

# Postoperative Pain and Analgesic Use in Children Receiving Dental General Anesthesia

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## BACKGROUND

### Postoperative Pain: Key Facts

- Pain is the #1 complication after dental GA
- Over 1/3 have moderate-to-severe pain day of surgery
- Significant quality-of-life impact on children and families

### Guidelines Evolution

2012 WHO: Non-opioid shift → 2018 AAPD: Non-opioid endorsed → 2023 ADA: IBU ± APAP first-line

## OBJECTIVES

- 1 Describe postoperative pain intensity and analgesic use following dental GA
- 2 Evaluate caregiver adherence and associated child pain outcomes

## STUDY DESIGN

- Prospective single-arm cohort at UW Pediatric Dentistry Surgery Center
- Pediatric patients undergoing dental GA; April–December 2025
- IRB-approved; Wong-Baker FACES (0–10);

## DATA COLLECTION

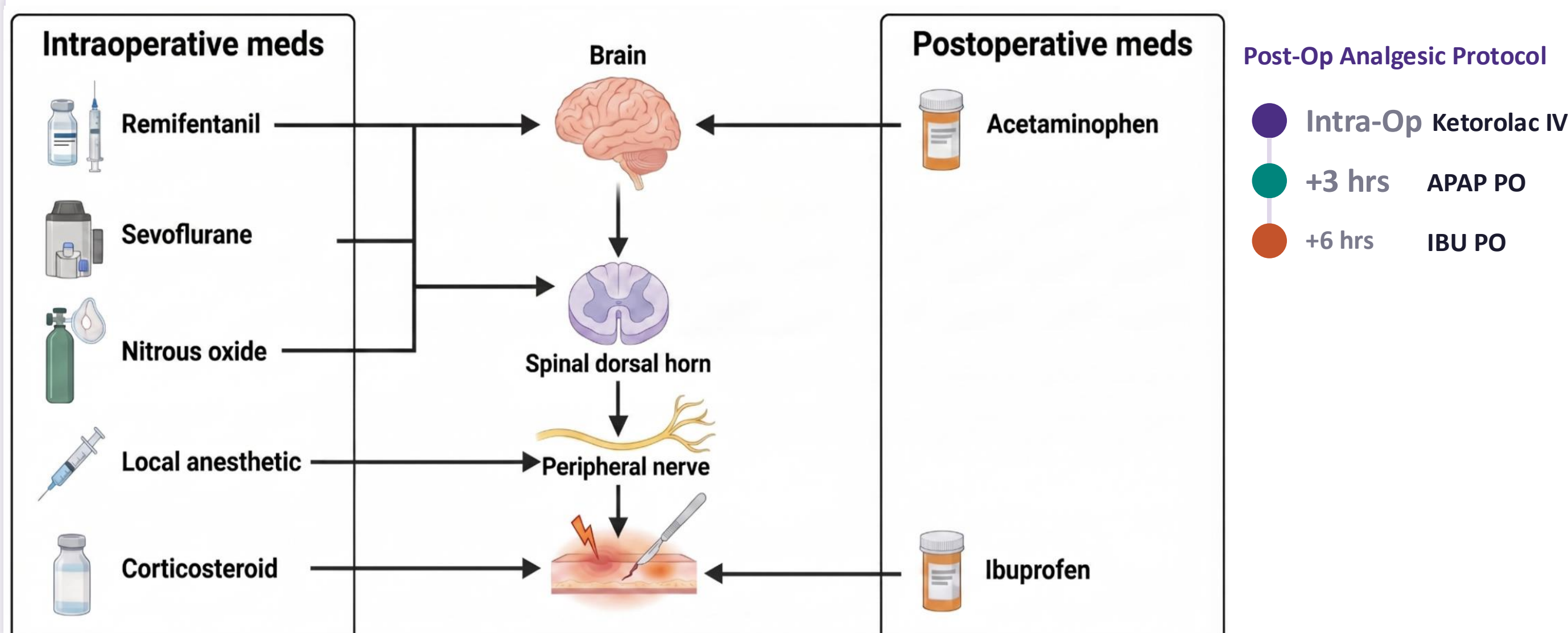
### Variables

- Demographics · Pain scores (Days 0–3) · Medication adherence
- Treatment: GA duration, local anesthetic, teeth treated

### Dental Procedures

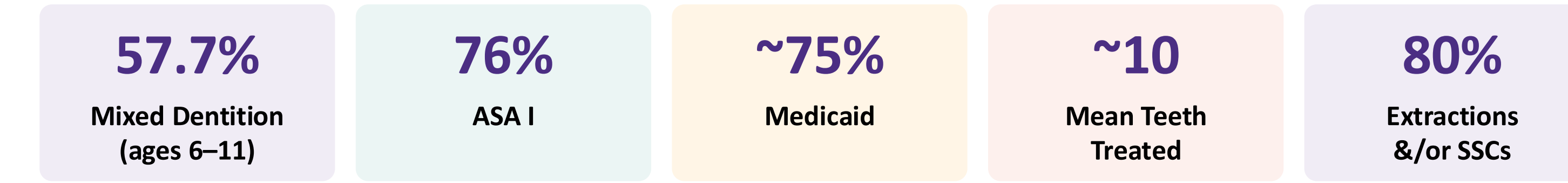
- Composite restorations · Pulp treatment · SSCs · Crowns · Extractions

## ANESTHESIA & POST-OP PROTOCOL

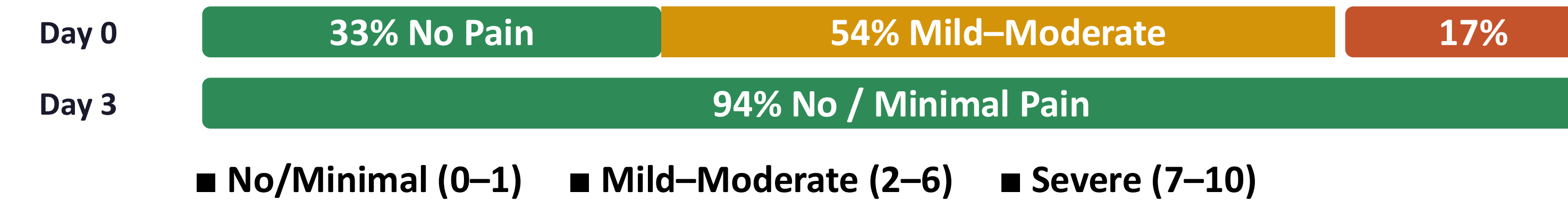


## RESULTS

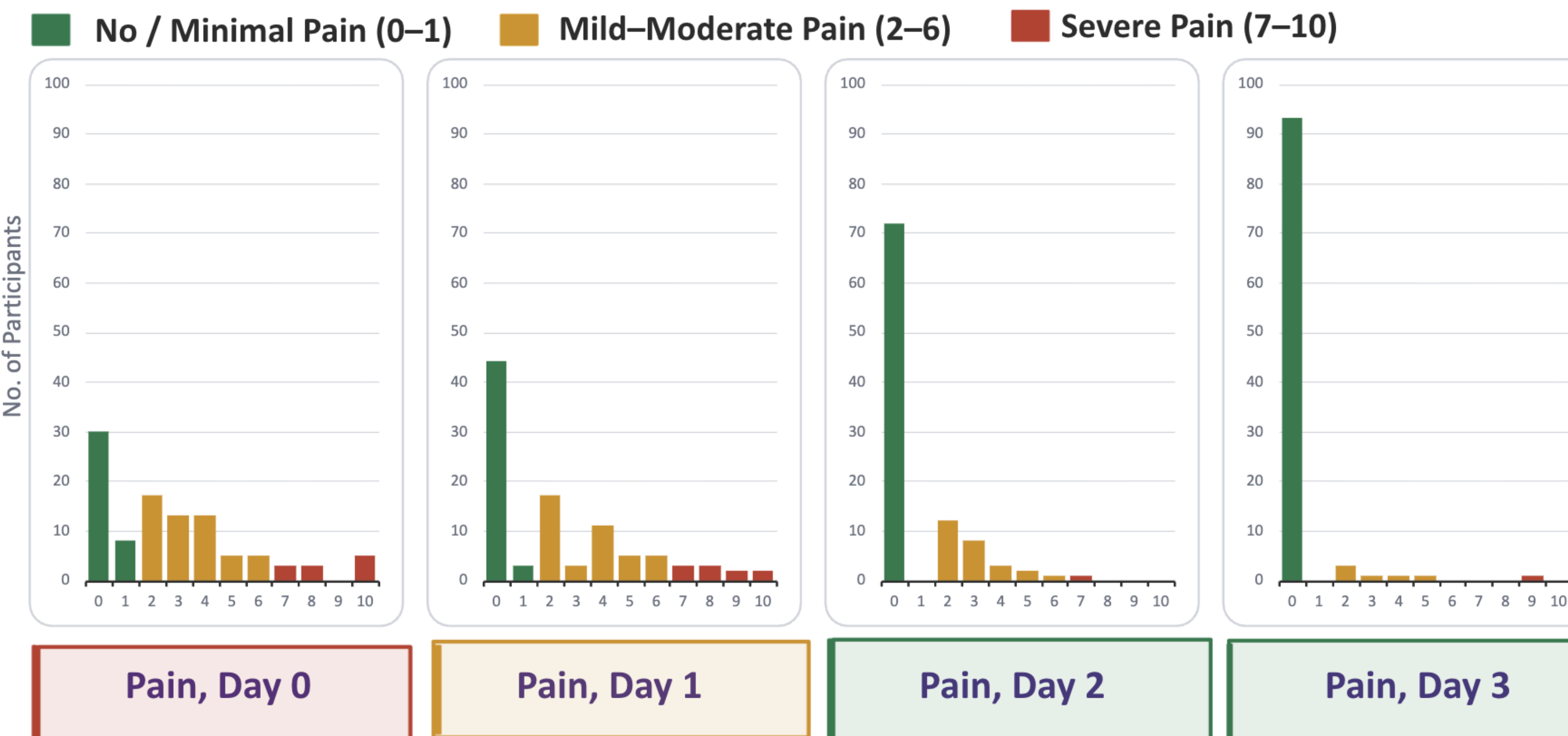
### Sample Characteristics (N = 100)



### Pain Outcomes: "A Short, Violent Storm"



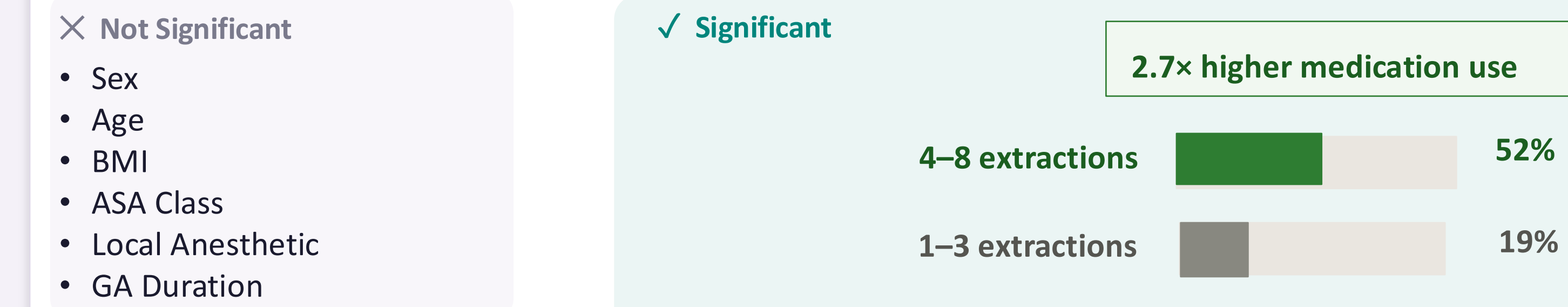
### Pain Trajectory: Day 0 – Day 3



## THE ADHERENCE DISCONNECT

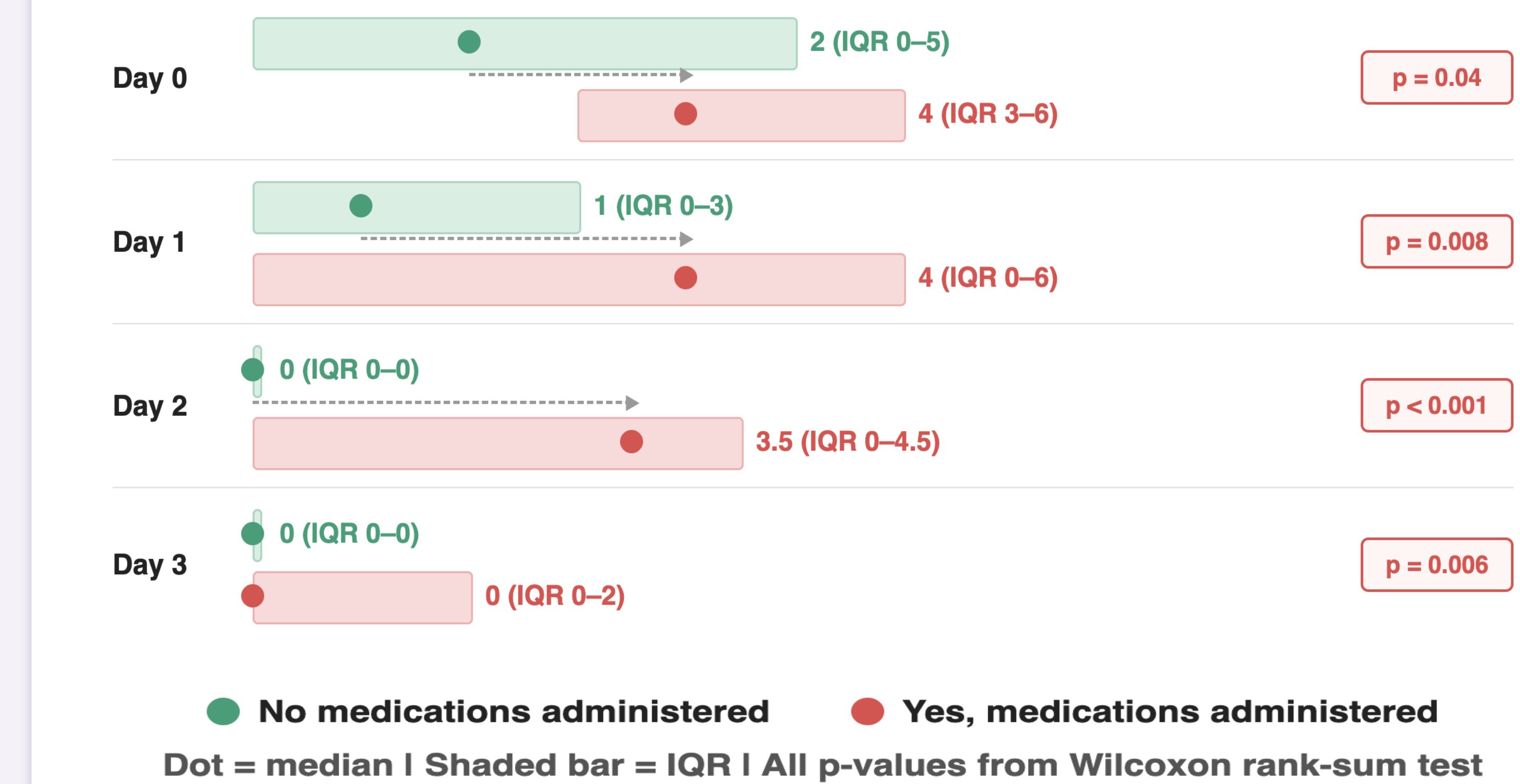


## Factors Associated with Adherence



### The Paradox: Medicine = More Pain

#### Median pain score (Wong-Baker FACES 0–10)



## CONCLUSIONS

**Medication adherence was low**  
Caregivers dosed reactively — not on a fixed schedule.

**Severe pain common on Day 0**  
Anticipatory guidance before discharge is critical.

**Procedural factors — minimal impact**  
Local anesthesia not associated with reduced post-op pain.

**Few predictors identified**  
Caregiver behavior is the dominant variable.

