



Perceptions and Challenges of Left-Handed Pediatric Dental Providers

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BACKGROUND

The work environment in pediatric dentistry is favorable to the right-handed clinician; with the prevalence of left handedness only being around 10% of the world population.¹

In many circumstances, the left-handed clinician needs to adjust their working position or chair position to accommodate the room, patient or their dental assistant; which leads to increased fatigue and discomfort. At times, left-handed clinicians have been forced to adjust to the right-handed environment which in turn leads to decreased efficiency and effectiveness when doing certain procedures.²

OBJECTIVES

- To assess the perceptions of Left-handed Pediatric Dentists (LHPDs) in everyday clinical practice
- To identify common hurdles faced by LHPDs during residency training and clinical practice

METHODOLOGY

- Obtain a list of pediatric dentists from the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) membership directory.
- Administer 21-point item web-based questionnaire to pediatric dentists that are members of the AAPD.
- Analyze data using STATA software: t-tests and chi squared tests

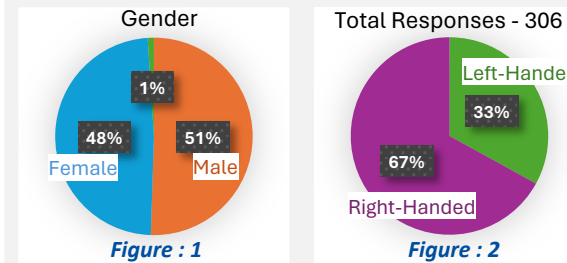
RESULTS

RACE	%	AGE	%
Caucasian	78	25-35	78
Hispanic/Latino	4	36-45	86
African American	5	46-55	20
Asian/Pacific Islander	11	55+	26
Native American/Alaskan Native	0		
Multiracial/ biracial	3		

Table : 1

Table : 2

RESULTS



Forty-three LHPDs (48%) expressed difficulty with operatory accessibility during residency and 32 (36%) felt that their faculty were not able to adequately support a left-handed trainee. Forty-nine respondents (54%) felt the 3’O clock position was the most comfortable and the lower left quadrant was most convenient, for performing procedures. Only 35(39%) LHPDs expressed difficulty adapting to their right-handed work environment while 16 (18%) reported that being left-handed made them feel anxious and 15 (17%) felt that left-handedness decreased their efficiency/time management. It was promising to note that no LHPDs received criticisms from parents/caregivers about performing dentistry with their left hand.

AVAILABILITY OF EQUIPMENT AND TOOLS

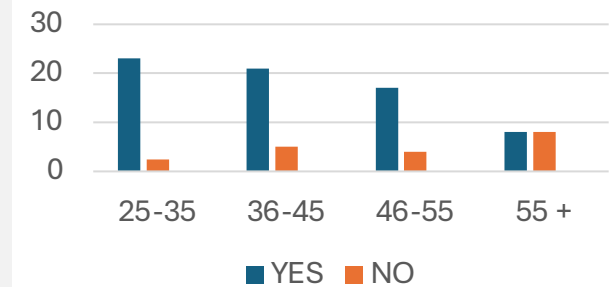


Figure : 3

PERCEPTION OF DISCRIMINATION BY AGE

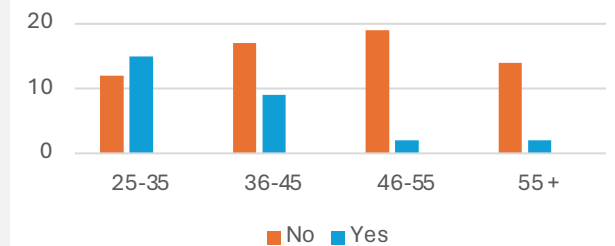


Figure : 4

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