

Cost Savings Related to Sealants in Alabama Medicaid Children

Kimberly Borges, DDS; Stephen Mitchell DMD | UAB School of Dentistry, Pediatric Department

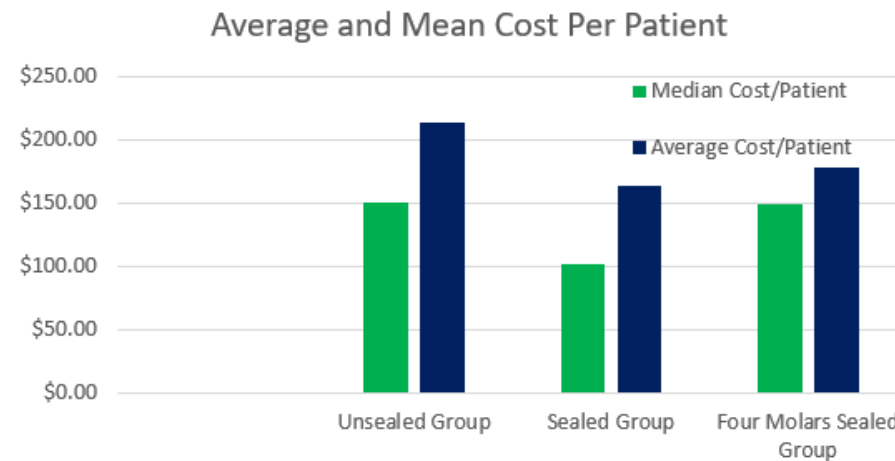
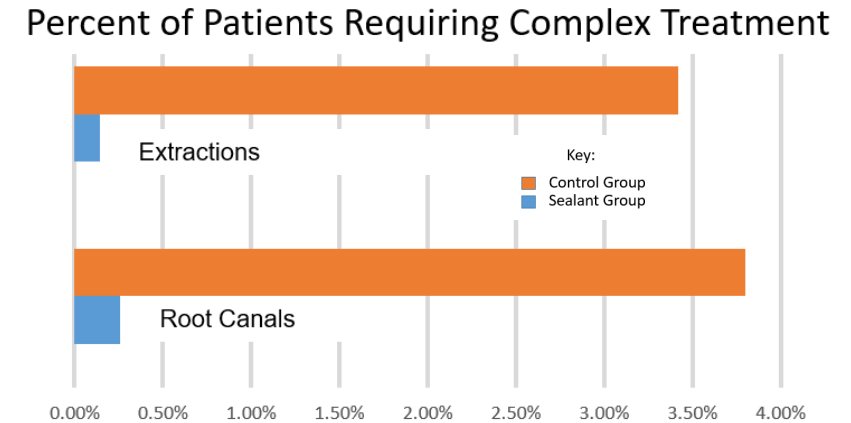
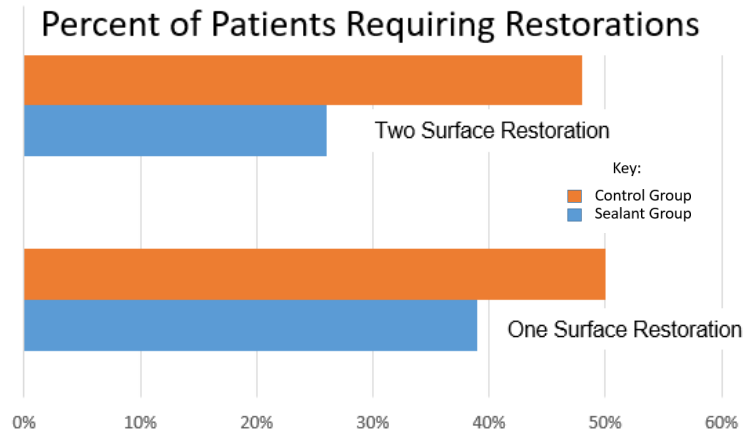
Introduction:

According to the CDC, in 2011-2012 children aged 6-11 years had experienced dental caries in permanent teeth.¹ Among those, pit and fissure caries are disproportionately higher than smooth surfaces caries in the school aged population.² With sufficient evidence for the efficacy of dental sealants in the prevention of pit and fissure caries, this dental service remains underutilized by dental professionals. The population with lowest dental sealant prevalence is non-Hispanic black children compared with Hispanic, non-Hispanic white, and Asian children.³ In addition to preventing caries, sealants have also proven to produce cost savings if placed on patients during periods of greatest risk. The push for third party payers to cover cost of sealants along with replacement and repair continues to be an aim of the AAPD. The purpose of the study was to determine the restorative cost savings of Alabama Medicaid children who received sealants compared with those who did not receive dental sealants.

Methods:

Dental claims from continuously enrolled children in Alabama Medicaid aged 5 to 7 years old were analyzed into two separate cohorts. The sealant group (SG) received sealants and the control group (CG) did not. The study focused on the subsequent restorative cost for teeth #3, #14, #19, and #30.

Results:



Conclusion:

1. Patients in the sealant group were less likely to require subsequent treatment.
2. Of the patients who required subsequent treatment, the severity of disease was reduced including fewer root canals, extractions, and full coverage restorations.
3. The cost to the Medicaid system was significantly less per patient if patients received sealants than those who never had sealants placed.

Acknowledgements:

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References:

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3. Dye BA, Thornton-Evans G, Li X, Iafolla TJ. Dental caries and sealant prevalence in children and adolescents in the United States, 2011-2012. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db191.htm>