

Impact of COVID-19 on Dental Care in New York State and Georgia

Caroline Puskas AB¹, Stephen S. Morse PhD²

¹Columbia University College of Dental Medicine, New York, NY

²Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, New York, NY



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INTRODUCTION

- During the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, there was an unprecedented, forced closure of dental offices nationwide
- The effects of this pause on dental care have not yet been defined
- This study conducted an interstate comparison of the COVID-19 impact on oral healthcare in New York State and Georgia, whose COVID-19 management and impact varied greatly

OBJECTIVES

- Better quantitate the withdrawal of dental care services in New York State and Georgia
- Investigate the impact of fear of COVID-19 exposure on patients seeking dental care

MATERIALS & METHODS

- 16-question Qualtrics survey sent to the membership of the New York State Dental Association (NYSDA) and Georgia Dental Association (GDA) that included:
 - Demographics of the dentists (Figure 1)
 - Appointment cancellation rates during the COVID-19 pandemic and how much cancellation rates were accounted for by COVID-19 exposure fear
 - Reopening times for non-emergent care (Figure 2)
 - Volume of individual dental procedures provided to patients from March 1 to August 1, 2020, compared to the same 5-month period in 2019 (Figure 3)

Figure 1: Sample Demographics

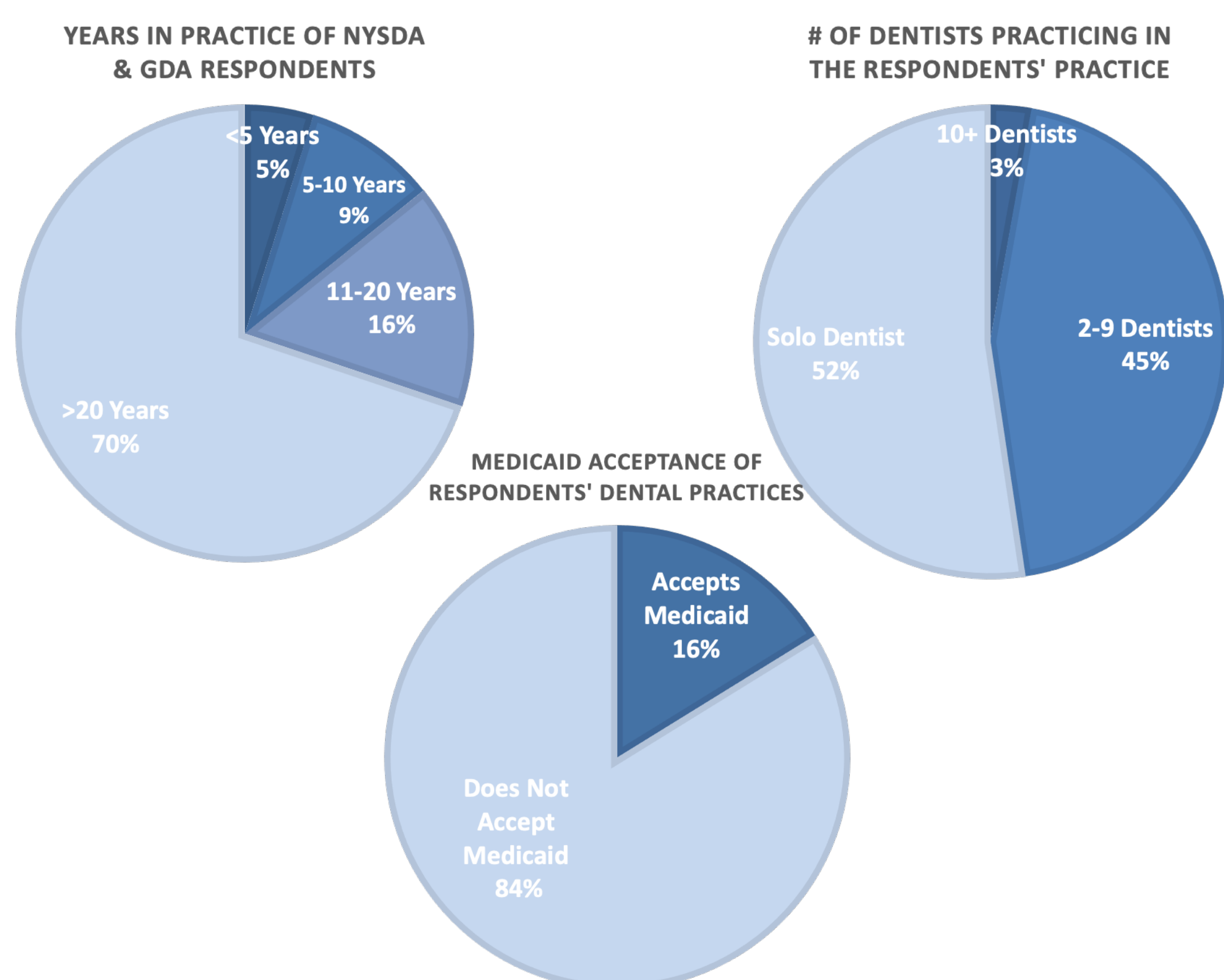
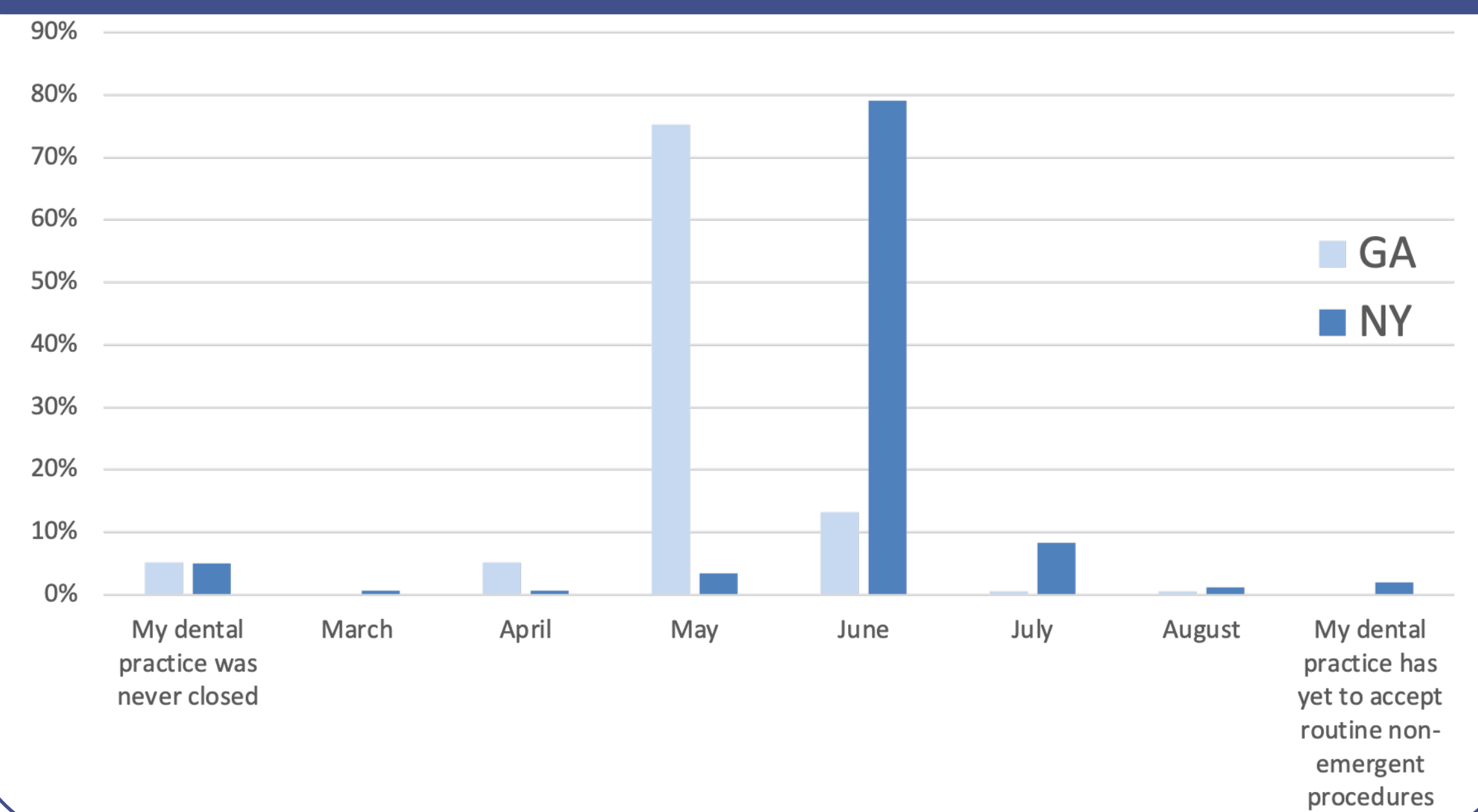


FIGURE 2: Dental PRACTICE FULL REOPENING TIMES (From March 1 to August 1, 2020)



RESULTS

- 701 members of the NYSDA and GDA elected to participate in the Qualtrics survey; responses from 680 actively practicing dentists were included in data analysis
- New York and Georgia dentist respondents felt 37% and 52% of patient appointment cancellations were due to COVID-19 exposure fear, respectively
- Demographic characteristics of NYSDA and GDA respondent members showed no statistically significant differences
- NYSDA members reported significantly larger decreases in performing all types of dental procedures, including prophylaxis, elective care, emergent care, and specialty procedures (Figure 3)
- Antibiotic prescription was the only dental care service whose change from pre-COVID baseline was not significantly different between New York and Georgia

CONCLUSIONS

- Across all dental procedures during the pandemic, services by New York dentists appeared to be more affected by the pandemic than Georgia dentists
- Study Limitations include possible recall and sampling biases
- Future investigations will use this quantification of the dental care provided during the COVID-19 dental hiatus to assess the impact and repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic on oral public health in the near and more distant future

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FIGURE 3: From March 1 to August 1, 2020 compared to the same 5-month period in 2019, how did the volume of each dental procedure provided to your patients change?

