



Characteristics of Timely Recall Patients in a Pediatric Population

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Background

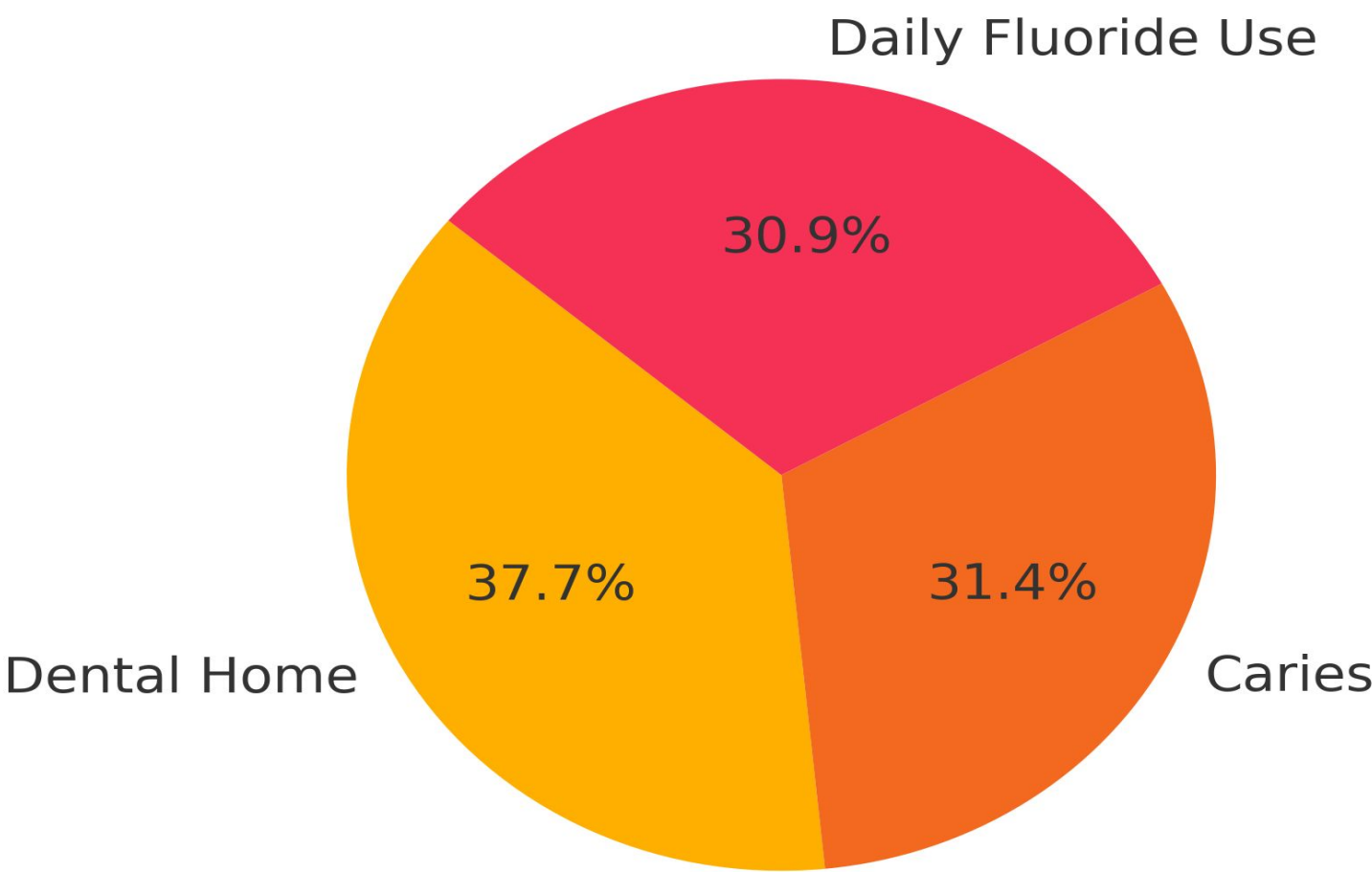
Regular dental visits are vital for children to ensure optimal health and quality of life. Preventive care including fluoride and sealant therapies, early detection of dental issues, establishing good health habits, and monitoring growth are significant points of benefit to overall health. Regular checkups also promote positive experiences, help manage behavioral concerns and fostering a healthy relationship with oral care. Parents often face social determinants that limit consistent dental visits.. Common concerns include dental anxiety, financial constraints, lack of insurance, busy schedules, and limited access to dental practitioners.

Children who regularly attend dental checkups benefit from parental involvement, positive experiences, and education. These factors lay the foundation for lifelong good preventive health habits, ensuring a proactive approach to healthcare. This research project aims to examine and identify certain characteristics that determine if a pediatric patient is likely to return for their scheduled recall visit.

Methods

This retrospective study analyzed 500 patient charts to identify characteristics associated with children returning for their recall visits within two months of the scheduled time versus those who did not. Data was collected from electronic health records, including demographic and behavioral factors; patient’s age, previous dental history, parental dental attendance, presence of siblings, and other relevant factors. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were performed to determine correlations between these characteristics and adherence to scheduled recall visits.

Top Characteristics of Patients Who Return for Timely Recall Visits



Results

In this analysis of pediatric dental recall attendance, the top three factors associated with patients who returned for their scheduled recall visits were: patients who had a dental home* (history of a dental visits prior to presenting to our clinic), a history of caries, and the use of a primary fluoride source such as fluoridated toothpaste or water. Conversely, the three characteristics most associated with missed recall visits were: absence of documented dental history, if the patient was an only child, and if the patient was in primary dentition.

Top 3 Positive and Negative Correlations with Recall Attendance



Discussion

The findings of this study highlight distinctions between patients who attend their scheduled dental recall exams and those who do not, reflecting the influence of parental priorities in their child’s oral health. Patients who showed up for recalls were more likely to have an established dental home, a history of caries, and regular exposure to fluoride—indicators of caregivers who value preventive care and prioritized their scheduled recall dental visit. These traits suggest that both parental engagement and awareness of their child’s past dental needs play critical roles in reinforcing the importance of routine follow-ups. In contrast, patients who missed their recall visits often lacked a documented dental history, were more likely to be only children, and tended to be in the primary dentition stage—factors that may reflect a lower perceived value for dental visits. These insights underscore the need for strategies to educate and support families who may not yet recognize the long-term importance of preventive dental care, especially in the early stages of a child’s development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study shows that dental recall attendance is strongly influenced by patient and family factors. A dental home, caries history, and regular fluoride use were common among those who returned, highlighting the impact of preventive care and caregiver engagement. Missed recalls were linked to limited dental history, minimal treatment, and primary dentition, suggesting a lower perceived need for follow-up. These findings underscore the importance of early education and consistent care to improve recall compliance and pediatric oral health.

References

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