

Aim

Children are uniquely dependent on caregivers to access health care services, including dental appointments. Reviewing existing literature to identify barriers to care can help highlight at-risk populations and inform strategies or programs to improve appointment attendance and overall access to pediatric dental care. The objective of this scoping review was to identify key factors contributing to missed or failed pediatric dental appointments.

Methods

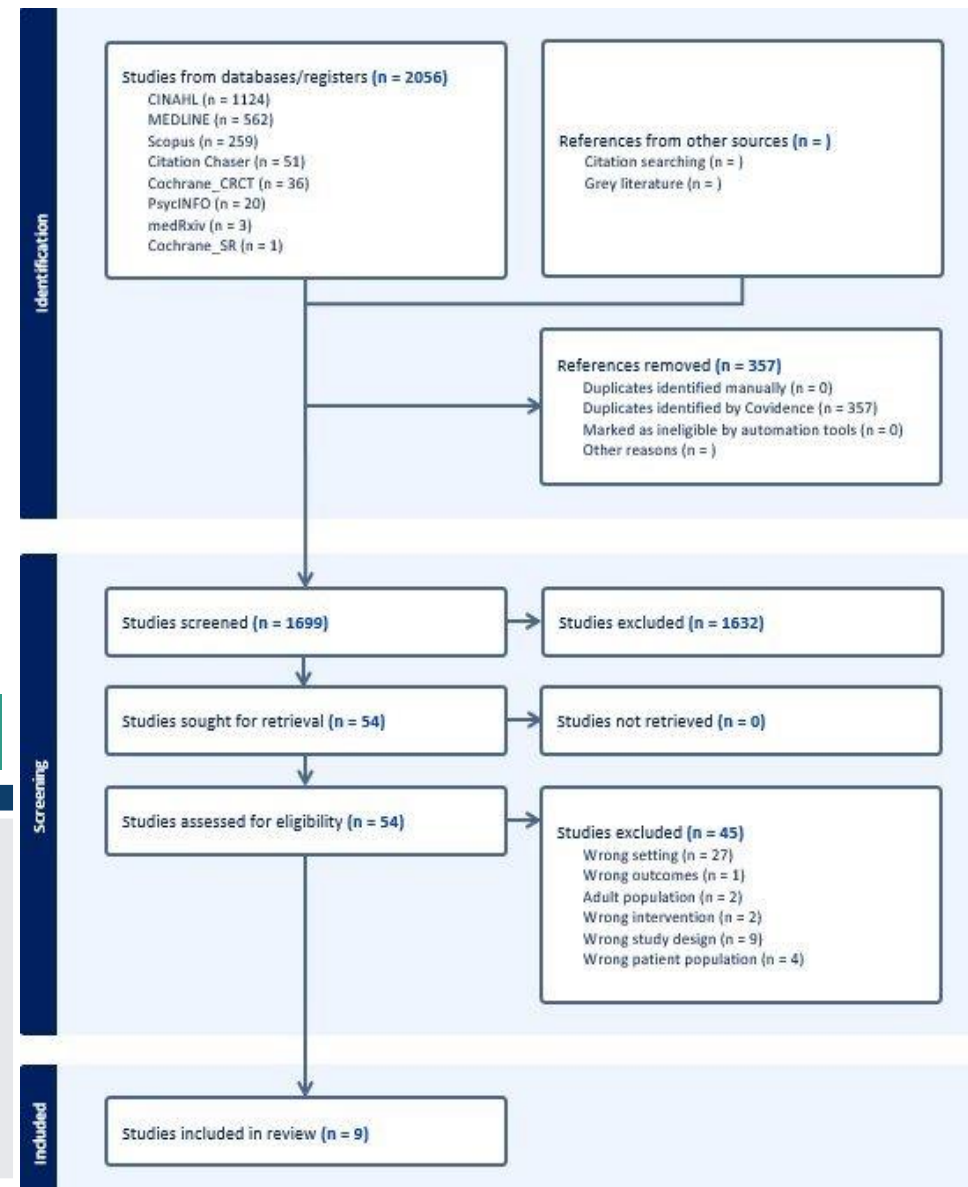
- A comprehensive literature database search was performed and the database search strategy was developed by a health science librarian in consultation with the project team.
- Studies were identified by the librarian developing and running searches in MEDLINE, PsycInfo, Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials, Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, Scopus, and Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINHAL).
- Gray literature resources were also searched.
- The search strategy was written for Ovid MEDLINE and translated using each database's syntax, controlled vocabulary, and search fields.
- MeSH terms and text words were used for the search concepts of dental appointments or dental scheduling, pediatrics, children, failed appointments, missed appointments, cancelled appointments, no-shows, and their synonyms.
- All databases and gray literature resources were searched on August 30, 2024.
- A draft search strategy was then reviewed by a second librarian.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion	Exclusion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies where children were the target population being studied • Studies conducted in the United States • Studies written in English • Studies that examined pediatric appointment attendance or failed attendance • Studies completed after 2000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies written in languages other than English • Studies conducted outside of the United States • Studies conducted in adult population or mixed adult/pediatric populations

Results

Table 1. This PRISMA table demonstrates the articles that were screened based on inclusion and selection criteria for full text review. The text was initially screened by the first and second reviewers, and any articles that required tie-breakers were determined by the third reviewer.



Results

Table 2. This table shows the most cited factors or traits of families who missed appointments. Other commonly cited factors included long wait times between initial and intervention appointments, families from certain racial backgrounds, and patients that had history of missed appointments.

5 studies found families utilizing public insurance had increased rates of no-show appointments	4 studies found that families who waited longer between initial and treatment visits were more likely to fail appointments
3 studies found that families of certain races (Black/Hispanic) had higher rates of no-show	2 studies found families with history of no-show were more likely to miss appointments

Discussion

- Widespread implementation of appointment reminder systems, such as text messages or automated calls, may be imperative in reminding families of upcoming appointments (Crutchfield & Kistler, 2017).
- Other factors frequently cited for missed dental appointments included history of no-show, certain racial groups, social issues, and transportation barriers. The difficulty in implementing support programs for specific members of society is discovering parameters or eligibility criteria that allow these at-risk populations to be identified (Shah et al., 2016)
- Targeting patients who have a history of no-shows for intervention such as reminder phone-calls can be a way to consolidate resources while effectively reducing no-show rates.(Shah et al.,2016).

References

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ojqyiZy2eGc7WuhUdjmWEZCwrQ2B8GhwOnlQlib4hnl/edit?usp=sharing>