

Parental Awareness of Sleep Disordered Breathing in Children

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Objective

To evaluate parental awareness of SDB and discussions with physicians in a pediatric dental population.

Materials and Methods

- This was a pilot study designed to assess parental familiarity with SDB and sleep apnea.
- Convenience sampling of 50 parents of pediatric patients at the University of Maryland School of Dentistry.
- The questionnaire was derived from the “I’M SLEEPY” questionnaire used to screen for SDB and sleep apnea.
- The questionnaire contained 6 questions regarding signs and symptoms related to SDB.
- Additional questions were included to assess parental familiarity with SDB.
- Ethnic disparities were analyzed among participants.
- Fisher’s Exact tests and descriptive statistics were used to compare sociodemographic parameters to response to questionnaire.

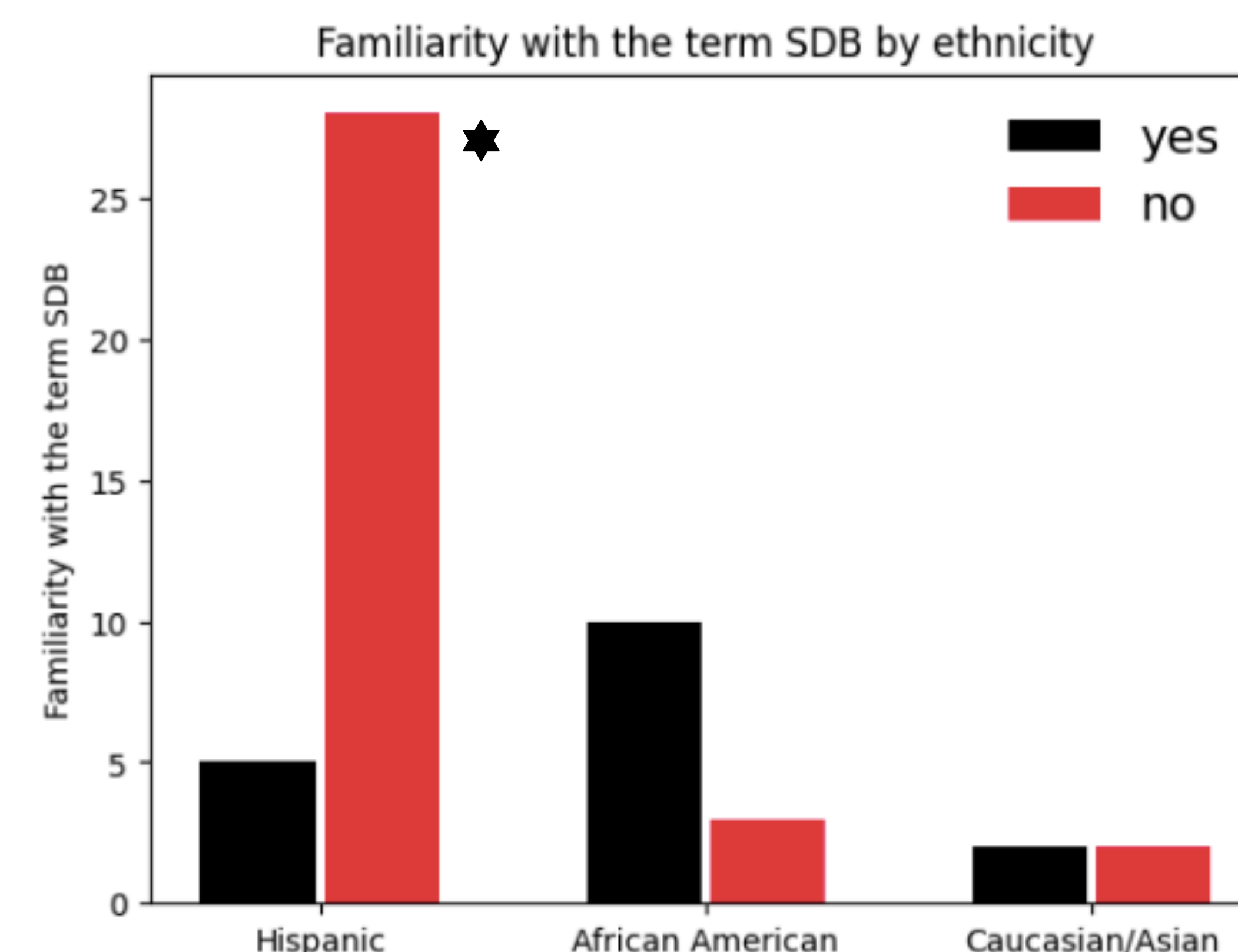


Figure 1: Familiarity with the term SDB based on ethnicity (P<.01).

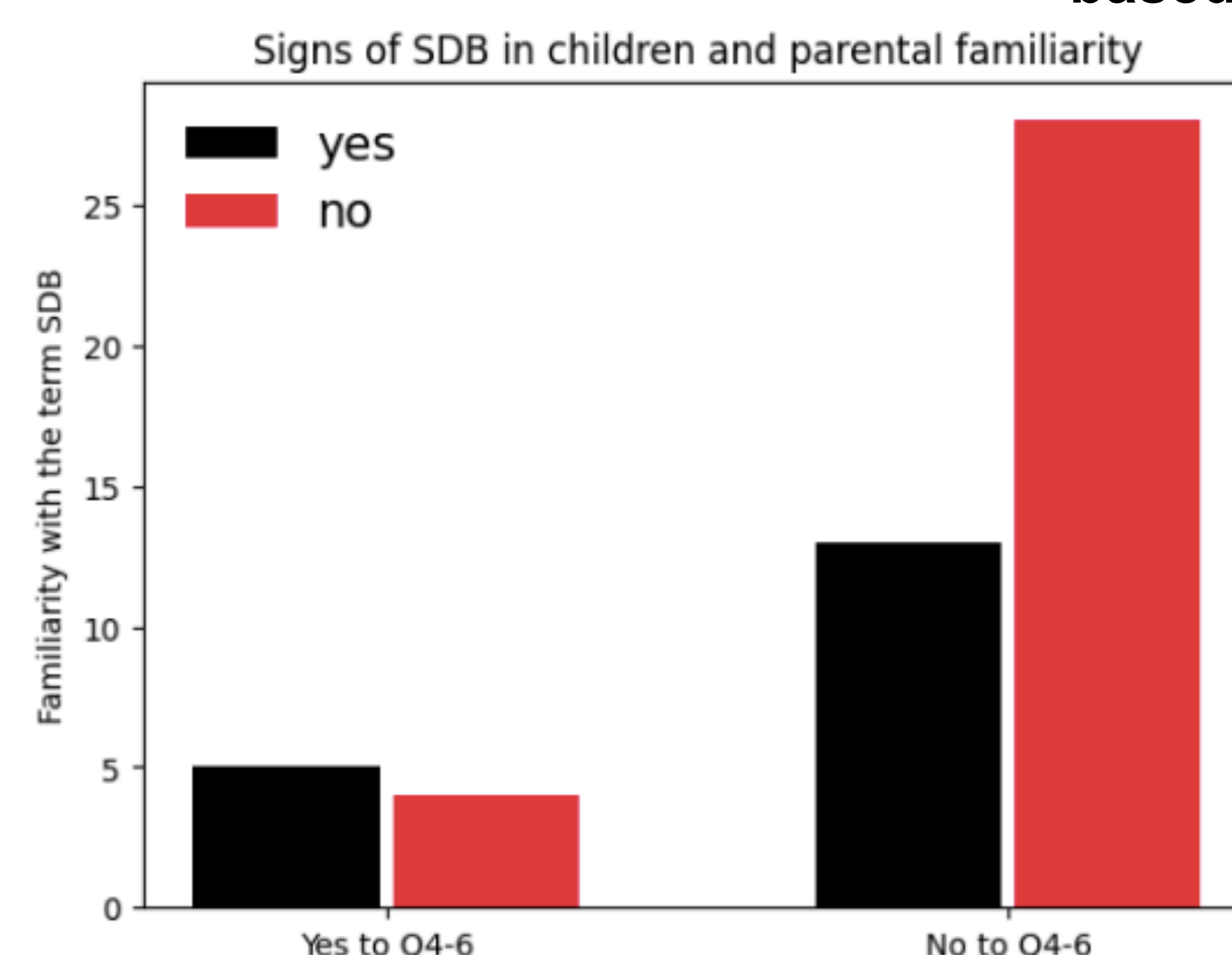


Figure 2: Children that exhibited signs and symptoms of SDB and if their parents were familiar with the term SDB or sleep apnea (P>.05).

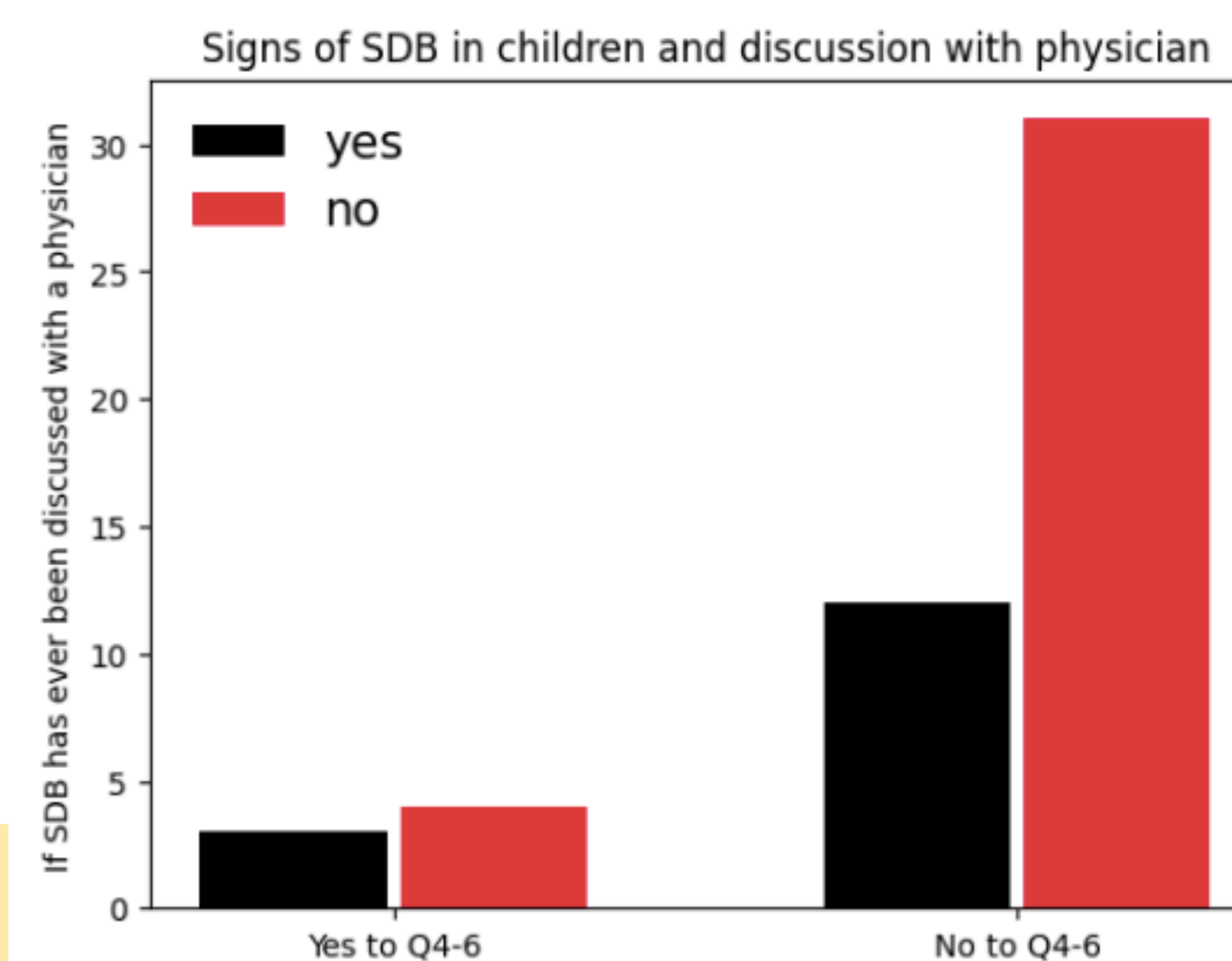


Figure 3: Children that exhibited signs and symptoms of SDB and if their parents were have ever discussed SDB or sleep apnea with their child’s physician (P>.05).

Results

- The study reveals a lack of parental awareness of pediatric SDB among this patient population.
- 66% of participants were Hispanic, 26% African American, and 8% other races.
- African American participants showed greater familiarity with the term sleep disordered breathing compared to Hispanic participants and other races (P<.01) (Fig.1).
- There was no significant association between children that expressed signs and symptoms of SDB or sleep apnea and if the parent was familiar with the term SDB (P>.05) (Fig. 2).
- There was no significant association between the time since a child’s last visit to a physician and parental SDB Awareness (P>.05) (Fig. 3).

Conclusions

- A majority of parents were unaware that sleep-disordered breathing could affect children.
- Ethnic disparities highlight the need for targeted awareness initiatives.
- Integrating SDB discussions into routine pediatric dental care may be helpful for early detection and intervention.