

Children's Oral Health and Barriers to Seeking Care: Perspectives of Caregivers Seeking Pediatric Hospital Dental Treatment

Santé buccodentaire des enfants et obstacles dans la recherche de soins : point de vue des parents ou tuteurs légaux à la recherche de traitements dentaires pédiatriques en milieu hospitalier

SHAUNA HACHEY, JOANNE CLOVIS AND KIMBERLEY LAMARCHE

TABLE 1. Characteristics of population at risk

	Mean % (N)	SD	Range
CHILD			
Age (N = 62)	6.21	3.06	13
Gender (N = 61)			
Male	52.5 (32)		
Female	47.5 (29)		
Ethnicity			
Caucasian	75.8 (47)		
First Nations/Aboriginal	9.7 (6)		
African	4.8 (3)		
Asian	4.8 (3)		
Other	4.8 (3)		
Insurance status			
Public insurance	61.3 (38)		
Private insurance	48.4 (30)		
Dual private insurance	11.3 (7)		
No dental insurance*	1.6 (1)		
CAREGIVER			
Age (N = 55)			
20–25	12.7 (7)		
26–30	21.8 (12)		
31–35	18.2 (10)		
36–40	20.0 (11)		
41–45	12.7 (7)		
46–50	7.3 (4)		
50 or older	7.3 (4)		
Gender (N = 57)			
Female	86.0 (49)		
Male	14.0 (8)		
Immigrant status			
	7.0 (4)		
Household (N = 56)			
Two-parent	75.0 (42)		
Single parent	16.1 (9)		
Extended family	8.9 (5)		

TABLE 1. Characteristics of population at risk (cont'd)

	Mean % (N)	SD	Range
Marital status (N = 57)			
Married	43.9 (25)		
Common-law	26.3 (15)		
Single	22.8 (13)		
Divorced	7.0 (4)		
Population (N = 57)			
Rural (1,000 or less)	26.3 (15)		
1,000–29,999	21.1 (12)		
30,000–99,999	12.3 (7)		
100,000–499,999	15.8 (9)		
Unsure	24.6 (14)		
Education (N = 56)			
<High school	12.5 (7)		
High school or equivalent	28.6 (16)		
College	37.5 (21)		
Undergraduate	14.3 (8)		
Postgraduate, doctoral or post-doctoral	7.1 (4)		
Insurance status			
Private insurance	54.8 (34)		
No dental insurance	22.6 (14)		
Income assistance dental program	8.1 (5)		
Dual private insurance	6.5 (4)		
Indigenous status dental care coverage	6.5 (4)		
Military personnel dental care coverage	1.6 (1)		
Household income (N = 52)			
Less than \$25,000	32.9 (17)		
\$25,000–49,999	28.8 (15)		
\$50,000–74,999	13.4 (7)		
\$75,000–99,999	9.5 (5)		
\$100,000 or more	15.4 (8)		
Low-income households (N = 52)	53.8 (28)		

* All children eligible for the study qualified for MSI COHR.

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TABLE 2. Utilization of oral healthcare services

	Mean	SD	Range
CHILDREN (N = 62)			
Findings related to age at first dental visit			
Perceived recommended age for first visit (N = 55)	2.29	1.36	5
Age of child at first visit (N = 56)	2.69	1.29	4
			% (N)
Caregivers who perceived the appropriate age of first visit to be by age 1 (N = 55)			36.4 (20)
Children who sought dental care by age 1 (N = 56)			23.2 (13)
Children with caries/abscesses at first visit (N = 59)			44.1 (26)
Children not seeking regular preventive care (N = 59)			16.9 (10)
Findings related to oral health status of children			
Children who experienced a toothache (pain) (N = 59)			72.9 (43)
Children who missed school because of a toothache (pain) (N = 43)			23.3 (10)
Caregivers who missed work because of a child's toothache (pain) (N = 44)			36.4 (16)
CAREGIVERS (N = 62)			
Caregiver's oral health status			
Caregivers who experienced a toothache (pain) (N = 59)			86.4 (51)
Caregivers who missed time from work because of a toothache (pain) (N = 49)			36.7 (18)
Caregivers who have not sought preventive dental care in the past year (N = 57)			42.1 (24)
Person who instructed caregivers about recommended age at first visit			
Dentist			58.1 (36)
Family doctor			25.8 (16)
Dental hygienist			21.0 (13)
No one			14.5 (9)
Other			3.2 (2)
Nurse			1.6 (1)
Prenatal instructor			1.6 (1)
Person who instructed caregivers about oral hygiene homecare for their children			
Dentist			66.1 (41)
Dental hygienist			38.7 (24)
Family doctor			21.0 (13)
No one			8.1 (5)
Prenatal instructor			4.8 (3)
Nurse			1.6 (1)
Other			1.6 (1)

TABLE 2. Utilization of oral healthcare services (cont'd)

Person who instructed caregivers about cariogenic foods and drinks	
Dentist	67.7 (42)
Dental hygienist	32.3 (20)
Family doctor	25.8 (16)
No one	8.1 (5)
Prenatal instructor	4.8 (3)
Nurse	1.6 (1)
Other	1.6 (1)
Media that provided information to caregivers about oral health	
Television	56.5 (35)
None	29 (18)
Internet	25.8 (16)
Social media	19.4 (12)
Radio	11.3 (7)

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TABLE 3. Barriers to care

	% (N)
Caregivers who experienced difficulty seeking oral healthcare for their child (N = 59)	45.8 (27)
Barriers to care:	
Could not afford	17.7 (11)
Child uncooperative or too young for treatment	16.1 (10)
Could not miss work	9.7 (6)
Difficulty getting an appointment	6.5 (4)
No insurance or uncertain of insurance coverage**	4.8 (3)
Transportation problems	4.8 (3)
Nervous of dental treatment	3.2 (2)
Other	3.2 (2)
Dentist does not accept MSI*	1.6 (1)
There were other things to be taken care of	1.6 (1)
Appointments take too long	1.6 (1)
Caregivers who experienced difficulty seeking oral healthcare for themselves (N = 59)	45.8 (27)
Barriers to care:	
Could not afford	35.5 (22)
No insurance or uncertain of insurance coverage	14.5 (9)
Could not miss work	8.1 (5)
Nervous of dental treatment	8.1 (5)
Transportation problems	4.8 (3)
Difficulty getting an appointment	3.2 (2)
Don't like/trust/believe in dental professionals	3.2 (2)
Appointments take too long	1.6 (1)

* All dentists in Nova Scotia accept MSI COHP insurance.

** All children eligible for the study qualified for public insurance.

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TABLE 4. Perception of oral healthcare in Nova Scotia

	% (N)
Perception of availability of dental services in NS for children (N = 57)	
Excellent	14.0 (8)
Very good	21.1 (12)
Good	40.4 (23)
Fair	17.5 (10)
Poor	7.0 (4)
Preference of delivery for children's dental care (N = 60)	
Private dental clinic	46.7 (28)
Community-based clinic	26.7 (16)
Primary healthcare-based clinic	15.0 (9)
Children's school-based clinic	6.7 (4)
Other	5.0 (3)
Perceived caregiver's oral health status (N = 60)	
Excellent	10.0 (6)
Very good	23.3 (14)
Good	33.3 (20)
Fair	21.7 (13)
Poor	11.7 (7)
Perception of availability of dental services in NS for caregivers (N = 57)	
Excellent	17.5 (10)
Very good	33.3 (19)
Good	29.8 (17)
Fair	12.3 (7)
Poor	7.0 (4)
Perception of discrimination by dental care providers (N = 53)	
No perceived discrimination	67.7 (42)
Income level	11.3 (7)
Insurance status	4.8 (3)
Other (parenting style)	1.6 (1)
Importance of dental care/health (N = 60)	
Very important	73.3 (44)
Important	23.3 (14)
Somewhat important	1.7 (1)
Somewhat unimportant	1.7 (1)
Importance of medical care/health (N = 60)	
Very important	80.0 (48)
Important	16.7 (10)
Somewhat important	1.7 (1)
Somewhat unimportant	1.7 (1)