

Factors Affecting Appointment Attendance at a Federally Qualified Health Center



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INTRODUCTION

In pediatric dentistry, patient adherence to scheduled visits is critical for maintaining oral health, preventing disease progression, and ensuring timely treatment completion. However, no-show and cancellation rates remain a persistent issue, particularly in underserved populations due to significant barriers to care.

PURPOSE

The objective of this study is to analyze patient records to identify demographic, socioeconomic, and appointment-related factors that are associated with increased no-show and cancellation rates in a pediatric dental clinic. Specifically, this study aimed to examine if insurance status, patient age, race, day or time of appointment, or other patient demographics have effects on appointment attendance. Identifying patterns and trends in appointment adherence will help determine key risk factors for missed visits.

METHODS

This study was a retrospective chart review. This design involved analyzing existing patient records from the Brandon Community Health Center Pediatric Dental Clinic. An analysis of Electronic Health records over a 12-month period of the year 2024 for pediatric patients at the Brandon Community Health Center who had at least one scheduled dental appointment at the clinic was performed. The dataset included a total of 14,691 appointments. Data collected included demographic factors, appointment-related factors, and appointment status.

FIGURES

Figure 1

Day of the Week	% of CANC + N/S
Monday	31.62%
Tuesday	32.10%
Wednesday	29.21%
Thursday	34.07%
Friday	32.02%

Figure 2

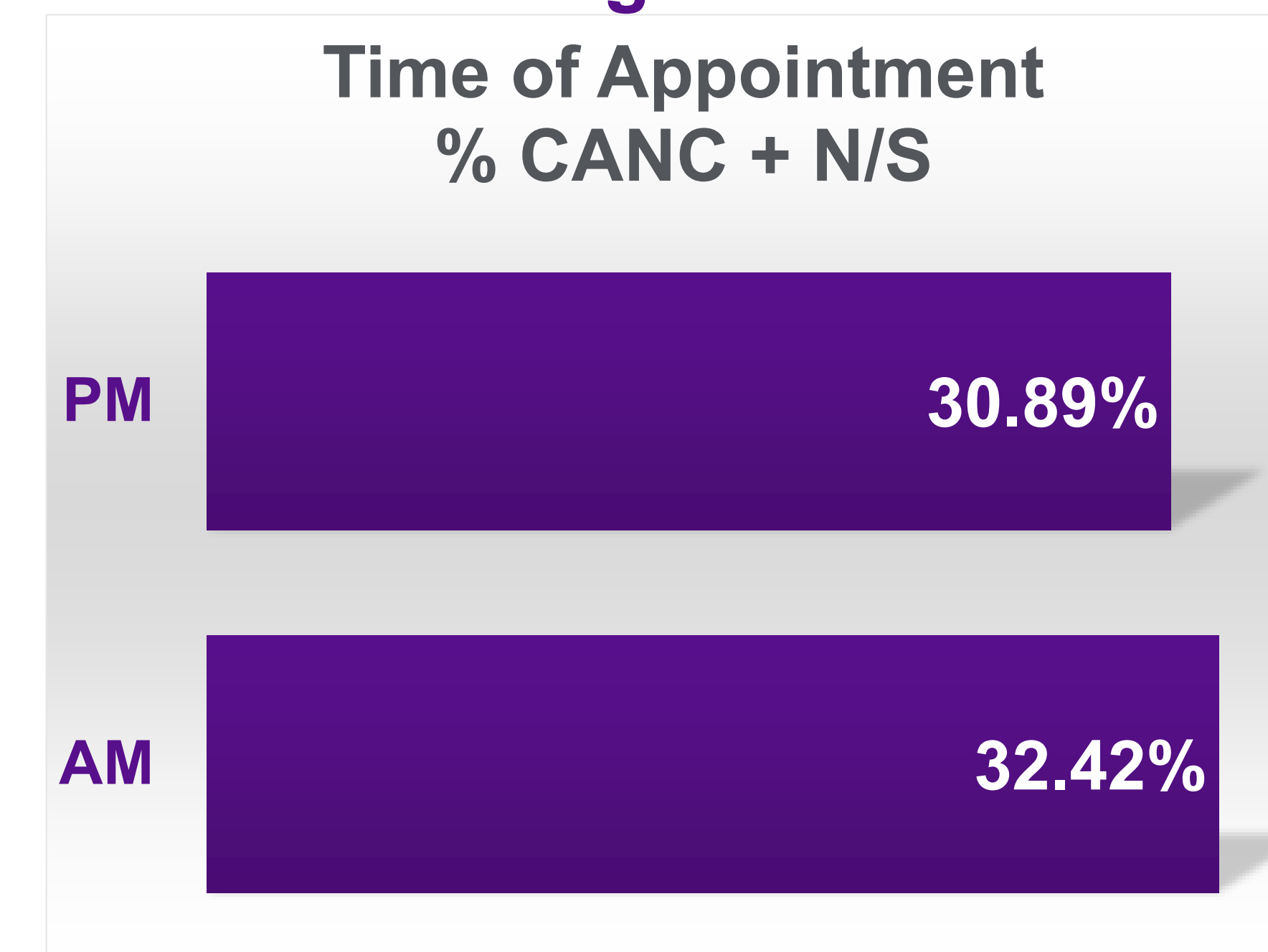


Figure 3

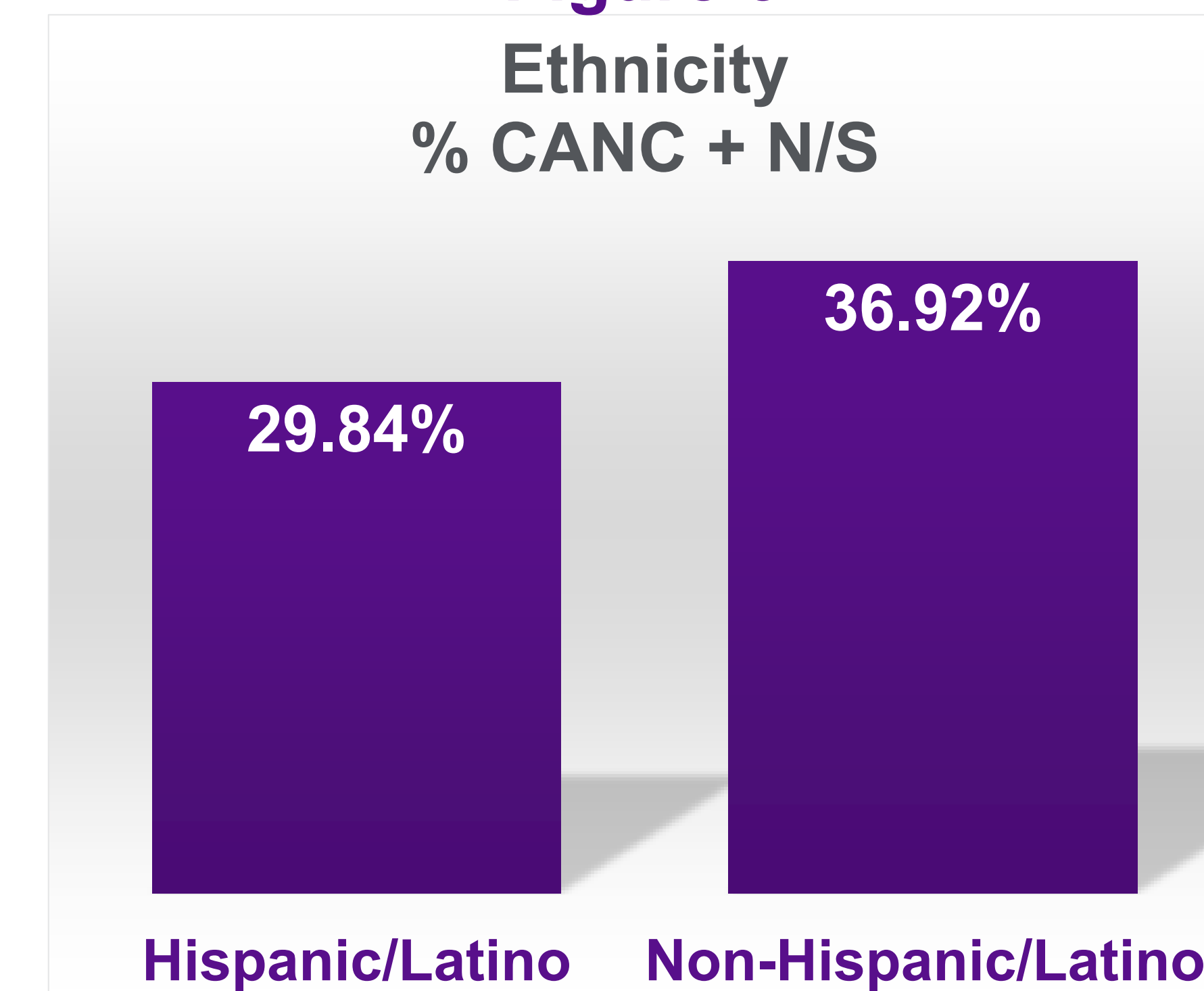


Figure 4

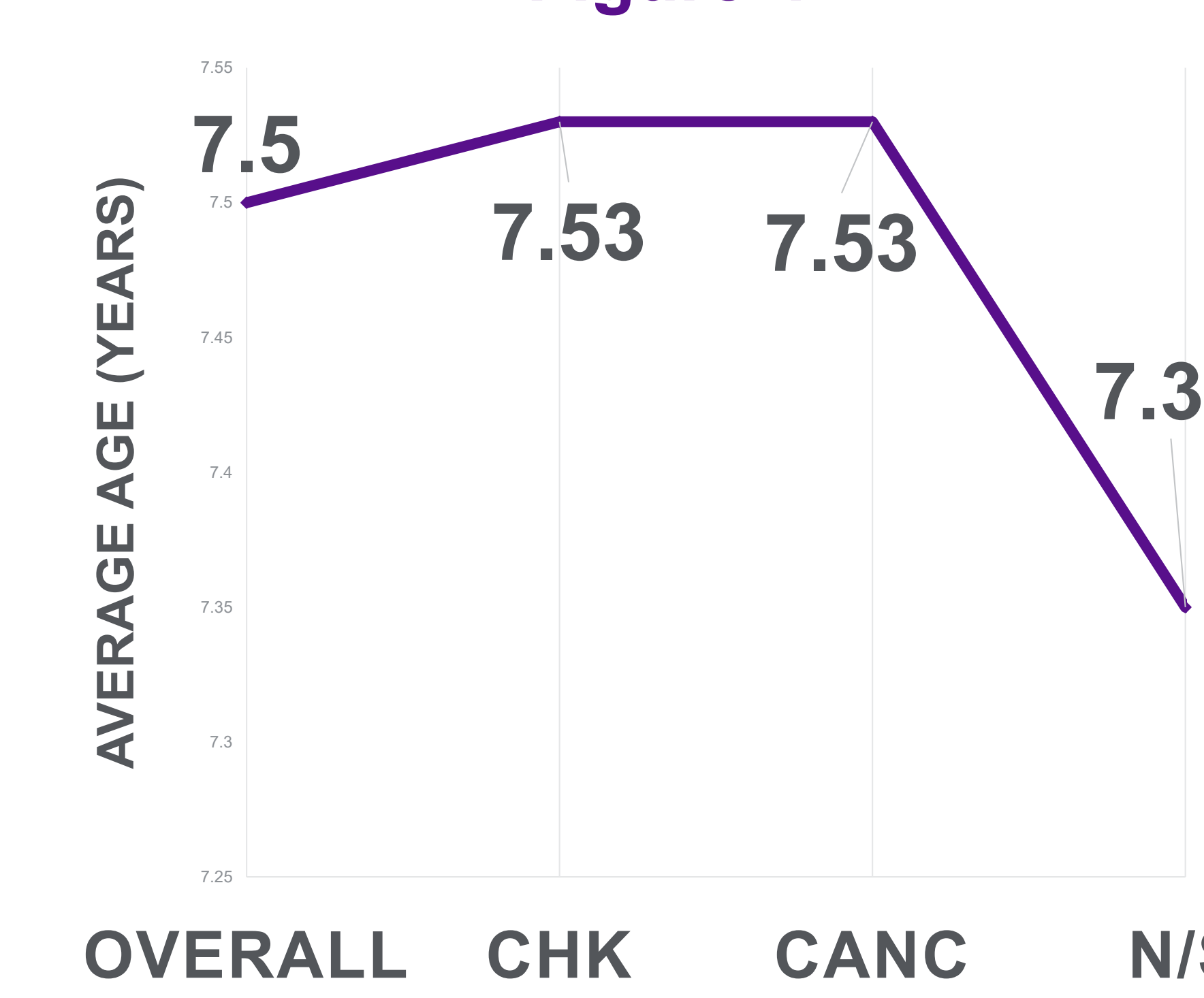
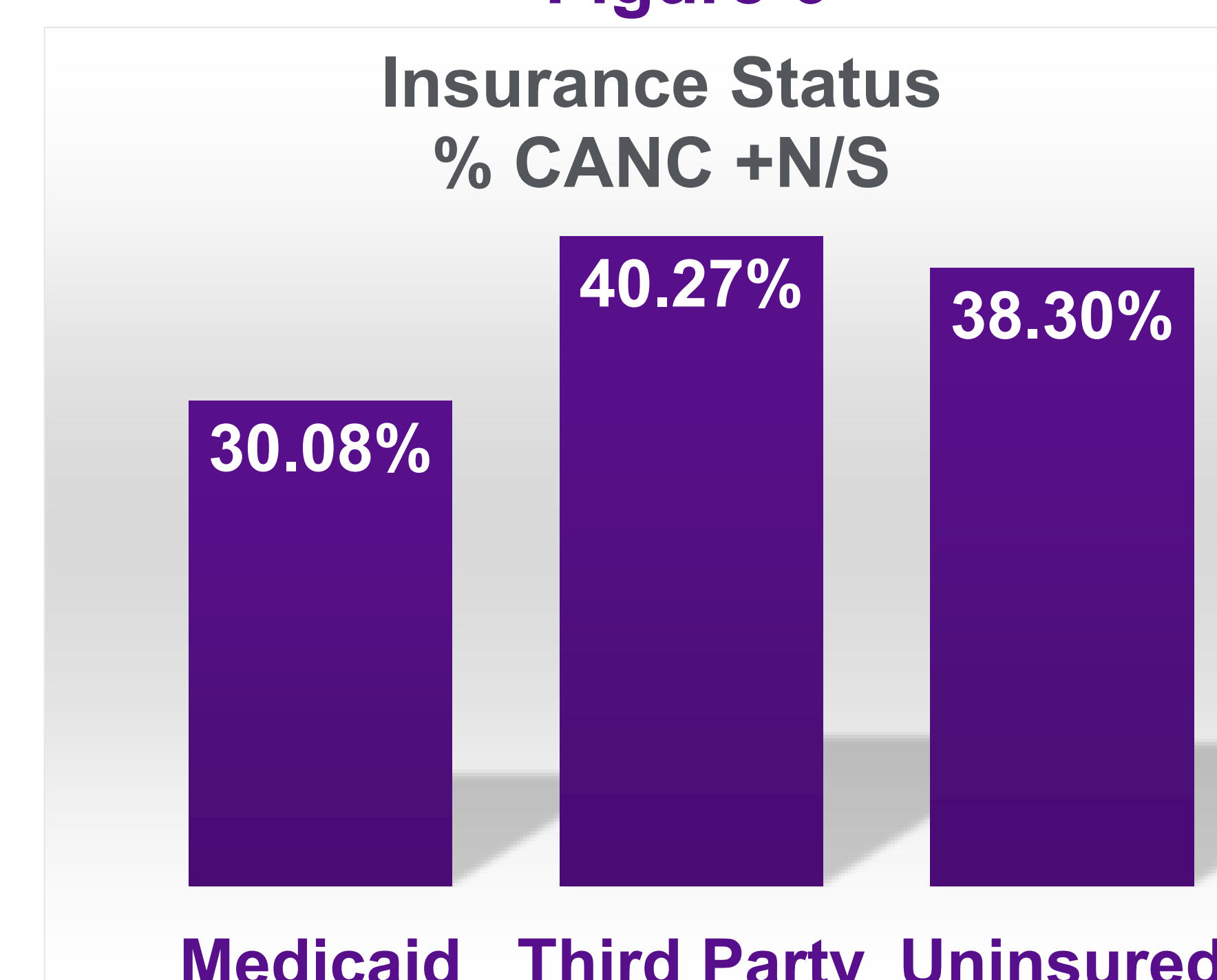


Figure 5

Race	Total Appts	% CANC + N/S
Asian	158	33.54%
Black or African American	1693	34.73%
White	12840	31.32%

Figure 6



RESULTS

Overall, 68.3% of visits were completed (CHK), while 13.1% were canceled (CANC) and 18.6% resulted in no-shows (N/S). The highest combined cancellation and no-show rate occurred on Thursdays (34.1%), whereas Wednesdays had the lowest (29.2%) (Figure 1). Non-attendance was modestly higher for morning appointments (32.4%) compared to afternoon visits (30.9%) (Figure 2). Non-Hispanic/Latino patients demonstrated higher missed-visit rates than Hispanic/Latino patients (Figure 3). Patients who missed appointments were slightly younger, with a mean age of 7.35 years, relative to the overall patient population (Figure 4). Racial disparities were observed, with Black or African American patients exhibiting higher missed-visit rates than Asian and White patients (Figure 5). Insurance status was also associated with attendance patterns: Medicaid patients had the lowest missed-appointment rate (30.1%), while uninsured (38.3%) and third-party insured patients (40.3%) had higher rates of non-attendance (Figure 6).

CONCLUSIONS

About one-third of appointments were missed or canceled. Day and time of appointment, insurance type, and patient demographics significantly influenced attendance. These findings highlight that missed and canceled appointments stem from a complex mix of socioeconomic, logistical, and behavioral factors.

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