



INTRODUCTION

Pediatric oral health care is recommended to begin at 1 year of age. Children who have a dental home are more likely to receive appropriate oral health care and improve the families' oral health knowledge and practices (1).

Parents often fail to bring their children for their first dental visit with some studies reported the average age of the first dental visit is 6-9 years old. (2)

While preventive measures are important for all patients, waiting to institute these measures at age 3 would be too late for patients at high risk of dental caries. The patient with ECC will require more dental care, incur more expense, and is likely to face a lifetime of caries (3)

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study is to identify possible barriers responsible for not seeking dental care utilization by parents/guardians of pediatric dental patients.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Site: Anonymous surveys were administered to the parents/guardians of children 5 years old or younger who came to the Naples Children and Education Foundation (NCEF) Pediatric Dental Center for their first dental visit or first recall appointment.

Population: Parents/Guardians of children that presented to NCEF from DECEMBER 2020- FEBRUARY 2022.

Instrument: A survey of eight questions was administered to those parents who consented to participate in the study. Information regarding demographics and potential barriers to care were gathered by one of the researchers in the Education Room at NCEF-Pediatric Dental Center.

Data Analysis: Descriptive, univariate and bivariate analysis was conducted to identify the barriers for seeking care by caregivers of pediatric dental patients. Multiple logistic regression was conducted to identify the predictor variables for parents that delay their children's dental visits.

• Approved by University of Florida Health Science Center (IRB202100321)

RESULTS

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics. NCEF 2021-2022		
Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
*Mother		
<29	40	40.4
30-34	31	31.3
35+	28	28.3
**Child		
1 year old	41	41.4
2 years old	42	42.4
3 years old	9	9.1
4 years old and more	7	7.1
Employment Status of the Parent/Guardian		
Unemployed	45	45.5
Employed:	54	54.5
Full Time	33	33.3
Part Time	19	19.2
Parent/Guardian Highest Level of Education		
Graduate School	18	18.2
Some College	17	17.2
High School	43	43.4
Less than School	21	21.2
*mean age (±SD) = 31.81(±5.72)		
** mean age (±SD) = 1.87(±1.02)		

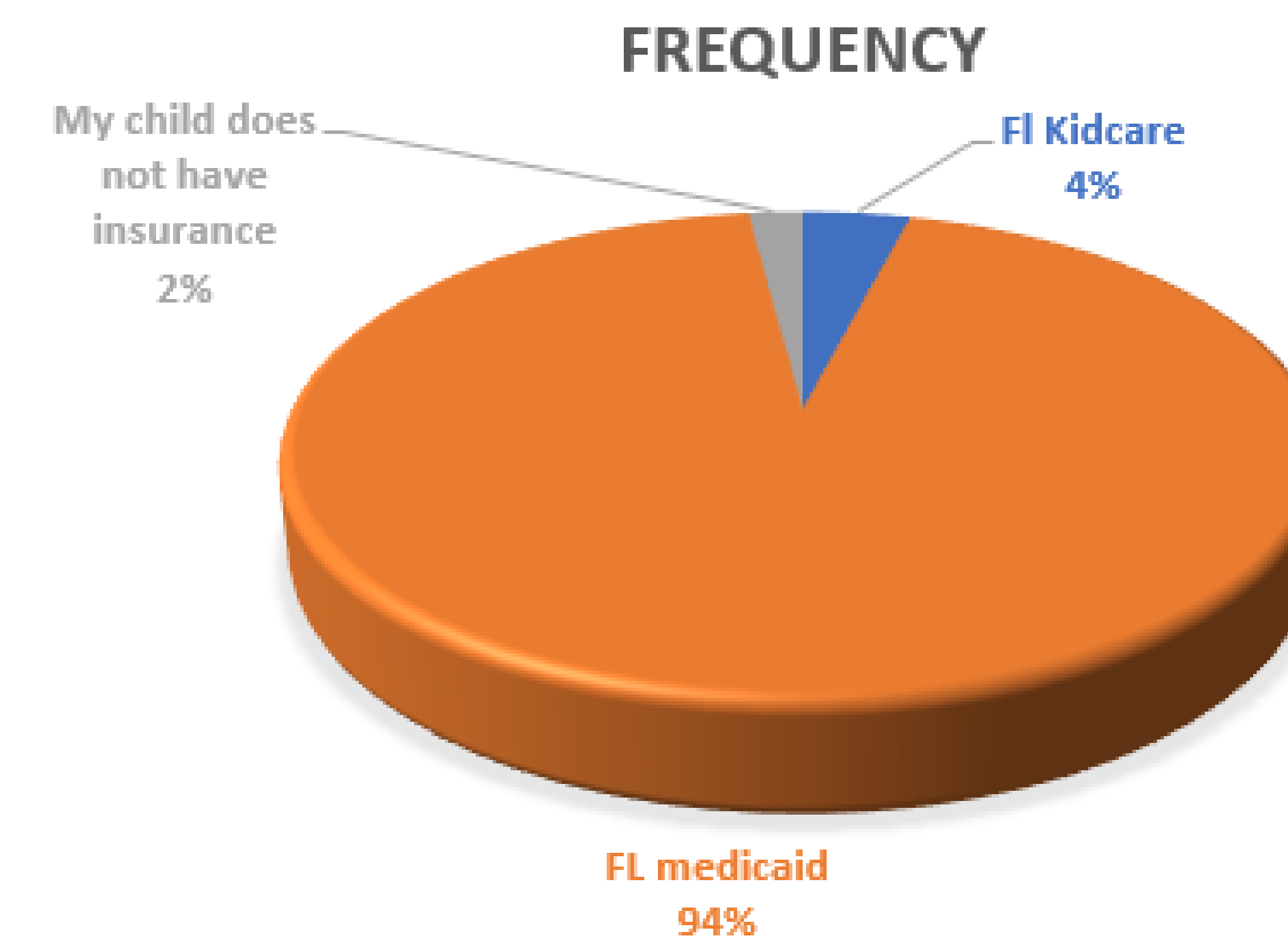


Table 2. Main reasons for seeking dental care before 1 year of age.		
Reasons	Frequency (%)	Chi ² (p-value)
Referral by a pediatrician	At 1 year of age	3.5 (0.04)
	After 1 year of age	
Employment	Unemployed	14.3 (0.001)
	Employed	

Table 3. Predictors for Parent/Guardian seeking dental care of the Child before 1 year old. Multiple Logistic Regression Analysis.		
PREDICTORS	ODDS RATIOS	95% Confidence
Employed	0.23*	0.095-0.556
Referral by the pediatrician	0.476	0.165-1.374

CONCLUSIONS

- The significant variables after bi-variate analysis for visiting the pediatric dentist at the suggested time were: pediatrician recommendation, school requirement and employment status of the parent.
- After logistic regression analysis there was only one significant variable: current employment status.
- The main predictor for children having the first dental visit before one-year-old or less was Parents/guardians who are unemployed are more likely to bring their children into the dentist sooner than parents/guardians who are employed.

REFERENCES

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Research supported by the Naples Children Education Foundation (NCEF) and University of Florida Pediatric Dentistry Department