

# Oral Health Among Individuals Requiring Support of a Caregiver

Morgan Santoro\*, Paige Martin, Lisa J. Heaton, Adrianna Sonnek, Rebecca Preston, Eric P. Tranby  
CareQuest Institute for Oral Health



## Research Objective

The aim of this research is to examine oral health outcomes of individuals requiring caregiver support, from the caregivers' perspective, to assess the individual's ability to access and utilize oral health services.

## Study Design

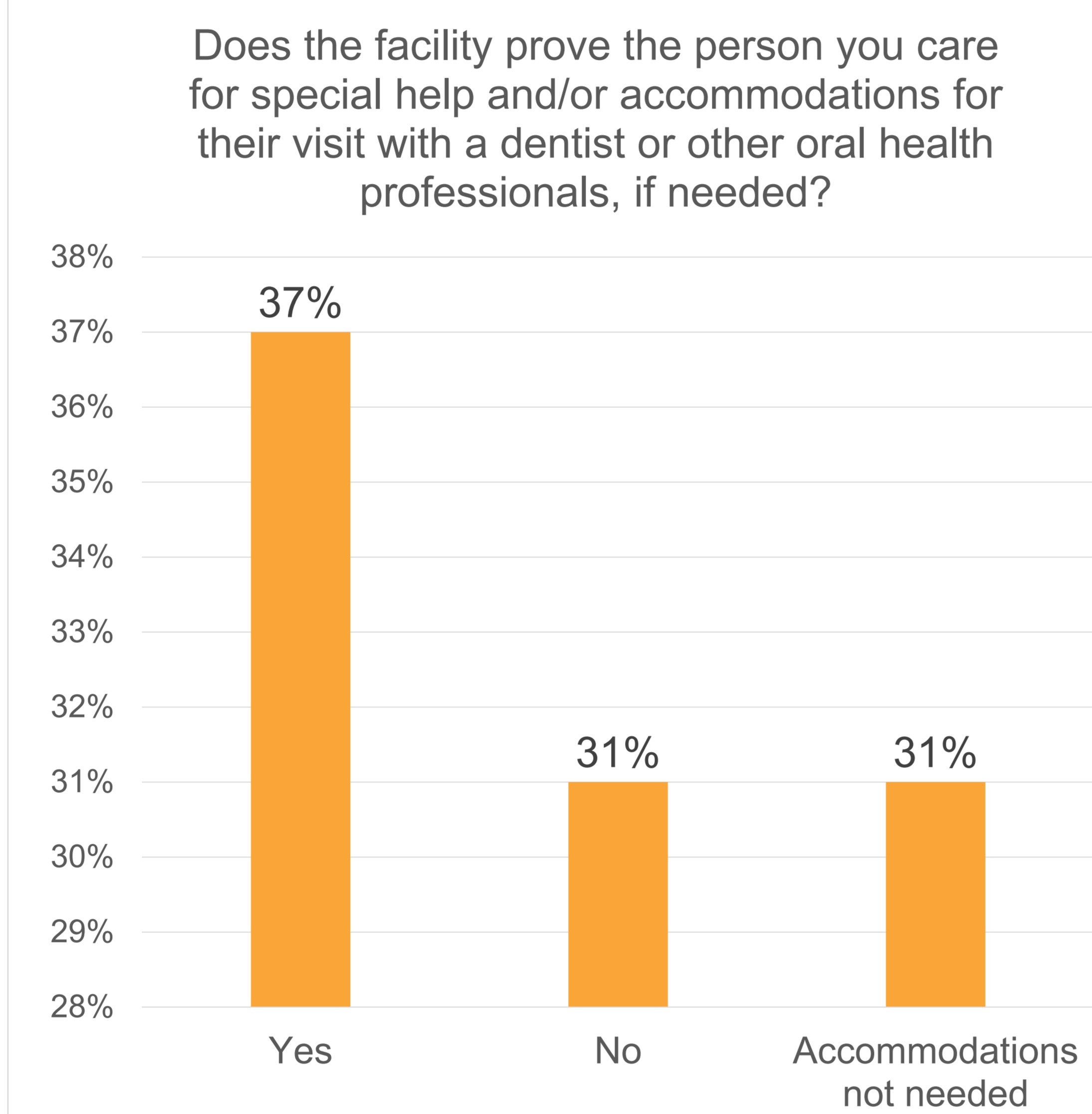
- The nationally representative 2023 State of Oral Health Equity in America (SOHEA) survey was created by CareQuest Institute for Oral Health and administered by NORC at the University of Chicago.
- Randomly selected adults (18+) on the AmeriSpeak panel were asked to report if they were a caregiver to an adult aged 18 years or older.
- Caregiver respondents reported utilization of routine dental care for the person being cared for and the frequency of their dental visits.

## Descriptive Findings

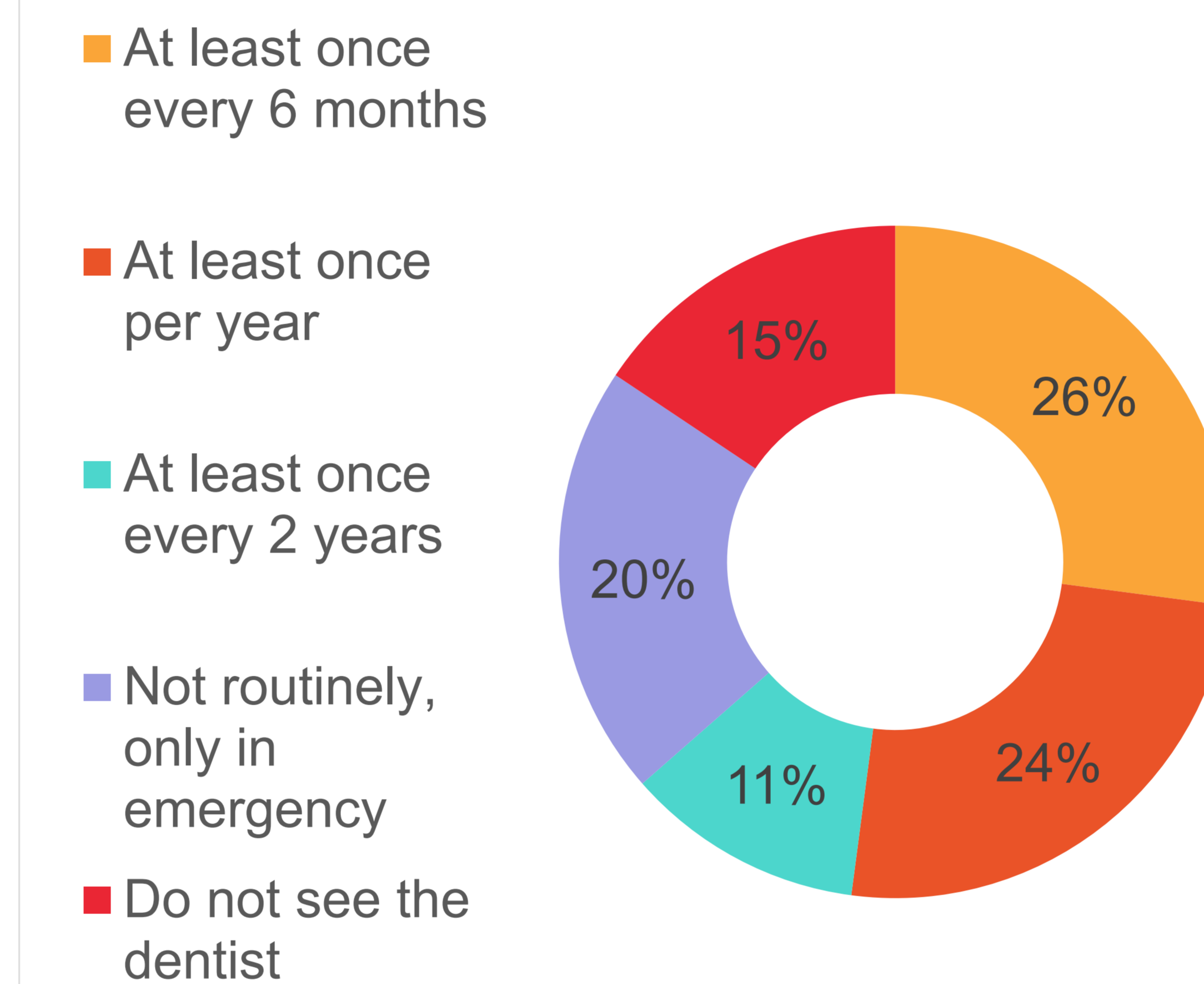
- Participants with caregiver status (N=481) reported on behalf of the adults for whom they care (38% with a physical disability; 24% with an intellectual or developmental disability; 33% as an adult aged 65+ requiring care).
- One-third (33%) of caregivers report the person they care for does not have a regular source of dental care.
- About 18% of caregivers reported in the past 12 months, the person they care for was delayed in receiving necessary dental care, tests, or treatments; the primary reason was the inability to afford care (21%; Figure 1).

## Key Findings

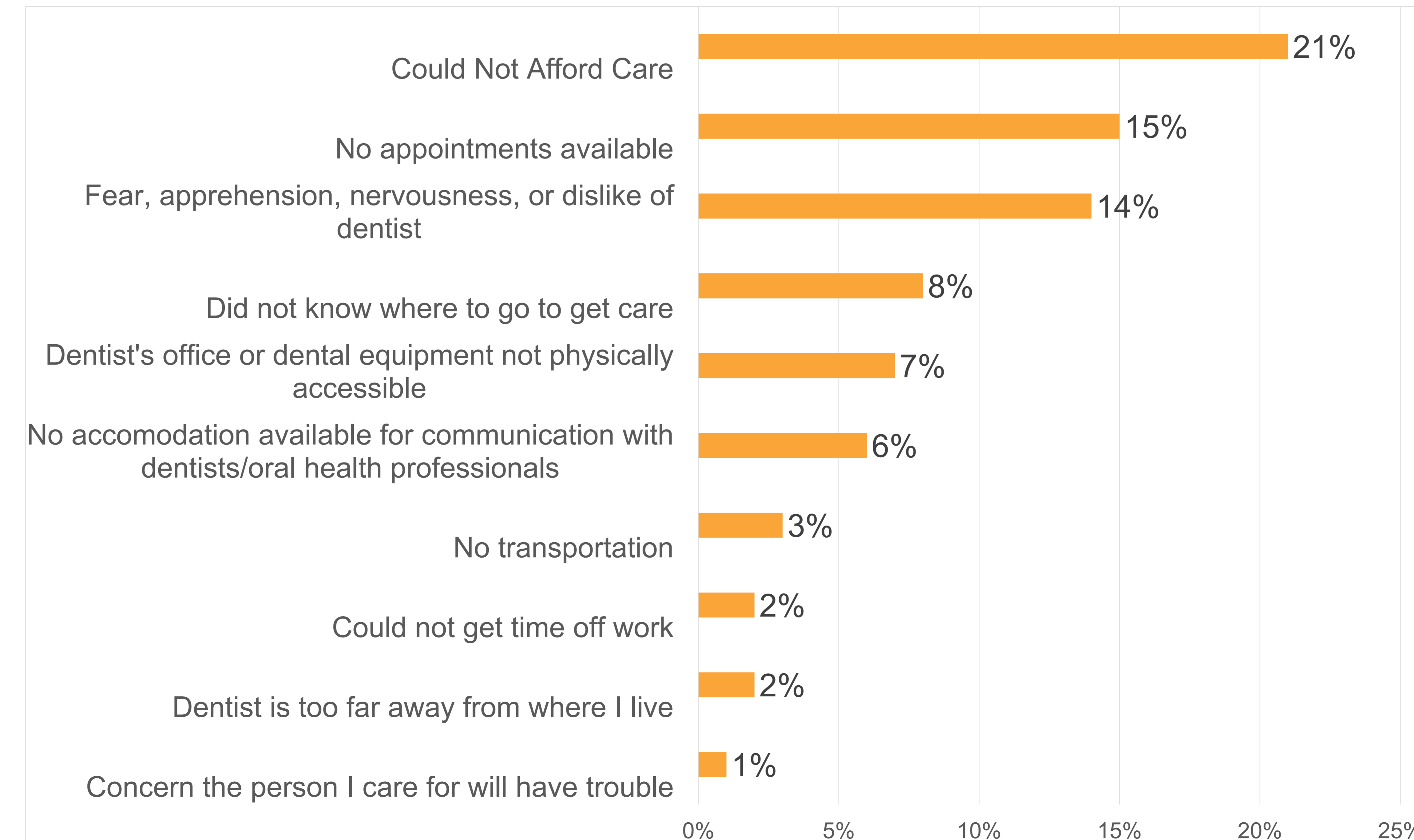
**Figure 1: Availability of Accommodations in the Dental Setting**



**Figure 2: How Often Person Cared for is Seen by Dentist from Perspective of Caregiver**



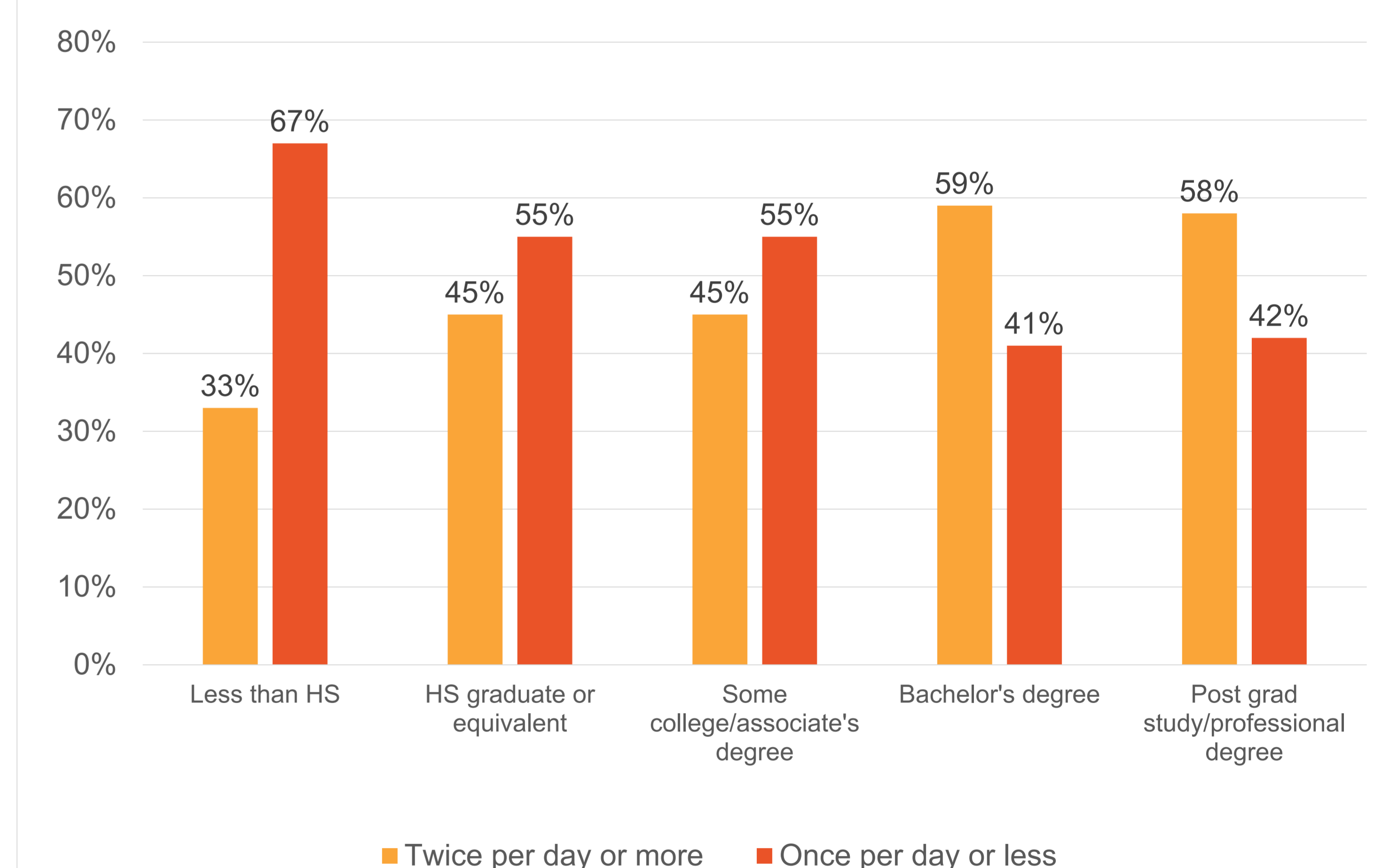
**Figure 3: Main Reason Person Being Cared For Was Delayed in Getting Necessary Dental Care, Tests, or Treatments From Caregiver's Perspective**



## Regression Analysis Results

- Female** caregivers are significantly **less** likely than **male** caregivers to report the person for whom they care had at least one oral health symptom in the past year (Female: OR=0.17; 95% CI=0.04-0.58; p=0.009).
- Caregivers who identify as **Asian** are significantly **less** likely than caregivers identifying as **white** to report the person for whom they care has fair/poor overall health (OR=0.33; 95% CI=0.13-0.78; p=0.014).
- Caregivers living in **urban** environments are significantly **less** likely than **rural** residents to report the person for whom they care visits a dentist less than once per year (OR=0.51; 95% CI=0.27-0.97; p=0.04).
- Caregivers **without a dental home** are significantly **more** likely than those **with a dental home** to report the person for whom they care visits a dentist less than once per year (OR=2.14; 95% CI=1.21-3.84; p=0.01).

**Figure 4. Brushing Frequency by Caregiver Education**



## Conclusion

Individuals under the support of a caregiver appear, based on the perspective of their caregiver, to face challenges accessing and sustaining routine dental care, with cost being the primary impeding factor.

## For More Information

Please reach out to Morgan Santoro or Paige Martin for any further information or questions: [msantoro@carequest.org](mailto:msantoro@carequest.org); [pmartin@carequest.org](mailto:pmartin@carequest.org)