

## Introduction

**The purpose of this study is to assess the comfort level of pediatric residents with various dental practices such as use of fluoride varnish, prevention of dental caries, identification of dental caries, referring to dental professionals at appropriate times and current dental practices provided to patients at well-child visits**

- Although largely preventable, dental caries remains the most prevalent chronic disease in both children and adults.
- Untreated dental caries can cause pain, infections as well as cause issues with eating, speaking, playing and learning.
- Visits with pediatric providers occur earlier and more frequently and are a great opportunity for dental anticipatory guidance. Only 26% of preschool aged children will be seen by a dentist at this point.
- The preschool age group is at a high risk for having any dental caries and lack of access to dental care is one of the contributing factors for the high prevalence of ECC.<sup>3</sup>
- Only 32% of Pediatric Medical program directors stated they were satisfied with their resident's competency in oral health.<sup>4</sup> Also, Implementation of an oral health curriculum in pediatric and family medicine residencies was shown to improve both dental knowledge and practices among the residents.<sup>1</sup>

## Methods

### Study population:

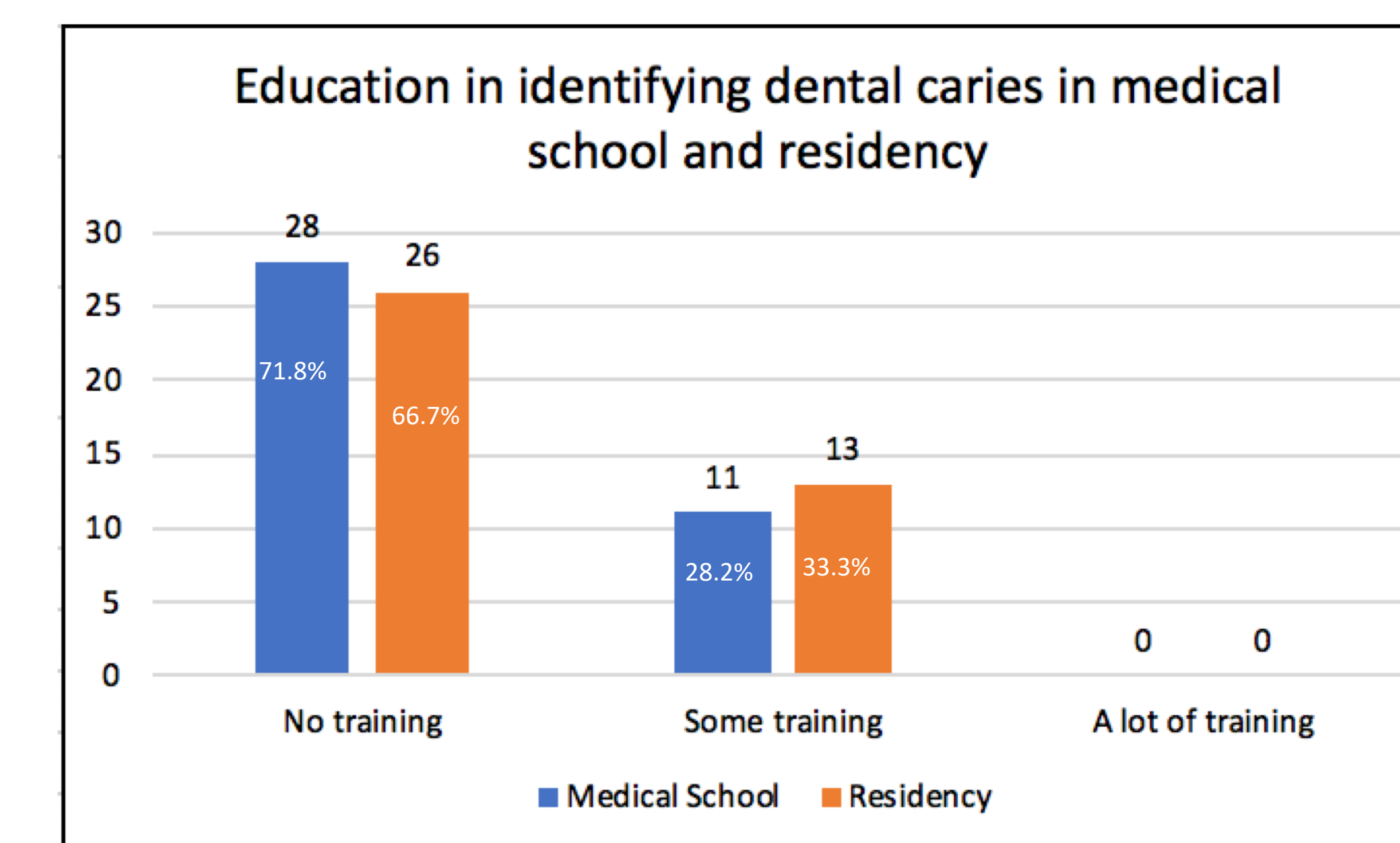
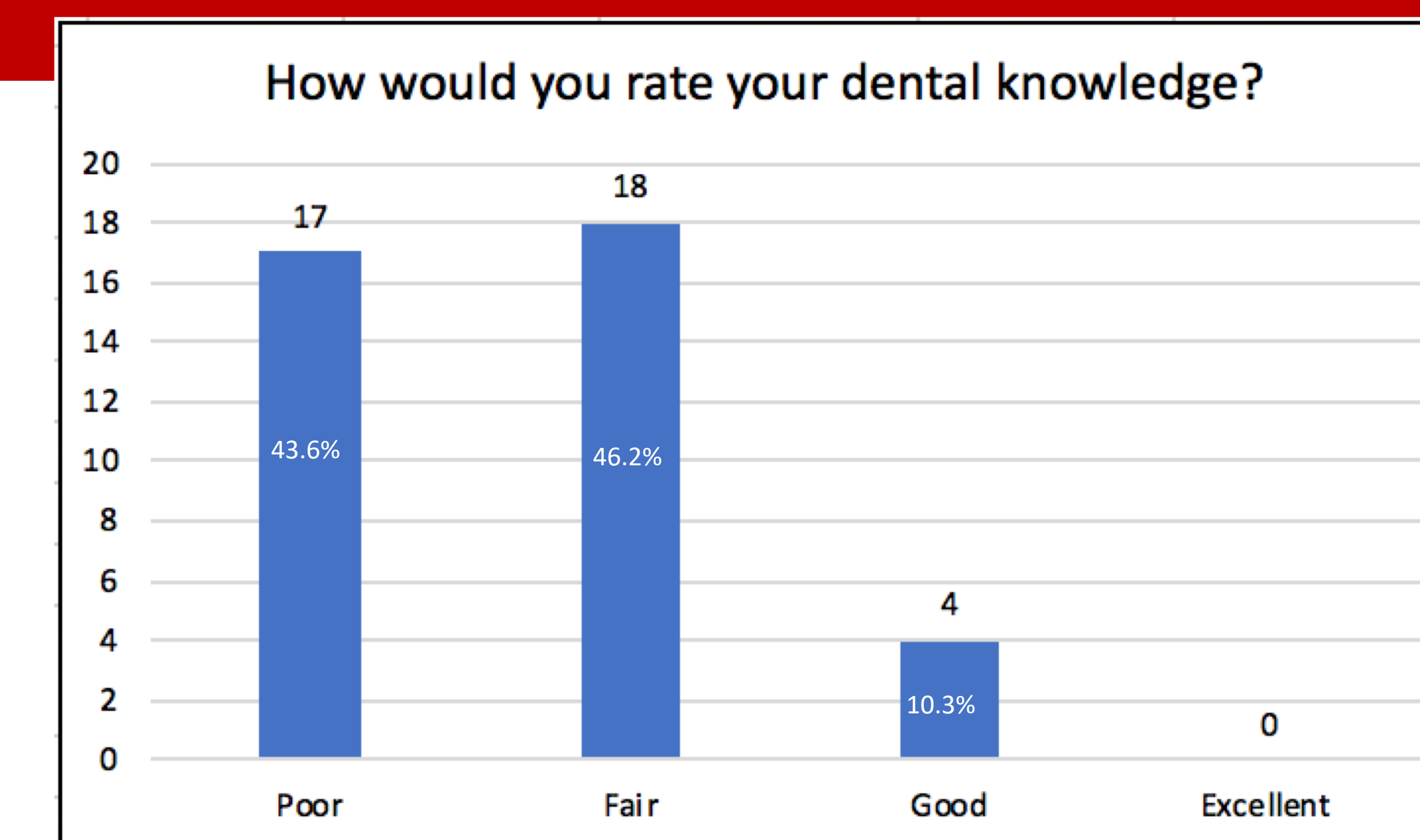
- A cross-sectional study was conducted on pediatric residents at Boston Medical Center (BMC) between December 2022 and April 2023.
- Participants were residents of the Boston Combined Residency Program (BCRP) who completed the survey
- A total of 39 eligible subjects were included. Two respondents did not answer all questions of survey so only answered questions were included in results.

### Data collection and analysis:

- An anonymous survey consisting of a total of 26 questions consisted of 8 background questions, 7 dental principle questions and 11 questions about dental practices during well-child visits.
- Data was collected on RedCap and was imported into Excel.

## Results

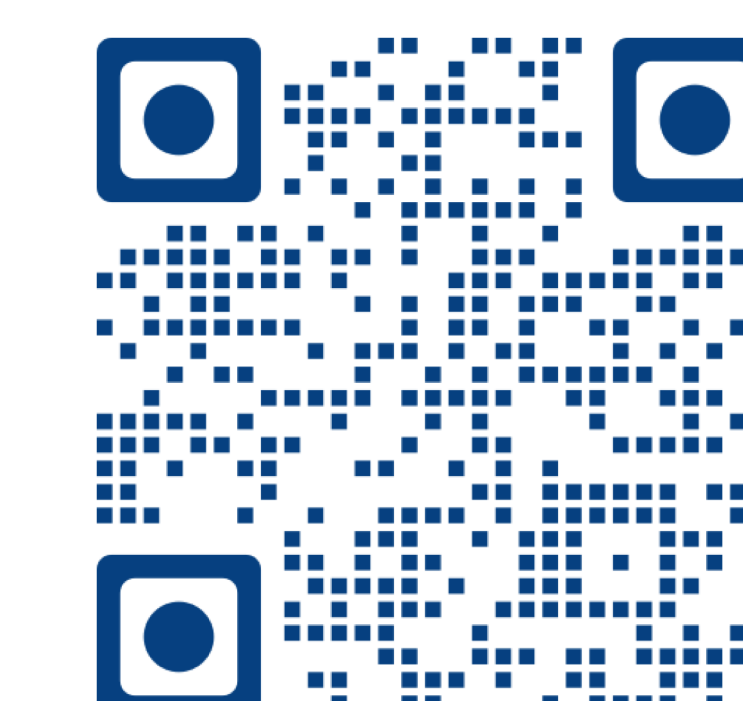
%(n=39)	Survey Responses
46.2%	First year of residency
40.1%	Answered all dental knowledge questions incorrectly
84.6%	Correctly identified recommended age for patient to be referred to dentist
71.8%	Did not demonstrate knowledge of age a child should generally have all their primary teeth
56.5%	Did not demonstrate knowledge of recommended amounts of fluoridated toothpaste for children
38.5%	Always ask patients if they have a dental home
15.4%	Always discuss oral hygiene with parents
7.7%	Are comfortable and always perform an oral examination at well child visits.
34.7%	Somewhat not comfortable with performing various dental practices
59.0%	Refer children to the dentist regardless of dental health
22.0%	Only refer when there is a dental problem
18.4% (n=38)	Do not discuss toothbrushing with parents at well child visits
63.2% (n=38)	Are not comfortable determining caries risk of a patient
15.8% (n=38)	Are not comfortable discussing risk factors for dental caries with patients
86.8% (n=38)	Wanted additional oral health education



## Discussion and Conclusions

- Data from the survey shows the following:
  - Pediatric residents have some knowledge of oral health but need more education to improve dental knowledge.
  - There was a wide range of comfort levels regarding various dental practices.
  - Additional training for pediatric medical residents would be beneficial regarding oral hygiene education, caries risk assessment, fluoride recommendations and appropriate age for first dental visit.
  - Medical education should be interdisciplinary and should involve dedicated curriculum time to oral health.
- Majority of pediatric residents at BCRP report that dental education is important but report their dental knowledge is either fair or poor.
- Most pediatric residents reported being somewhat not comfortable with various dental practices performed at well child visits.
- Implementation of additional oral health education into the current curriculum is desired by a majority of respondents.

## References



Please scan for references