



Introduction

- According to WHO World Disability report, about 93 million children, ages 0-14, are estimated to have some form of disability. 892 million children ages 15 and above have some form of disability (1)
- Special needs children (SNC) can be due to intellectual, physical, social or emotional impairment (2)
- One of Healthy People 2030 objectives is to "increase the proportion of national surveys with questions that identify people with disabilities" (3)
- Previous studies have shown that the oral health conditions of SNC like dental caries or gingivitis progress at a faster rate when compared to children without special needs (4)
- Challenges in delivery of oral healthcare continues to persist despite improvements in meeting the dental needs of SNC (5)

Objectives

- To study the prevalence of dental diseases (odontalgia, gingivitis, or dental caries) in children who received special needs services in children ages 1-17.

Methods

- Data for this project was obtained from National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH).
- This is a cross-sectional study using 2021 survey cycle
- A random sample of households were selected by mail to identify households with children <18 years of age.
- 50,892 children (ages 0-17 years) whose families responded to the National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) in 2021.
- Children ages 1 and above were included in the study (including children with disabilities who received services and children with health care accommodations in household)
- Prevalence of dental problems such as dental caries, gum bleed, and/or toothaches were studied using the responses from the topical questionnaire.
- Statistical analyses were conducted to understand the relationship between independent variables (disability health status) and dependent variables

Data Analysis

Table 1: Characteristics of the study population

Race/Ethnicity	Percent
White	77%
Black	7%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%
Asian	6%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	1%
Two or More Race	9%
Hispanic	13%
Sex	
Male	52%
Female	48%
Age in Years	
group 1 (1 to <=10)	62%
group 2 (>=10)	38%

Table 2: Prevalence of Dental Caries in Children with Disabilities

Race/Ethnicity	Percentage of children with dental problems
White	9%
African American	1%
American Indian or Alaska Native alone	0%
Asian alone	1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0%
Two or More Race	1%
Hispanic	2%

	With dental problems	Without dental problems
With Special Needs	6,109	41,670
Without Special Needs	134	929

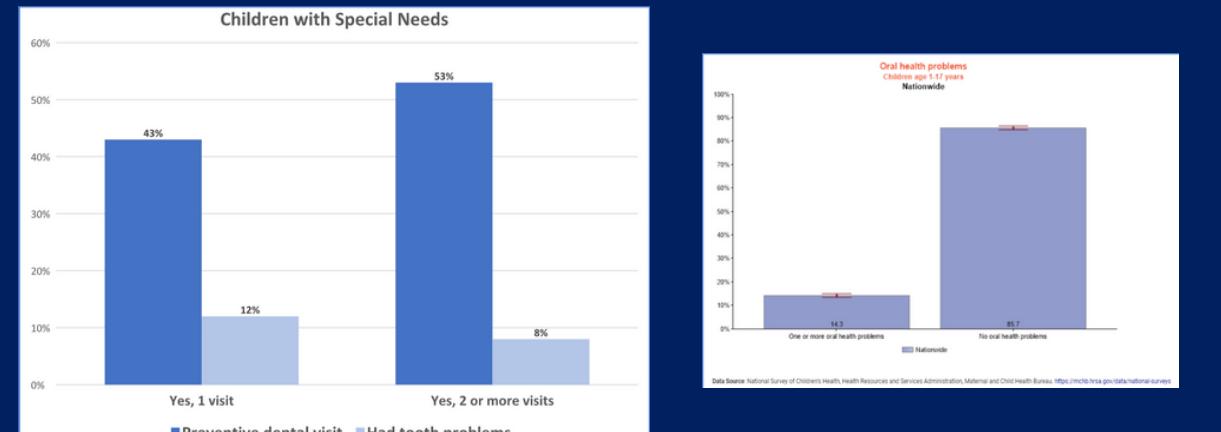


Table 3: Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum	p-value
Children with Special Needs	1.8	0.414	1	2	<.0001
Age in Years	8.2	5.259	0	17	<.0001
Cavities	1.9	0.3	1	2	<.0001
Gumbleed	2.0	0.123	1	2	<.0001
Toothaches	2.0	0.176	1	2	<.0001

Table 4:

Correlation between Dental Problems (Gum bleed, toothaches, gingivitis) and Disability Services

Variable	With Variable	N	Sample	Fisher's z	95% Confidence Limits	p Value for
Dental Problems	Special Services	47339	0.07274	0.07287	0.063772 - 0.081693	<.0001

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Conclusions

SNC (above 10 years of age) showed a slightly higher prevalence of dental problems when compared to children who are at or below 10 years of age.

SNC children who are White had a higher prevalence of dental problems followed by SNC children who are Hispanic.

SNC children are more likely to have dental problems when compared to their peers.

SNC who had one dental visit per year had one or more dental problems than SNC who received two dental visits per year.

Recommendations

- Oral health education for parents and caregivers to emphasize the importance of routine dental care every year.
- Focus on primary prevention activities
- Eating a healthy diet following the USDA guidelines
- Using fluoridated toothpaste and other fluoride products to reduce dental caries

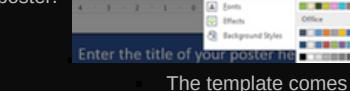
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