



IFDH Pediatric Patient Practices Survey

BACKGROUND

Survey #5 in a series supported by Procter & Gamble

Objectives: To better understand global dental hygienists' practices regarding pediatric patients 6–12 years old. To identify opportunities for future educational programs.

Survey flow: IFDH → 34 national associations → individual members.

RESPONDENTS

367 respondents from 25 countries

Top countries

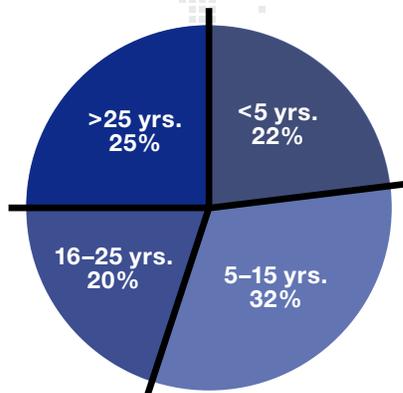
- Italy – 19%
- USA – 13%
- Canada – 12%
- Portugal – 11%
- Australia – 6%
- South Africa – 5%
- Israel – 5%
- Norway – 4%
- Belgium – 4%
- Singapore – 4%

Countries with ≤2%:

Ireland, Malta, Nepal, Lithuania, Sweden, United Kingdom, Latvia, Slovak Republic, Spain, Cameroon, Denmark, New Zealand, Russia, Switzerland, Peru

Years of dental hygiene experience

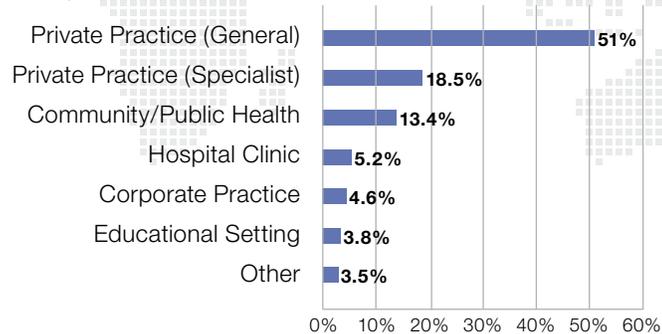
Skewed slightly towards 15 years of experience or less in practice



Work setting

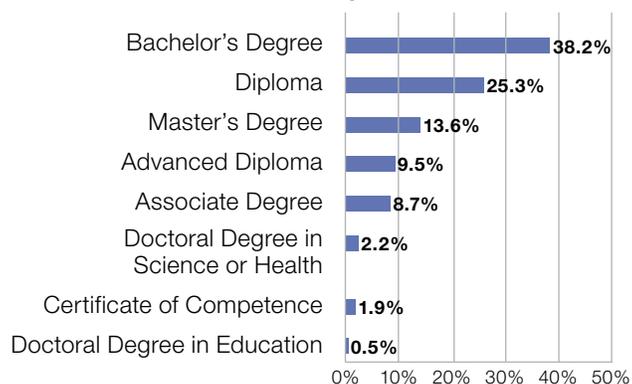
Almost 70% are in a private practice setting.

This is an important factor to consider when reviewing the survey results.



Education

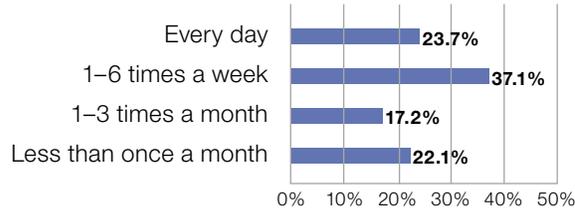
Majority have Bachelor's Degree or Diploma



How often do you see pediatric patients who are 6–12 years old?

About 60% see pediatric patients at least once a week.

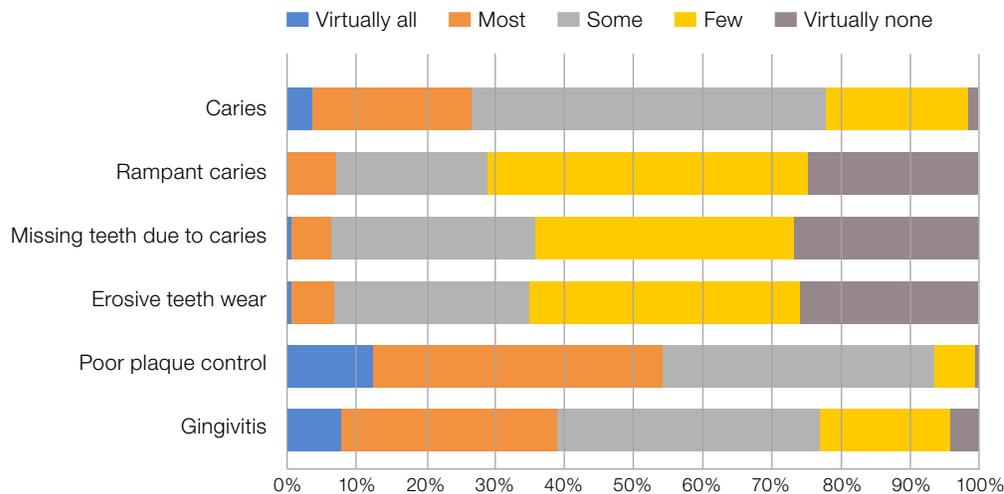
286 (78%) respondents who see children at least once a month responded to the remaining survey questions.



Among your pediatric patients who are 6–12 years old, how many present with the following diseases/conditions?

Top conditions affecting ‘virtually all or most’ pediatric patients:

- Poor plaque control – 55%
- Gingivitis – 39%
- Caries – 27%



Which of the following words describe how you feel about treating pediatric patients who are 6–12 years old? (check all that apply)

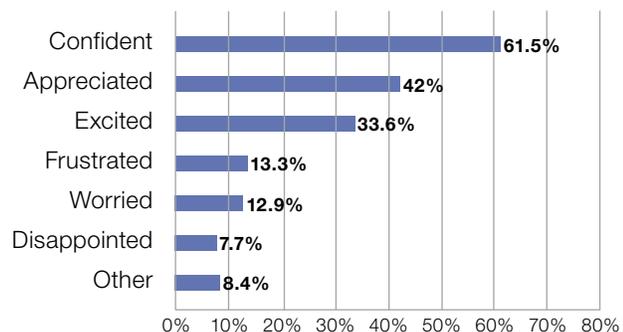
Most have positive feelings.

Why they enjoy it:

- Love children; they are fun, honest
- It’s rewarding to educate them, I feel appreciated
- Children are sponges/blank canvas, just starting to learn oral hygiene habits so it’s a great time to teach them
- Enjoy the challenge of connecting with each child, they’re all different
- Confident in my skills and experience

Why it’s challenging:

- Don’t see results, repeat info over and over, feel ‘deflated’
- Parents not engaged, supportive, or accountable; some blame child when it’s the parents’ fault
- Fear of dental office
- Children don’t want to brush



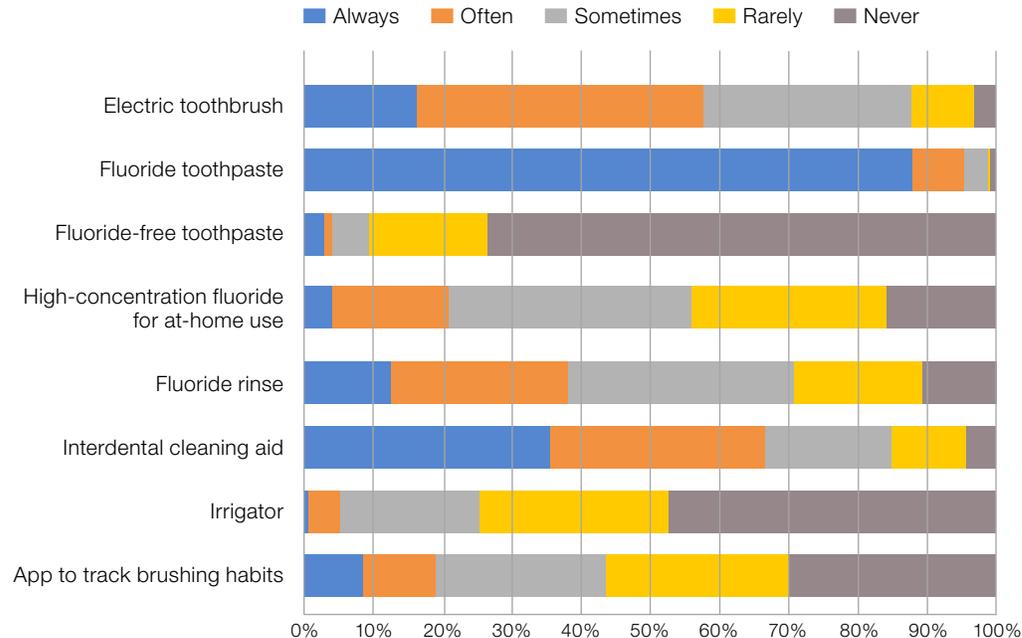
How often do you recommend the following products for your pediatric patients who are 6–12 years old?

Most often recommended products for children (always/often %):

- Fluoride toothpaste – 96%
- Interdental cleaning aid – 67%
- Electric toothbrush – 58%

Least often recommended (rarely/never %):

- Fluoride-free paste – 90%
- Irrigator – 74%
- App – 56%

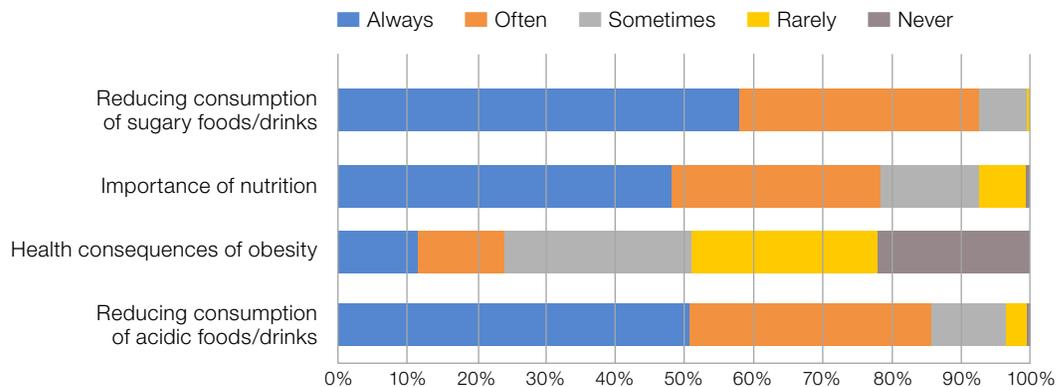


How often do you discuss the following lifestyle factors with your pediatric patients who are 6–12 years old and/or their caregivers?

The majority of respondents counsel patients and/or caregivers on:

- Negative impact of sugary and acidic foods and beverages
- Importance of nutrition

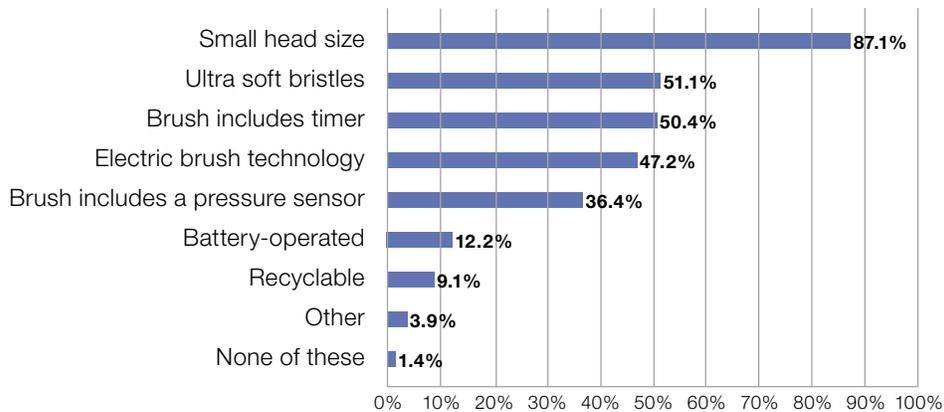
There is less emphasis on the health consequences of obesity.



Which of the following toothbrush features, if any, are EXTREMELY or VERY IMPORTANT to your toothbrush recommendation for pediatric patients age 6–12 years old? (check all that apply)

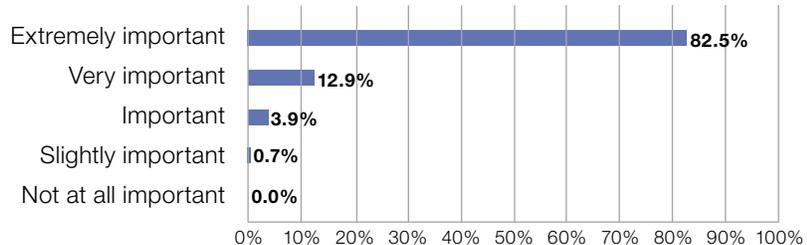
Most important toothbrush features for pediatric patients:

- Small head size – 87%
- Ultra soft bristles – 51%
- Brush includes timer – 50%
- Electric brush technology – 47%



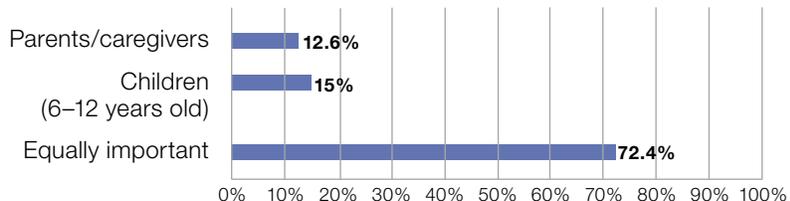
How important is parent/caregiver involvement to children’s oral hygiene outcomes? (check one)

Caregiver involvement is extremely important to children’s oral hygiene outcomes.



Who is the most important recipient of your oral hygiene instruction? (check one)

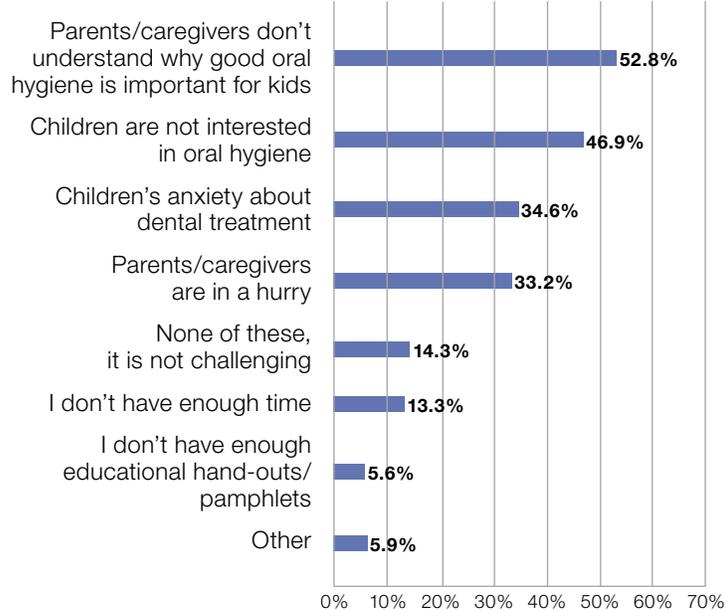
For most respondents, caregivers and children are equally important recipients of oral hygiene instruction.



What things make it challenging to provide oral hygiene instruction to your pediatric patients age 6–12 years old? (check up to three)

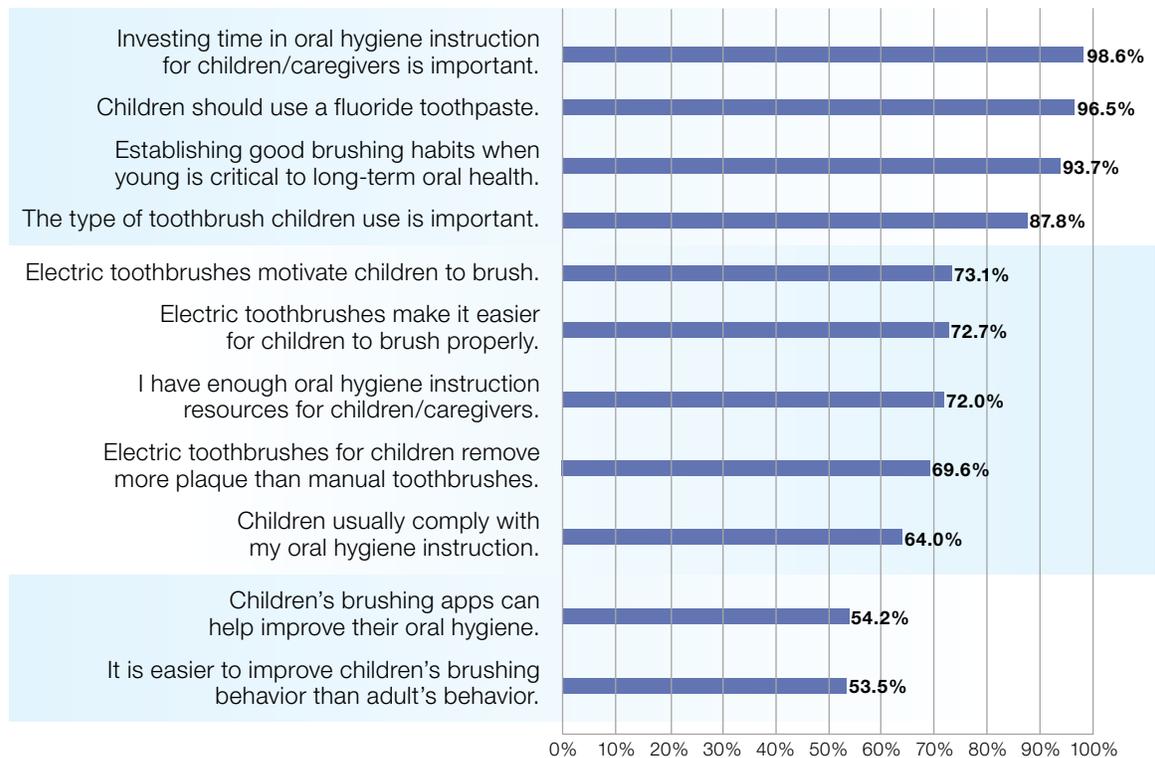
Biggest challenges:

- Caregivers don't understand why oral hygiene is important – 53%
- Children aren't interested – 47%
- Children's anxiety – 35%
- Parents are in a hurry – 33%



Thinking of your pediatric patients 6–12 years old, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

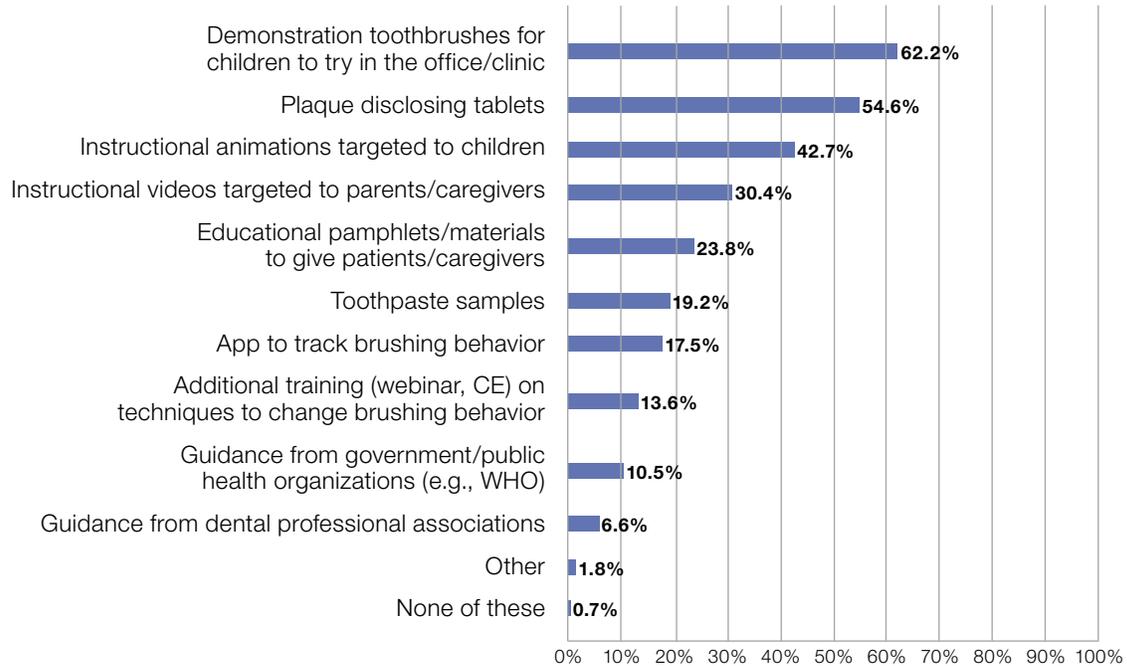
Score indicates % who **strongly agree** and **agree**.



Which resources would help you provide oral hygiene instruction to parents/caregivers and children 6–12 years of age? (check up to three)

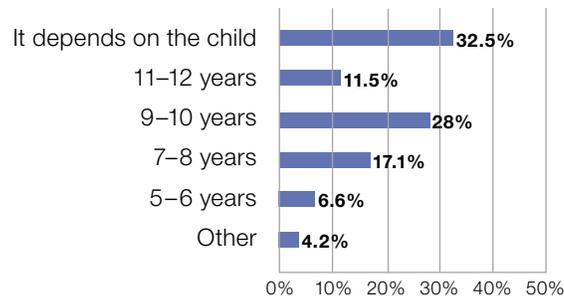
Top resources to help provide oral hygiene instruction:

- Demonstration toothbrushes – 62%
- Plaque disclosing tablets – 55%
- Instructional animations targeted to children – 43%



Until what age do you recommend that parents/caregivers supervise their children's toothbrushing?

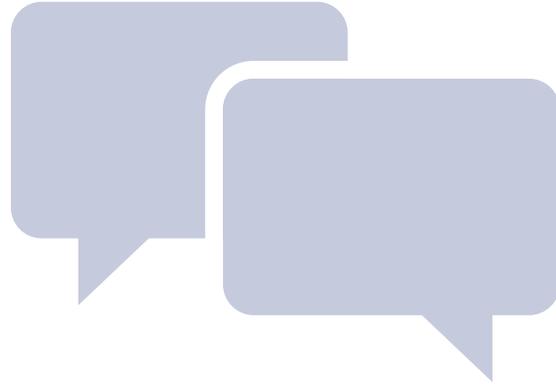
- Depends on child – 33%
- 9–10 years old – 28%
- 7–8 years old – 17%



What is one thing you would recommend to dental hygiene colleagues to improve at-home oral hygiene of their pediatric patients? Please be as specific as possible.

Themes:

- Use plaque disclosing agents in office and home
- Engage and educate caregiver, ask them questions, need their supervision of child
- Be patient, build relationships, invest time
- Encourage, motivate, compliment
- Demonstration of brushing and get child to demonstrate back (tell-show-do)
- Use tracking and reward systems
- Use electric toothbrush



Other IFDH Survey Results

Click the links below to learn more about other IFDH surveys:

[2022 Oral-systemic link survey](#)

[2021 Electric toothbrush survey](#)

[2020 Covid Survey](#)

[2019 Toothpaste Survey](#)