

GA Wait Times Effect on Families' Quality of Life

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Intro

Previous research shows that despite dental caries remaining the most common chronic childhood disease, operating room (OR) access for pediatric dentist is decreasing. Compared to medical reimbursement, dental reimbursement rates are low. Due to lack of access, wait times for surgery have increased for patients requiring general anesthesia for dental rehabilitation. Many patients turn to academic centers due to access to more trained staff and supplies, but they are becoming overwhelmed with patients and are feeling the pressure of low reimbursements as well.

At CCHMC the division of dentistry has a waiting list of approximately 1,000 patients that need dental care while under GA. The impact of these prolonged wait times at CCHMC are not yet well understood.

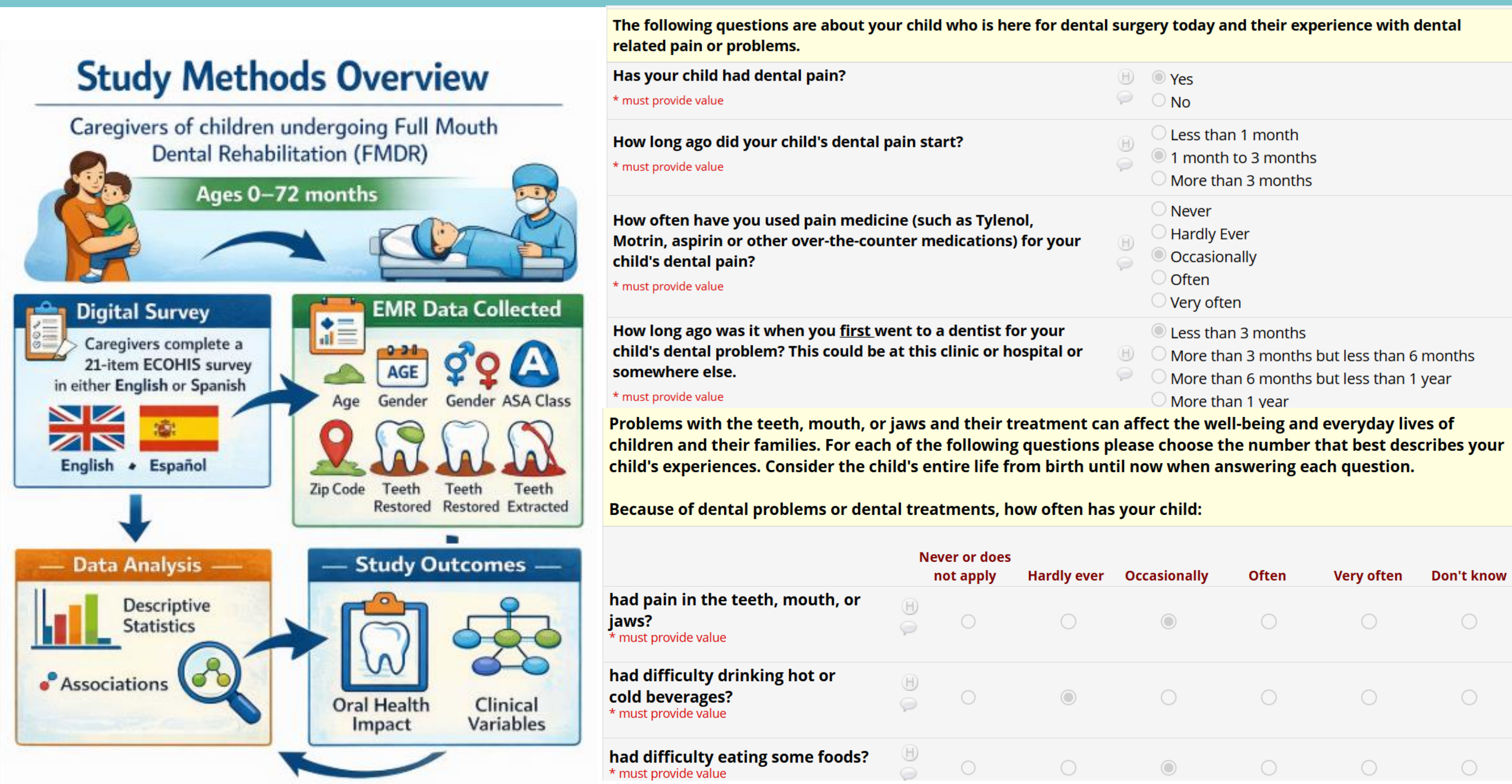
Objectives

- 1) Identify the impact of prolonged delay for full-mouth dental rehabilitation (FMDR) under general anesthesia and its impact on oral health-related quality of life in young children.
- 2) Determine if there were any adverse events during the wait time for general anesthesia and if these wait times impacted the patient family's daily life.

Methods

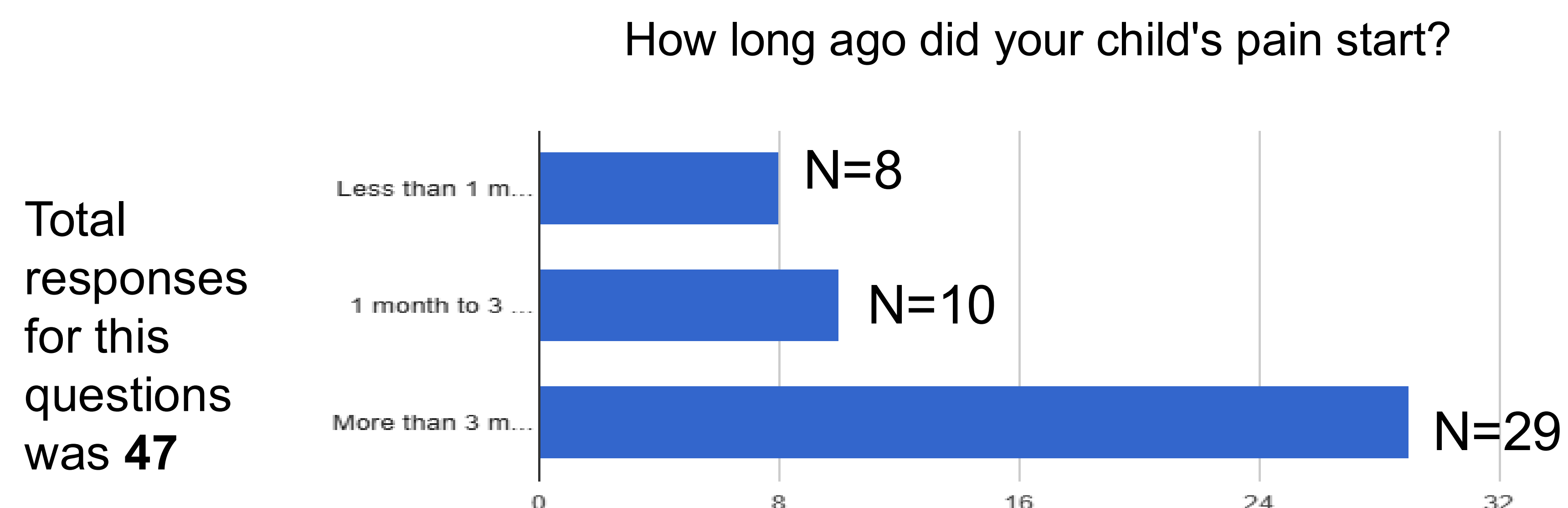
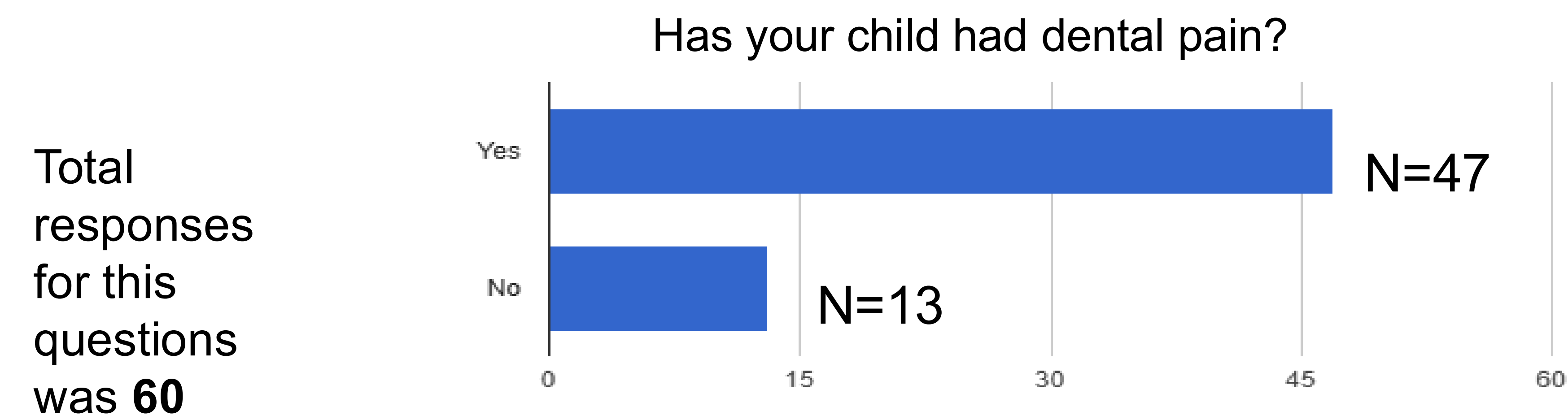
This prospective, cross-sectional study includes caregivers of children on the day of their FMDR. Prospective enrollment is currently being conducted with recruitment from parents of children aged 0-72 months old on the day of their dental surgery under general anesthesia. These families were provided with a digital 21-term survey that included items from the Early Childhood Oral health Impact Scale (ECOHIS), in either Spanish or English. Patients with completed surveys will have added clinical and demographic data abstracted from their electronic medical record to include gender, age at treatment date, American Society of Anesthesiology (ASA) Classification, zip code, date of referral for FMDR, number of teeth restored with dental fillings or crowns, and the number of teeth extracted. Descriptive statistics and association will be calculated.

Methods



Results

Based off a total of **60 respondents**, the average wait time for the OR at Cincinnati Children's Hospital was **128 days**.



Study Limitations

- Languages offered were only English and Spanish, which left out a fair number of patients whose parents spoke other languages
- Age cut-off at 6 years old did not capture the full picture of patients older than this who are experiencing similar difficulties during their OR wait time
- Data will need to be continually collected to reach a statistically considerable number of responses to make conclusions

Discussion

Preliminary findings reinforce that children presenting for FMDR under general anesthesia often experience substantial oral health-related quality-of-life impairment due to long OR wait times. Recognizing this burden may:

- Support earlier identification and referral of high-risk patients
- Strengthen caregiver counseling regarding disease progression
- Emphasize preventive interventions in primary care settings
- Inform shared decision-making surrounding comprehensive dental treatment under general anesthesia

Furthermore, incorporating validated quality-of-life measures such as ECOHIS into perioperative workflows may enhance patient-centered outcome assessment in pediatric dentistry.

Continued research will need to be continued to further display potential relationships between lengthy OR times and their impact of patients and their family's daily lives.

Conclusions/ Future study

- Continue data collection with the goal of collecting 650 survey responses
- Extrapolate the data to further investigate any impact long OR wait times have on patients and their families
- Collaborate with other institutions completing paralleled research (Nationwide Children's Hospital and University of Illinois Chicago Hospital) to draw comparisons and differences across different hospital systems

References

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