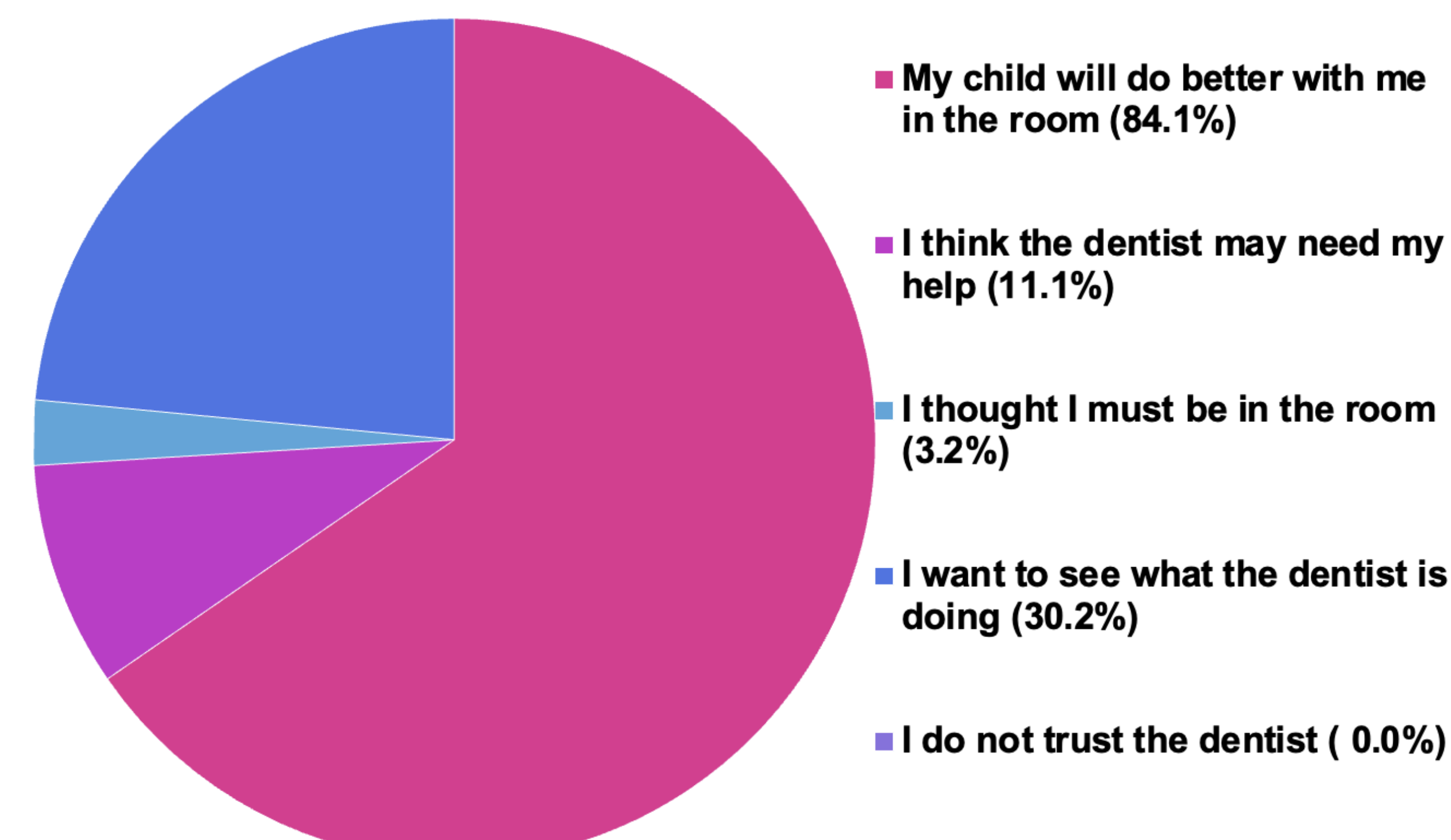
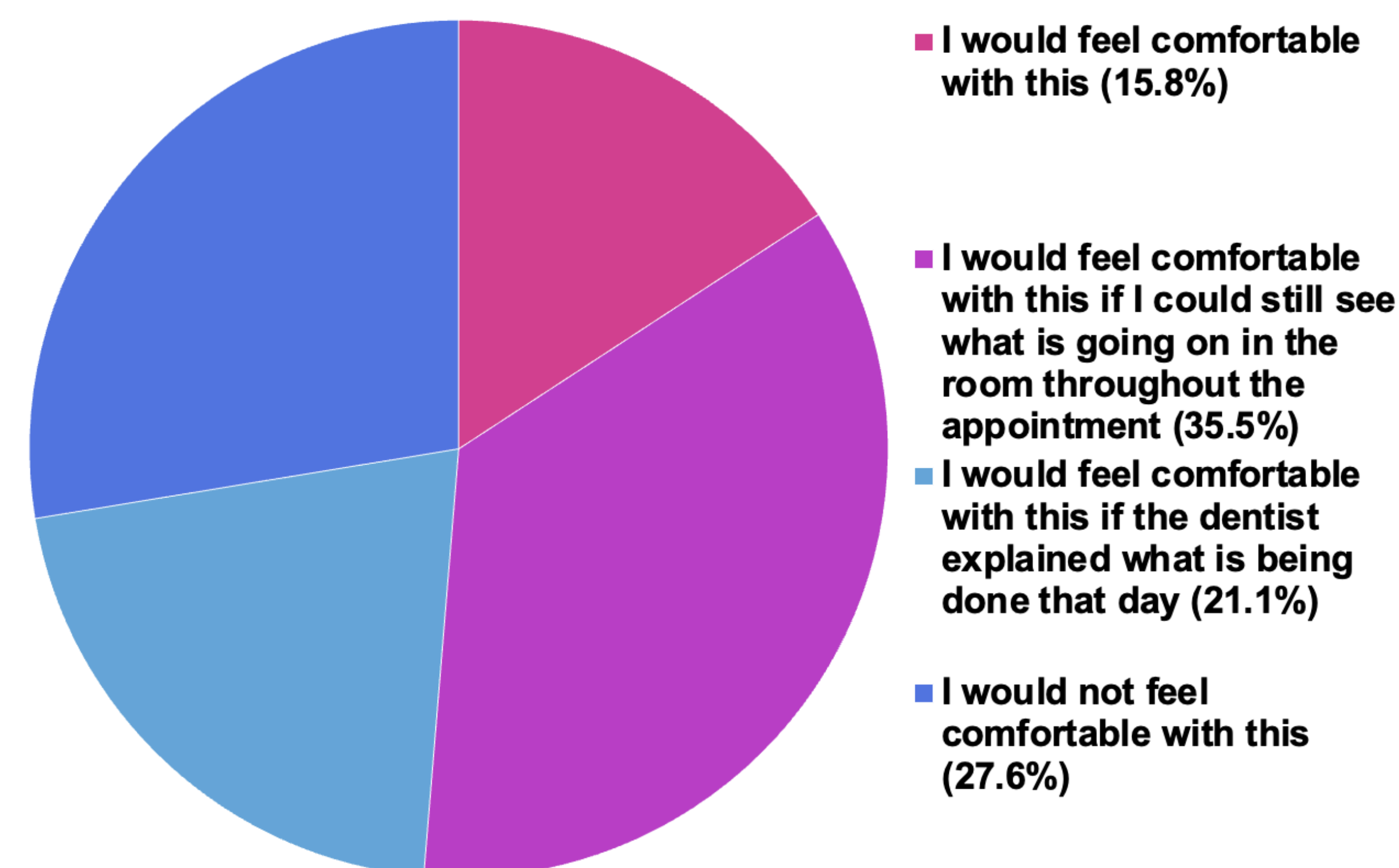


Figure 3. The parent's/guardian's comfort level with an office policy asking them to remain in the waiting area during their child's dental treatment.



First-Time vs. Returning Treatment:

Preference remains high regardless of whether it is the child's first treatment (87%) or a subsequent visit (84%).

Minimal Impact of Past Experiences:

Parents who had positive past experiences (85%) and those without positive experiences (89%) still strongly prefer staying.

Preference Based on Type of Treatment:

Preference remains high across different treatments but shows some variation:

- Local anesthesia: 83% prefer staying.
- Nitrous oxide: 89% prefer staying (highest preference).
- Sedation: 78% prefer staying (lowest preference).

Conclusions

- 1) Most parents/guardians consistently preferred to stay in the operatory during their child's dental procedure, regardless of factors such as treatment experience, appointment type, child behavior expectations, or demographic variables.
- 2) Offering clear explanations or providing visual access to the room can enhance comfort and facilitate acceptance when parents are asked to step out.

References

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