

Opposition to Age One Dental Visit by Dentists

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COHRA Social Network Study

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Conflict of Interest

None

Background



Dental Care is Crucial During the First Year of Life


- Proper care for baby teeth is imperative as they serve several critical functions, including:
 - Fostering good nutrition by permitting proper chewing
 - Aiding speech development
 - Helping proper development of permanent teeth by saving space for them
 - The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD), American Dental Association (ADA) and the American Academy of Pediatrics all recommend a dental visit for children by age one.
 - Baby teeth are vulnerable to tooth decay from their very first appearance, on average between the ages of six and 12 months.
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Background


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Statement on Early Childhood Caries

(Trans. 2000:454)

1. Early Childhood Caries is defined as the presence of one or more decayed (non-cavitated or cavitated lesions), missing (due to caries) or filled tooth surfaces in any primary tooth in a preschool-age child between birth and 71 months of age. The term "Severe Early Childhood Caries" refers to "atypical" or "progressive" or "acute" or "rampant" patterns of dental caries.
2. The Association recognizes that early childhood caries is a significant public health problem in selected populations and is also found throughout the general population.
3. The Association urges health professionals and the public to recognize that a child's teeth are susceptible to decay as soon as they begin to erupt. Early childhood caries is an infectious disease. There are many aspects of early childhood caries; baby bottle tooth decay is recognized as one of the more severe manifestations of this syndrome.
4. The Association urges parents and guardians, as a child's first tooth erupts, to consult with their dentist regarding:
 - Scheduling the child's first dental visit. It is advantageous for the first visit to occur within six months of eruption of the first tooth and no later than 12 months of age, and
 - Receiving oral health education based on the child's developmental needs (also known as anticipatory guidance).

Background

ORAL HEALTH POLICIES: DENTAL HOME

Policy on the Dental Home

Latest Revision

2018

Purpose

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) supports the concept of a dental home for all infants, children, adolescents, and persons with special health care needs. The dental home is inclusive of all aspects of oral health that result from the interaction of the patient, parents, dentists, dental professionals, and nondental professionals. Establishment of the dental home is initiated by the identification and interaction of these individuals, resulting in a heightened awareness of all issues impacting the patient's oral health.¹ This concept is derived from the American Academy of Pediatrics' (AAP) definition of a medical home which is an approach to providing comprehensive and high quality primary care and not a location or physical structure.²

Methods

This policy was developed by the Council on Clinical Affairs and adopted in 2001. This document is an update from the last revision in 2015. This policy is based on a review of the

Referral by the primary care physician or health provider has been recommended, based on risk assessment, as early as six months of age and no later than 12 months of age.¹⁰⁻¹² Furthermore, subsequent periodicity of reappointment is based upon risk assessment. This provides time-critical opportunities to implement preventive health practices and reduce the child's risk of preventable dental/oral disease.¹³

Policy statement

The AAPD encourages parents and other care providers to help every child establish a dental home by 12 months of age. The AAPD recognizes a dental home should provide:

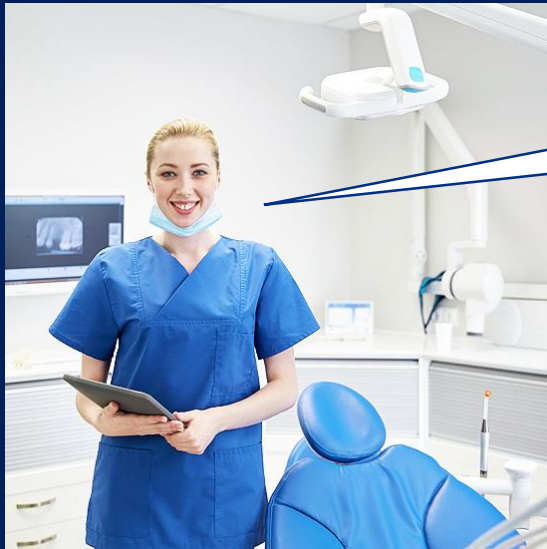
- comprehensive, continuous, accessible, family-centered, coordinated, compassionate, and culturally-effective care for children, as modeled by the AAP.^{1,14}
- comprehensive evidence-base oral health care including acute care and preventive services in accordance with AAPD periodicity schedules.^{1,15}

Background

- Dentists may not be willing to see young children
 - General dentists: <50% saw children under 2 years old ¹
 - Pediatric dentists: 53% saw children at 1 year or younger ²
- Caregivers have difficulty finding a dental provider for their child ³
- Caregivers were advised by family members, physicians, health plans to wait until their child was older for the first dental visit ⁴

Objective

We examined whether information that mothers received from pediatric and family dentists in their social network was consistent with the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry guideline, which recommends that children see a dentist at age one.



Come visit me when your child is age 1?



Methods

- Cross-sectional
- Semi-structured qualitative interview
- 70 mothers
 - Children 3-5 years-old
 - Enrolled in COHRA



Methods

- Incentive
 - Child play space
 - Child book and toys
 - \$50 gift card
- Analysis
 - Transcribed
 - Coded
 - Analyzed using grounded theory



INTERVIEW GUIDE



Dental Use/Dentist Visits

Diet

Taking Care of Teeth

Facing a Dental Problem

Intros:

-Parents often receive *unsolicited advice* about raising a child. Have you had experiences where someone offered an opinion about what your child should eat or how to take care of your child's mouth?

-What part of taking care of your child's mouth do you feel is the *most frustrating*? Who do you talk to about it?

-What past experiences of caring for your teeth influence the way you take care of your child's teeth? /Perception of childhood experiences/parental involvement/hygiene

-When did you decide to take your child to the dentist? Were other people surprised that you took them at that age? Has anyone ever said that "baby teeth don't matter"?

General:

-Who makes it easier or harder to: take care of child's teeth, schedule dental visits, and get to dental visits.

-Tell me about a time you shared advice with someone about how to care for children's teeth.

-If your child had a cavity, who would you turn to for advice, referral, transportation, money, child care, other support?

-Taking care of children's teeth can be difficult. *Who do you go to* when you want to get advice or just vent? Are they a source you trust? /Is there anyone you've given advice to?

-How do you and your spouse decide who takes care of brushing/dental visits/food?

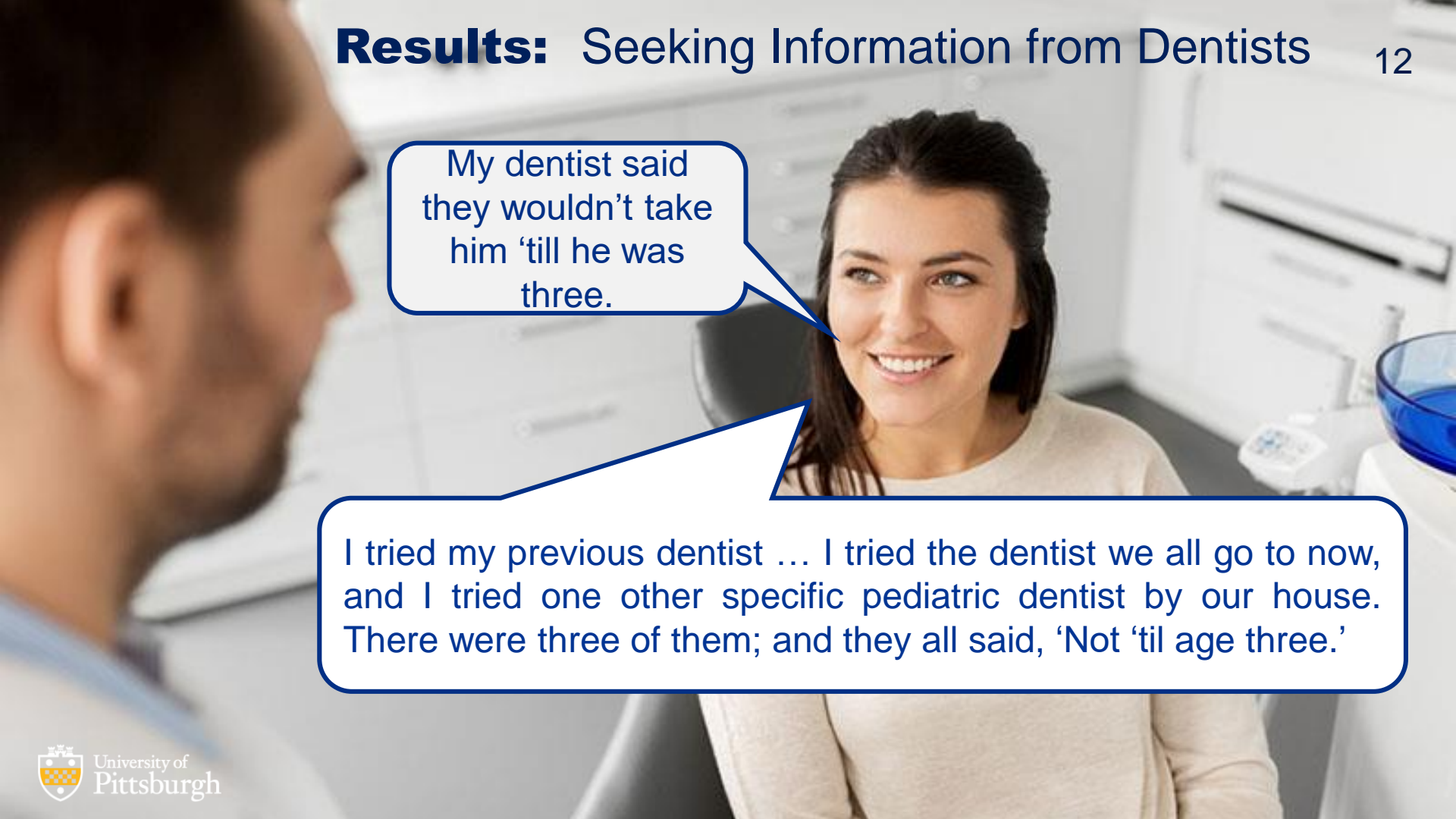
-Does post-partum experience introduce changes to who helps with child's routines? (Temporary? Permanent?)

Results

1. Seeking Information from Dentists
2. Dentist Justification for Delayed Visits
3. Negative Impact on Dentist Relationship
4. Noncompliance with Dentists' Recommendation of Delayed Visits

Results: Seeking Information from Dentists

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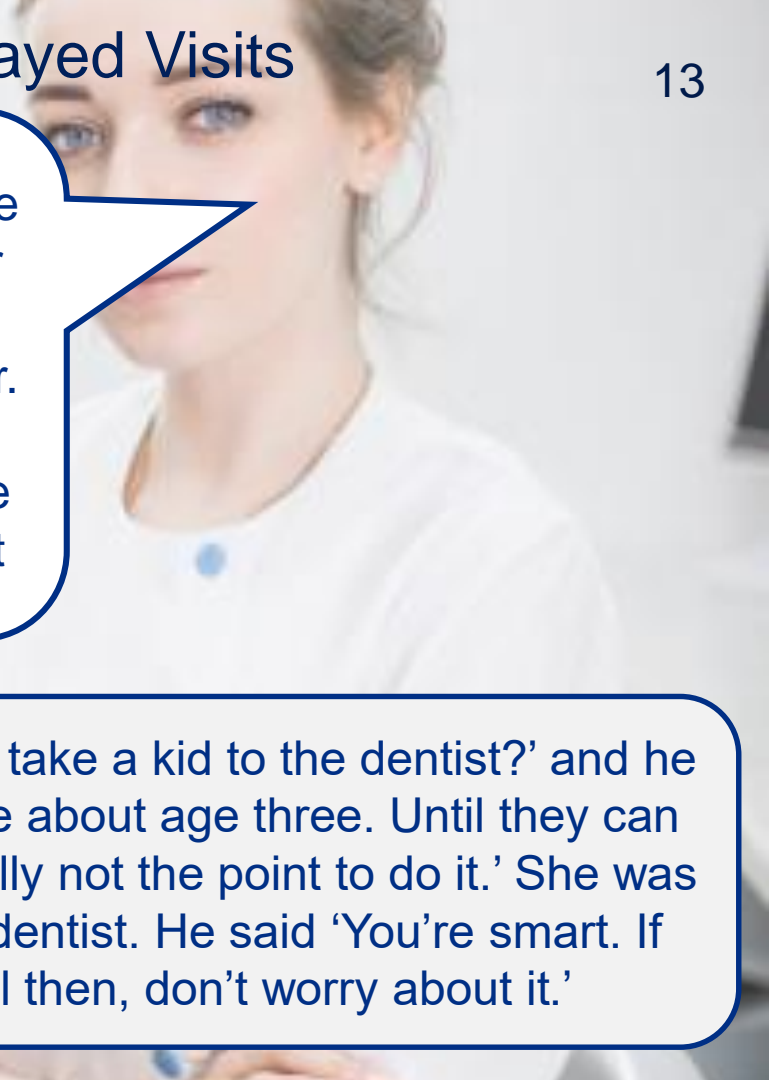


My dentist said
they wouldn't take
him 'till he was
three.

I tried my previous dentist ... I tried the dentist we all go to now,
and I tried one other specific pediatric dentist by our house.
There were three of them; and they all said, 'Not 'til age three.'

Results: Dentist Justification for Delayed Visits

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I took her, I think, she was three, maybe two or three, which was what they were telling you at the time, you know, 'Wait until they had most of their teeth.' I guess their two-year molars would probably have been when I would have taken her. So, you have most of their teeth and everything, and she, I tried to take her to my dentist, and she was so terrified, the dentist never even looked at her. She was like, 'It's not worth it.'

I had asked [Mom's dentist], 'When do you take a kid to the dentist?' and he said, 'Honestly, there's no real point before about age three. Until they can lay there with their mouth open, there's really not the point to do it.' She was three before I took her to her first official dentist. He said 'You're smart. If there's an issue, take her, but up until then, don't worry about it.'

Results: Negative Impact on Dentist Relationship

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He was my dentist when I was a little kid. And it shocked me that he wouldn't! He did not want to see her. Like, at all. He was like, 'You have to bring her back when she's like four.'

I was just concerned, because I wanted her not to be scared of [dentists], you know, I wanted her to be comfortable. I remember saying to [the dentist], "Could you humor me and just let her sit in the chair and like look in her mouth or something? Because the longer you put this off, the more you're going to freak her out." But they made me wait, literally, until her third birthday.

Results: Noncompliance with Dentists' Recommendation of Delayed Visits

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So, that's why we sought out a different dentist that he goes somewhere else now since he's been going since he was two. But, some parents may have just been like, 'Ah I'm just going to wait till three, then.' I was like, 'No, my insurance covers it. He's going when he's two!' And he loves going to the dentist. Yeah. So, it's great it worked out. We did the right thing.



Conclusions

- Dentists can be influential members of mothers' social network
- Dentists are not adhering to professional recommendations for the age 1 dental visit
- Need for dentists to reinforce mothers' efforts to seek care for their children at a young age

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Thank you

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Thank you



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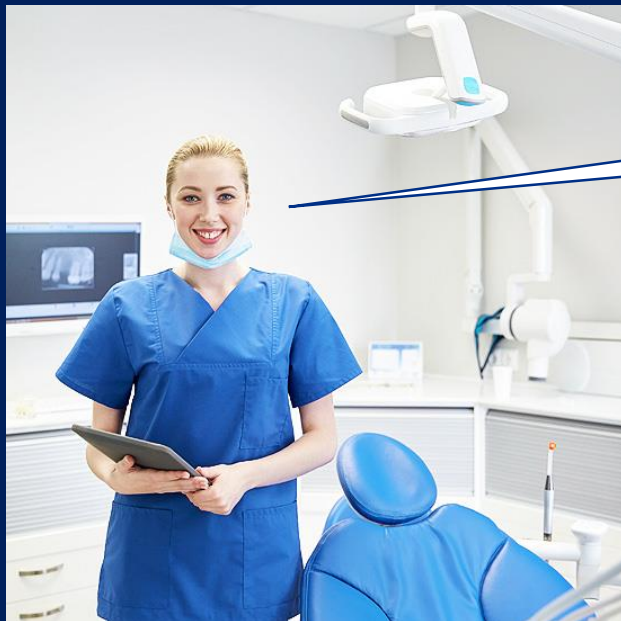
Questions?

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Supplemental Slides

Objective

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Come visit me when your
child is age 1!

