



INTRODUCTION

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) “affirms that the use of fluoride as an adjunct in the prevention of caries is safe and effective. The AAPD encourages dentist and other health care providers, public health officials, and parents/caregivers to optimize fluoride exposures to reduce the risk for caries and to enhance the remineralization of affected tooth structures.” The AAPD encourages the brushing of teeth with appropriate amounts of fluoride toothpaste twice daily for all children and encourages the application of professional fluoride treatments for all individuals at risk for dental caries. They also encourage dental providers to talk to parents and caregivers about the benefits of fluoride and to proactively address fluoride hesitance through chairside and community education. However, there is resistance amongst patients towards fluoride overexposure and despite there being research on other effective remineralizing agents, most pediatric dentists are only catering their practice to fluoride-based products. Research shows that many fluoride-free alternative toothpastes are equally effective at remineralizing enamel as fluoride toothpastes are.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to survey pediatric dentists’ awareness and acceptance of fluoride-free remineralizing agents in order assess trends.

METHODS

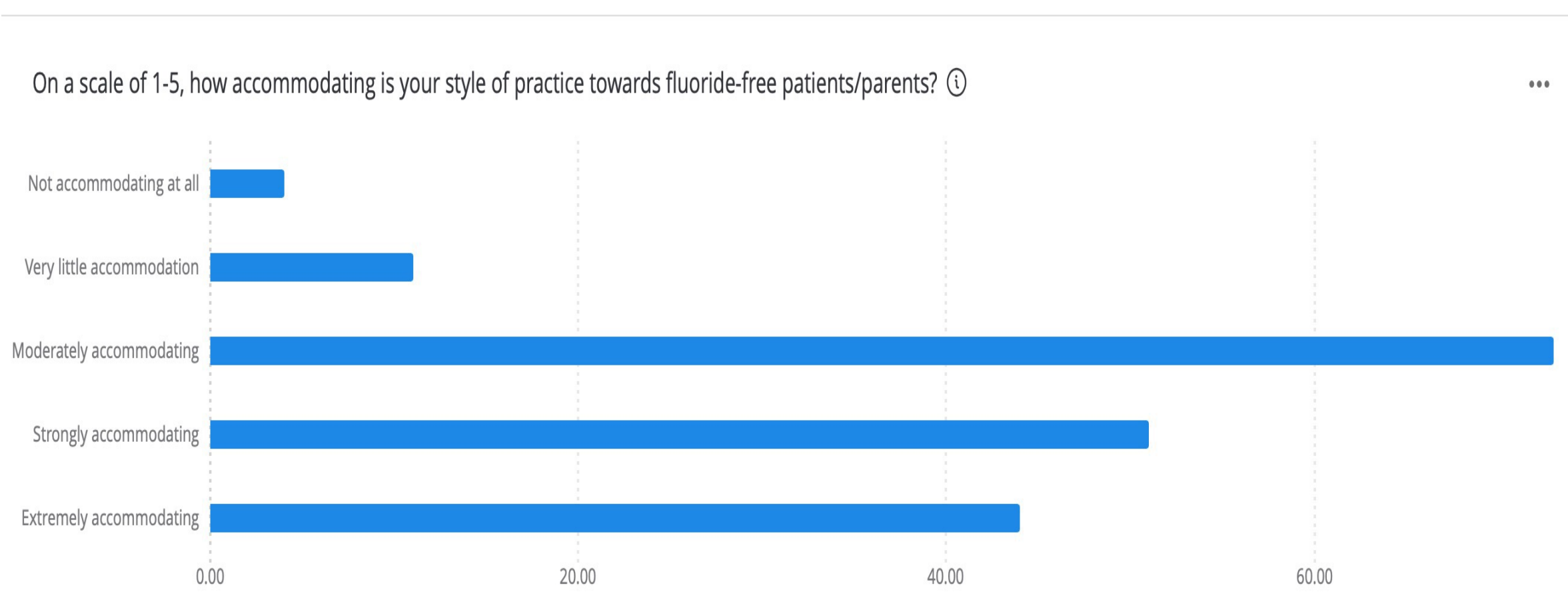
A listserv of the southeastern and western private practice pediatric dentists was obtained from the AAPD consisting of 6490 email addresses.

- A questionnaire comprised of 15 questions designed to gather statistics regarding acceptance and awareness of fluoride-free remineralizing agents was sent to each address using Qualtrics.
- The data was analyzed to assess trends in acceptance based on region of education and age.

RESULTS

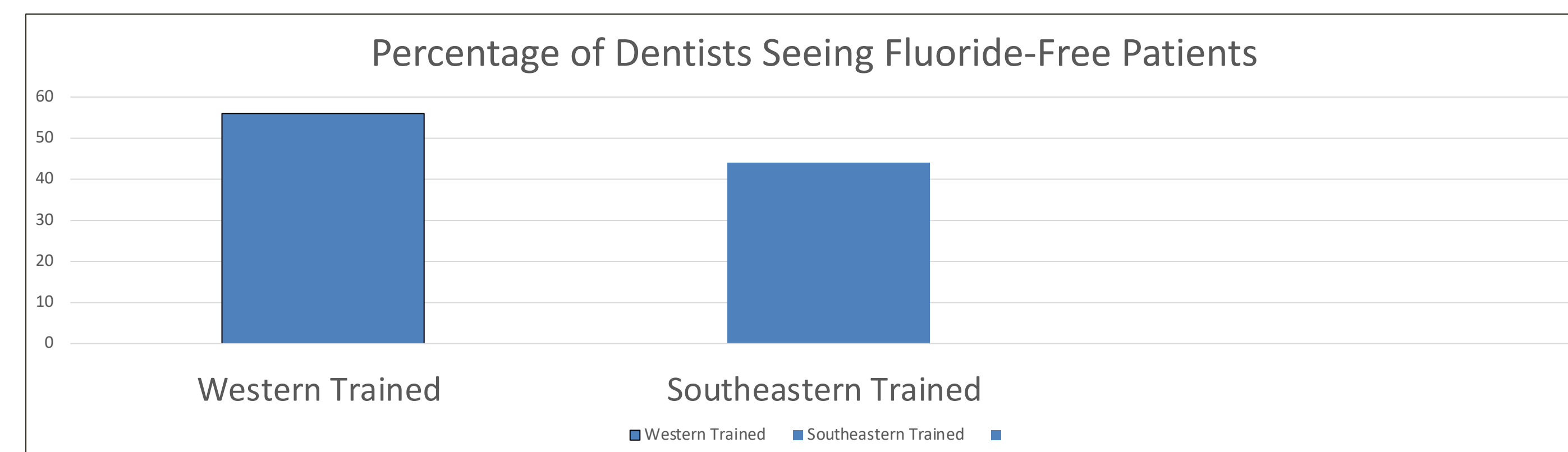
The survey’s return rate was 3.1% with a total of 204 responses

- From all the dentists surveyed, 6.8 percent said they do not tailor, or offer “very little accommodation” to fluoride free parents/patients.
- There was no statistical difference based on region of education and their personal accommodation towards fluoride-free parents.

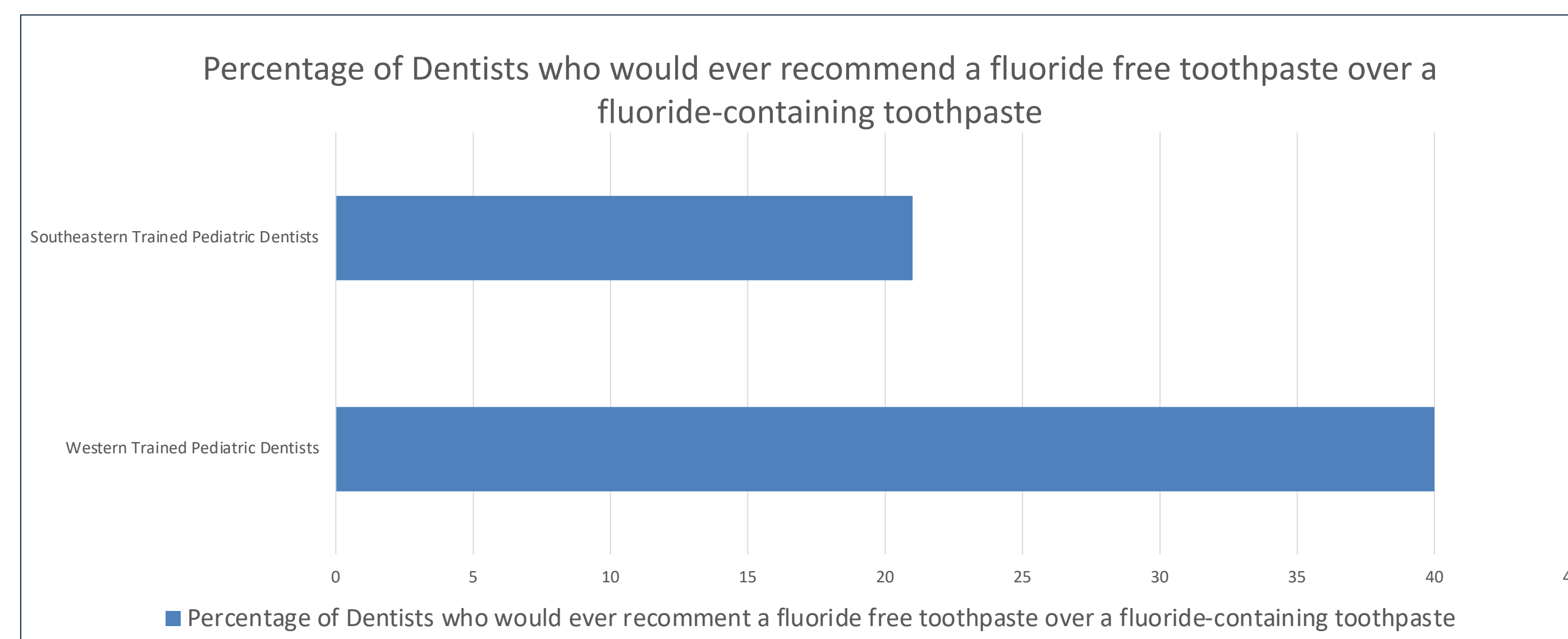


- 56% of western-trained pediatric dentists and 44% of southeastern-trained pediatric dentists reported having fluoride-free parents/patients either a “few times a day or a few times a week.”

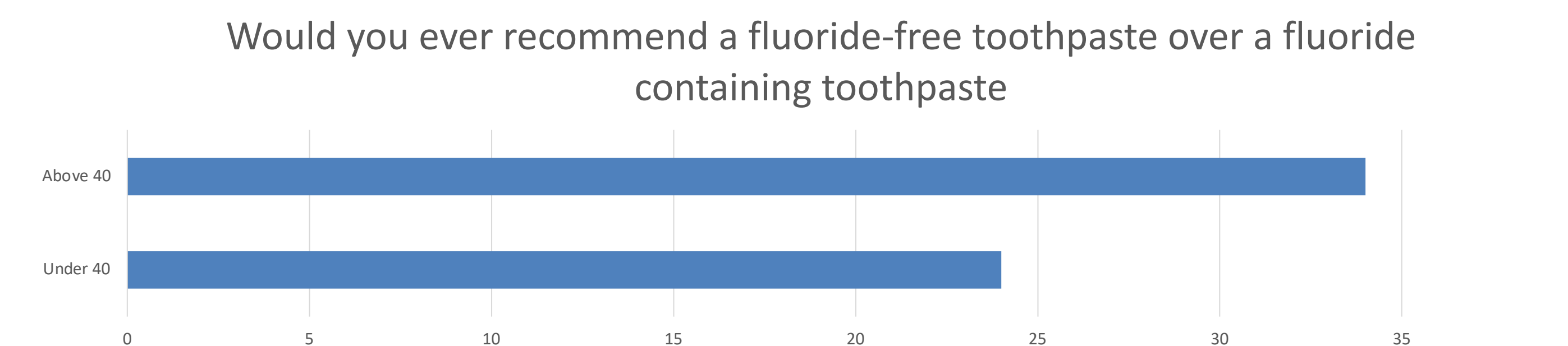
RESULTS



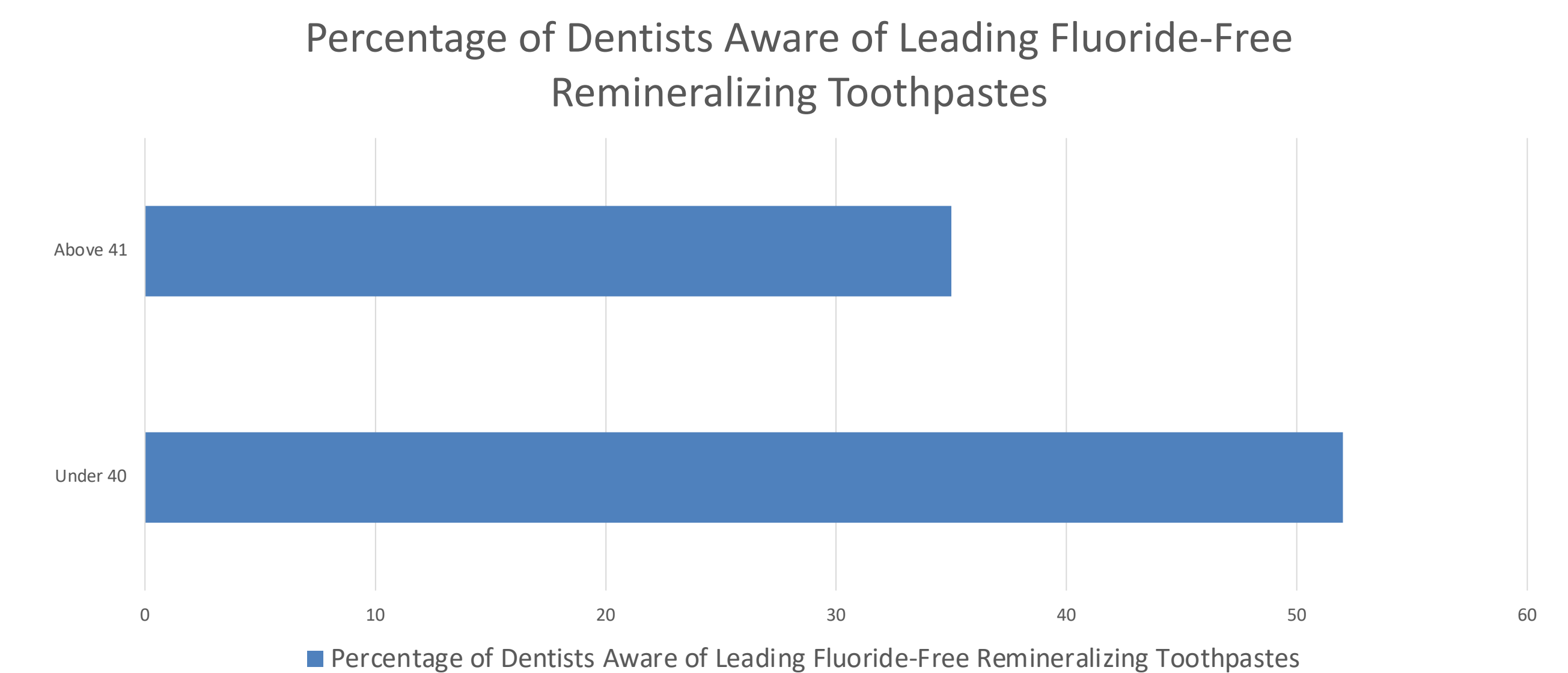
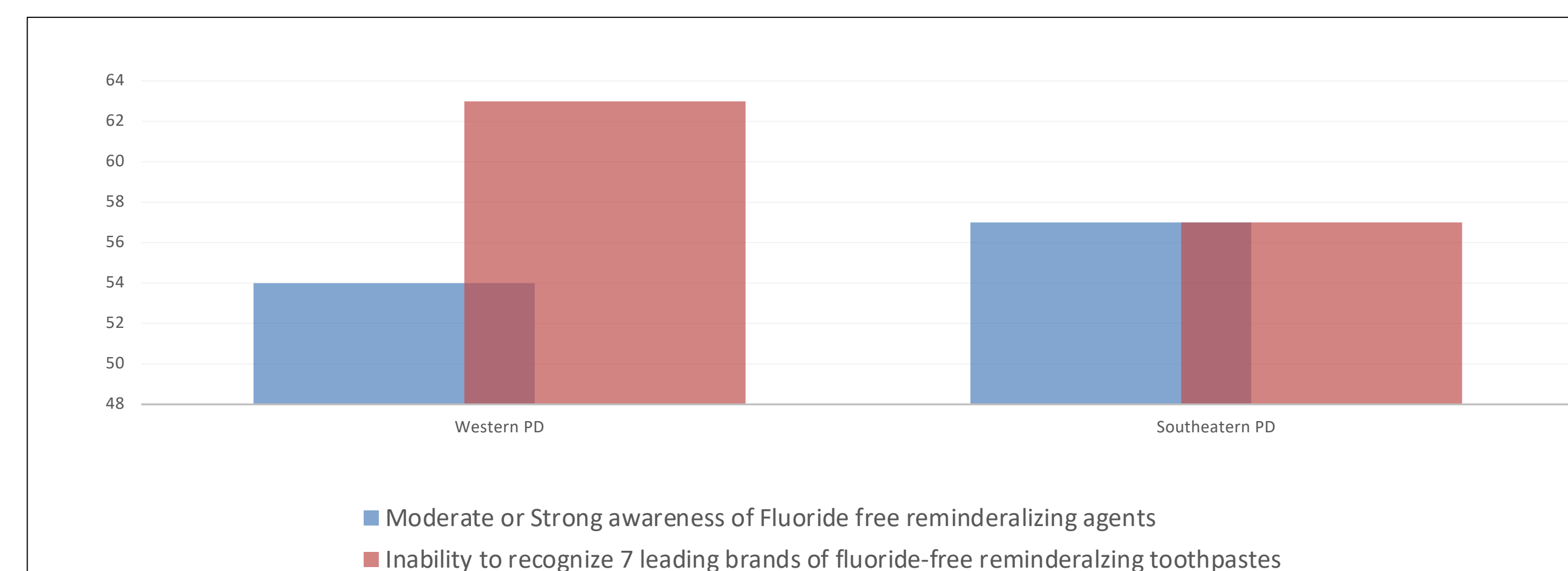
- 40% of all western trained dentists said they would recommend a fluoride-free toothpaste “all patients” regardless of their patients' fluoride beliefs, while only 21% of southeastern trained dentists said they would do the same.



- 24% of all pediatric dentists surveyed under the age of 40 said they would recommend a fluoride-free toothpaste over a fluoride containing toothpaste, while 34 % of pediatric dentists above the age of 41 dentists said they would recommend a fluoride-free toothpaste over a fluoride toothpaste.



- 54% of southeastern trained pediatric dentists and 57% of western trained pediatric dentists replied saying they have either moderate or strong awareness of fluoride free-alternative that remineralize enamel. Despite this, 63% percent of surveyed western trained dentists, and 57% of southeastern trained pediatric dentists, did not recognize 7 leading fluoride-free reminerlizing toothpastes brands.



- When questioned which brand of fluoride-free remineralizing toothpaste brands pediatric dentists had heard off(Risewell, Boka, Pearlie White, Kinder Karex, Grind, Dr. Raven’s Enrich, Peioscience) 52% of of pediatrics dentists under the age of 40 had heard of at least 1 brand. However, only 35% of pediatrics dentists above the age of 41 had heard of at least of the brands above.

Conclusions

- There is a growing resistance amongst certain populations towards fluoride-based products. This resistance can negatively impact the dentition of pediatric patients as a result.
- As healthcare providers, it is important to stay informed to current research in order to offer the best care possible to patients/parents who do not want their children using fluoride toothpastes.
- Region of practice/residency training and age can be a contributing factor towards opinion and exposure of fluoride-free remineralizing agents.
- The data gathered trends towards western-trained pediatric dentists to be more likely to recommend a fluoride-free toothpaste than a southeastern trained dentist.
- The data gathered also trends towards pediatric dentists over the age of 41 being more likely to recommend a fluoride-free toothpaste over a fluoride containing toothpaste when compared to pediatric dentists under the age of 40.