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Sedation Services Offered at Pediatric Dental Offices in the United States as Reported on Publicly Available Practice Websites

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ABSTRACT

Background: As early childhood caries impacts children throughout the United States, restorative dental procedures are often needed. The literature indicates that due to a variety of factors, parents may research their child's dental condition and try to find options for care that they perceive as least traumatic for their children. These options frequently include sedation and general anesthesia. This background research is typically completed via the internet on public websites. **Purpose:** The purpose of this investigation was to identify if information regarding specific types of sedation/anesthesia services offered by pediatric dental providers are available on practice websites and to determine if the type of information available differed depending upon practice location. **Methods:** Pediatric dental practices based in states located in Northeast, Southwest and Western districts as delineated by the AAPD were included in the study. Practices were identified using the ABPD webpage as practices with Board Certified Pediatric dentist practitioners. Specific information regarding the availability of oral conscious sedation, IV sedation, and general anesthesia were assessed and analyzed using descriptive statistics. **Results/Conclusions:** A total of 432 pediatric dental practice websites were evaluated. 34% of websites analyzed were from the Southwestern district, 30% from the Northeast district and 36% from the Western district. While the majority of all public websites analyzed either did not mention specifically which types of sedation were offered or were unclear about the information, there were however, some statistically significant differences among regions in regard to the type of information available.

BACKGROUND/INTRODUCTION

Early childhood caries is a public health issue affecting families across the United States. In today's society we are seeing an increased demand for pediatric sedation dentistry due to a number of influencing factors such as anxiety with dentist (Chanpong et al) and changes in parenting styles that have shifted to less assertive behavior management techniques (Casamassimo et al). The literature shows that it is becoming more common for parents to research their child's present dental condition before seeking professional care, therefore practice websites can be utilized for dentists to attract new patients and provide information about sedation dentistry. As parents are becoming more aware of sedation options that are available in pediatric dentistry, they are choosing a treatment option that is the least traumatic for their children. According to an online survey given to 79 pediatric dentistry programs in North America, 98% of pediatric dental residency programs offer treatment under minimal/moderate sedation with the combination of oral medications and nitrous oxide, and 98% of programs additionally offer treatment under deep sedation/general anesthesia. Our goal with this investigation was to determine the different sedation services offered at dental offices based on information obtained via public practice websites and if the services offered differed based on practice location.

Results/Discussion/Conclusion

Four hundred and thirty-two Pediatric dental practice websites located in Northwest (30%), Southwest (34%) and Western (36%) Districts of US were evaluated for information regarding oral conscious sedation, IV sedation in office/surgical center and general anesthesia in office or hospital setting. Additionally, the mention of an anesthesia provider was recorded. Data was categorized into Yes, No, No mention of services, or unclear as to what specific sedation options were available. A total of these responses for each sedation selection across all the districts is charted in figure 1-6. This assessment found that majority of practices didn't provide sedation information readily available on their webpages. Many offices did not state who would be administering medications or IV during procedure or if procedure would be in office or a hospital setting. Chi square analysis found a significant difference between region and website data, indicating that practices in some areas of the country, namely practices in the Northeast and Western districts were more likely to share specific details. **Conclusion:** More consideration should be given when developing a practice website for Pediatric dental practices in order to better educate parents on services that may be offered for the care of their child.

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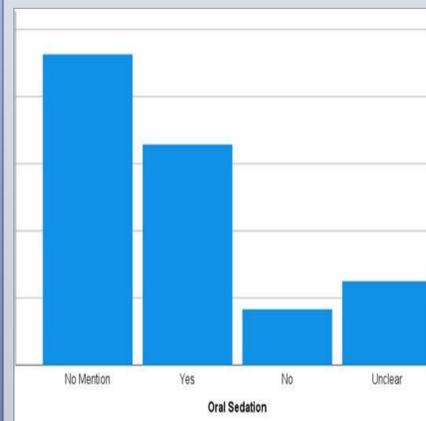


Figure 1

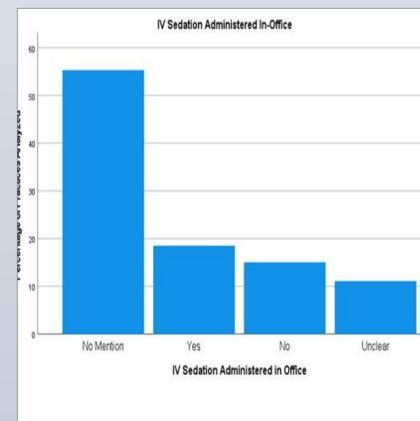


Figure 2

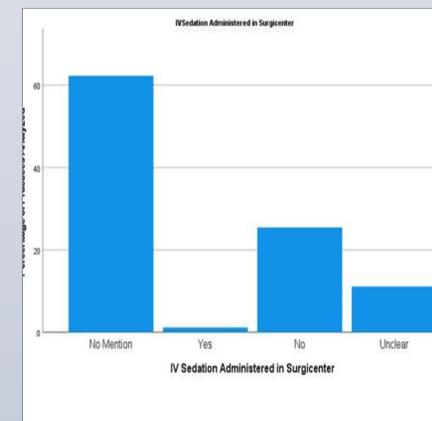


Figure 3

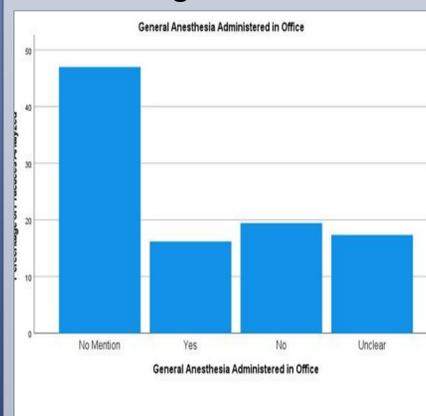


Figure 4

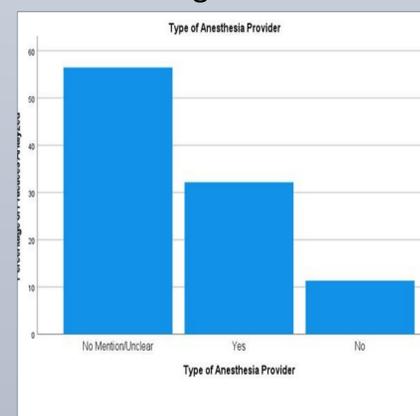


Figure 5

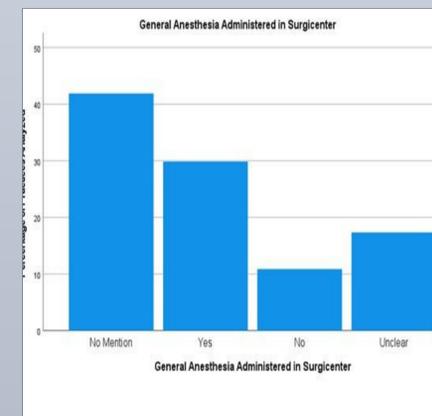


Figure 6