

“Parental Decision-Making: Endodontic Therapy vs Extraction in Permanent Molars”

Yani Rizo, DMD

Cooper University Hospital, Camden, NJ Pediatric Dentistry Residency Program

Introduction

Deep caries in permanent molars frequently requires a complex treatment decision in pediatric patients, often involving a choice between extraction and endodontic therapy.¹

Although preservation of permanent teeth is generally the preferred clinical approach, parental decision-making does not always align with this goal. Treatment choices are commonly influenced by prior dental experiences, perceived longevity of treatment, cost considerations, and access to care.²⁻⁴

In pediatric populations, where parents serve as primary decision-makers, understanding these influencing factors is essential. However, there is limited evidence specifically evaluating how these variables impact parental choices when managing permanent molars with extensive caries.⁵

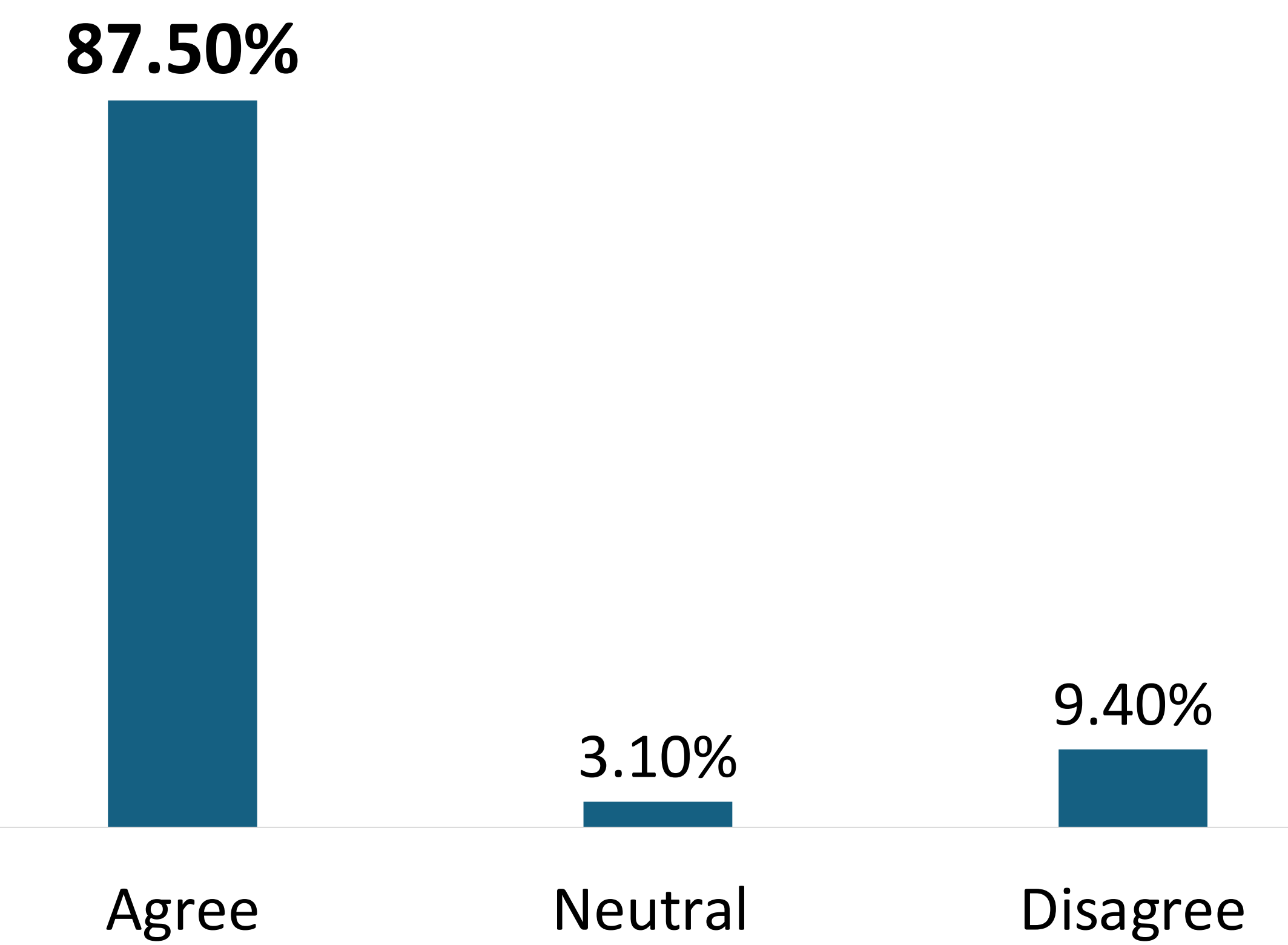
Objective

To evaluate factors influencing parental choice between extraction and root canal treatment for permanent molars in children.

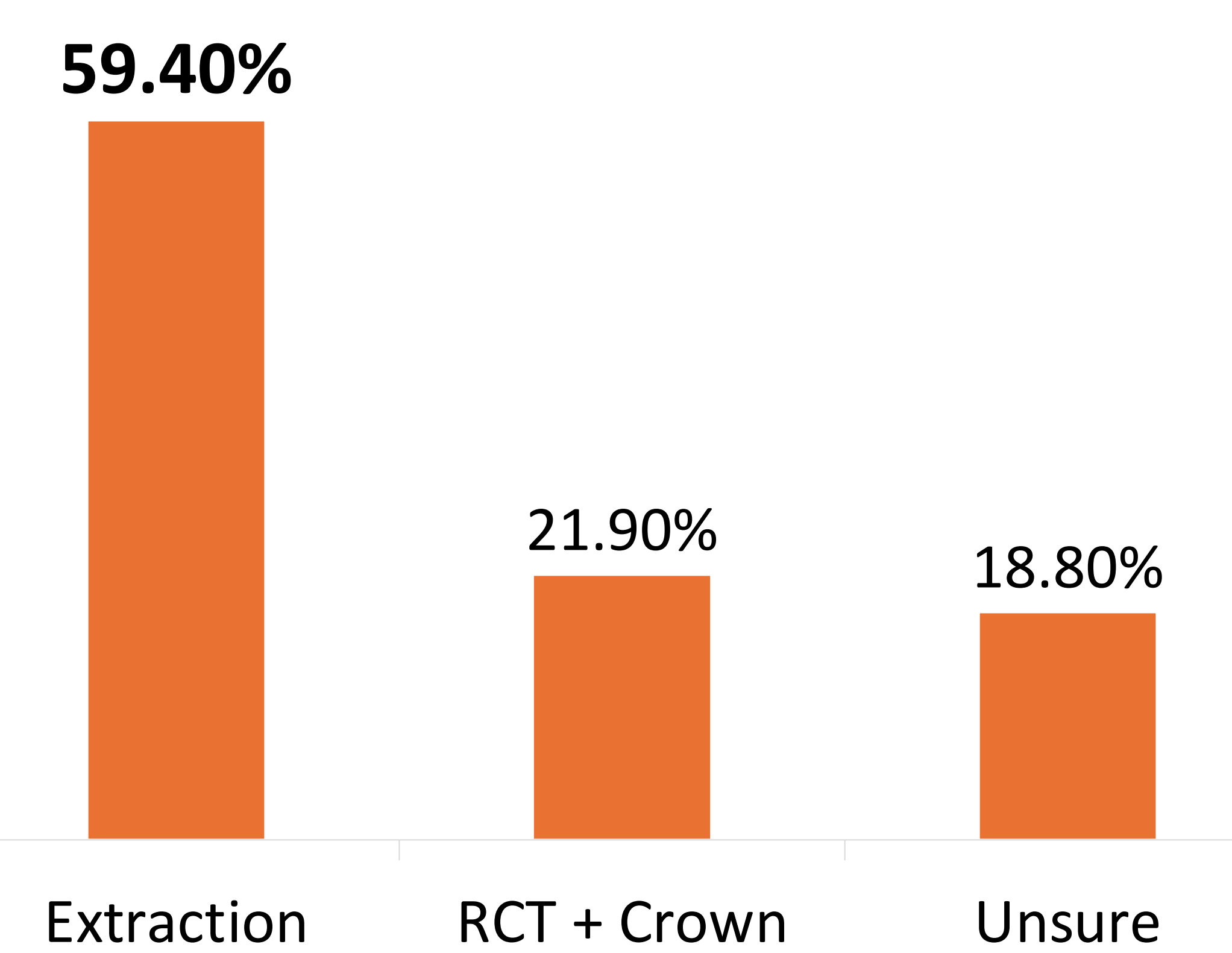
Methods

- Cross-sectional, single-site survey
- Parents/guardians of children (ages 6–14)
- Conducted at Pediatric Dental Associates – Cherry Hill
- Anonymous questionnaire (English/Spanish)
- Assessed:
 - Treatment preference
 - Prior dental experience
 - Decision-making factors
- n = 32
- Descriptive statistics used

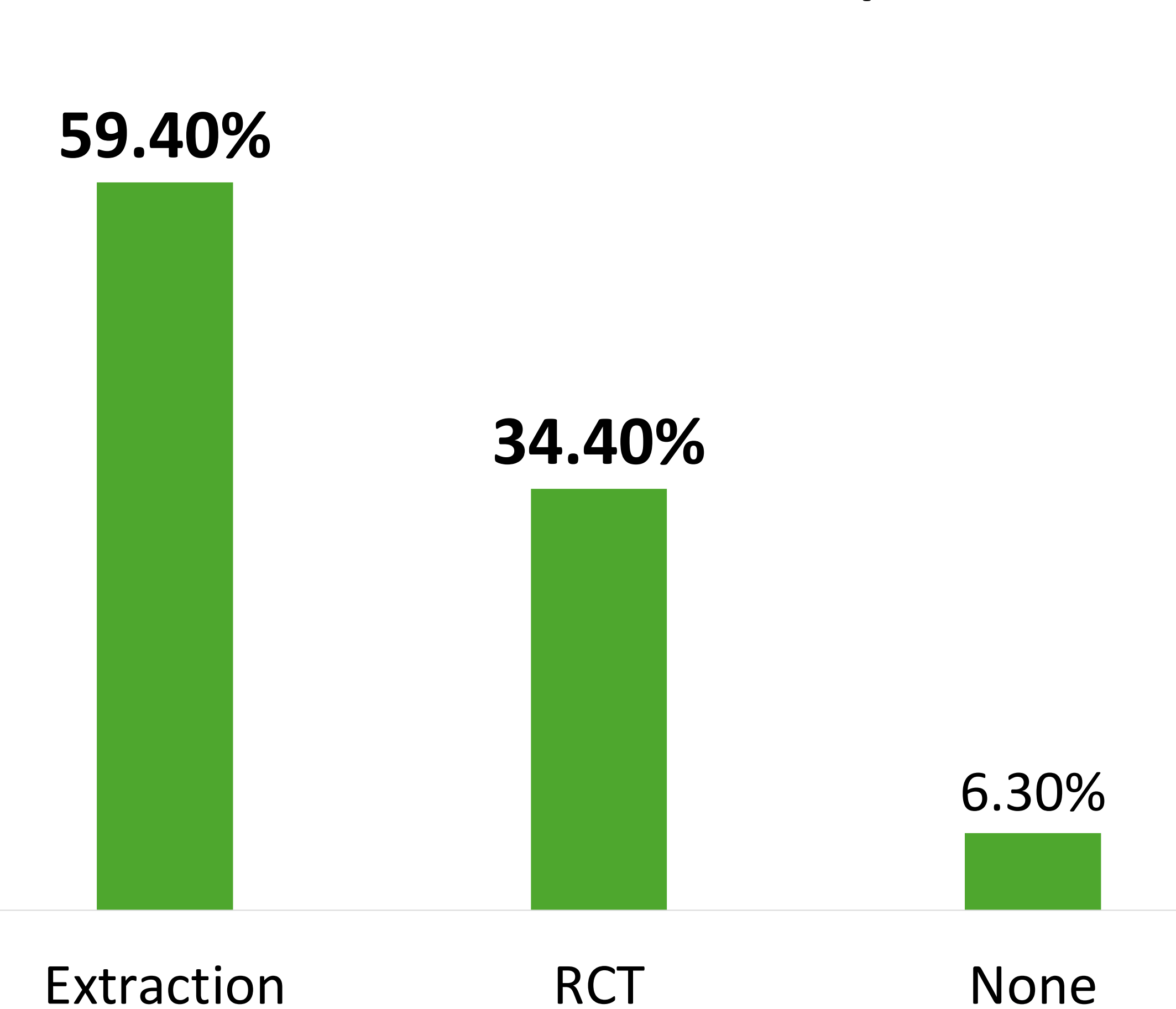
Parental Attitudes Toward Preservation of Permanent Teeth



Preferred Treatment for Permanent Molars



Prior Dental Treatment Experience



Discussion & Conclusions

- Most parents preferred extraction over root canal treatment.
- However, the majority still agreed that preserving permanent teeth is important.
- This reveals a gap between parental beliefs and actual treatment choices.
- Prior dental experiences and perceived treatment longevity appear to influence decisions.
- Dentist recommendation played a key role in shaping final choices.
- These findings emphasize the need for improved provider–parent communication to support informed, shared decision-making.

Results

- Thirty-two surveys were included in the analysis.
- Extraction was the most commonly selected treatment for permanent molars (59.4%).
 - Root canal treatment with a crown was selected less frequently (21.9%), while 18.8% of respondents were unsure.
 - Although 87.5% of parents agreed that preserving permanent teeth is important, extraction remained the preferred treatment choice.
 - Prior experience with extraction appeared to influence parental decision-making.

Limitations

- Small sample size (n=32)
- Single-site study
- Self-reported responses



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