

Service evaluation of a new unscheduled paediatric dental service in NHS Lothian



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Introduction

During and after the COVID-19 pandemic, it was difficult to access dental care as well as register with a general dental practitioner [1]. A new dental service was developed for unregistered paediatric patients in NHS Lothian in Scotland who required urgent dental treatment. This service aimed to provide a safety-net function and reduce attendance at stretched emergency services. The aim of this project was to evaluate this new urgent paediatric dental service.

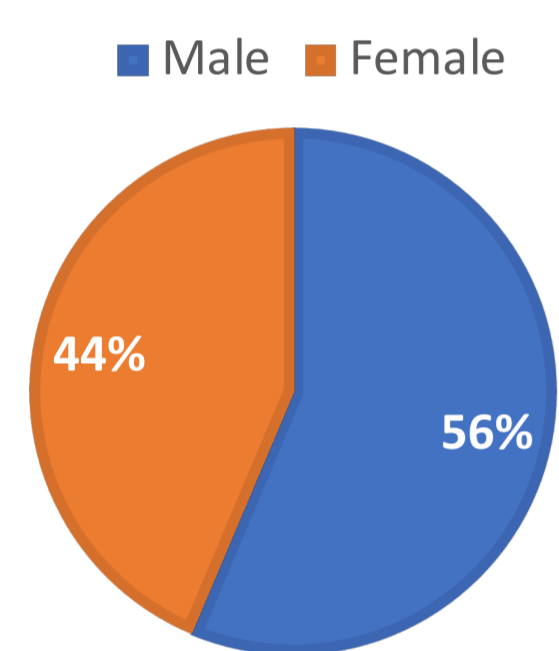
Methodology

A retrospective service evaluation was carried out for all children who attended from June 2020 to December 2021. Patient-related experience measures (PREMS) and patient-related outcome measures (PROMS) questionnaires were offered prospectively after all treatments for three months.

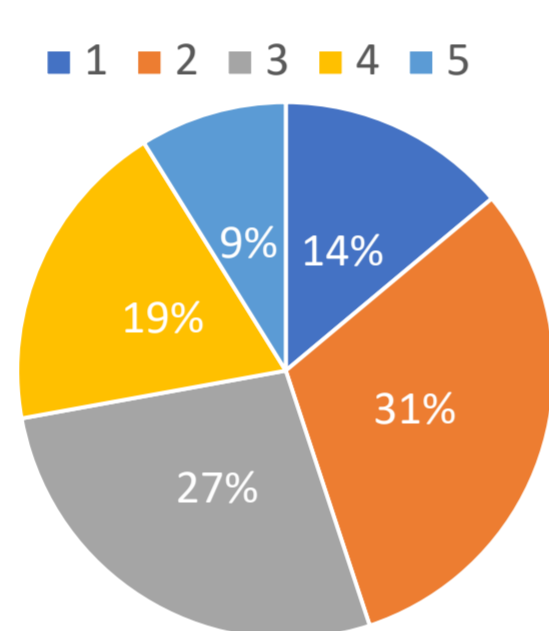
Results

Over 268 appointments, 158 children were treated. The was-not-brought rate was 6.7%. Ages ranged from 1 month to 16 years 11 months (median 7.4 years). Travel distance to the clinic ranged from 0.4km to 39.8km (median 9.5km). A recent change of clinic location reduced the median travel distance by 5km. 29% of children had additional support needs and 4% required an interpreter. Extraction (47%) was the most common treatment and inhalation sedation (47%) the most common modality. 28% of children required referral for general anaesthetic. PROMS and PREMS (N=20) showed that 90% of parents/guardians found it easy or very easy to access the clinic. 75% of treated children were on a waiting list or registered with a dentist at the review telephone appointment.

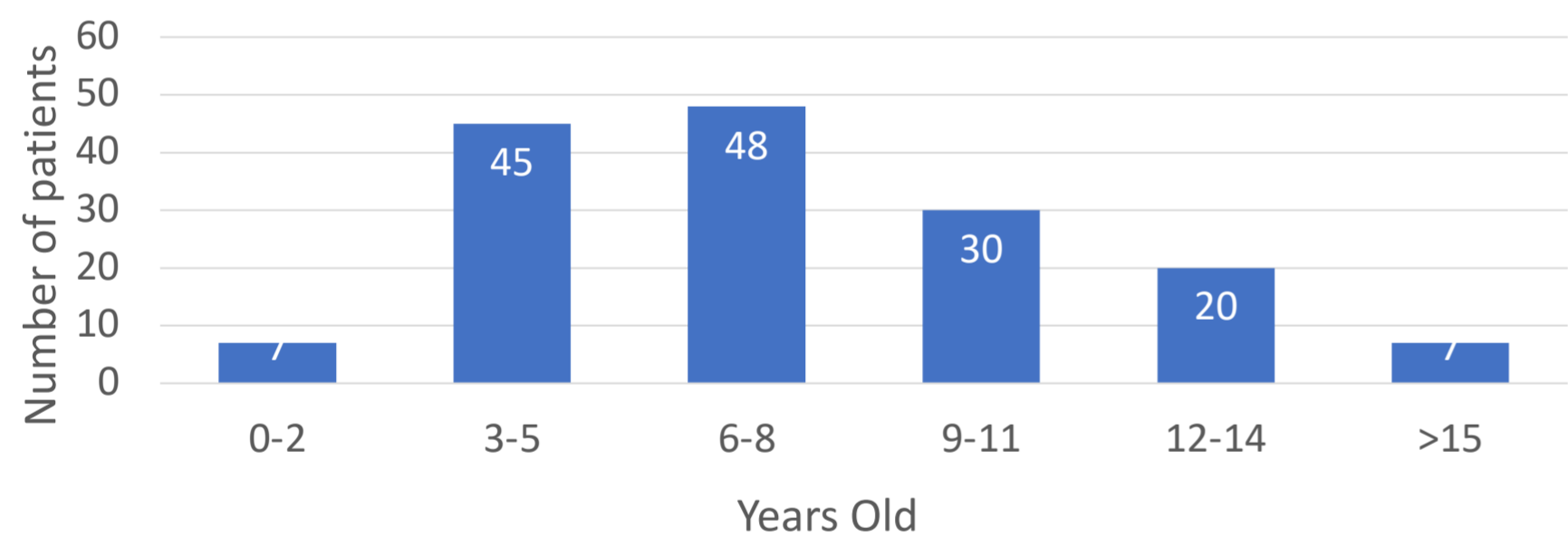
GENDER OF PATIENTS



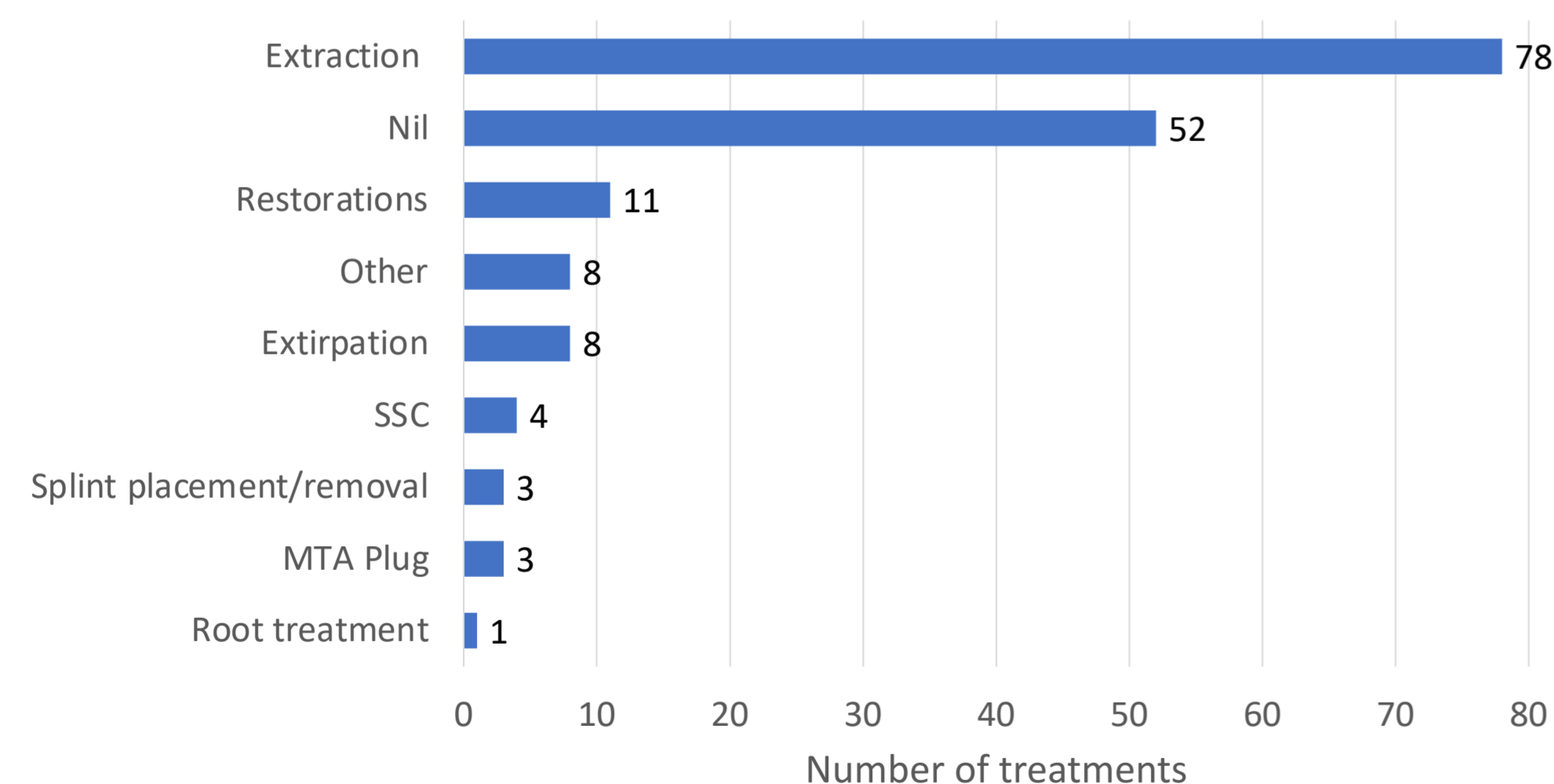
SIMD (QUINTILE) CODES



AGE ATTENDING CLINIC



TREATMENTS CARRIED OUT



Discussion

This service reduces the burden on community, emergency and secondary care by providing a simple, accessible course of treatment to unregistered, often vulnerable children. The change in clinic location to the city centre has made it more accessible. The clinic is largely meeting its purpose, with patient satisfaction confirmed by PROMS and PREMS.

References

1. Care Quality Commission. (2022). *COVID-19 Insight 10: Dental access during the pandemic.*

