

Survey of Provider Attitudes and Opinions of Telehealth at TUSDM

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Introduction

Telehealth aims to fulfill the demands and necessities of providing healthcare to its consumers and has the power to transform the approach of healthcare (1,4). It promotes efforts to substantially improve the quality of healthcare by improving the availability and productivity by lessening the need to travel to a healthcare facility, in addition to offering clinical reinforcement, disabling geographic hindrances, providing several modes of communication equipment, and improving patient experiences (2,3).

Purpose

The primary objective of this study was to assess provider attitudes and opinions regarding telehealth at the Tufts University School of Dental Medicine (TUSDM). The secondary objective of the study was to compare the faculty, pre-doctoral students, and postdoctoral students at TUSDM in terms of their attitudes and opinions regarding telehealth.

Materials and Methods

A survey was developed and validated, and was sent to 849 predoctoral, postdoctoral students and faculty at TUSDM. The survey consisted of 13 questions regarding the participants’ professional background as well as their opinions and attitudes towards telehealth.

Results

Of the 849 survey recipients, 163 (19%) responded. Among the 161 usable surveys, 90 (56%) were predoctoral students, 42 (26%) were postdoctoral students and 29 (18%) were faculty. Fifty-four percent reported having completed at least one telehealth visit as a provider. Among this subset, 80% strongly agreed or agreed that telehealth is a good adjunct in providing care; 74% strongly agreed or agreed that telehealth has improved communication with patients. Among all respondents, 66% of the predoctoral students, 52% of the faculty and 41% of the postdoctoral students reported an opinion that patient preference for in-person visits may be one of the barriers to telehealth; this difference was statistically significant ($P=.025$).

Results

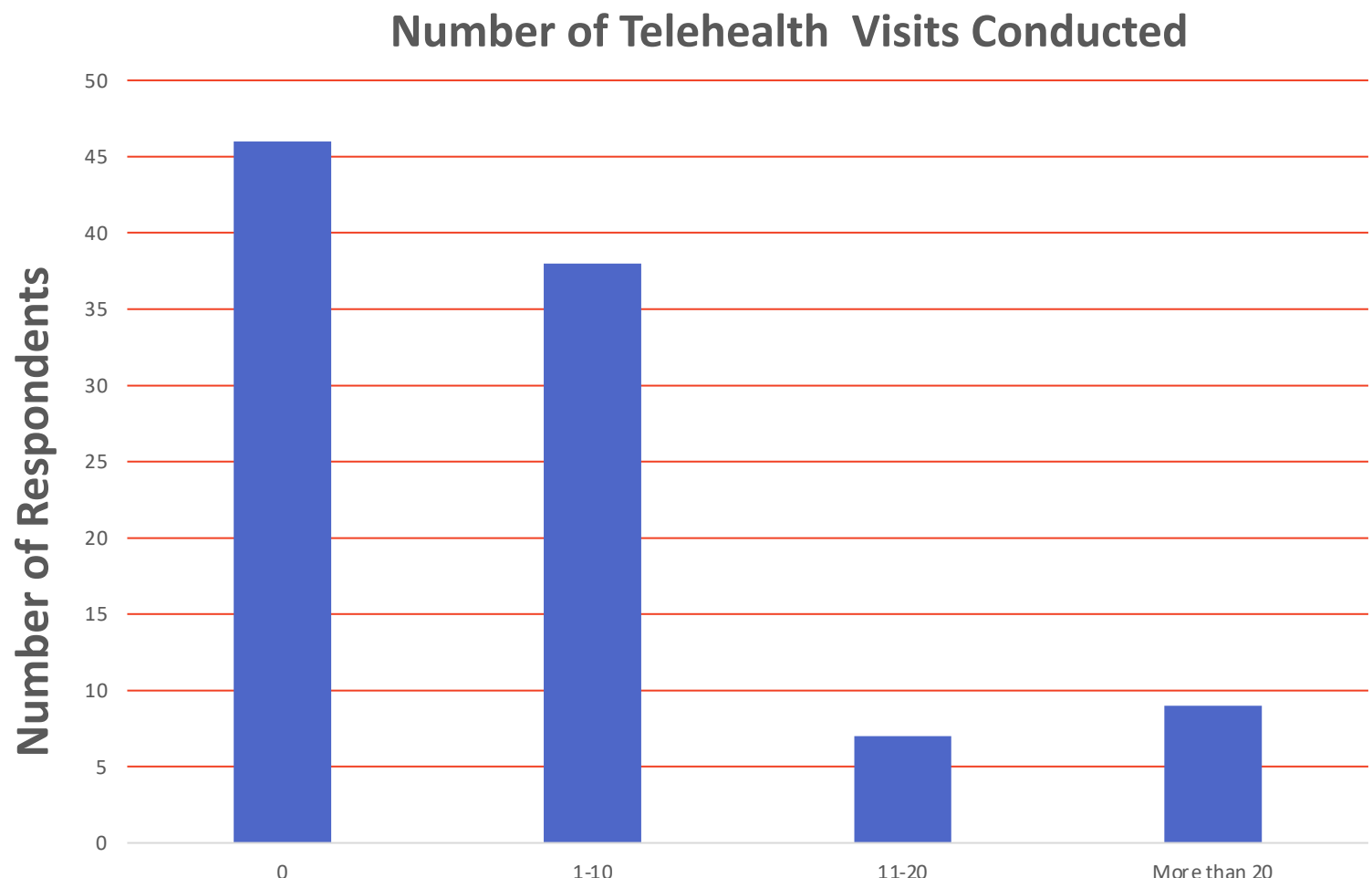


Figure 1: Number or Telehealth visits conducted by providers

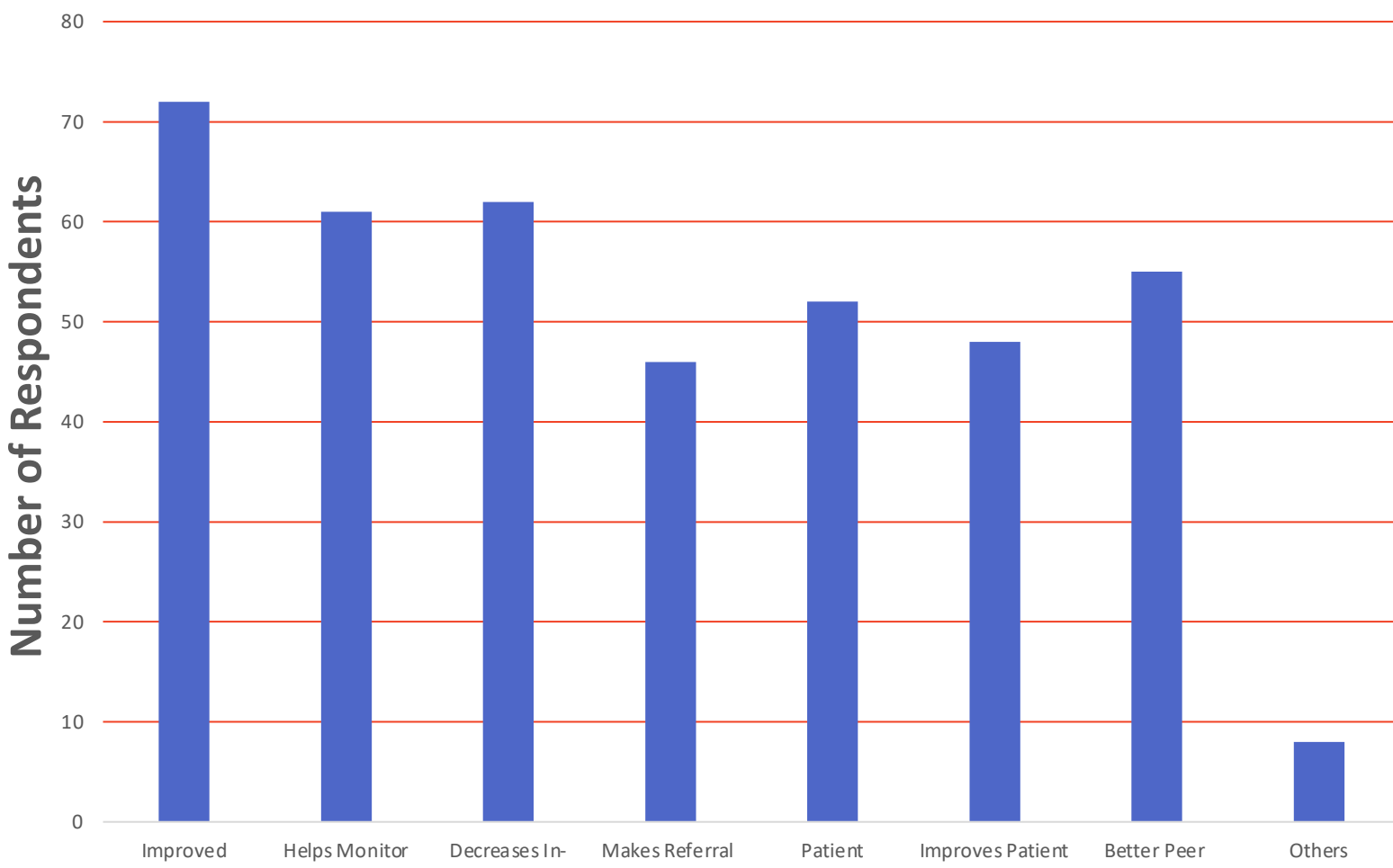


Figure 3: Telehealth advantages based on provider opinions

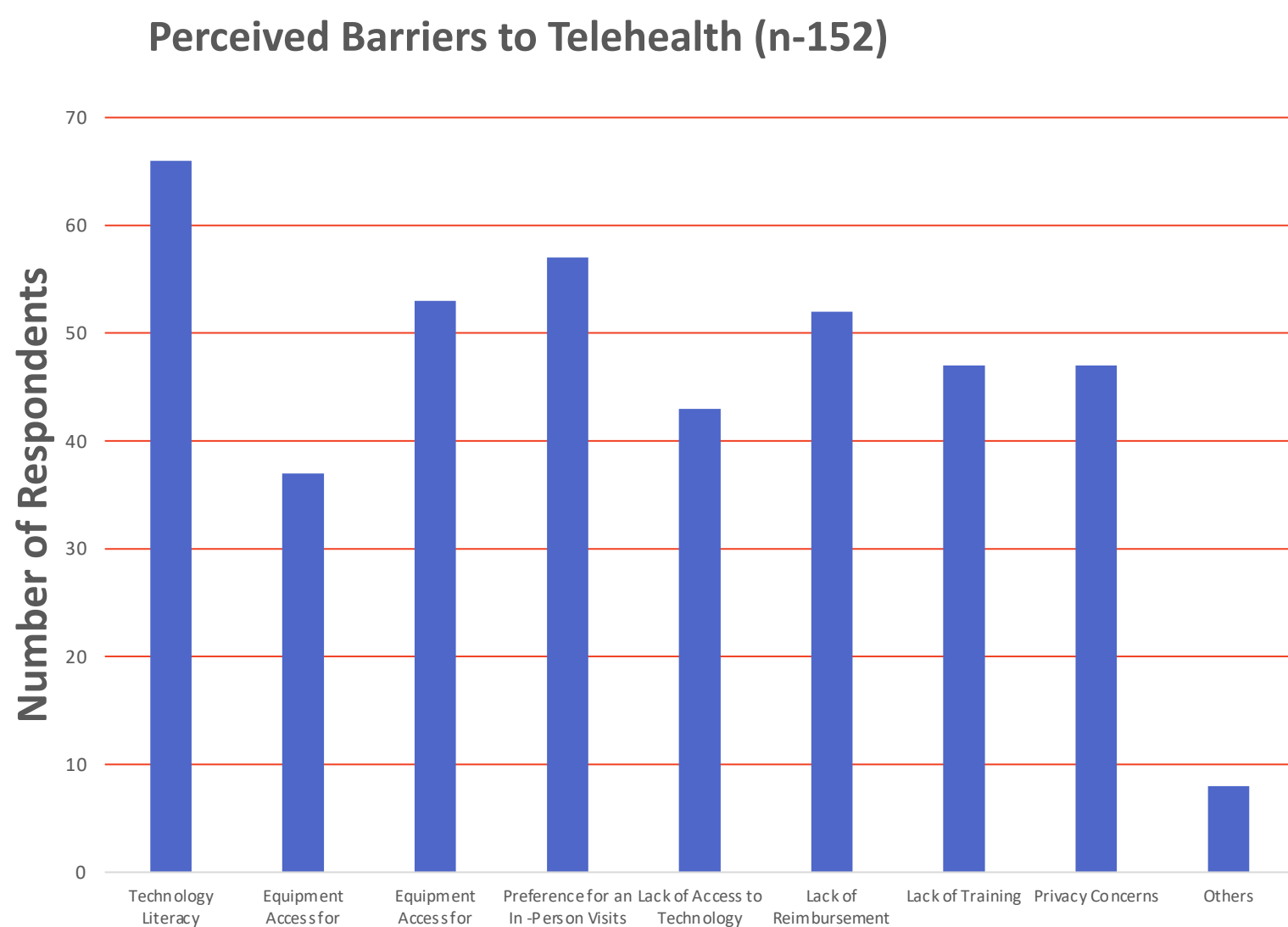


Figure 5: Telehealth barriers based on provider opinions

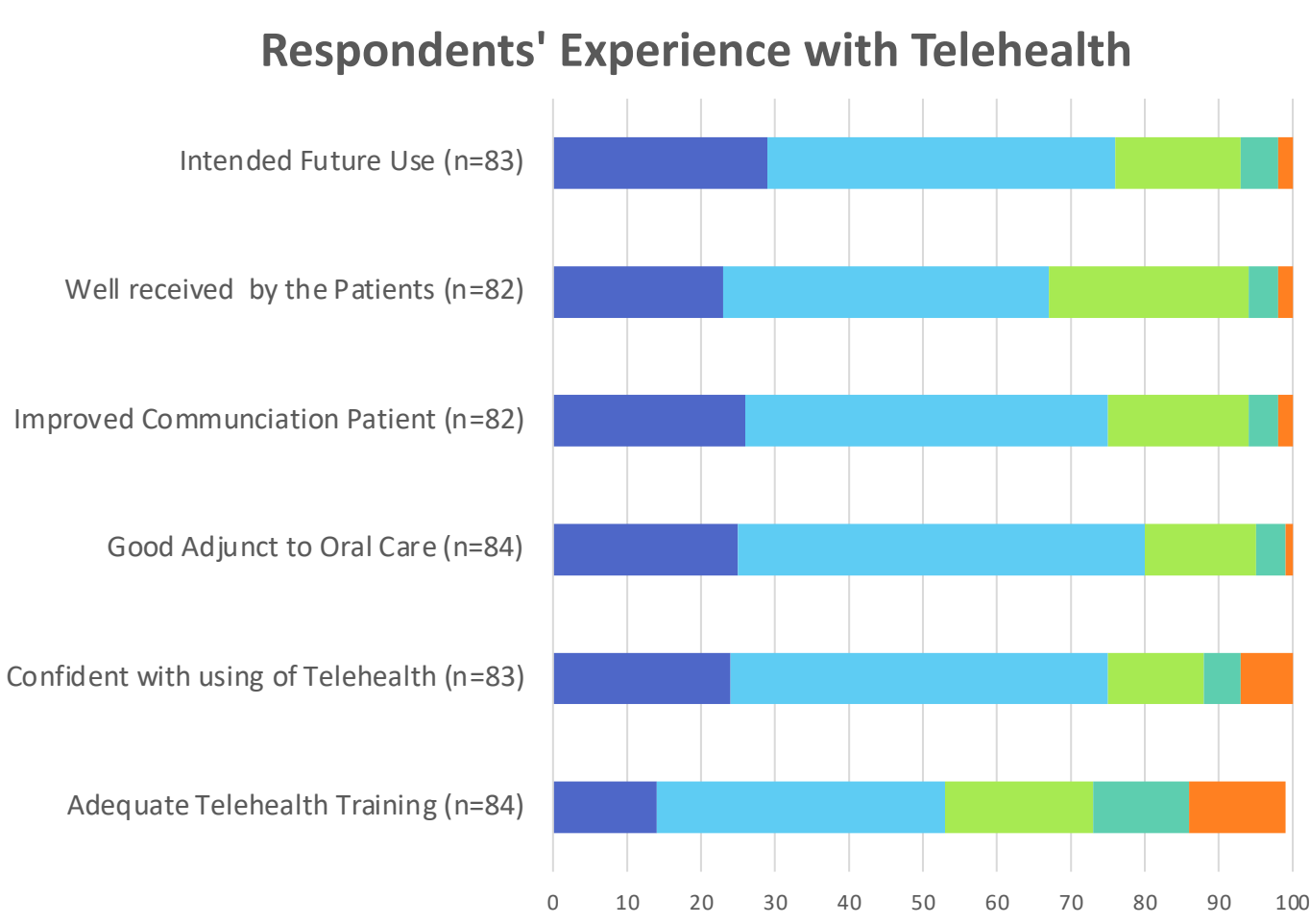


Figure 2: Opinions based on Telehealth experience

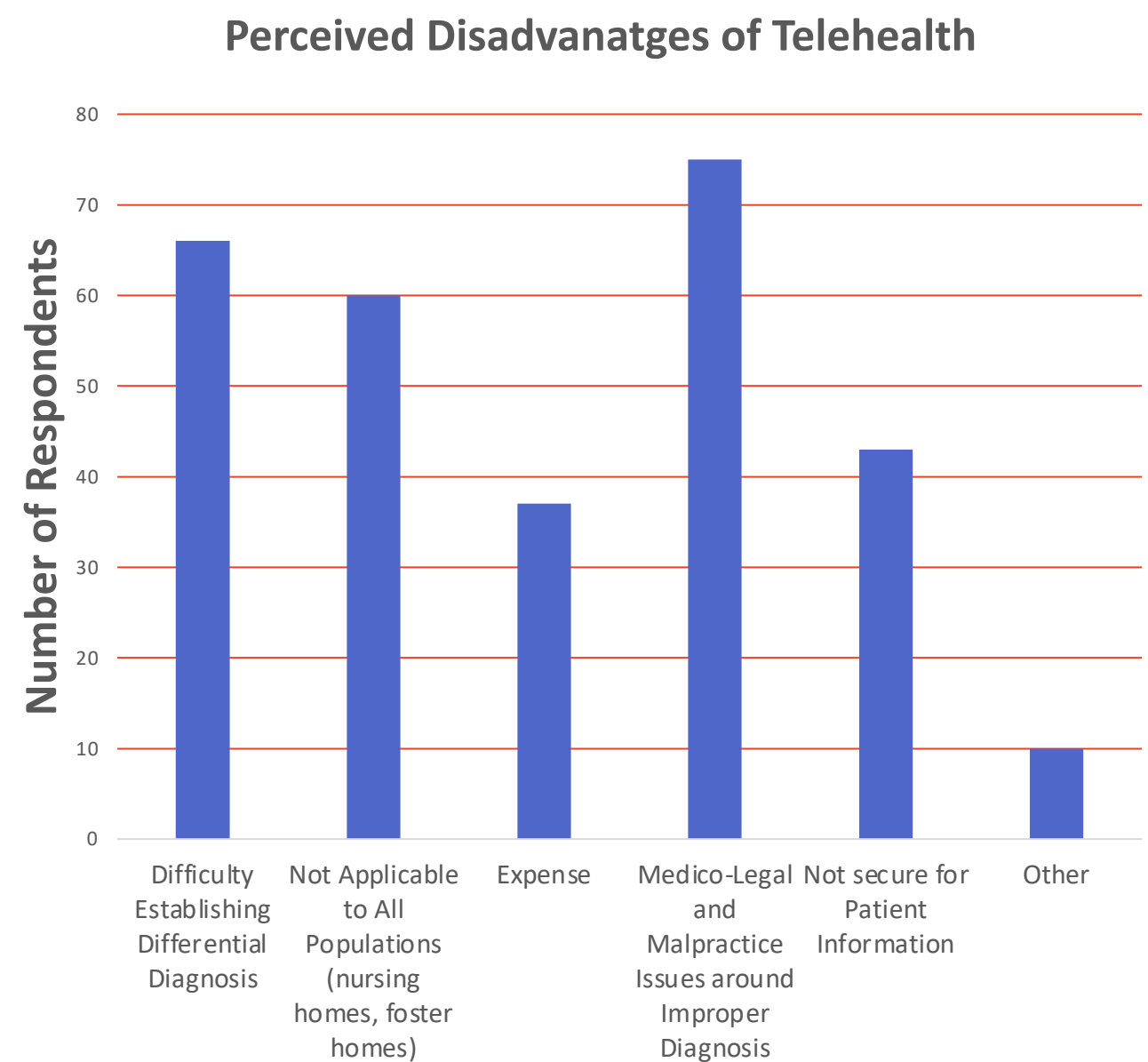


Figure 4: Telehealth disadvantages based provider opinions

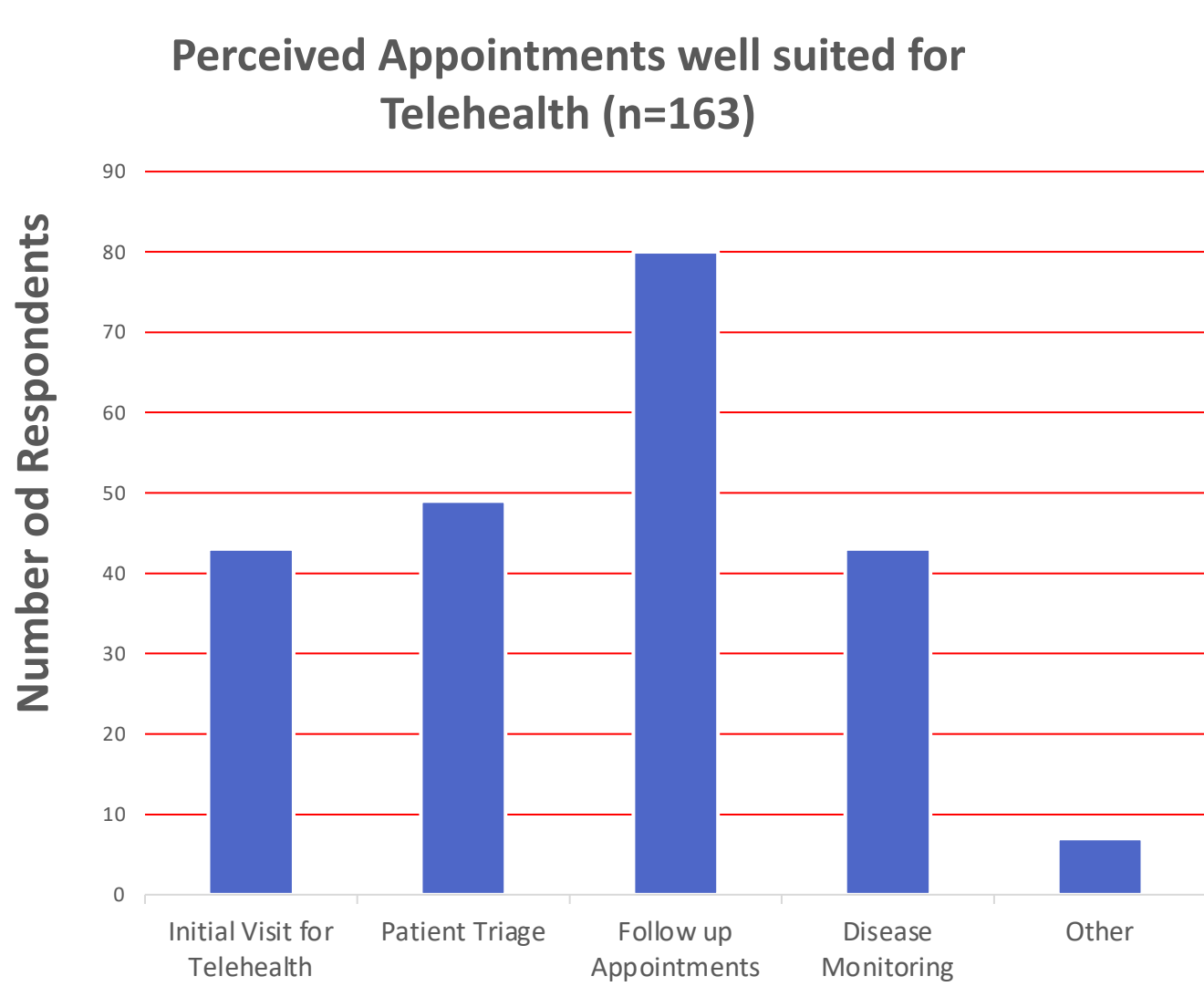


Figure 6: Most suited appointment type for Telehealth

Results

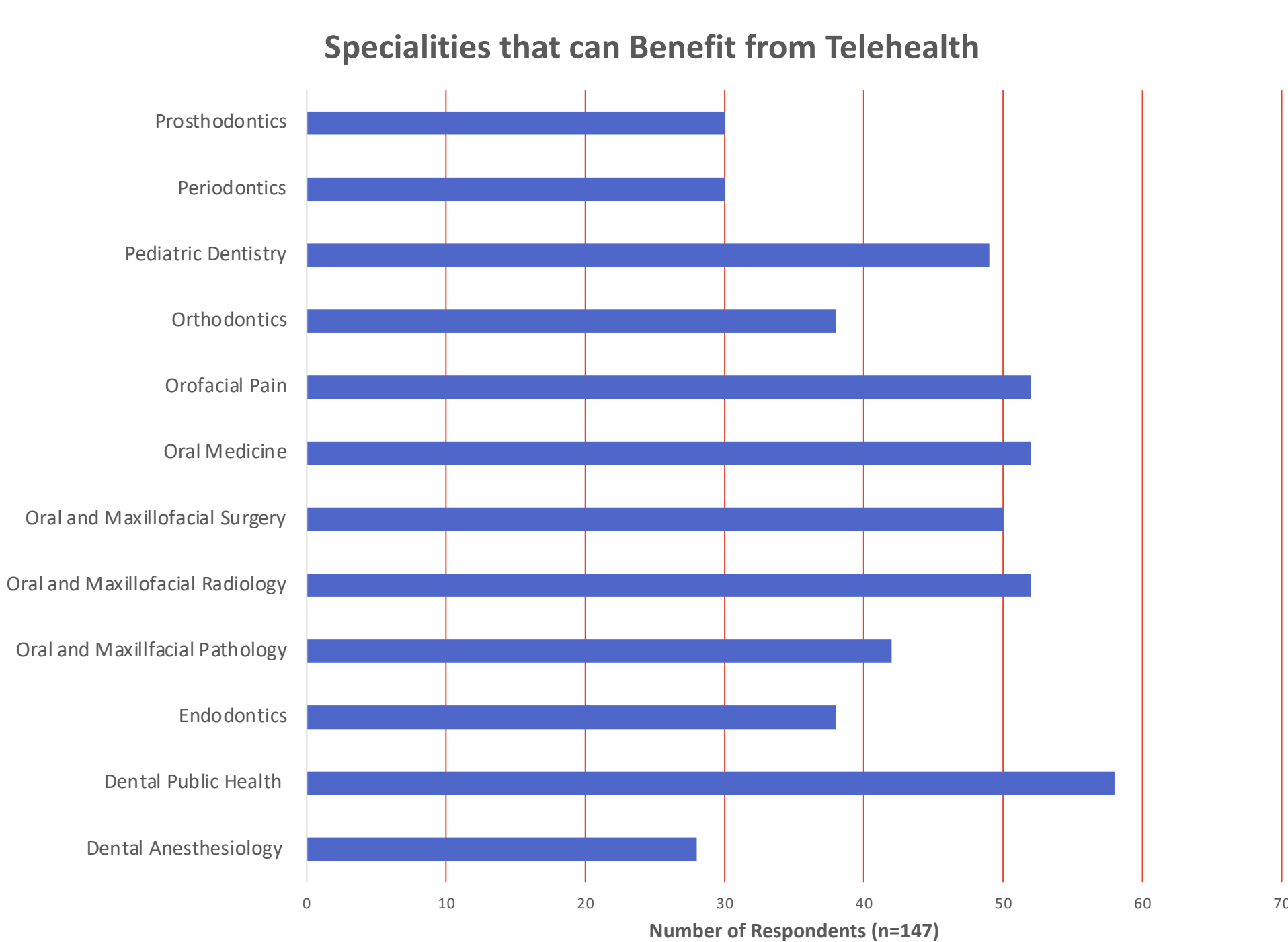


Figure 7: Specialties that benefit with Telehealth

Conclusion

Most dental providers at TUSDM reported positive opinions and attitudes regarding telehealth’s ability to improve communication and serve as an adjunct to providing care. Opinions on barriers to telehealth may vary among predoctoral students, postdoctoral students, and faculty.

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