

# Barriers to Dental Usage for WIC Enrollees at Sunset Park Family Health Center Brooklyn, NY



Aaron Shea DDS, Jasmine Chopra DDS, Raghbir Kaur DMD  
NYU Langone Hospitals-Advanced Education in Pediatric Dentistry, Brooklyn, NY  
Hansjorg Wyss Department of Plastic Surgery, Division of Dental Medicine, NYU School of Medicine

NYU Langone Dental Postdoctoral  
Residency Programs

## INTRODUCTION

- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides access to food, nutritional counseling, and referrals to social and health services
- Enrollees of the WIC program may be at high caries risk compared to the general population due to low SES and racial minority status
- Barriers to oral health care access may continue to prevent dental care usage by WIC enrollees due to lack of insurance coverage, lack of transportation, lack of child support, difficulty taking time off from work, and poor oral health literacy

## PURPOSE

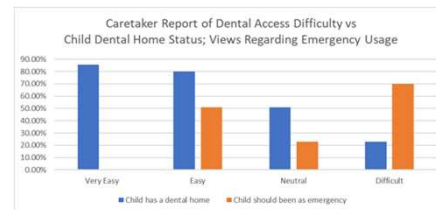
- To identify the prevalence of factors that limit oral healthcare among WIC participants at Sunset Park Family Health Center at NYU Langone, Brooklyn
- To identify interventions and clinical workflows to improve access to oral health care utilization among WIC participants at Sunset Park Family Health Center at NYU Langone, Brooklyn
- To identify predictors of self-reported oral health care within the past year among WIC participants at Sunset Park Family Health Center at NYU Langone, Brooklyn

## METHODS

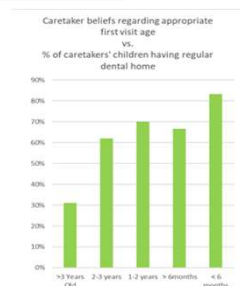
- A questionnaire of 34 items was administered to consenting WIC enrollees
- Study sample was N=115 caregivers of WIC enrolled children aged 1-5 years
- Two-sample t-tests were used for comparisons of continuous variables between two groups
- ANOVA was used for comparison of continuous variables between more than three groups
- Chi-squared tests were used for comparison of categorical variables between groups

## RESULTS

- Caretaker **perception of the relative ease of accessing dental services** was significantly associated with their perceptions of how often their child should be seen by a dentist.



- Level of completed schooling** of caretakers was significantly and positively correlated with increasing likelihood of having a regular dentist for both the caretaker and child.
  - Higher degree achievement was positively correlated with caregiver dentist status (correlation coefficient= 0.32, p=0.0005) and child dentist status (correlation coefficient=0.19; p=0.05)



- Parents' beliefs about appropriate first visit age** and appropriate periodicity of recall visit were found to be significantly associated with whether the child was reported to have a regular dentist

## RESULTS

The two most common barriers to care were:

- Perception that the caretaker's child was **too young** to need a dentist (33%)
- Perception that dental care is too expensive/ or **caretaker unable to pay for treatment** (30%)

Barrier	Frequency
My child is young and does not need the dentist	38 (33.0%)
Expensive/ unable to pay for the treatment	35 (30.4%)
Unable to find appointment time	23 (20.0%)
My child doesn't sit in the chair for treatment	21 (18.3%)
Unable to find time off work	19 (16.5%)
The waiting time is too long	17 (14.8%)
My dentist doesn't treat little children	13 (11.3%)
Dental clinic is not open at hour when I can go	12 (10.4%)
Nobody answers the phone when I try to make	12 (10.4%)
My child had a bad experience at the dental clinic	12 (10.4%)
I am not sure where to find a dentist	8 (7.0%)
Office is too far and I can't travel	6 (5.2%)
Childcare is not available for my other children	4 (3.5%)
The dentist office staff do not speak my language	4 (3.5%)
No insurance	2 (1.7%)

## CONCLUSIONS

- The most commonly reported barriers to dental utilization by caretakers were young patient age, prohibitive costs associated with dental care, and inability to find appointment time
- Higher academic achievement was positively associated with both Sunset Park WIC enrollee caretaker dental utilization and the dental utilization of their children.
- The beliefs about dental visit importance for children, and dental visit periodicity were associated with the establishment of a dental home
- WIC enrollees at Sunset Park Family Health Center Brooklyn, NY may benefit from interventions that provide recommended timing for establishing a dental home and providing information regarding minimal EPSDT Medicaid coverage for dental care.

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