

Significance of Ethnicity and Dental Status on Adolescents' Psychosocial Perspectives

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Objective

To assess the association of dental and sociodemographic factors and psychosocial perspectives on adolescents.

Materials and Methods

- Convenient sampling of 72 pediatric patients aged 10 to 17 years old from the pediatric clinic at the University of Maryland School of Dentistry.
- A questionnaire containing 24 questions investigating dental self-confidence, social and psychological impact and aesthetic perspectives of smiles.
- Patients who were unable to read, comprehend, and write in English were excluded.
- Dental and sociodemographic parameters such as race, gender, age, presence of a dental home or premature loss of permanent teeth were also collected.
- 50% of participants were African American, 38% Hispanic, and 12% other races.
- 68% of participants were 10 to 14 years of age while 32 % were 15 to 17 years of age.
- Chi-Square test was used to compare individual dental and sociodemographic parameters to response to questionnaire.

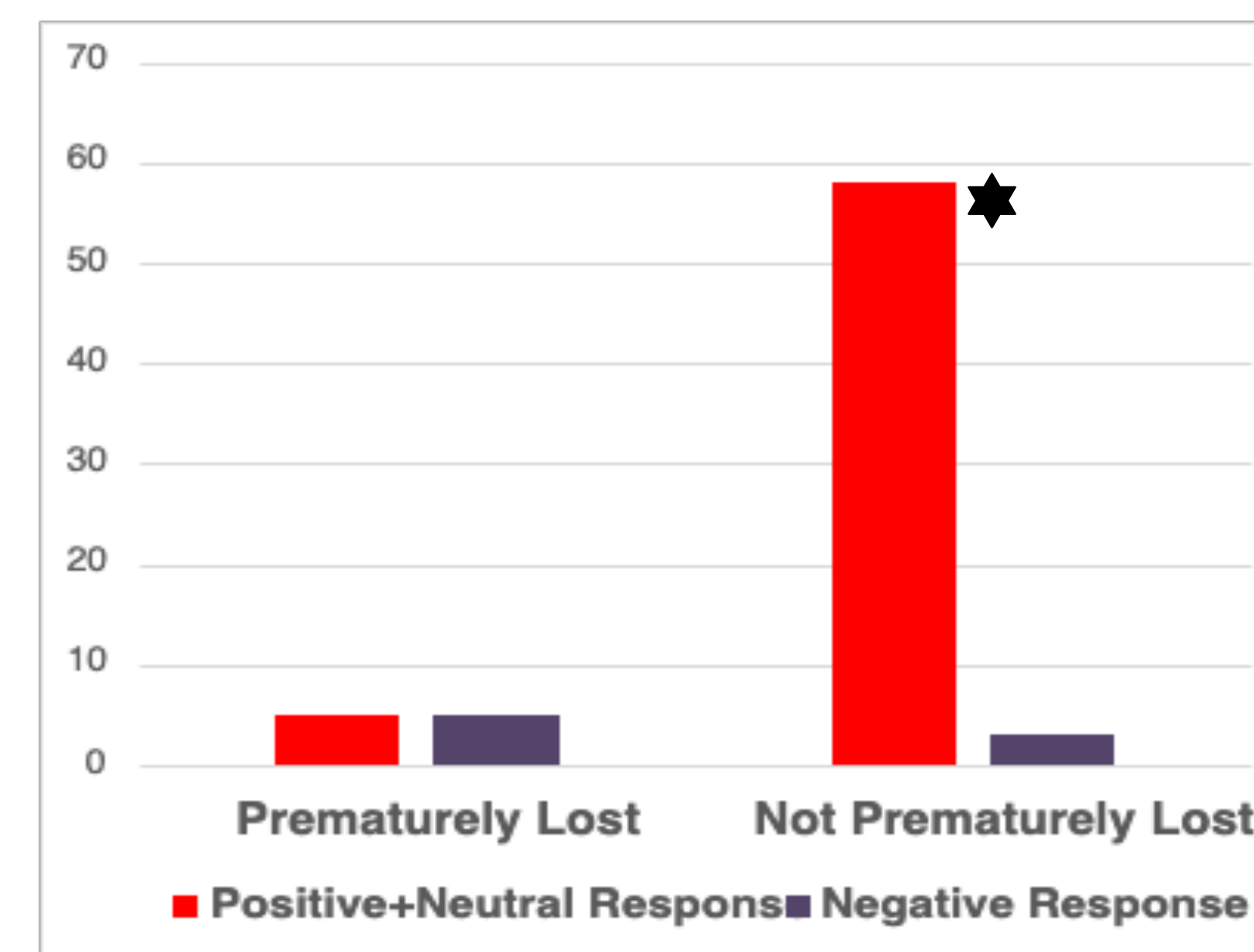


Figure 1: Response to social inhibition due to premature tooth loss vs no tooth loss
(* Statistically significant)

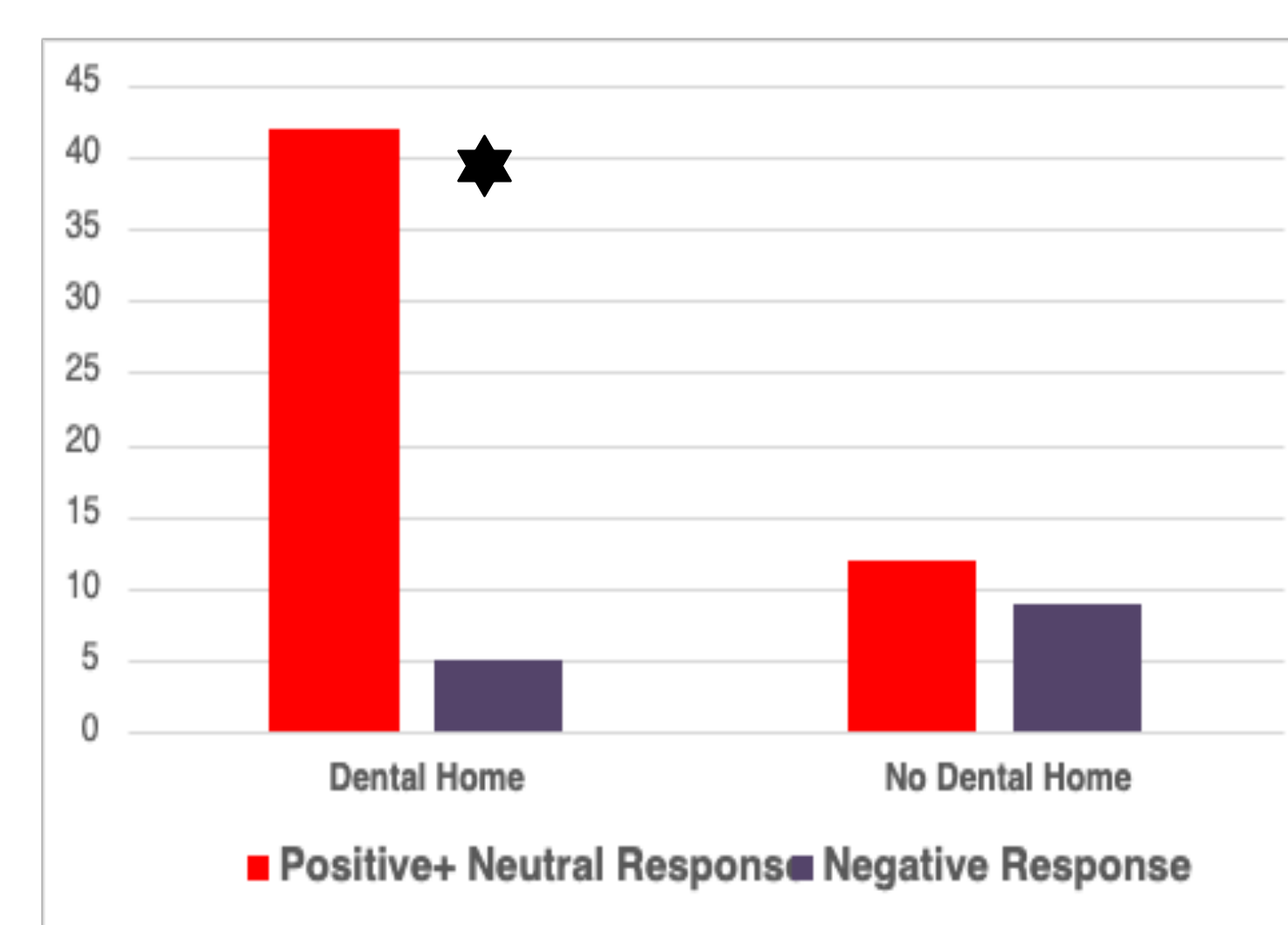


Figure 2: Response to social inhibition due to dental home vs no dental home
(* Statistically significant)

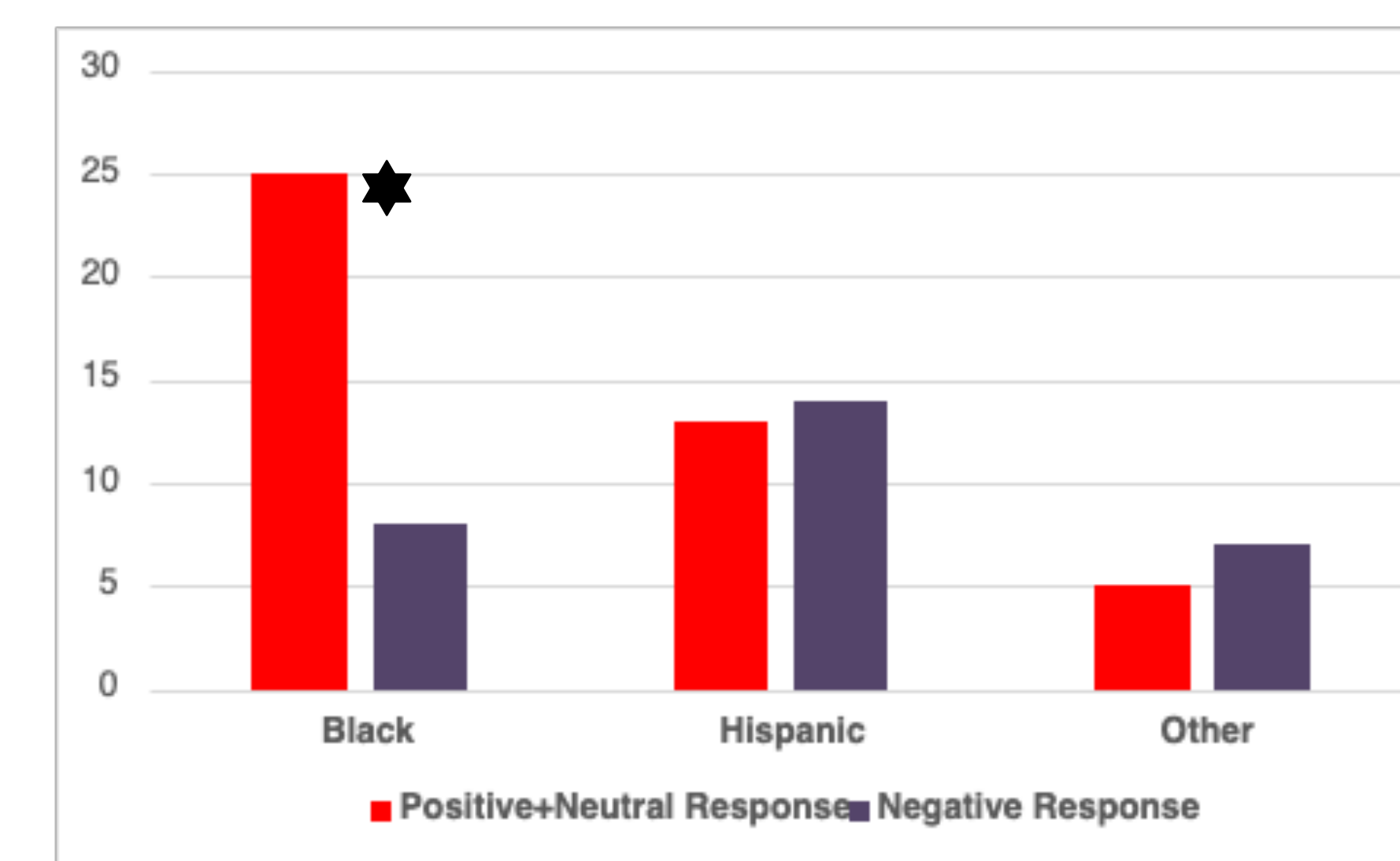


Figure 3: Response to liking the position of teeth based on race
(* Statistically significant)

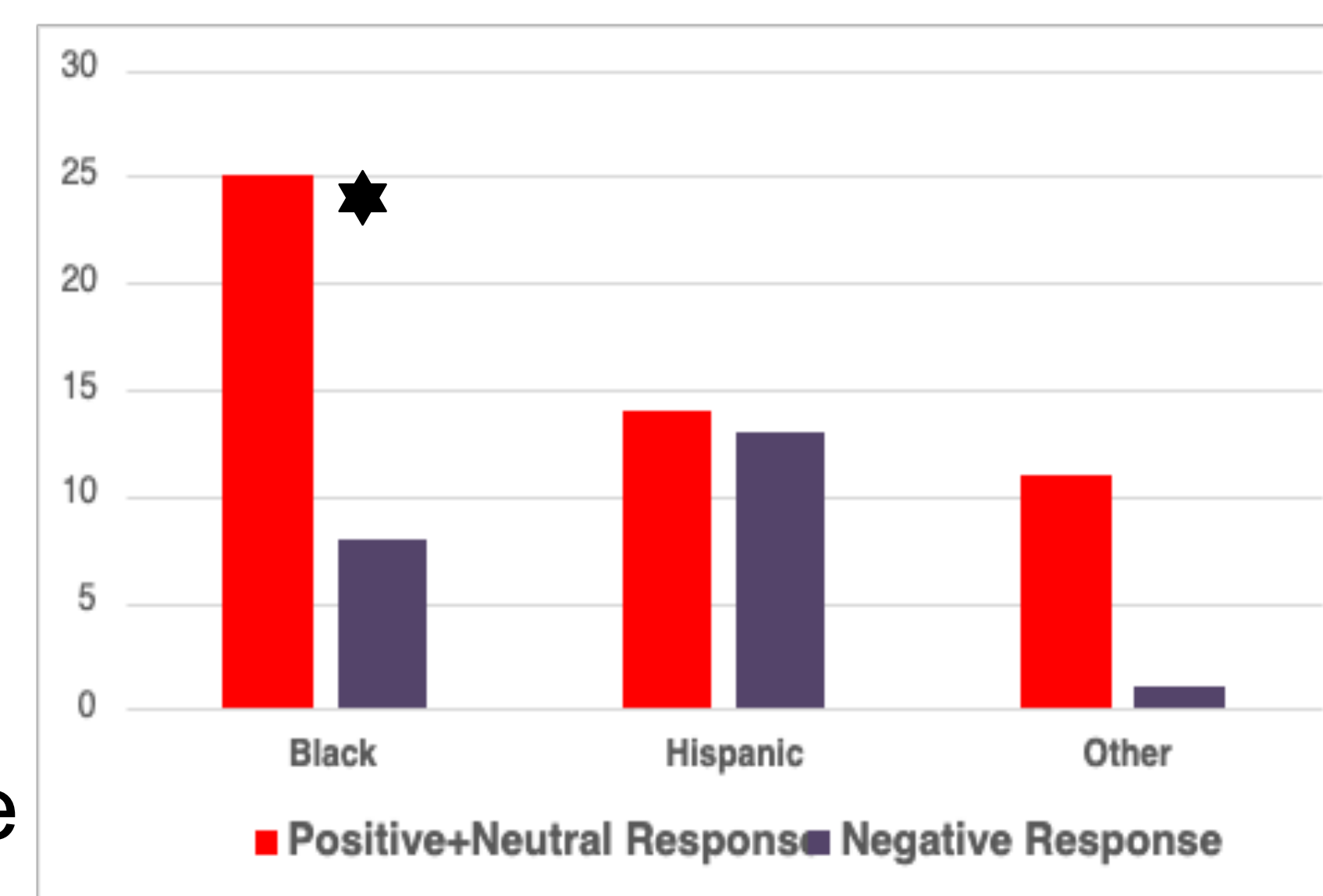


Figure 4: Response to being afraid of offensive remarks based on race
(* Statistically significant)

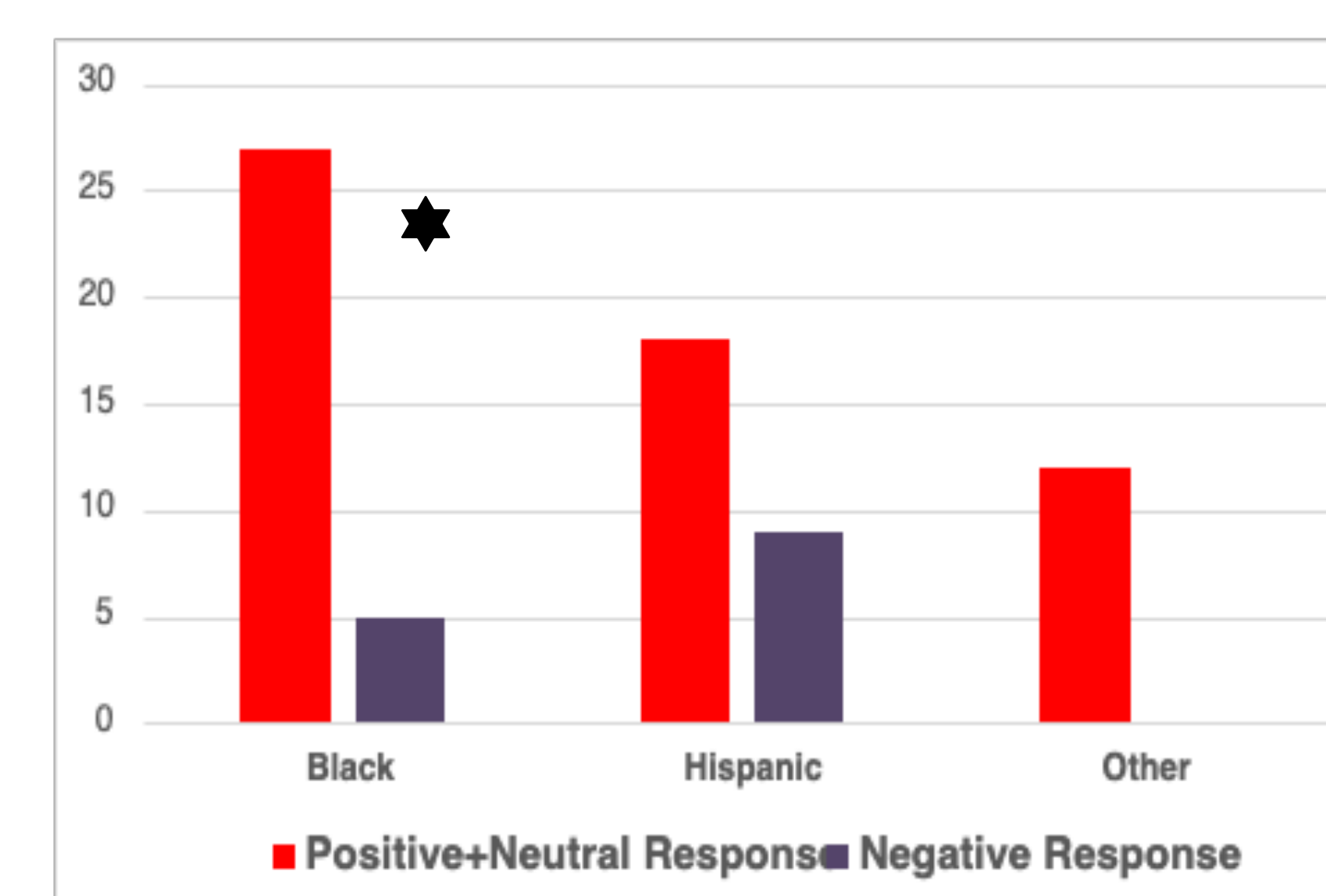


Figure 5: Response to liking teeth in the mirror based on race
(* Statistically significant)

Results

- There were no significant differences found in age and gender with respect to dental self-confidence, social, psychosocial and aesthetic perspectives regarding impact of smile.
- The **statistically** significant findings from the 24 questions in the questionnaire were as follows:
 - Subjects without premature tooth loss did not feel inhibited in social contacts because of their teeth compared to those with no tooth loss ($P < .05$) (Fig.1).
 - Subjects with a dental home did not feel inhibited in social contacts because of their teeth compared to those without a dental home ($P < .05$) (Fig. 2).
 - African-American adolescents were significantly more likely to rate tooth position as very nice compared to other races ($P < .05$) (Fig. 3).
 - African-American adolescents were not afraid other people would make offensive remarks about their teeth compared to other races ($P < .05$) (Fig. 4).
 - African-American adolescents were more likely to like to see their teeth in the mirror compared to other races ($P < .05$) (Fig.5).

Conclusions

- Premature tooth loss and dental home had significant social impacts on adolescents.
- Race had significant psychological impact as well as dental self-confidence, social and aesthetic impacts on adolescents.
- Future research is needed due to limited sample size.