


Parents' Perceptions of Their Children's Teeth: A Useful Indicator of Disease?

Mathew Christensen Ph.D., Diane Brunson
MPH, & Theresa Anselmo BSDH

Colorado Department of Public Health and
Environment

- 
- One question in the National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) asks parents' to describe the condition of their children's teeth.
 - At Issue: How accurate are parents' perceptions, and can they be used as an estimate of disease prevalence in the state?
-



- Method:

- Compare representative state data about parents' perceptions with representative state data from dental hygienists' in-mouth assessments.

- Data:

- National Survey of Children's Health; Colorado Child Health Survey; Basic Screening Survey
-



Parents' rating

- Excellent
- Very Good


- Good
- Fair

- Poor

BSS urgency of need


- No obvious problem

 - Early dental care is needed

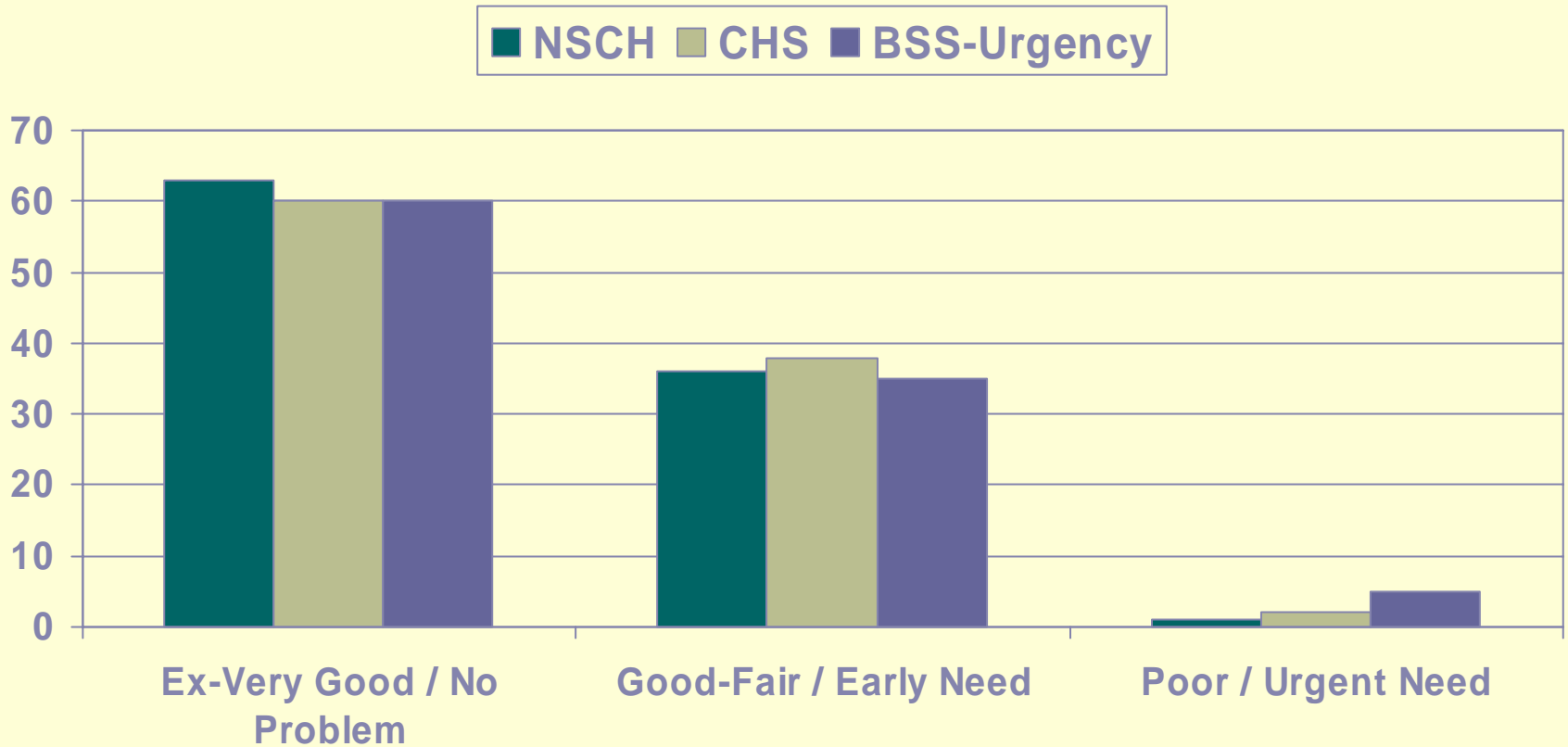
 - Urgent dental care is needed
- 



BSS: Urgency Definitions


- 35% “early dental care is needed... within the next few weeks”
 - (1) caries w/o other signs or symptoms, (2) spontaneous bleeding gums, (3) suspicious white or red soft tissue areas
 - 5% “urgent/emergent need for dental care...24 hours”
 - (1) pain, (2) infection, (3) swelling, (4) soft tissue ulceration of more than 2 weeks duration
- 


Colorado Third Graders' Teeth







National Survey of Children's Health 03-04: 160 Colorado 3rd Graders

- How would you describe the condition of (S.C.)'s teeth?
 - Excellent 30%
 - Very good 32%
 - Good 27%
 - Fair 9%
 - Poor 1%
- 





Colorado Child Health Survey 2004: 112 Colorado 3rd Graders

- How would you rate the condition of your child's teeth? Would you say the condition is:
 - Excellent 27%
 - Very Good 32%
 - Good 22%
 - Fair 16%
 - Poor 2%
- 



BSS 2004: Urgency of Need for Dental Care

- 60% “no obvious dental problem... routine dental care”
 - 35% “early dental care is needed... within the next few weeks”
 - 5% “urgent/emergent need for dental care...24 hours”
- 



● Can parents' perceptions of their children's teeth be used to estimate "urgency prevalence," and establish trends in the years BSS data are not collected?

● Colorado Data Costs

● BSS ~ \$20,000

● NSCH ~ none for state

● CHS ~ \$1,200 per question





● Future Plans

- Ask question about parent's perceptions of health on BSS consent
 - Will directly compare parents' perceptions and clinical assessments
 - Data accumulated over time provides consistent estimates of the amount of error between parents' perceptions and clinical assessments
- 