



## Introduction

- Socioemotional and behavioral concerns are frequently observed by pediatric dental providers and may also be reported by caregivers
- Individualized information from caregivers about dental visits is particularly important for children with behavioral health diagnoses such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD; Chandrashekhar & Bommangoudar, 2018)
- Families of children with ASD may also face increased challenges with dental visits due to COVID-19 (e.g., mask wearing, greater time between visits, more routine changes; Bellis, 2021)

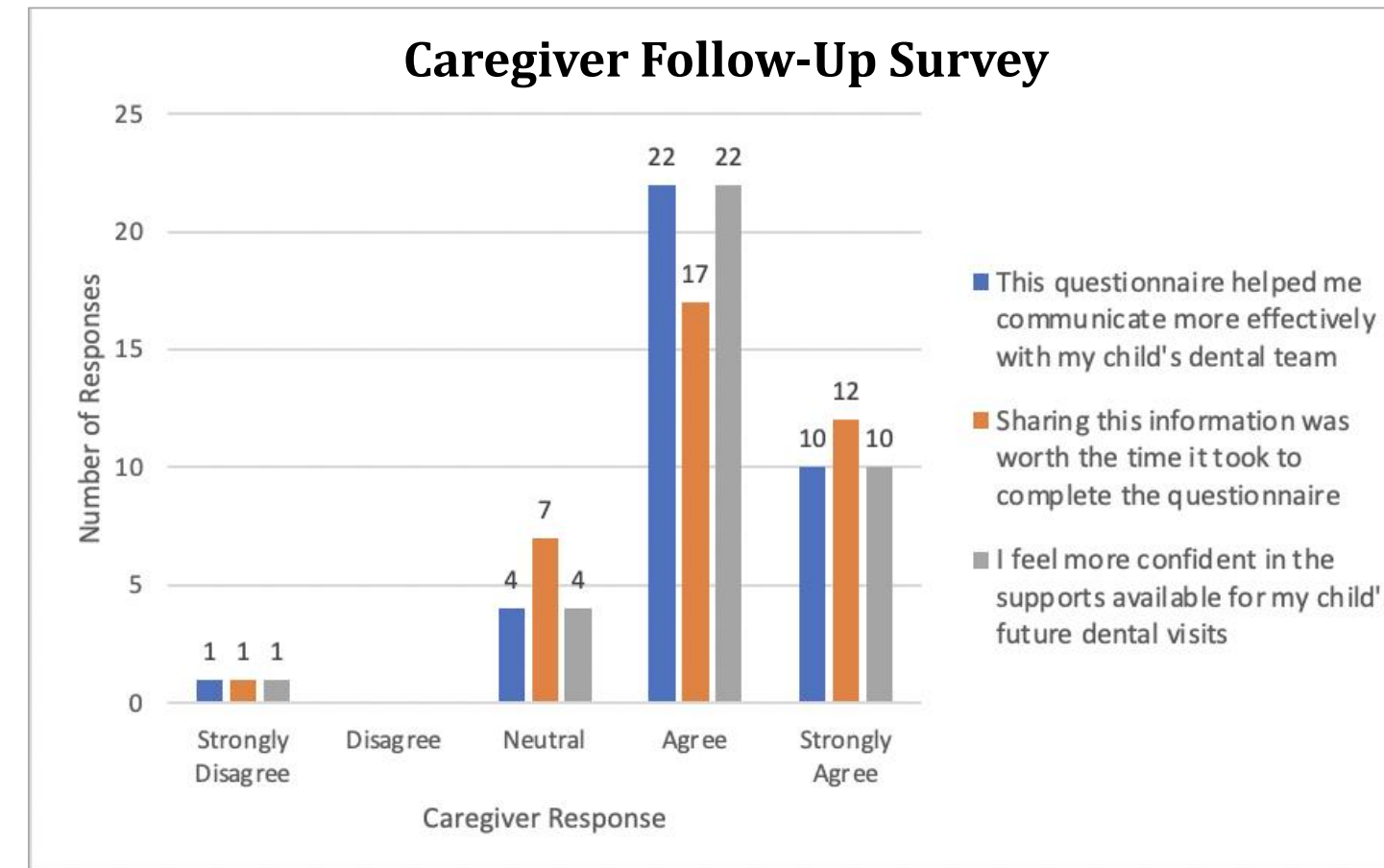
### Goals of current study:

- Identify ways to better communicate individualized care needs (e.g., psychiatric diagnoses, past dental experiences) to providers
- Create an Individualized Patient Care Form to obtain more information from parents and caregivers and to offer various strategies and interventions available for appointments
- Increase provider access and knowledge of intervention strategies to address common behavioral health concerns

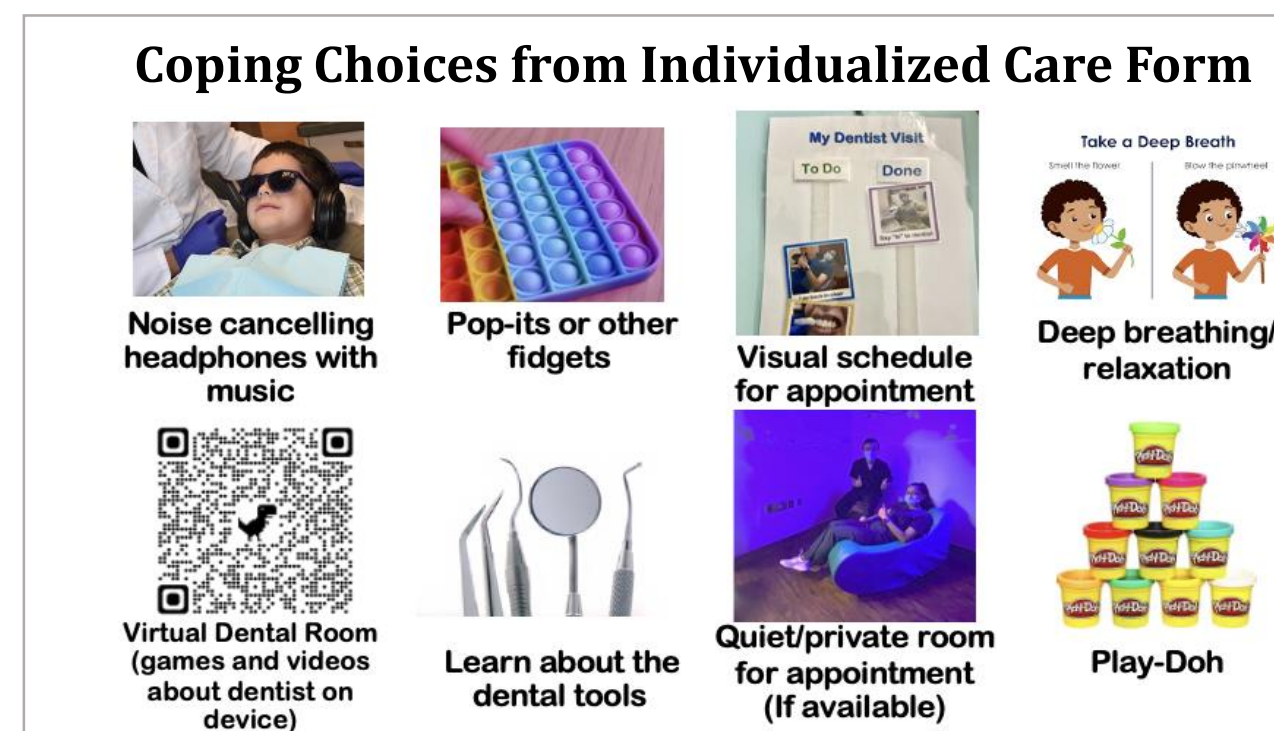
## Methods

- Location: UR Eastman Pediatric Dental Clinic
- Conducted *Preliminary Needs Assessment* with dental residents to identify what information would be helpful to know prior to a dental visit for patients with individualized needs
  - Multiple choice and open answer survey (N=10)
  - 100%** of residents reported that knowing the following would be helpful:
    - Past Dental Experiences
    - Coping strategies for appointments
    - Child's special healthcare needs
- Developed an **Individualized Patient Care Form** based on provider feedback
- Created a visual schedule intervention and obtained other coping tools (e.g., noise cancelling headphones) for appointments that were listed on this form
- Distributed the *Individualized Patient Care Form* and *Follow-Up Survey* to caregivers at dental visits (N=37) and shared the form with their dental provider during the visit
- Distributed a *Follow-Up Survey* to dental residents regarding use of the Individualized Care form (N=11)
- Analyses:** Descriptive statistics about surveys

## Results



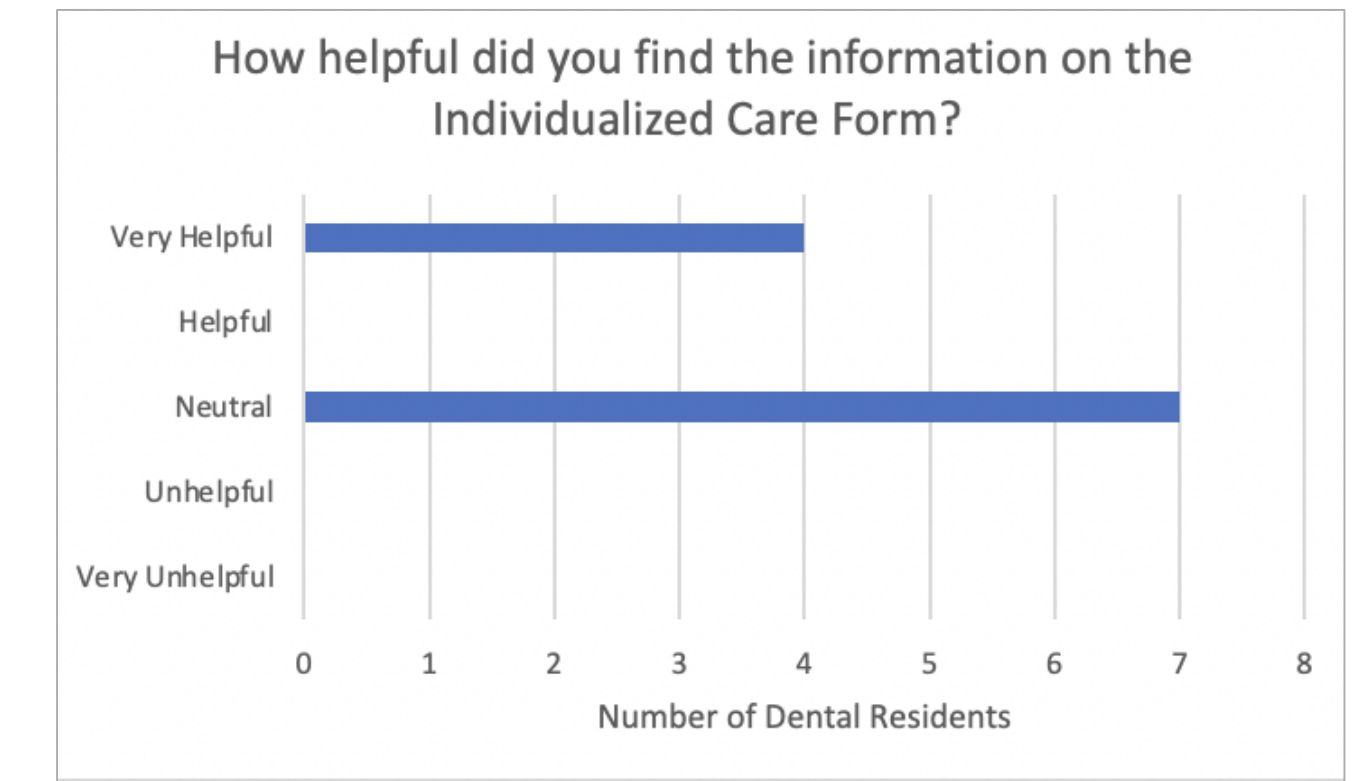
- 86% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that the form helped them communicate with the child's dental team more effectively
- 78% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that completing the form was worth the time it took to complete



### Examples of caregiver comments from Individualized Care Forms:

- "The demeanor of the provider really impacts the overall experience. When the provider speaks slowly and in comforting tones, she does better than when the provider is rushed."
- "Their regular dentist tried to hide the lidocaine needle and 'sneak attack.' Not cool. Be up front with her about what you're doing and let her be brave."
- "She likes to talk about rainbows and airplanes."
- "Needs a quiet room. No singing."
- "It's helpful if you talk him through the procedure."
- "[This appointment is] a little nerve wracking for us both."

## Resident Follow-Up Survey



## Discussion

- Caregivers find it helpful and worthwhile to provide information through an Individualized Care Form
  - This was true even for some caregivers who did not endorse any specific behavioral health concerns for their child
- The majority of caregivers were receptive to completing the Individualized Care Form, particularly while sitting in the waiting room
- Residents generally feel neutral about the use of the form and would prefer the information to be collected beforehand. Residents would like the coping choices (e.g., headphones, Play-Doh) to be readily available for them
- Limitations include the time required to complete the form, where to store this information, and how best to share this information with providers

## Future Directions

- Implement a digitized form for all new patients, including those who do not endorse behavioral health concerns
- Ensure that providers know where and how to access this information before and between appointments
- Ensure that the coping choices are available for provider use
- Identify a way to flag and update the Individualized Care Forms

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the providers and residents at Eastman Dental for welcoming me and helping with this project!