

Prevalence And Determinants of Preventive Dental Care Utilization Among Pregnant Women in Virginia: Findings from The Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS)

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INTRODUCTION

Prenatal oral health is essential for maintaining maternal and fetal health [1,2]. It helps prevent and manage oral conditions like periodontal disease, which is linked to adverse outcomes such as preterm birth and low birth weight [3,4]. Despite recommendations, preventive dental care utilization during pregnancy remains low.

OBJECTIVE

This study aims to estimate the prevalence of prenatal preventive dental care and investigate factors influencing its utilization, including access to prenatal care services, experiences with discrimination, health conditions, and substance use.

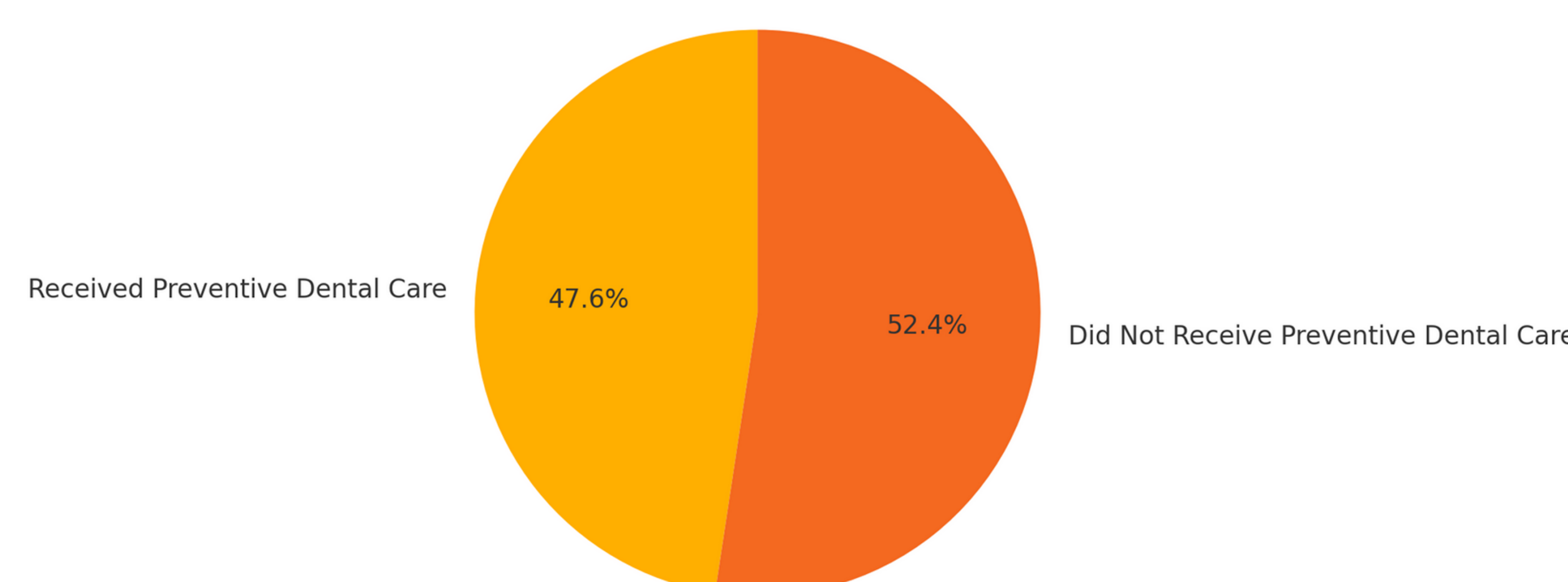
METHODOLOGY

- This study is a secondary data analysis of Virginia PRAMS Phase 8, representing women surveyed within the state between 2016 and 2022.
- PRAMS is a state-based surveillance system in which women are selected after delivery from birth certificates.
- Data are collected using a mixed-mode approach, combining mail, web, and telephone surveys.
- Logistic regression estimated crude and adjusted odds ratios (ORs) with 95% confidence intervals (CIs).
- Statistical analysis was conducted using SAS, with significance set at $P < 0.05$.

RESULTS

- A total of 6,759 participants were included in this study.

Prevalence of Preventive Dental Care Utilization



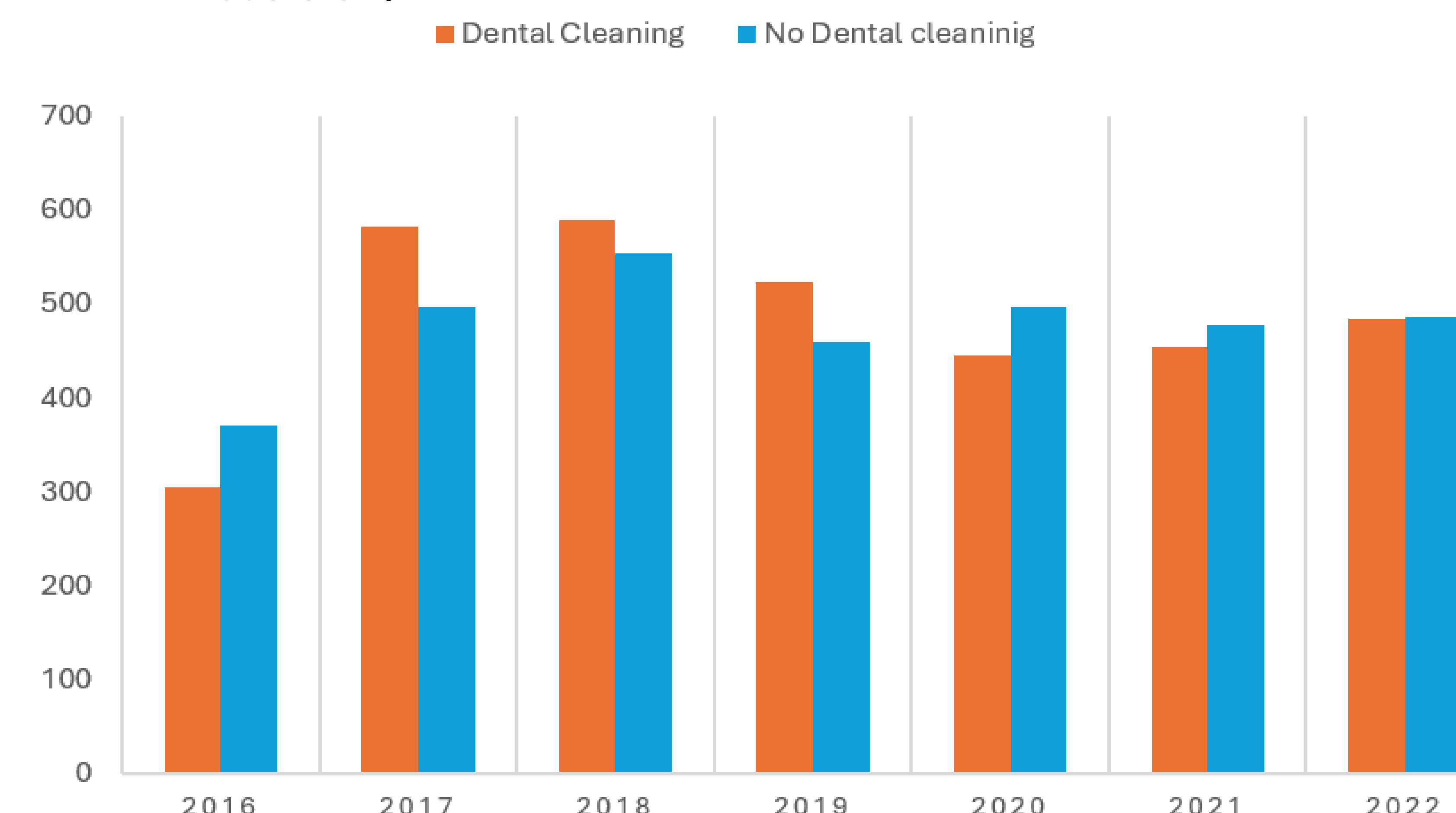
Factors Associated with Lower Utilization

- Pregnancy-related anxiety (OR = 0.75; $P = 0.042$)
- Cigarette smoking (OR = 0.57; $P = 0.031$)
- Medicaid insurance (OR = 0.76; $P = 0.037$)

- Difficulty finding a dentist accepting pregnant women (OR = 0.47; $P = 0.002$)
- WIC enrollment (OR = 0.70; $P = 0.011$)

Factors Associated with Higher Utilization

- Healthcare visits before pregnancy (OR = 2.85; $P < 0.0001$)
- Experiencing dental problems during pregnancy (OR = 2.03; $P < 0.0001$)



Trends in Dental Cleaning During Pregnancy (2016-2022)

CONCLUSION

- Less than half of pregnant women received preventive dental care, revealing significant gaps in maternal oral health services.
- Integrated prenatal and oral healthcare models are needed to improve access, particularly for women with mental health challenges, difficulty finding dental providers, and those in public assistance programs.

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REFERENCES

