

## BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

- COVID-19 has disrupted how health care is managed and received on a systems, community, and individual level.
- There have been widespread effects on economic, psychological, and behavioral health and function across all socioeconomic strata.

**Primary Aim:** To identify pandemic-related behavioral and attitudinal changes related to dental care and dental health behaviors in caregivers of dental patients in a hospital safety-net dental clinic

## METHODS

- Anonymous, voluntary, cross-sectional survey given to caregivers of patients (0-18y) in a hospital dental clinic.
- REDCap survey distributed to 604 participants (594 surveys completed) on electronic tablets
- Data collected Nov 2022-Feb 2023
- Questions: demographics of caregiver and child, perceptions and behaviors of dental health and treatment, and perceptions and behaviors related to pandemic
- Analyses via R version 3.6.2 (R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria)

## ADDITIONAL CHARTS AND REFERENCES



## RESULTS

### Respondent Demographics

#### Education Level

- Less than High School (31, 5.5%),
- High School or GED (270, 48.0%)
- Associate or Technical (146, 26.0%)
- Bachelors (77, 13.7%), Advanced (38, 6.8%)

#### Marital Status

- Single (225, 40.0%)
- Married (258, 45.8%)
- Divorced (49, 8.7%), Other (31, 5.5%)

#### Income Level

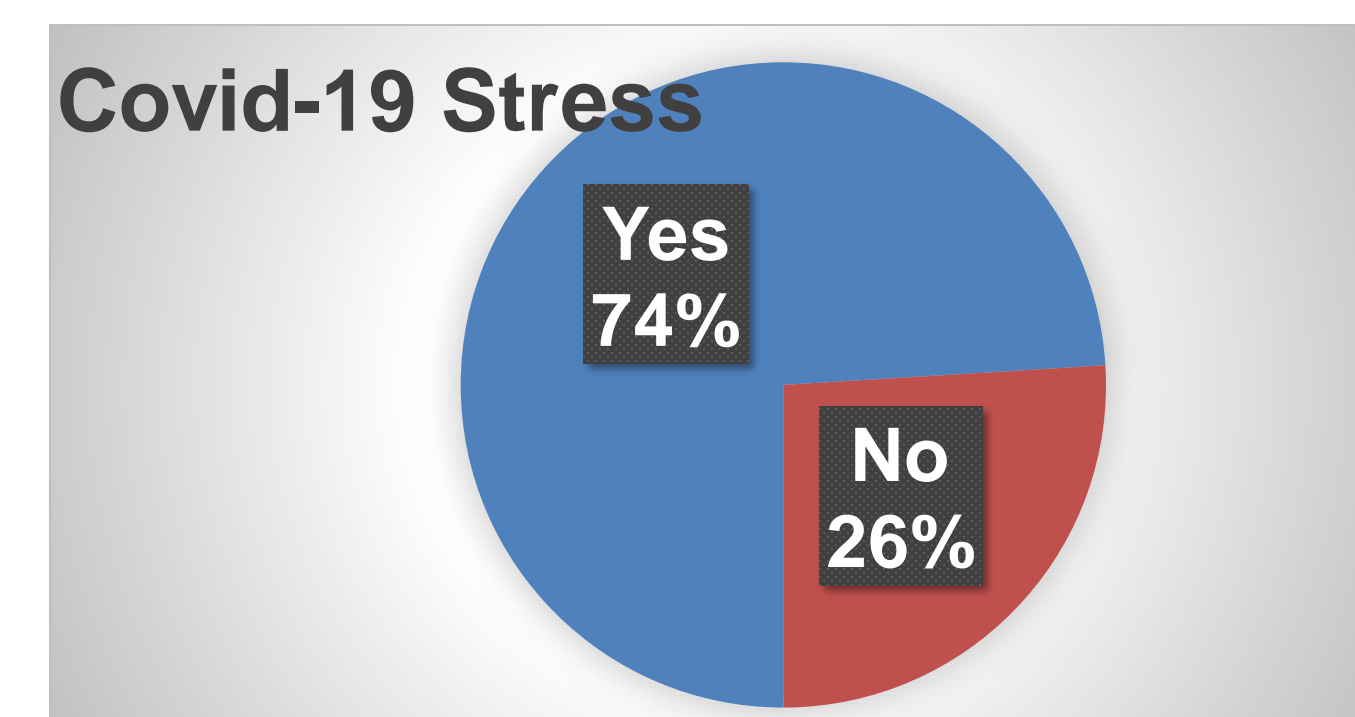
- Less than \$20,000 (138, 24.6%)
- \$20,001-50,000 (222, 39.5%)
- \$50,001-100,000 (150, 26.7%)
- Greater than \$100,000 (52, 9.3%)

#### Home Zip Code

- Metropolitan: 50K+ (486, 82.6%)
- Micropolitan: 10-50K (86, 14.6%)
- Small Town or Rural: <10K (16, 2.7%)

#### Insurance Type:

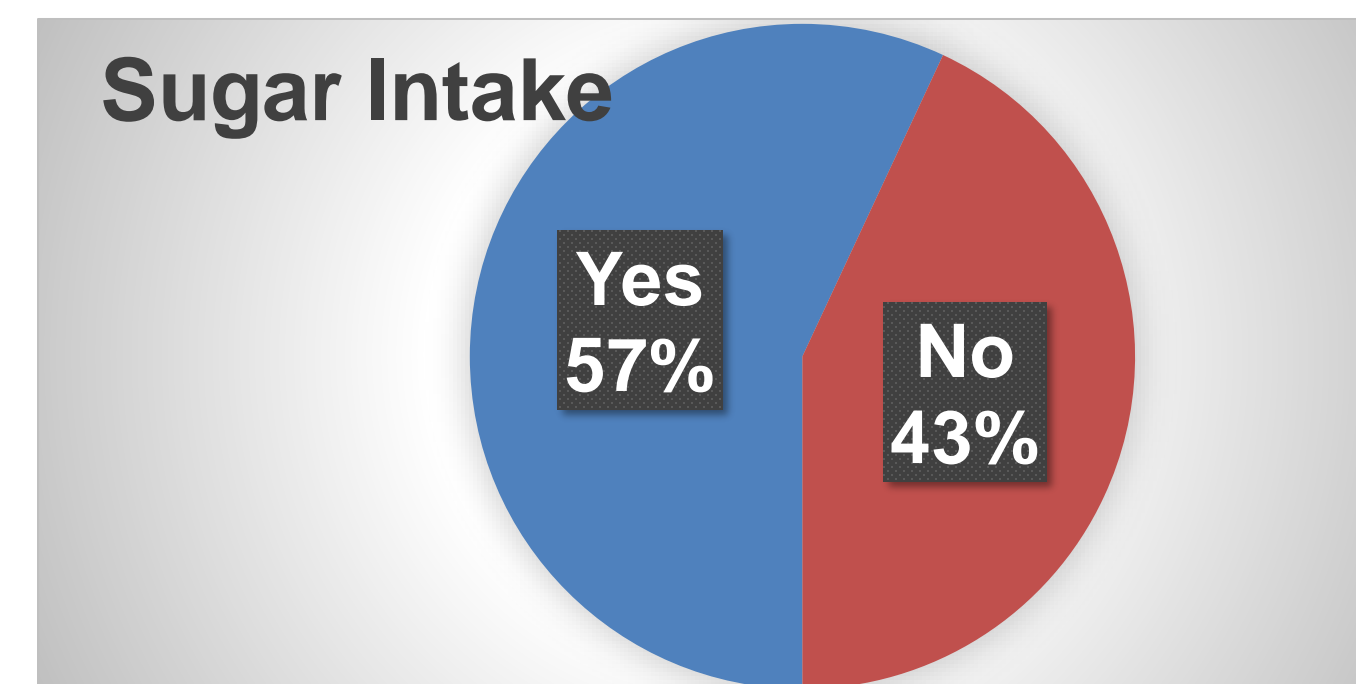
- Commercial/Private (80, 14.2%)
- Medicaid (441, 78.5%)
- Self-Pay (no insurance) (13, 2.3%)
- Other (28, 5.0%)



**Q: COVID-19 has made my life more stressful (n=594).**

#### More likely to say yes:

- Rural zip codes, p=0.026
- Child's dental health Fair/Poor p=0.0023
- Have family members or close friends that had died or become very sick with COVID-19, p<0.001
- Have at least one child vaccinated against COVID, p = 0.026



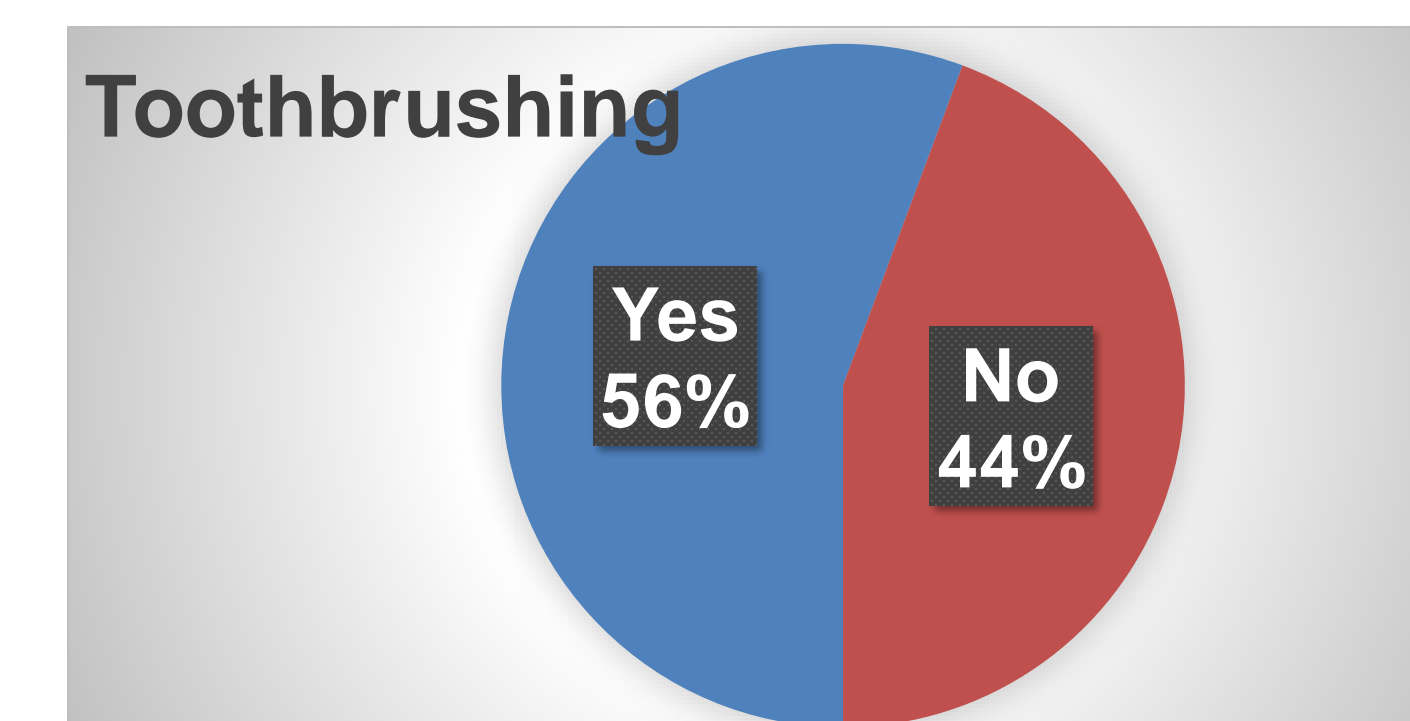
**Q: I pay more attention to my child's intake of sugar, juice, and drinks like soda, Kool-Aid, and Gatorade now than before the pandemic (n=590).**

#### More likely to say yes:

- Married, p=0.046
- Did not go to the dentist during the pandemic, p<0.001

#### More likely to say no:

- Incomes \$100,000 or more, p=0.004
- Self-pay insurance type, p=0.044
- Did not think children should be required to wear masks at school if the health department recommended it, p=0.014
- Did not think that government agencies will protect them if another pandemic happens, p<0.0001
- COVID-19 has made my life more stressful, p=0.046



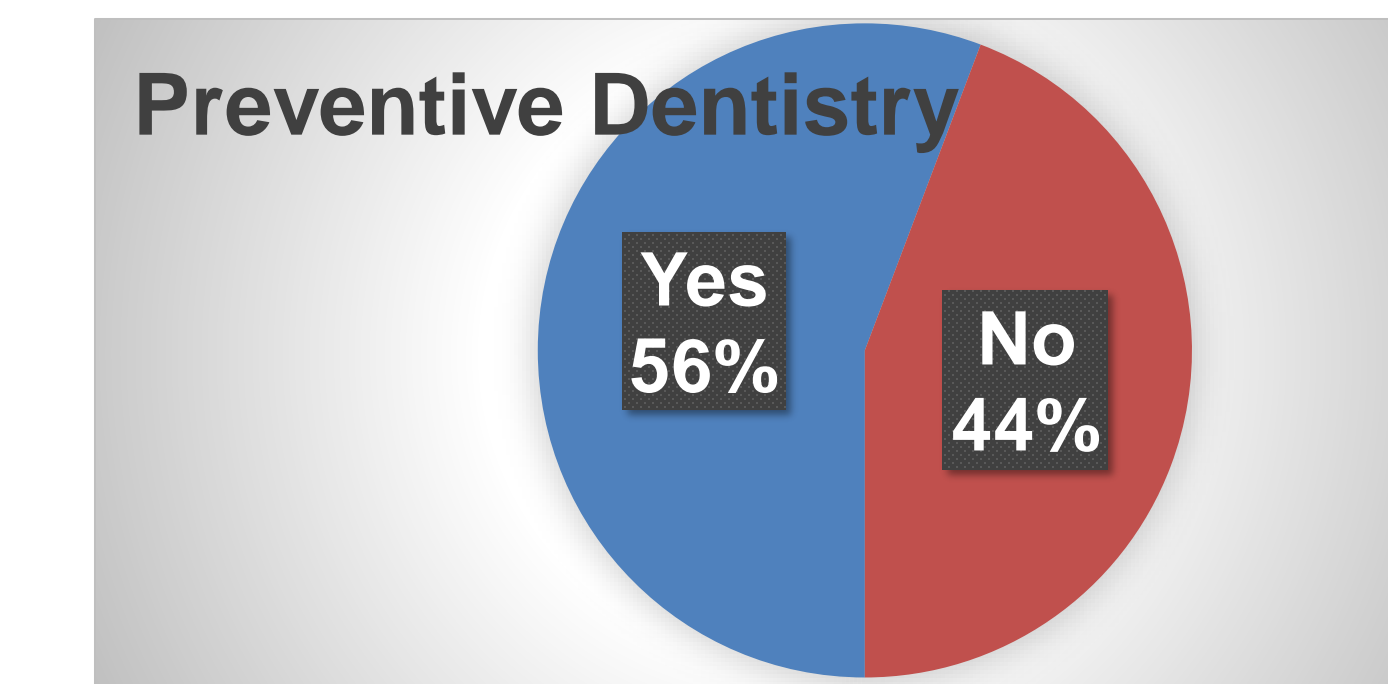
**Q: I work harder at making sure my child's teeth are brushed now than before the pandemic (n=589).**

#### More likely to say yes:

- Parents (vs other care providers), p=0.014
- Urban zip codes, p=0.039
- Whose children are younger, p=0.023

#### More likely to say no:

- Did not think children should be required to wear masks at school if the health department recommended it, p<0.0001



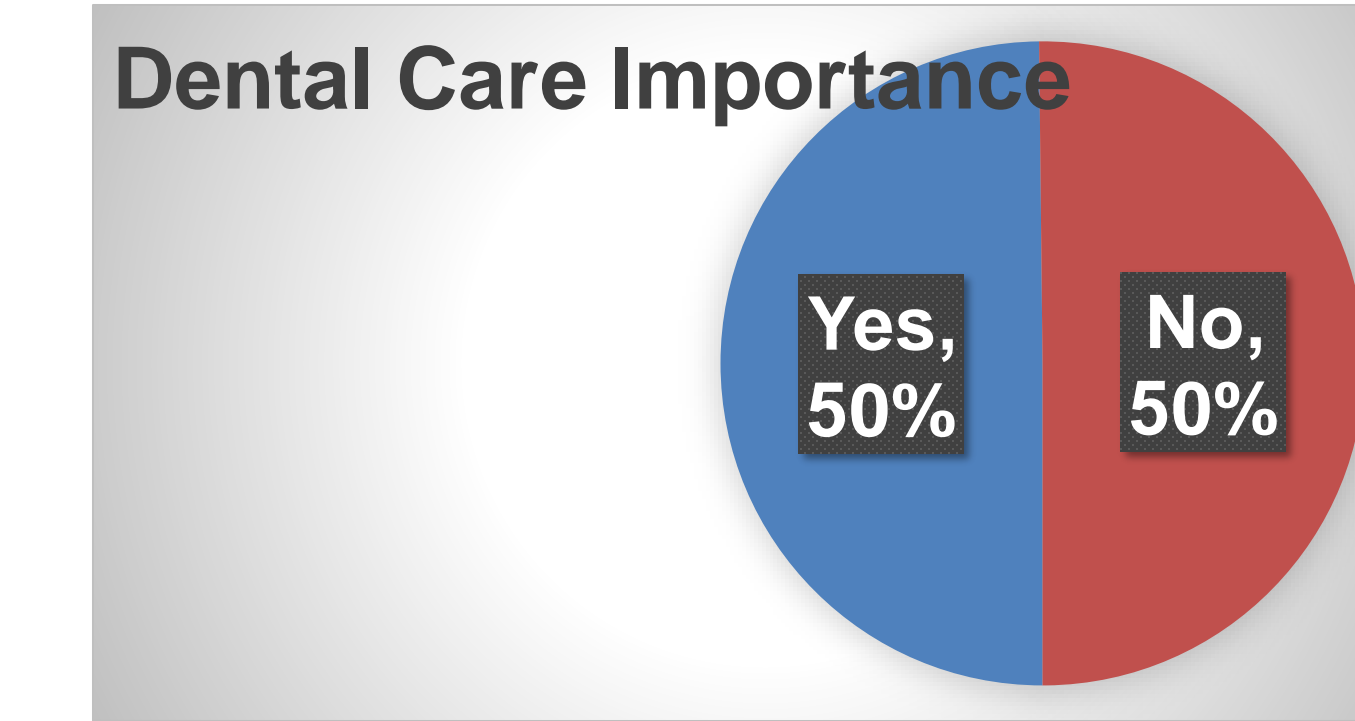
**Q: I think it is more important to get regular dental checkups now than before the pandemic (n=590).**

#### More likely to say yes:

- Urban zip codes

#### More likely to say no:

- Annual family incomes of \$50,001-\$100,000 (p=0.048) or > \$100,000 (p=0.043)
- Did not think children should be required to wear masks at school if the health department recommended it, p<.0001
- Did not think that government agencies will protect them if another pandemic happens, p= 0.001
- COVID-19 has made their life more stressful (p=0.04)



**Q: My child's dental care is more important to me now than it was before the pandemic started (n=594).**

#### More likely to say yes:

- Married (vs divorced), p=0.02
- Urban zip codes, p=0.036

#### More likely to say no:

- Who reported regular dental checkup visits prior to COVID, p=0.009
- Did not think children should be required to wear masks at school if the health department recommended it, p<0.0001
- Did not think that government agencies will protect them if another pandemic happens, p=0.043

## DISCUSSION

- Our sample shows roughly half of respondents changed their dental care behaviors or attitudes about dental care following the pandemic.
- Education level had no impact on the perceived importance of dental care, diet, and hygiene.
- Marital status, income, home zip codes, and stress from COVID-19 had some effect.
- Confidence and agreement with the government's recommendations had strong associations with changed attitudes.
- Limitations: self-reporting, convenience bias, sample excluding those who could not complete a written survey in English.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Half of survey respondents changed their perceptions to view dental care, preventive dentistry, sugar intake, and toothbrushing as more important after the pandemic.
- The half that did not change their perceptions responded poorly to questions concerning confidence in government recommendations.
- Further investigation and analysis may provide a greater understanding of the impact of the pandemic on dental care.