

Mobile Device Location Data Illuminates Impacts of COVID-19 on Dental Office Visitation



Study Design

- Dental patient visitation patterns were evaluated using mobile device data.
- Patterns were compared between 2019 and 2020 to understand the impact of COVID-19 on dental office visitation.



Results

- Dental office visitation rates decreased from 1.25% in 2019 to less than 0.75% in 2020.
- People in nonmetropolitan areas traveled 3 more miles on average to a dental office than those in metropolitan areas in both 2019 and 2020.
- Big box retail stores and fast food locations were most commonly visited on the same day as a dental office.



Recommendations

- Technology-based dental encounters and shifting care delivery can help address the decrease in dental office visits.
- Nutritional guidance from dental offices may help patients make better choices when they visit restaurants on the same day as their dental appointment.
- Oral health messaging can be maximized throughout the community based on patient mobility patterns.