Background

❖ Bertie County has a population of approximately 20,000 people and only two dentists in the county
❖ The ratio of dentists to the county population is 9,510:1
❖ Bertie County has no dentists that see pediatric patients
❖ Pediatric patients rely on school-based oral health programs to receive oral care
❖ At the start of the pandemic, the WHO recommended not to receive dental care, except for emergencies
❖ The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the United States as a whole – in particular, jobs/employment, income, schools, and healthcare services
❖ Due to COVID-19, public school education in Bertie County is delivered virtually

Objective

❖ To assess the impact of COVID-19 on dental care access in Bertie County through changes in employment, income, barriers in receiving care, transportation, and personal concerns regarding the pandemic

Methods

❖ Questionnaires are provided to adult caregivers of children aged 8-14 and their children at the Bertie County Health Department, in which the child is receiving dental care
❖ The questionnaire measures the sociodemographic and oral health habits of the family, impact of COVID-19 on dental care access, and patient oral health quality of life for the parent and the child
❖ The participants receive a gift card for their participation in the study

Preliminary Results

❖ From the data collected (n=10 pairs parent/child):
  • 100% of participants and their household have not had symptoms of COVID-19
  • 40% of participants are slightly anxious regarding the pandemic and continuing their normal daily activities; 50% of participants are slightly anxious regarding the pandemic and leaving their home to go to a medical/dental office
  • 60% of concerns regarding COVID-19 and going to receive dental care is being around other people and others not complying with the 3 W’s
  • 50% of participants work full-time
  • 50% of participants had no change of income due to the pandemic; 30% had an increase of income, and 20% had a decrease
  • 40% of participants have 5 people living in same the household, and 20% have 6 or more people living in the same household
  • 50% of participants were able to receive dental treatment and 80% of their family members were able to receive dental treatment
  • From the 9 participants who responded to where dental treatment was received, 22% of treatment was from a private dentist and 44% from a public dentist
  • 30% of participants’ family members received treatment from a private dentist and 60% from a public dentist
  • 80% of participants have dental insurance

Next Steps

❖ Continue data collection of (n=100)
❖ Analyze the data collected once it has been complete
❖ Review literature regarding COVID-19 and dental care access, perceived severity and barriers during a pandemic, socioeconomic challenges, and changes in Medicare/Medicaid coverage in the United States and North Carolina
❖ Review literature regarding COVID-19 and dental care access from other countries
❖ Look into future possible studies regarding impact of COVID-19, dental care access, and dental diseases or emergencies (e.g. pediatric caries prevalence, ED dental visits)

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