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## Background

In the United States, mental health disorders, are increasing at a startling rate. The PHQ-9 is a screening tool that has been shown to have a high sensitivity and specificity in pediatric primary care settings. There is a limited amount of evidence regarding depression screening in non-primary care or mental health settings and even less in dental clinics.

## Objective

The aims of this study are to investigate the prevalence of depression amongst adolescent patients at Yale Pediatric Dental Clinic; to improve patients' oral health by assessing their mental health; and to evaluate the need for improved mental health and crisis intervention training amongst pediatric dental residents.

## Methods

- ❖ One hundred adolescents aged 12-17 were administered the PHQ-9 survey as well as a background survey.
- ❖ The scores were tabulated and the patient was classified as no or minimal depression (score 0-4), mild depression (score 5-9), moderate depression (10-14), moderately severe depression (15-19) or severe depression (20+).
- ❖ Based on the score the patient was given a depression classification and the resident then distributed mental health resources or made an internal referral to behavioral health.

## Results

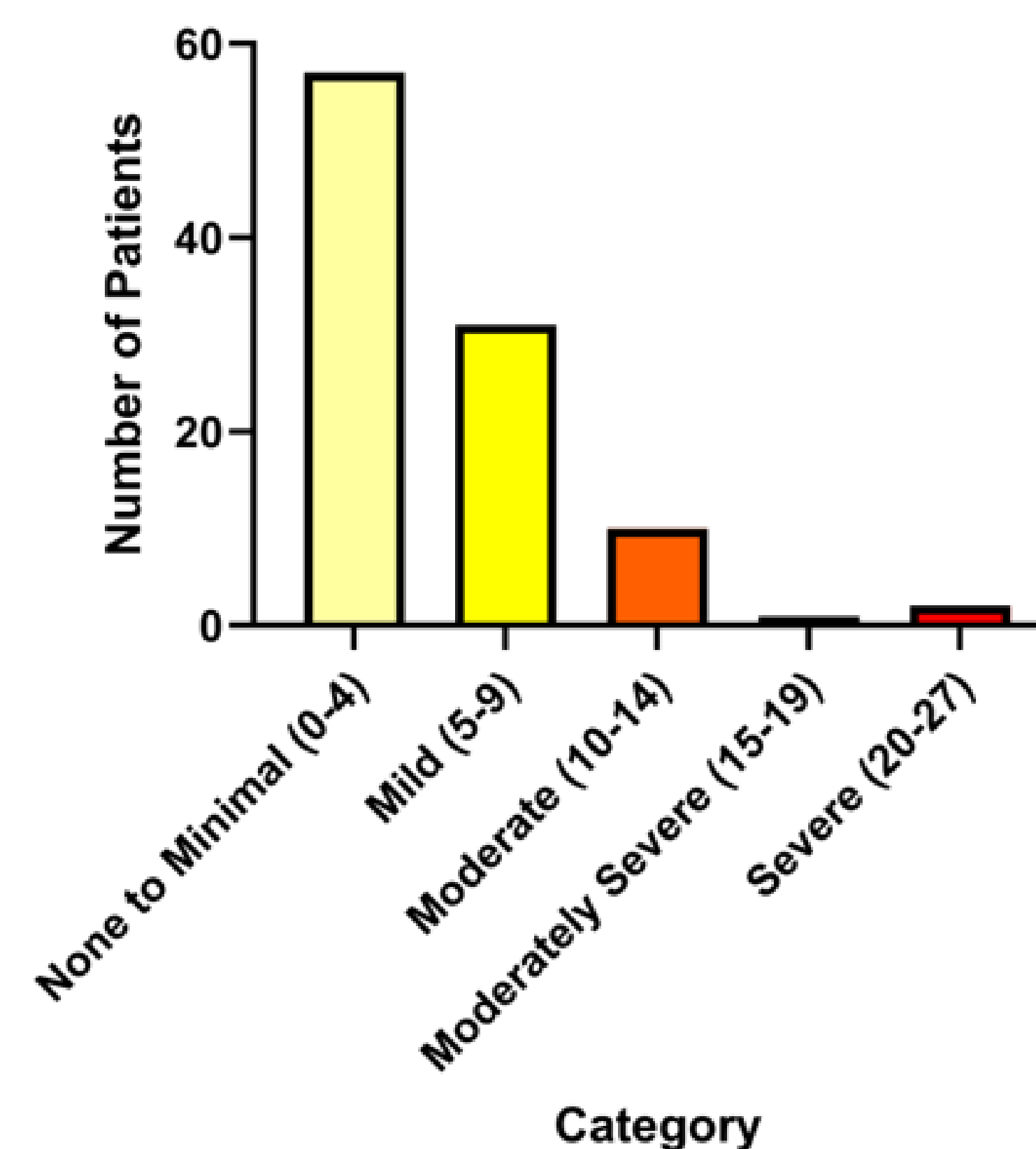


Figure 1. Prevalence of depression based on PHQ-9 scores

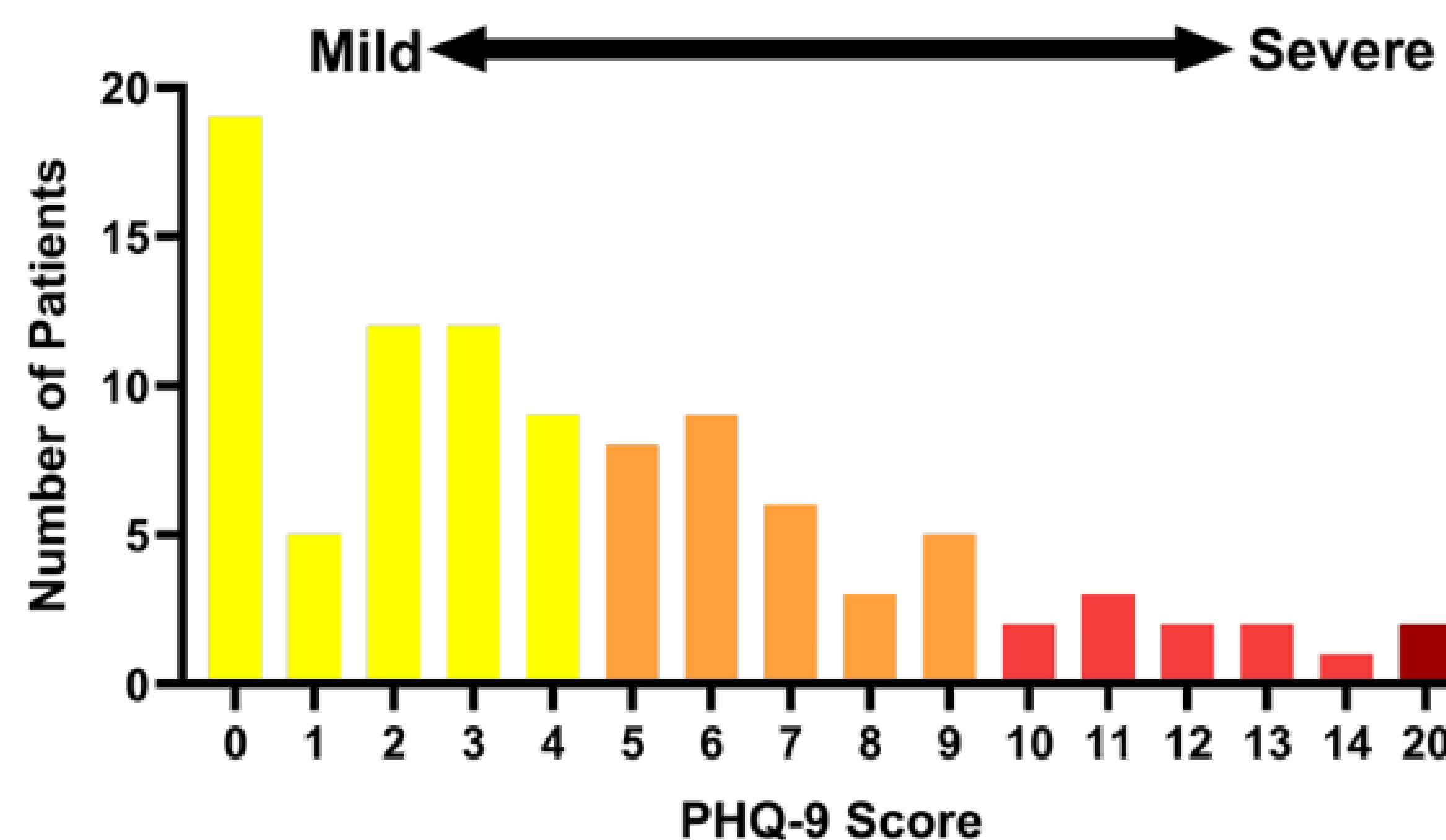


Figure 2. Distribution of patient scores on PHQ-9

## Key Findings & Implications

- ❖ 43% of participants scored  $\geq 5$  on the PHQ-9 . 12% of participants scored  $\geq 10$  indicating at least moderate depressive symptoms.
- ❖ There were no statistically significant differences in race or ethnicity, with statistically significant differences in gender. The transgender group reported higher PHQ-9 scores compared to men and women.
- ❖ Patients currently seeing a mental health provider had significantly higher depressive symptoms with a p-value of 0.006. Patients with a history of depression diagnosis had significantly higher PHQ-9 score compared to those without a diagnosis (mean difference = 4.89 points).

## Conclusion

**This study showed that the prevalence of mild depression among adolescents at the Yale Pediatric Dental Clinic is high. This study highlights the need for additional training in mental health conditions and resources for pediatric dental residents across the nation.**

## References

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