



IRB-FY2023-7510

Attitudes of New York State Pediatric Dentists Towards Treating Hasidic Patients

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Introduction

New York State is home to the largest population of Jewish people outside of Israel, including Hasidic, Haredi, and Ultra-Orthodox Jews (HHUOJ).¹ A central tenet of the HHUOJ lifestyle is strict interpretation of the laws set forth in the Torah and Talmud. One stringency is the belief that segregating themselves from modern society will allow the population to thrive and avoid assimilation with the outside world.² Because of this, available studies into their health practices are limited. The purpose of this project was to gain a better understanding of the comfort level and variations in practice of pediatric dentists and pediatric dental residents in New York State regarding the treatment of HHUOJ patients.

Methods

A twenty-six-question survey was emailed to the 641 pediatric dentists or pediatric dental residents who according to the AAPD had addresses in New York State. The inclusion criteria for the survey were being a practicing pediatric dentist or pediatric dental resident with an AAPD address in New York State, having had at least one appointment with a HHUOJ child, and completing enough survey questions for REDCap to recognize the survey as completed. Fifty-five surveys met the inclusion criteria. All questions were set to a Likert scale with 1 representing “strongly disagree” and 5 reflecting “strongly agree”.

Conclusions

Age is the most significant criteria when evaluating for differences in how providers interact with HHUOJ families, and thus CE courses dealing with culturally competent care for HHUOJ patients offered in New York State should be marketed to dentists above the age of 46 as this group seemed to have the biggest disconnect between their own thoughts on their interactions with HHUOJ patients and what occurs in practice.

References

1 Berger, Joseph. “Aided by Orthodox, City’s Jewish Population Is Growing Again.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 12 June 2012, www.nytimes.com/2012/06/12/nyregion/new-yorks-jewish-population-is-growing-again.html.

2 Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. “Orthodox Judaism”. Encyclopedia Britannica, 2 Feb. 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Orthodox-Judaism>. Accessed 11 February 2024.

Results

55 Surveys were completed and sixteen of the ninety-one Mann-Whitney U Tests run returned statistically significant results with $P < .05$. Demographics of survey respondents: Gender: 18 male, 36 female; Location of Practice: 12 in Rockland or Kings Counties, 42 in Other Counties in New York State; Age: 36 under 45 years of age, 19 over 46 years of age.

