

Parent Oral Health Knowledge and Caries Experience in Children

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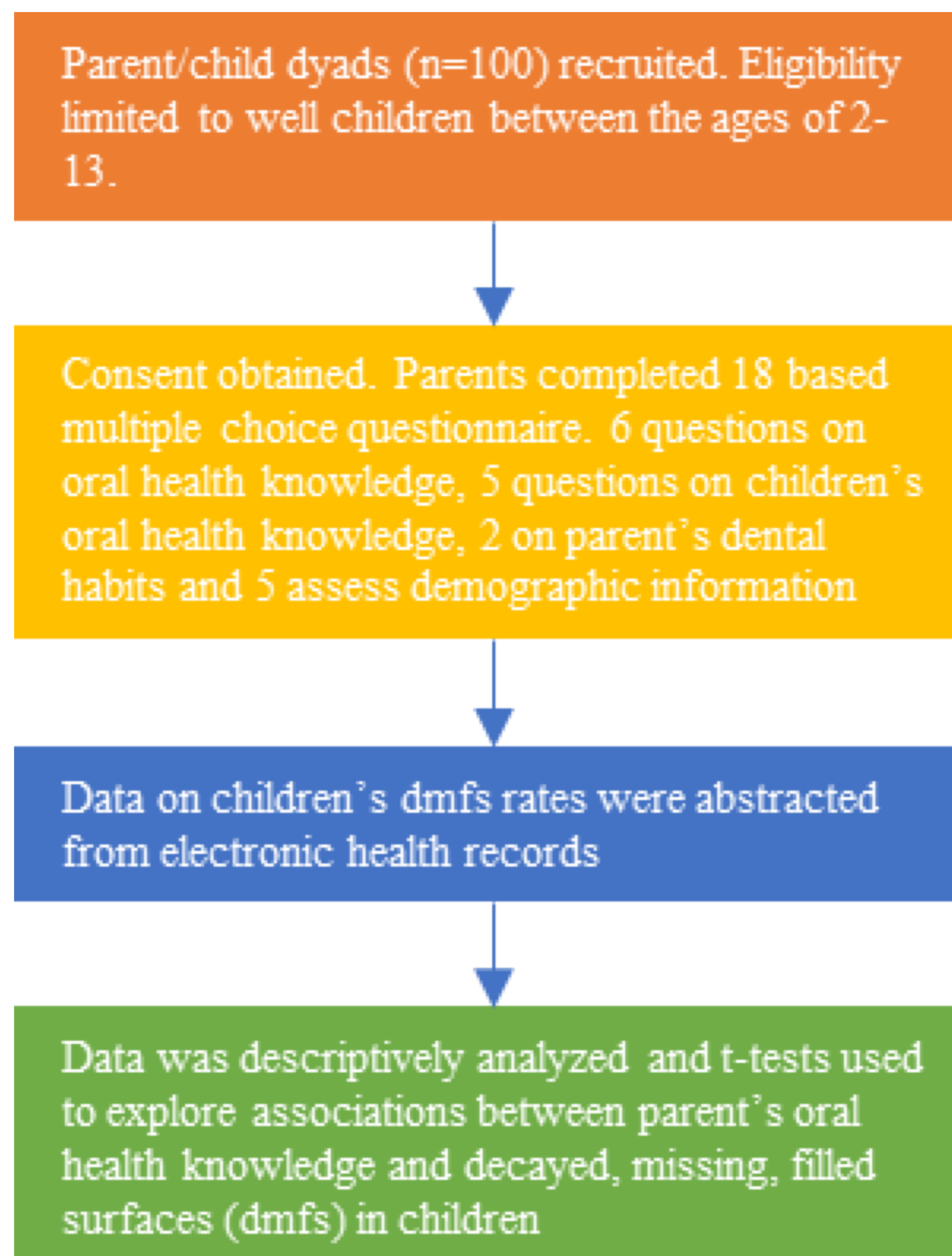
Background

- Rates of decayed missing and filled teeth in children have decreased over the past two decades, however the declining rate has plateaued over the past ten years.
- Severe tooth decay can negatively affect a child's growth, body weight, cognitive development and overall quality of life; yet prevalence remains high, particularly among socially vulnerable children.
- Caries management in young children falls heavily on parents/guardians and their oral health related knowledge and practices.
- Parents impact children's oral health through their influence on dietary practices, frequency and technique of toothbrushing, as well as regular dental check-ups.

Objectives

The purpose of this cross-sectional survey research was to assess the relationship between parent's oral health knowledge and the rates of decayed, missing, and filled surfaces (dmfs) in children's dentition.

Materials & Methods



Results

- A total of 100 surveys were completed
- Most parents were between 25-34 years old, mainly spoke English at home (n=72, 72%), were employed (n=54, 54%) and completed high school education (n=77, 77%)
- The average number of dmfs in children studied was 7.67 (range 0 – 25)
- No statistically significant associations were found between percent correct responses by parents and their child's dmfs rate
- Parents averaged 85% correct responses. The most frequently incorrectly answered question was the duration of time for tooth brushing.

Figure 1: Analysis of Survey Response

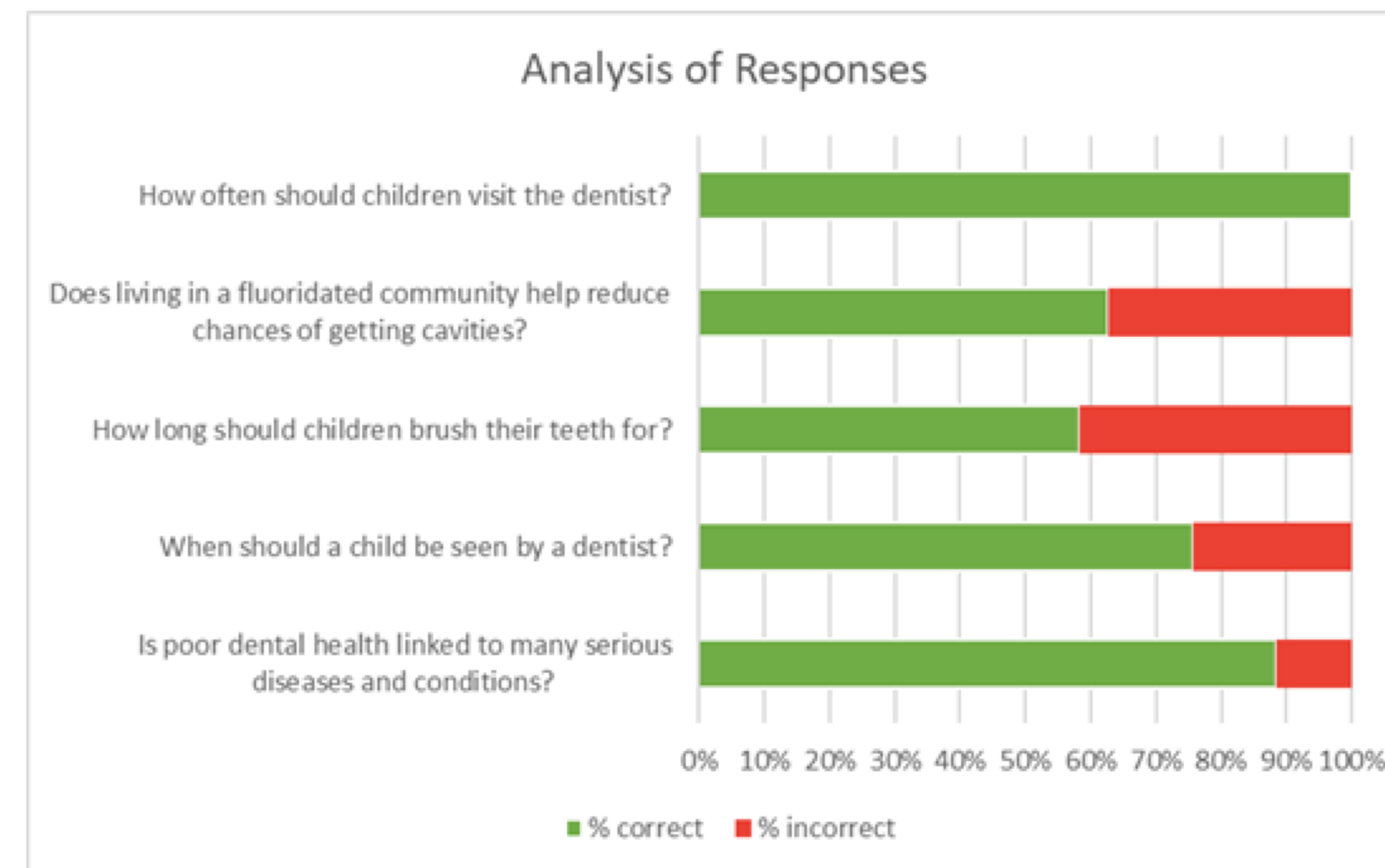
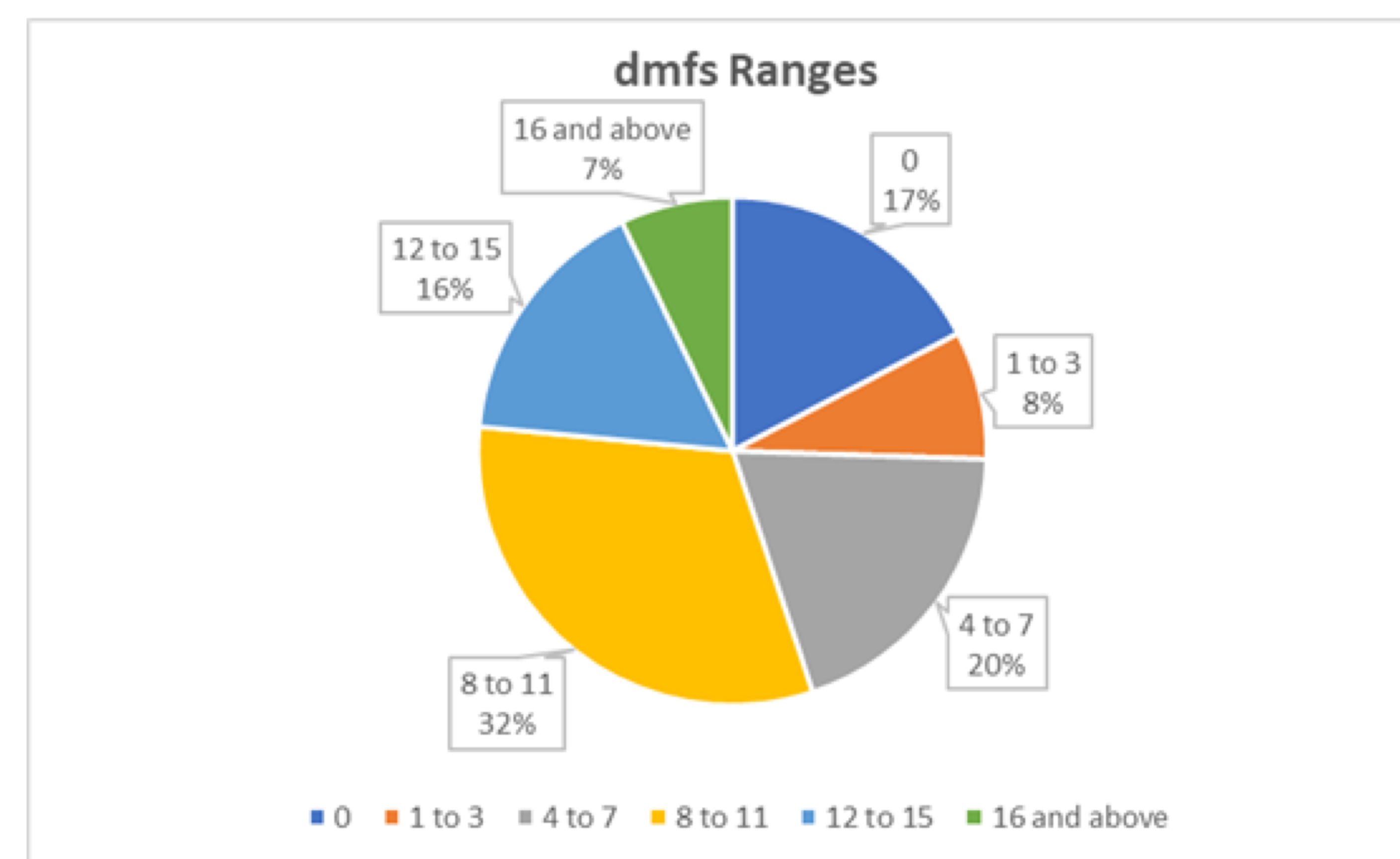
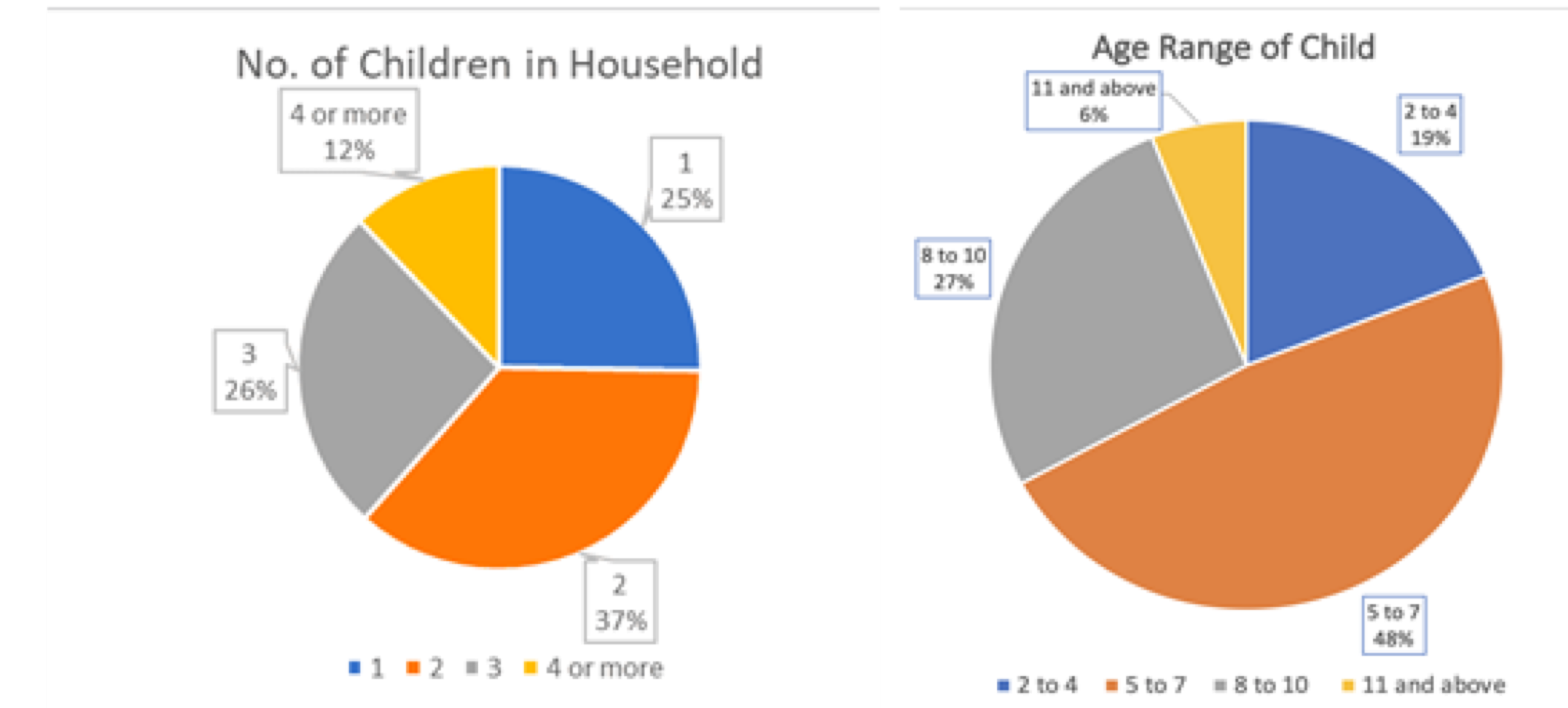


Figure 2: Distribution of dmfs Ranges



Results (continued)

Figure 3: Number of Children in Household and Average Age Range of Child



Discussion

- Although there was no statistical significance associations found, parents were shown to be knowledgeable regarding oral health, despite children presenting with high average dmfs rates
- Knowledge assessment may have been affected by completion of surveys immediately following dental visits, during which routine oral health information is provided.
- The study was also limited to primary teeth dmfs and the prevalence of caries in permanent dentition was not evaluated

Conclusion

- Findings suggest that although parents possess oral health knowledge regarding caries risks, they may not be adequately implanting healthful oral health-related behaviors at home, as caries rates remained very high among children in the study
- Future studies should assess the home-based oral health behaviors and the challenges parents may face in implementing behaviors to prevent caries.

References

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