Age One Dental Visits

Background
The Michigan Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring Survey (MI PRAMS) has recently begun asking new mothers questions about whether they intend to take their infant to the dentist by their first birthday. Infants normally begin to erupt teeth between 6 and 12 months, at which time the teeth are vulnerable to decay and demineralization of the enamel. Once decay has begun it can progress rapidly, as primary teeth are much smaller and the enamel is thinner than in permanent teeth.1 Tooth decay can lead to malnutrition, infection, premature tooth loss and costly restorative interventions. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends a dental visit by age one.2

Results
Based on the combined 2016-2018 MI PRAMS data set, almost two-thirds (64.7%) of new Michigan mothers intend to take their child to the dentist before their first birthday. Mothers with less than a high school diploma were more likely to report intending to follow through with the age one dental visits (77.2%) compared to mothers who obtained a college degree (52.9%). Women who had an annual household income of <$16,000 were more likely to report intending to take their child to the dentist before their first birthday (82.2%) compared to women who had an annual household income of ≥$60,000 (50.9%). Women with public insurance (76.9%) or without insurance (71.6%) were more likely to report the intention to take their infant to the dentist before their first birthday more than women with private insurance (57.9%).

Discussion
This is the first time that Michigan women have been asked about their plans for infant oral health care on MI PRAMS. Interestingly, these results show an inverse relationship to income, age and education. These results suggest that the large statewide effort to educate women on Medicaid on the age one dental visit may be making an impact. Furthermore, these results indicate the need to reach women on private insurance who may never engage with public health services. Additional efforts should be made to engage the private practice dental community who may be more likely to provide services to those on private insurances. Further research is needed to determine if this is a true association or related to other factors which were not accounted for in this study.

References

Suggested Citation

Data Source: MI PRAMS, 2016-2018

Confidence Interval: A range that contains 95% of the true mean of the population