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THE DENTAL HEALTH OF ARMY FAMILY MEMBERS: 1987-88
VOLUME II:

DENTAL UTILIZATION/PERCEIVED NEED FOR DENTAL CARE

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Chapter 5: Results/Dental Utilization

5.1 Spouses

5.1.1 Sample size.

To allow comparisons between the sample and national data collected by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), we restricted our sample to spouses between the ages of 18 and 54, inclusive. Thus, our total sample drops to 3,542.

Table 5-1 shows results for the total sample and the sample stratified by sex and race for 18-54 year olds. In Tables 5-2 through 5-4, the samples are stratified by age bands as well as by sex and race (where sufficient sample size is available).

5.1.2 Proportion of Spouses Who Have Never Seen a Dentist.

Overall, the proportion of Army spouses who have never seen a dentist (0.5%) is lower than in the national sample (1.3%). Controlling for sex and race, this trend, through variable, is consistent (with the exception of "other" ethnic groups). For non-users of dental care, the gap between Army spouses and the national sample is widest for Blacks (2.4%) and Hispanics (4.8%). Among other ethnics, Army spouses are twice as likely never to have seen a dentist (1.8%) than their national cohorts (0.9%).

Overall, the proportion of Army Spouses who have never seen a dentist decreases as age increases and is much lower than for their national cohorts (Tables 5-2 to 5-4). This pattern holds for whites, Blacks, and Hispanics but not other ethnic groups. Among other ethnic groups the proportion of Army spouses who have never seen a dentist decreases as age increases but is nearly twice as high as in their national cohorts.

5.1.3 Proportion of Spouses Who Have Seen a Dentist in the Past Year.

Table 5-1 shows that in some subgroups (males, females, and other ethnics), Army spouses are less likely to have seen a dentist within the past year than their national cohorts. Overall, 63.2% of Army spouses have seen a dentist within the past year versus 60.4% of the national sample. Striking gains in annual dental utilization for Army spouses versus their national cohorts are present for Blacks (12.7%) and Hispanics (19.1%). Tables 5-2 to 5-4 show that age clearly has an effect on dental utilization. The proportion of dependent spouses who have seen a dentist within the past year increases as we go from 18-34 year olds (60.4%), to 35-44 year olds (70.0%) to 45-54 year olds (74.4%). In comparison, in the national cohort utilization displays an inverse U-shaped relationship with age. These patterns are consistent when we control for sex.

Overall, for whites and for females, the proportion of individuals who have seen a dentist within the past year is roughly comparable for 18-34 year old spouses and their national cohorts (Table 5-2). In older age bands, annual dental utilization by spouses in these subgroups exceeds their national cohorts. Regardless of age, the proportion of Black and Hispanic dependents who have seen a dentist within the past year far exceeds their national cohorts.

5.1.4 Summary and Conclusion for Spouses

The following summary highlights findings from a convenience sample of 3,542 spouses (ages 18-54, inclusive) of active duty soldiers at 10 Army installations. Because this is a convenience sample, caution should be used in applying these findings to the general population of Army spouses. Because the spouse sample is predominantly female, while the national sample is more balanced, caution should be applied when comparing these two groups except when the samples are stratified by sex.

--Annual dental utilization by dependent spouses increases as age increases: 60.4% of 18-34 year olds, 70.0% of 35-44 year olds, and 74.4% of 45-54 year olds have seen a dentist within the past year.

--While annual dental utilization for 18-34 year old dependent spouses is comparable to national norms, in older age bands annual dental utilization by active duty spouses exceeds national norms.

--Annual dental utilization by Black and Hispanic dependent spouses exceeds national norms by 13-19%.

--Dependent spouses are less likely to have never seen a dentist (0.5%) than their national cohorts (1.3%).

5.2 Preschoolers at Ft. Sam Houston

5.2.1 Sample Size

To allow comparisons between the sample and national data collected by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), we restricted our samples to preschoolers between the ages of 2 and 4, inclusive. Thus, our sample drops to 56.

Table 5-5 shows results for the total sample and the sample stratified by sex and race (where sufficient sample size is available).

5.2.2 Proportion of Preschoolers Who Have Never Seen a Dentist.

Overall, 25% of preschoolers at Ft. Sam Houston have never seen a dentist versus 62.9% of their national cohorts. Male preschoolers at Ft. Sam Houston are more likely to have never seen a dentist (28.0%) than females (22.6%).

5.2.3 Proportion of Preschoolers Who Have Seen a Dentist Within the Past Year.

Overall, two-thirds of preschoolers at Ft. Sam Houston have seen a dentist within the past year versus only one-third of their national cohorts. Male preschoolers at Ft. Sam Houston are more likely to have seen a dentist within the past year (68.0%) than females (64.5%).

5.2.4 Summary and Conclusions for Preschoolers at Ft. Sam Houston.

The following summary highlights findings from a sample of 56 preschoolers (age 2-4, inclusive) for Army families at one installation. Because the sample is small, the sample estimates have a high variance. Demographics of the children's sponsors suggest the sample may be atypical. Many of the children have highly educated parents and high ranking military sponsors. Thus, caution should be used in applying these findings to the general population of preschool children of active duty soldiers.

--Annual dental utilization by 2-4 year olds at Ft. Sam Houston (66.1%) exceeds national norms (33.5%).

--Dependent 2-4 year olds at Ft. Sam Houston are less likely to have never seen a dentist (25.0%) than their national cohorts (62.9%).

5.3 Preschoolers at Ft. Lewis

5.3.1 Sample Size

To allow comparisons between the sample and national data collected by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), we restricted our sample to preschoolers between the ages of 2 and 4, inclusive. Thus our sample size drops to 48.

Table 5-6 shows results for the total sample and the sample stratified by sex. There were insufficient cases to stratify the sample by race.

5.3.2 Proportion of Preschoolers Who Have Never Seen a Dentist

Over half (52.1%) of preschoolers at Ft. Lewis have never seen dentist versus 62.9% of their national cohorts. Female preschoolers at Ft. Lewis were slightly more likely to have never seen a dentist (54.6%) than males (50.0%).

5.3.3 Proportion of Preschoolers Who Have Seen a Dentist Within the Past Year.

Preschoolers at Ft. Lewis are only slightly more likely to have seen a dentist within the past year (39.6%) than their national cohorts (33.5%). Male preschoolers at Ft. Lewis are more likely to have seen a dentist within the past year (42.3%) than females (36.4%).

5.3.4 Summary and conclusion for Preschoolers at Ft. Lewis

The following summary highlights findings from a sample of 48 preschoolers (age 2-4, inclusive) from Army families at one installation. Because the sample is small, sample estimates have a high variance. This sample probably more closely approximates the population of preschool children of active duty soldiers in the Army at large than the FSH sample, as Ft. Lewis is a more typical, combat arms, military installation.

--Annual dental utilization by 2-4 year olds at Ft. Lewis (39.6%) is close to national norms (33.5%).

--Dependent 2-4 year olds at Ft. Lewis are less likely to have never seen a dentist (52.1%) than their national cohorts (62.9%).

5.4 Grade School Children at Ft. Sam Houston

5.4.1 Sample Size

To allow comparisons between the sample and national data collected by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), we restricted our sample to grade school children between the ages of 5 and 11, inclusive. Thus, our sample drops to 728.

Table 5-7 shows results for the total sample and the sample stratified by sex and by race.

5.4.2 Proportion of Grade School Children Who Have Never Seen a Dentist.

Overall, only 5.5% of 5-11 year olds at Ft. Sam Houston have never seen a dentist versus 11.6% of their national cohorts. Female (6.2%), Black (7.4%) and Hispanic (8.1%) grade school

children at Ft. Sam Houston are more likely to have never seen a dentist than males (4.7%) or whites (3.9%). Each of these subgroups is less likely to have never seen a dentist than their national cohorts.

5.4.3 Proportion of Grade School Children Who Have Seen a Dentist in the Past Year.

Over three-quarters of all 5-11 year olds at Ft. Sam Houston have seen a dentist within the past year versus 71.8 % of their national cohorts. Male (79.2%) and white (81.9%) 5-11 year olds at Ft. Sam Houston were more likely to have seen a dentist within the past year than females (77.0%), Blacks (74.1%), or Hispanics (73.7%). Annual utilization by dependent minority children exceeds national cohorts by as much as 15%.

5.4.4 Summary and Conclusion for Grade School Children at Ft. Sam Houston.

The following summary highlights findings from a sample of 728 grade school children (age 5-11, inclusive) at one military installation. These findings may not apply to the population of dependent grade school children at large because Ft. Sam Houston is an atypical military installation. FSH has a high proportion of well-educated, high income, health professionals who most likely possess high levels of health consciousness. FSH also has a lower proportion of combat arms personnel than most Army installations and provides average levels (32.3%) of dependent dental care.

--Annual dental utilization by dependent 5-11 year olds at Ft. Sam Houston (78.0%) is greater than by their national cohorts (71.8%).

--Annual dental utilization by Black and Hispanic dependent 5-11 year olds at Ft. Sam Houston exceeds their national cohorts by roughly 15%.

--Annual dental utilization at Ft. Sam Houston by white dependent 5-11 year olds (81.9%) is higher than by Blacks (74.1%) and Hispanics (73.7%).

--Dependent 5-11 year olds at Ft. Sam Houston are less likely to have never seen a dentist (5.5%) than their national cohorts (11.6%).

--Female (6.2%), Black (7.4%), and Hispanic (8.1%) dependent 5-11 year olds at Ft. Sam Houston are more likely to have never seen a dentist than males (4.7%) or whites (3.9%).

5.5 Grade School Children at Ft. Lewis

5.5.1 Sample Size

To allow comparisons between the sample and national data collected by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), we restricted our sample size to grade school children between the age of 5-11, inclusive. Thus, our sample drops to 1,119.

Table 5-8 shows results for the total sample and the sample stratified by sex and by race.

5.5.2 Proportion of Grade School Children Who Have Never Seen a Dentist.

Overall, 8.1% of 5-11 year olds at Ft. Lewis have never seen a dentist versus 11.6% of their national cohorts. Male (9.6%), Black (10.0%), Hispanic (13.8%), or other ethnic (9.3%), 5-11 year old dependents are more likely to have never seen a dentist than females (6.8%) or whites (6.4%). All of these subgroups are less likely to have never seen a dentist than their national cohorts.

5.5.3 Proportion of Grade School Children Who Have Seen a Dentist in the Past Year.

Just under three-quarters (72.5%) of all 5-11 year olds at Ft. Lewis have seen a dentist within the past year. This is nearly equivalent to their national cohorts (71.8%). With the exception of Blacks and Hispanics, all ethnic and gender subgroups in the Ft. Lewis sample have annual dental utilization rates very similar to their national cohorts. The annual dental utilization rates of Black and Hispanic 5-11 year olds at Ft. Lewis exceed their national cohorts by 7.1% and 10.1%, respectively.

5.5.4 Summary and Conclusion for Grade School Children at Ft. Lewis.

The following summary highlights findings from a sample of 1,119 grade school children (age 5-11, inclusive) at one military installation. This sample probably more closely approximates the population of grade school children of active duty soldiers in the Army at large than the FSH sample, as Ft. Lewis is a more typical, combat arms, military installation. However, levels of dependent dental care at Ft. Lewis (17.4%) are below average in Health Services Command.

--Annual dental utilization by dependent 5-11 year olds at Ft. Lewis (72.5%) is nearly equal to their national cohorts (71.8%).

--Annual dental utilization by Black and Hispanic dependent 5-11 year olds at Ft. Lewis exceeds their national cohorts by 7-10%.

--Annual dental utilization at Ft. Lewis by white (74.8%) and other ethnic (75.4%) dependent 5-11 year olds is greater than by Blacks (65.8%) and Hispanics (69.0%).

--Dependent 5-11 year olds at Ft. Lewis are less likely to have never seen a dentist (8.1%) than their national cohorts (11.6%).

--Male (9.6%), Black (10.0%), Hispanic (13.8%), and other ethnic (9.3%) dependent 5-11 year olds at Ft. Lewis are more likely to have never seen a dentist than females (6.8%) or whites (6.4%).

5.6 High School Students at Ft. Sam Houston

5.6.1 Sample Size

To allow comparisons between the sample and national data collected by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), we restricted our sample to teenage dependents between the age of 12 and 17, inclusive. Thus, our sample drops to 293.

Table 5-9 shows results for the total sample and the sample stratified by sex and by race.

5.6.2 Proportion of High School Students Who Have Never Seen a Dentist.

Only 1.7 % of all 12-17 year olds in our sample have never seen a dentist versus 3.5% in the NCHS sample. Female (2.0%) and Black (3.2%) dependent teenagers are more likely to have never seen a dentist than males (1.4%), whites (1.5%), or Hispanics (0%). Each of these subgroups is less likely to have never seen a dentist than their national cohorts.

5.6.3 Proportion of High School Students Who Have Seen A Dentist in the Past Year.

Over four-fifths (82.6%) of all 12-17 year old dependent teenagers have seen a dentist within the past year versus 71.1% of their national cohorts. White (83.6%) and Hispanic (83.3%) teenage dependents are more likely to have seen a dentist in the past year than Black (77.4%) teenage dependents. Annual dental utilization rates by dependent Blacks and Hispanics exceed their national cohorts by 21.8% and 24.1%, respectively.

5.6.4 Summary and Conclusion for High School Students at Ft. Sam Houston.

The following summary highlights findings from a sample of 293 high school students (age 12-17, inclusive) at one military installation. These findings may not apply to the population of teenage dependents at large because Ft. Sam Houston is an atypical military installation. FSH has a high proportion of well-educated, high income health professionals who most likely possess high levels of health consciousness. FSH also has a lower proportion of combat arms personnel than most Army installations and provides average levels (32.3%) of dependent dental care.

--Annual dental utilization by dependent 12-17 year olds at Ft. Sam Houston (82.6%) is greater than by their national cohorts (71.1%).

--Annual dental utilization by Black and Hispanic dependent 12-17 year olds at Ft. Sam Houston exceeds their national cohorts by 22-24%.

--Annual dental utilization at Ft. Sam Houston by white (83.6%) and Hispanic (83.3%) dependent 12-17 year olds is higher than by Blacks (77.4%).

--Dependent 12-17 year olds at Ft. Sam Houston are less likely to have never seen a dentist (1.7%) than their national cohorts (3.5%).

--Female (2.0%) and Black (3.2%) dependent 12-17 year olds at Ft. Sam Houston are more likely to have never seen a dentist than males (1.4%), whites (1.5%), or Hispanics (0%).

Chapter 6: Results/Perceived Need for Dental Care

6.1 Spouses

6.1.1 Perceived Need for Different Types of Dental Care.

Table 6-1 shows the proportion of dependent spouses who perceive they need an oral prophylaxis, orthodontic care, other dental care (excluding oral prophylaxis and orthodontic care), and any dental care. Nearly all spouses (96.9%) feel they need some type of dental care. Most spouses (88.4%) feel they need to have their teeth cleaned. Roughly one-fifth (21.4%) of these adults perceive they need orthodontic care. Nearly three-quarters (72.7%) perceive a need for something other than orthodontic care or an oral prophylaxis.

6.1.2 Perception Versus Professionally Assessed Need for Dental Care.

Tables 6-2 to 6-4 compare the perceived need of spouses for different types of dental care with clinical assessments of their dental treatment needs (determined by a dentist). Perceived need for orthodontic care and clinical assessment of this need are compared in Table 6-2. There is a strong direct relationship between these measures. As the severity of professionally assessed orthodontic needs increases, the proportion of spouses with perceived need for orthodontic treatment increases. A significant proportion of spouses with normal occlusions (15.6%) or elective orthodontic needs (22.1%) perceives a need for orthodontic care. Only a third to two-fifths of spouses with severe or handicapping malocclusions feel they need orthodontic treatment.

In Table 6-3, assessed need for restorative care is compared with perceived need for other dental care. As the intensity of restorative treatment needs increases, the proportion of spouses who feel they need other dental care increases. Over half (54.7%) of spouses with no restorative treatment needs feel they need dental care. Nearly all (88.7%) with high levels of restorative treatment need (7 or more teeth) perceive a need for dental care.

We compare the dental fitness classification for all assessed treatment needs with perception of need for any dental care (excluding teeth cleaning) in Table 6-4. Almost three-fifths (57.1%) of spouses with no dental treatment needs perceive a need for dental care other than oral prophylaxis. Nearly all (88.4%) spouses with at least one emergent dental condition feel they need dental care.

6.1.3 Summary and Conclusion for Spouses

The following summary highlights findings from a convenience sample of 3,562 spouses of active duty soldiers at 10 Army installations. Sample size varies with the willingness of subjects to disclose their perceived needs for dental care. Because this is a convenience sample, caution should be used in applying these findings to the general population of Army spouses.

Because perceptions rather than actual need may drive demand for care in an insured population, it is important to understand what dental care a service population thinks it needs.

--Nearly all spouses (96.9%) perceive a need for some type of dental care.

--Nearly all spouses (88.4%) perceive a need for an oral prophylaxis.

--Only one-fifth (21.4%) of all spouses perceive a need for orthodontic care.

--Nearly three-quarters (72.7%) of all spouses perceive a need for something other than orthodontic care or an oral prophylaxis.

--While a strong direct relationship exists between perceived need and professionally assessed need for dental care, perceptions and reality don't always match well. In this sample, a high proportion of spouses (57.1%) with no clinically assessed needs thinks it needs something other than a prophylaxis. These "worried well" may put a strain on the dental care delivery system. On the other hand, some individuals who should be seeking care are not: 11.6% of spouses with at least one emergent dental condition do not perceive a need for dental care.

6.2 Preschoolers at Ft. Sam Houston

6.2.1 Perceived Need By Parents of Different Types of Dental Care.

Perceived need by parents of preschoolers at Ft. Sam Houston for different types of dental care is shown in Table 6-5. While most parents (70.3%) feel their child needs an oral prophylaxis, few (12.2%) feel their child needs other dental care. When both of these needs are taken into consideration, roughly three-quarters (77.2%) of parents feel their child needs dental care.

6.2.2 Perceptions of Parents Versus Professionally Assessed Need for Dental Care

Since few preschoolers in this sample were found to have dental disease, we did not have sufficient cases to compare perceptions of parents with professionally assessed needs for dental care.

6.2.3 Summary and Conclusion for Preschoolers at Ft. Sam Houston

The following summary highlights findings from a sample of 92 preschoolers from Army families at one installation. Demographics of the children's sponsors suggest the sample may be atypical. Many of the children have well-educated parents and high ranking military sponsors. Thus, caution should be used in applying these findings to the general population of preschool children of active duty soldiers.

--Most parents of preschoolers at Ft. Sam Houston (77.2%) perceive that their child needs some type of dental care.

--Most parents of preschoolers at Ft. Sam Houston (70.3%) perceive that their child needs an oral prophylaxis.

--Very few parents of preschoolers at Ft. Sam Houston (12.2%) perceived that their child needs dental care other than a prophylaxis.

6.3 Preschoolers at Ft. Lewis

6.3.1 Perceived Need by Parents for Different Types of Dental Care.

Perceived need by parents of preschoolers at Ft. Lewis for different types of dental care is shown in Table 6-6. While most parents (78.5%) feel their child needs an oral prophylaxis, few (22.2%) feel their child needs other dental care. Taking both needs into account, nearly 80% of parents at Ft. Lewis feel their child needs some type of dental care.

6.3.2 Perceptions of Parents Versus Professionally Assessed Need for Dental Care.

Since few preschoolers in this sample were found to have dental disease, we did not have sufficient cases to compare perceptions of parents with professionally assessed needs for dental care.

6.3.3 Summary and Conclusions for Preschoolers at Ft. Lewis

The following summary highlights findings from a sample of preschoolers from Army families at one installation. This sample probably more closely approximates the population of preschool children of active duty soldiers in the Army at large than the FSH sample, as Ft. Lewis is a more typical, combat arms, military installation.

--Most parents of preschoolers at Ft. Lewis (79.3%) perceive that their child needs some type of dental care.

--Most parents of preschoolers at Ft. Lewis (78.5%) perceive that their child needs an oral prophylaxis.

--Few parents of preschoolers at Ft. Lewis (22.2%) perceive that their child needs dental care other than a prophylaxis.

6.4 Grade School Children at Ft. Sam Houston

6.4.1 Perceived Need by Parents for Different Types of Dental Care.

Perceived need by parents of grade school children at Ft. Sam Houston for different types of dental care is given in Table 6-7. Nearly all (92.9%) parents feel their child needs some type of dental care. Most (84.7%) feel their child needs an oral prophylaxis. About half feel their child needs orthodontic care (50.8%) or some dental care other than orthodontia or oral prophylaxis (53.1%).

6.4.2 Perception of Parents Versus Professionally Assessed Need for Dental Care.

Perceptions by parents of their grade school child's dental needs compared with clinical assessments of their treatment needs (determined by a dentist) are presented in Tables 6-8 to 6-10. There is a strong direct relationship between these measures.

Perceived need for orthodontic care and clinical assessment of this need are compared in table 6-8. As the severity of professionally assessed orthodontic needs increases, the proportion of parents who perceive their child needs orthodontic care increases. Parents of almost half of the children with normal occlusions (43.7%) or elective orthodontic needs (58.8%) perceive a need for orthodontic care. Almost three-quarters (74.3%) of parents whose child has a handicapping malocclusion perceive that their child needs orthodontic care.

In Table 6-9, assessed need for restorative care is compared with perceived need for dental care, excluding orthodontics and oral prophylaxis. As the intensity of restorative treatment required increases, the proportion of parents who feel their child needs dental care increases. Nearly half (47.1%) of parents with children who have no restorative treatment needs feel their child needs some dental care, excluding orthodontics and oral prophylaxis. Nearly all parents (84.6%) whose child has 4 or more teeth in need of restorative work perceive their child needs some dental care, excluding orthodontics and oral prophylaxis.

We compare the severity of all assessed dental treatment needs (excluding teeth cleaning) with perception of need for any dental care (excluding teeth cleaning) in Table 6-10. Three-fifths of parents whose child needs no dental care perceived a need for care versus 83.8% of parents whose child has at least one emergent dental condition.

6.4.3 Summary and Conclusion for Grade School Students at Ft. Sam Houston.

The following summary highlights findings from a sample of 789 grade school children at one military installation. These findings may not apply to the population of grade school children of active duty soldiers at large because Ft. Sam Houston is an atypical military installation. FSH has a high population of well-educated, high income, health professionals who most likely possess high levels of health consciousness. FSH also has a lower proportion of combat arms personnel than most Army installations.

--Nearly all parents of grade school children at Ft. Sam Houston (92.9%) perceive that their child needs some type of dental care.

--Nearly all parents of grade school children at Ft. Sam Houston (84.7%) perceive that their child needs an oral prophylaxis.

--About half the parents of grade school children at Ft. Sam Houston (50.8%) perceive that their child needs orthodontic care.

--About half the parents of grade school children at Ft. Sam Houston (53.1%) perceive that their child needs dental care other than orthodontics or an oral prophylaxis.

--A strong direct relationship exists between perceived need and professionally assessed need for dental care. However, perceptions and reality don't always match well. In this sample, a high proportion of parents whose children need no dental care (60.2%) think their children need something other than an oral prophylaxis. In contrast, the parents of 16.2% of children who have at least one emergent dental condition do not perceive a need for dental care.

6.5 Grade School Children at Ft. Lewis.

6.5.1 Perceived Need by Parents for Different Types of Dental Care.

Perceived need by parents of grade school children at Ft. Lewis for different types of dental care is given in Table 6-11. Nearly all parents (92.0%) feel their child needs some type of dental care. Most (82.9%) feel their child needs an oral prophylaxis. About half feel their child needs orthodontic care (43.5%) or some dental care other than orthodontics or oral prophylaxis (53.0%).

6.5.2 Perceptions of Parents Versus Professionally Assessed Need for Dental Care.

Perceptions by parents of their grade school child's dental needs compared with clinical assessments of treatment needs (determined by a dentist) are presented in Tables 6-12 to 6-14. There is a strong direct relationship between these measures.

Perceived need for orthodontic care and clinical assessment of this need are compared in Table 6-12. As the severity of professionally assessed orthodontic needs increases, the proportion of parents who perceive their child needs orthodontic care increases.

Roughly one-third of parents of children with normal occlusion and one-half of those with elective orthodontic needs feel their child needs orthodontic treatment. Two-thirds of parents whose child has a handicapping malocclusion perceive that their child needs orthodontic care.

In Table 6-13, assessed need for restorative care is compared with perceived need for dental care, excluding orthodontic care and oral prophylaxis. As the intensity of restorative treatment required increases, the proportion of parents who feel their child needs dental care increases. Roughly half (46.3%) of parents with children who have no restorative treatment needs feel their child needs some type of dental care other than orthodontics or oral prophylaxis. Nearly all parents (81.7%) whose child has 4 or more teeth in need of restorative work perceive their child needs some dental care, excluding orthodontics and oral prophylaxis.

We compare the severity of all assessed dental treatment needs, (excluding teeth cleaning) in Table 6-14. Almost three-fifths (58.9%) of parents whose child needs no dental care perceive a need for care versus 89.0% of parents whose child has at least one emergent dental condition.

6.5.3 Summary and Conclusion for Grade School Students at Ft. Lewis.

The following summary highlights findings from a sample of 1,220 grade school children of active duty soldiers at one military installation. This sample probably more closely approximates the population of grade school children of active duty soldiers in the Army at large than the FSH sample, as Ft. Lewis is a more typical, combat arms, military installation.

--Nearly all parents of grade school children at Ft. Lewis (92.0%) perceive that their child needs some type of dental care.

--Nearly all parents of grade school children at Ft. Lewis (82.9%) perceive that their child needs an oral prophylaxis.

--About half the parents of grade school children at Ft. Lewis (43.5%) perceive that their child needs orthodontic care.

--About half the parents of grade school children at Ft. Lewis (53.0%) perceive that their child needs dental care other than orthodontics or an oral prophylaxis.

--A strong direct relationship exists between perceived need and professionally assessed need for dental care. However, perceptions and reality don't always match well. In this sample, a high proportion of parents whose children need no dental care (58.9%) think their children need something other than an oral prophylaxis. In contrast, the parents of 11% of children who have at least one emergent dental condition do not perceive a need for dental care.

6.6 High School Students at Ft. Sam Houston.

6.6.1 Perceived Need by Parents for Different Types of Dental Care.

Perceived need by parents of teenage children at Ft. Sam Houston for different types of dental care is given in Table 6-15. Nearly all parents (89.1%) think their child needs some type of dental care. Most (77.3%) feel their child needs an oral prophylaxis. Roughly half believe their child needs orthodontic care (46.0%) or some dental care other than orthodontics or oral prophylaxis (46.5%).

6.6.2 Perceptions of Parents Versus Professionally Assessed Need for Dental Care.

We compare clinical assessment of needs for dental care with what parents think their children need in Tables 6-16 to 6-18. In general, there is a strong direct relationship between these variables.

Perceived need for orthodontic care and clinical assessment of this need are compared in Table 6-16. About one-third of parents whose child has a normal occlusion (35.9%) or a severe malocclusion (37.5%) believe their child needs orthodontic care. Over half of parents whose children have elective orthodontic needs (56.4%) and over three-quarters of parents whose children have handicapping malocclusion (79.3%) think their child needs orthodontic care.

In Table 6-17, assessed need for restorative care is compared with perceived need for dental care other than orthodontics and oral prophylaxis. As the intensity of restorative treatment required increases, the proportion of parents who think their child needs dental care increases. Roughly half (44.6%) of parents with children who have no restorative treatment needs believe their child needs some type of dental care other than orthodontics or oral prophylaxis. Three-quarters of parents whose child has 4 or more teeth needing restorative care perceive their child needs dental care.

In Table 6-18, we compare the severity of all assessed dental treatment needs (excluding teeth cleaning) with the perception of need for any dental care (excluding teeth cleaning). Nearly three-fifths (59.2%) of parents whose child needs no dental care perceive a need for care versus 100% of parents whose child has at least one emergent dental condition.

6.6.3 Summary and Conclusions for High School Students at Ft. Sam Houston.

The following summary highlights findings from a sample of 344 high school students at one military installation. These findings may not apply to the population of teenage dependents at large because Ft. Sam Houston is an atypical military installation. FSH has a high population of well-educated, high income health professionals who most likely possess high levels of health consciousness. FSH also has a lower proportion of combat arms personnel than most Army posts.

--Nearly all parents of teenagers at Ft. Sam Houston (89.1%) perceive that their child needs some type of dental care.

--Most parents of teenagers at Ft. Sam Houston (77.3%) perceive that their child needs an oral prophylaxis.

--About half the parents of teenagers at Ft. Sam Houston (46.0%) perceive that their child needs orthodontic care.

--About half the parents of teenagers at Ft. Sam Houston (46.5%) perceive that their child needs dental care other than orthodontics or an oral prophylaxis.

--With the exception of orthodontics, a strong direct relationship exists between perceived need and professionally assessed need for dental care. However, perceptions and reality don't always match well. In this sample, a high proportion of parents whose children need no dental care (59.2%) think their children need something other than an oral prophylaxis. Although 100% of parents whose children have an emergent dental condition think their children need dental care, the sample size (n=4) is small. We also must wonder why these children haven't sought care, especially when their parents perceive the need for it.

Table 5-1

Comparison of Interval Since Last Dental Visit and Demographic Characteristics of 18-54 year old Spouses to the 1986 National Health Survey +

Sex

Interval Since Last Dental Visit	<u>Total</u>		<u>Males</u>		<u>Females</u>	
	Dep * n=	NCHS n=	Dep n=	NCHS n=	Dep n=	NCHS n=
	3542	121,076	77	59,002	3464	62,073
1 year	63.2%	60.4%	53.2%	56.5%	63.4%	64.1%
2 years	20.9%	10.5%	27.3%	10.9%	20.8%	10.2%
3 + years	15.4%	27.8%	19.5%	31.0%	15.2%	24.8%
never	0.5%	1.3%	0%	1.6%	0.6%	0.9%

Race

Interval Since Last Dental Visit	<u>White</u>		<u>Black</u>		<u>Hispanic</u>		<u>Other</u>	
	Dep n=	NCHS n=	Dep n=	NCHS n=	Dep n=	NCHS n=	Dep n=	NCHS n=
	2299	102,799	673	13,895	280	9403	285	111,672
1 year	64.2%	62.4%	59.9%	47.2%	67.2%	48.1%	58.9%	61.4%
2 years	20.9%	10.4%	22.7%	11.0%	19.3%	12.9%	18.6%	10.4%
3 + years	14.6%	26.3%	16.9%	38.9%	12.1%	33.6%	20.7%	27.3%
never	0.3%	0.9%	0.5%	2.9%	1.4%	5.2%	1.8%	0.9%

+ National Center for Health Statistics

* Dependent Spouses

Table 5-2

Comparison of Interval Since Last Dental Visit and Demographic Characteristics of 18-34 year old Spouses to the 1986 National Health Survey +

Interval Since Last Dental Visit	<u>Sex</u>					
	<u>Total</u>		<u>Males</u>		<u>Females</u>	
	Dep *	NCHS	Dep	NCHS	Dep	NCHS
	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=
Visit	2541	66,958	57	32,698	2483	34,260
1 year	60.4%	59.3%	52.6%	54.5%	60.5%	63.9%
2 years	22.1%	11.4%	26.3%	11.8%	22.0%	11.0%
3 + years	16.9%	27.5%	21.1%	31.5%	16.8%	23.7%
never	0.6%	1.8%	0%	2.2%	0.7%	1.4%

Interval Since Last Dental Visit	<u>Race</u>							
	<u>White</u>		<u>Black</u>		<u>Hispanic</u>		<u>Other</u>	
	Dep	NCHS	Dep	NCHS	Dep	NCHS	Dep	NCHS
	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=
Visit	1633	56,120	536	8,347	213	5,862	156	61,095
1 year	61.2%	61.6%	57.6%	46.7%	64.8%	47.5%	54.5%	60.5%
2 years	22.1%	11.4%	23.7%	11.3%	19.7%	12.6%	19.9%	11.2%
3 + years	16.3%	25.7%	18.1%	38.2%	13.6%	33.5%	23.0%	26.9%
never	0.4%	1.3%	0.6%	3.8%	1.9%	6.4%	2.6%	1.4%

+ National Center for Health Statistics
 * Dependent Spouses

Table 5-3

Comparison of Interval Since Last Dental Visit and Demographic Characteristics of 35-44 year old Spouses to the 1986 National Health Survey +

Interval Since Last Dental Visit	<u>Sex</u>			
	<u>Total</u>		<u>Females</u>	
	Dep * n=	NCHS n=	Dep n=	NCHS n=
	872	31,949	855	16,393
1 year	70.0%	63.4%	70.4%	66.2%
2 years	18.1%	10.0%	17.8%	9.6%
3 + years	11.7%	26.0%	11.6%	23.9%
never	0.2%	0.6%	0.2%	0.3%

Interval Since Last Dental Visit	<u>Race</u>							
	<u>White</u>		<u>Black</u>		<u>Hispanic</u>		<u>Other</u>	
	Dep n=	NCHS n=	Dep n=	NCHS n=	Dep n=	NCHS n=	Dep n=	NCHS n=
	581	27,532	123	3251	57	2221	110	29,728
1 year	71.8%	65.3%	67.5%	48.4%	71.9%	52.3%	61.8%	64.2%
2 years	17.9%	9.7%	19.5%	11.4%	19.3%	14.3%	17.3%	9.7%
3 + years	10.1%	24.6%	13.0%	38.9%	8.8%	30.0%	20.0%	25.7%
never	0.2%	0.4%	0%	1.3%	0%	3.4%	0.9%	0.4%

+ National Center for Health Care Statistics

* Dependent Spouses

Table 5-4

Comparison of Interval Since Last Dental Visit and Demographic Characteristics of 45-54 year old Spouses to the 1986 National Health Survey +

Interval Since Last Dental Visit	<u>Sex</u>			
	Dep *	<u>Total</u>	Dep	<u>Females</u>
		NCHS		NCHS
n=	n=	n=	n=	
	129	22,169	126	11,420
1 year	74.4%	59.2%	73.8%	61.4%
2 years	17.1%	8.7%	17.5%	8.6%
3 + years	8.5%	31.4%	8.7%	29.3%
never	0%	0.7%	0%	0.7%

Interval Since Last Dental Visit	<u>Race</u>	
	Dep	<u>White</u>
		NCHS
n=	n=	
	85	19,147
1 year	70.6%	60.9%
2 years	18.8%	8.3%
3 + years	10.6%	30.3%
never	0%	0.5%

+ National Center for Health Statistics

* Dependent Spouses

Table 5-5

Comparison of Interval Since Last Dental Visit and Demographic Characteristics of 2-4 year olds at Ft. Sam Houston to the National Health Survey +

Sex

Interval Since Last Dental Visit	<u>Total</u>		<u>Males</u>		<u>Females</u>	
	FSH n=56	NCHS n=10,130	FSH n=25	NCHS n=5194	FSH n=31	NCHS n=4936
1 year	66.1%	33.5%	68.0%	33.5%	64.5%	33.5%
2 years	8.9%	2.7%	4.0%	2.5%	12.9%	2.8%
3 + years	0%	0.9%	0%	1.2%	0%	0.5%
never	25.0%	62.9%	28.0%	62.7%	22.6%	63.1%

Race

Interval Since Last Dental Visit	<u>White</u>	
	FSH n=40	NCHS n=8323
1 year	67.5%	34.4%
2 years	7.5%	2.3%
3 + years	0%	0.8%
never	25.0%	62.5%

+ National Center for Health Statistics

Table 5-6

Comparison of Interval Since Last Dental Visit and Demographic Characteristics of 2-4 year olds at Ft. Lewis to the 1986 National Health Survey +

Interval Since Last Dental Visit	<u>Sex</u>					
	<u>Total</u>		<u>Males</u>		<u>Females</u>	
	Lewis	NCHS	Lewis	NCHS	Lewis	NCHS
	n=48	n=10,130	n=26	n=5194	n=22	n=4,936
1 year	39.6%	33.5%	42.3%	33.5%	36.4%	33.5%
2 years	6.3%	2.7%	7.7%	2.6%	4.5%	2.8%
3 + years	2.0%	0.9%	0%	1.2%	4.5%	0.6%
never	52.1%	62.9%	50.0%	62.7%	54.6%	63.1%

+ National Center for Health Statistics

Table 5-7

Comparison of Interval Since Last Dental Visit and Demographic Characteristics of 5-11 year olds at Ft. Sam Houston to the 1986 National Survey +

Interval Since Last Dental Visit	<u>Sex</u>					
	<u>Total</u>		<u>Males</u>		<u>Females</u>	
	FSH	NCHS	FSH	NCHS	FSH	NCHS
	n=728	n=23,149	n=342	n=11,944	n=386	n=11,204
1 year	78.0%	71.8%	79.2%	70.5%	77.0%	73.1%
2 years	11.4%	8.1%	10.8%	8.5%	11.9%	7.7%
3 + years	5.1%	8.5%	5.3%	8.8%	4.9%	8.3%
never	5.5%	11.6%	4.7%	12.2%	6.2%	10.9%

Interval Since Last Dental Visit	<u>Race</u>					
	<u>White</u>		<u>Black</u>		<u>Hispanic</u>	
	FSH	NCHS	FSH	NCHS	FSH	NCHS
	n=387	n=18,862	n=189	n=3520	n=137	n=2504
1 year	81.9%	74.4%	74.1%	58.7%	73.7%	58.9%
2 years	9.6%	7.6%	12.7%	10.6%	13.1%	7.1%
3 + years	4.6%	7.7%	5.8%	13.4%	5.1%	13.3%
never	3.9%	10.3%	7.4%	17.3%	8.1%	20.7%

+ National Center for Health Care Statistics

Table 5-8

Comparison of Interval Since Last Dental Visit and Demographic Characteristics of 5-11 year olds at Ft. Lewis to the 1986 National Health Survey +

Interval Since Last Dental Visit	<u>Sex</u>							
	<u>Total</u>		<u>Males</u>		<u>Females</u>			
	Lewis	NCHS	Lewis	NCHS	Lewis	NCHS	Lewis	NCHS
	n=1119	n=23,149	n=542	n=11,944	n=577	n=11,204		
1 year	72.5%	71.8%	72.0%	70.5%	73.0%	73.1%		
2 years	12.2%	8.1%	12.5%	8.5%	12.0%	7.7%		
3 + years	7.1%	8.5%	5.9%	8.8%	8.2%	8.3%		
never	8.1%	11.6%	9.6%	12.2%	6.8%	10.9%		

Interval Since Last Dental Visit	<u>Race</u>							
	<u>White</u>		<u>Black</u>		<u>Hispanic</u>		<u>Other</u>	
	Lewis	NCHS	Lewis	NCHS	Lewis	NCHS	Lewis	NCHS
	n=642	n=18,862	n=240	n=3520	n=87	n=2504	n=150	n=20,643
1 year	74.8%	74.4%	65.8%	58.7%	69.0%	58.9%	75.4%	73.3%
2 years	11.7%	7.6%	16.3%	10.6%	12.6%	7.1%	8.0%	8.3%
3 + years	7.1%	7.7%	7.9%	13.4%	4.6%	13.3%	7.3%	7.9%
never	6.4%	10.3%	10.0%	17.3%	13.8%	20.7%	9.3%	10.5%

+ National Center for Health Care Statistics

Table 5-9

Comparison of Interval Since Last Dental Visit and Demographics Characteristics of 12-17 year olds at Ft. Sam Houston to the 1986 National Health Survey +

Interval Since Last Dental Visit	<u>Sex</u>					
	<u>Total</u>		<u>Males</u>		<u>Females</u>	
	FSH n=	NCHS n=	FSH n=	NCHS n=	FSH n=	NCHS n=
	293	21,089	144	10,677	149	10,412
1 year	82.6%	71.1%	81.9%	69.3%	83.2%	73.1%
2 years	12.6%	8.9%	14.6%	9.3%	10.8%	8.5%
3 + years	3.1%	16.5%	2.1%	17.8%	4.0%	15.1%
never	1.7%	3.5%	1.4%	3.6%	2.0%	3.3%

Interval Since Last Dental Visit	<u>Race</u>					
	<u>White</u>		<u>Black</u>		<u>Hispanic</u>	
	FSH n=	NCHS n=	FSH n=	NCHS n=	FSH n=	NCHS n=
	195	17,199	62	3242	30	1978
1 year	83.6%	74.1%	77.4%	55.6%	83.3%	59.2%
2 years	10.8%	8.4%	17.8%	11.4%	16.7%	9.2 %
3 + years	4.1%	14.8%	1.6%	25.9%	0%	22.7%
never	1.5%	2.7%	3.2%	7.1%	0%	8.9%

+ National Center for Health Statistics

Table 6-1

Perceived Need of Spouses for Different Types of Dental Care

	<u>Perceived Need</u>
	% of Spouses Responding Yes
<u>Types of Dental Care</u>	
Teeth Cleaning (n=3551)	88.4%
Orthodontic Care (n=3550)	21.4%
Other Dental Care (n=3550)	72.7%
Any of the Above (n=3561)	96.9%

Table 6-2

Orthodontic Treatment Priority Index Score by Perceived Need for Orthodontic Care for Spouses

Perceived Need for Orthodontic Care

% of Spouses Responding Yes

Treatment Priority Index Score

All cases (n=3550)	21.4%
Normal or Minor (n=1695)	15.6%
Elective (n=998)	22.1%
Severe (n=423)	32.6%
Handicapping (n=336)	38.1%
Unknown (n=98)	

Table 6-3

Intensity of Assessed Restorative Treatment Needs by Perceived
Need for Other * Dental Care for Spouses

Perceived Need for Other Dental Care

% of Spouses Responding Yes

Intensity of
Restorative
Treatment
Required

All cases (n=3550)	72.7%
0 teeth (n=969)	54.2%
1-3 teeth (n=1376)	73.8%
4-6 teeth (n=605)	84.1%
7 + teeth (n=600)	88.5%
Unknown (n=0)	

* Other Dental Care excludes need for teeth cleaning and
Orthodontic Care

Table 6-4

Assessed Severity of all Dental Treatment Required by Perceived
Need for Care (excluding teeth cleaning) for Spouses

Perceived Need for Dental Care
(excluding teeth cleaning)

% of Spouses Responding Yes

Severity of
Treatment
Required

All Cases (n=3559)	77.5%
No treatment (n=727)	57.1%
Routine treatment (n=1908)	80.0%
Emergency care (n=924)	88.4%
Unknown (n=0)	

Table 6-5

Perceived Need of Parents of Preschoolers at Ft. Sam Houston for
Different Types of Dental Care

<u>Type of Dental Care</u>	<u>Perceived Need</u> % of Parents Responding Yes
Teeth Cleaning (n=91)	70.3%
Other Dental Care (n=90)	12.2%
Any of the Above (n=92)	77.2%

Table 6-6

Perceived Need of Parents of Preschoolers at Ft. Lewis for
Different Types of Dental Care

<u>Type of Dental Care</u>	<u>Perceived Need</u> % of Parents Responding Yes
Teeth Cleaning (n=79)	78.5%
Other Dental Care (n=81)	29.6%
Any of the Above (n=82)	79.3%

Table 6-7

Perceived Need of Parents of Grade School Children at Ft. Sam Houston for Different Types of Dental Care

<u>Type of Dental Care</u>	<u>Perceived Need</u> % of Spouses Responding Yes
Teeth Cleaning (n=779)	84.7%
Orthodontic Care (n=774)	50.8%
Other Dental Care (n=774)	53.1%
Any of the Above (n=789)	92.9%

Table 6-8

Orthodontic Treatment Priority Index Score by Perceived Need for Orthodontic Care by Parents of Grade School Children at Ft. Sam Houston

Perceived Need for Orthodontic Care

% of Parents Responding Yes

Treatment Priority Index Score

All Cases (n=774)	50.8%
Normal/Minor (n=462)	43.7%
Elective (n=148)	58.8%
Severe (n=55)	65.5%
Handicapping (n=35)	74.3%
Unknown (n=74)	

Table 6-9

Intensity of Assessed Restorative Treatment Required by Perceived Need for Other Dental Care by Parents of Grade School Children at Ft. Sam Houston

Perceived Need for Other Dental Care

% of Parents Responding Yes

Intensity of
Restorative
Treatment
Required

All Cases (n=774)	53.1%
0 teeth (n=563)	47.1%
1-3 teeth (n=167)	68.3%
4+ teeth (n=13)	84.6%
Unknown (n=31)	

Table 6-10

Assessed Severity of all Dental Treatment Required by Perceived Need for Dental Care (excluding teeth cleaning) by Parents of Grade School Children at Ft. Sam Houston

Perceived Need for Dental Care
(excluding teeth cleaning)

% of Parents Responding Yes

Severity of
Treatment
Required

All cases (n=778)	68.1%
No treatment (n=344)	60.2%
Routine treatment (n=397)	73.6%
Emergency care (n=37)	83.8%
Unknown (n=0)	

Table 6-11

Perceived Need of Parents of Grade School Children at Ft. Lewis
for Different Types of Dental Care

<u>Type of Dental Care</u>	<u>Perceived Need</u> % of Parents Responding Yes
Teeth Cleaning (n=1225)	82.9%
Orthodontic Care (n=1213)	43.5%
Other Dental Care (n=1225)	53.0%
Any of the Above (n=1242)	92.0%

Table 6-12

Orthodontic Treatment Priority Index Score by Perceived Need for Orthodontic Care by Parents of Grade School Children at Ft. Lewis

Perceived Need for Orthodontic Care

% of Parents Responding Yes

Treatment Priority Index Score

All Cases (n=1213)	43.5%
Normal/Minor (n=689)	35.1%
Elective (n=267)	56.6%
Severe (n=103)	62.1%
Handicapping (n=56)	67.9%
Unknown (n=98)	

Table 6-13

Intensity of Assessed Restorative Treatment Required by Perceived Need for Other Dental Care by Parents of Grade School Children at Ft. Lewis

Perceived Need for Other Dental Care

% of Parents Responding Yes

Intensity of
Restorative
Treatment
Required

All Cases (n=1225)	53.0%
0 teeth (n=859)	46.3%
1-3 teeth (n=277)	67.9%
4+ teeth (n=60)	81.7%
Unknown (n=29)	

Table 6-14

Severity of all Dental Treatment Required by Perceived Need for Dental Care (excluding teeth cleaning) by Parents of Grade School Children at Ft. Lewis

Perceived Need for Dental Care
(excluding teeth cleaning)

% of Parents Responding Yes

Severity of
Treatment
Required

All cases (n=1220)	66.7%
No treatment (n=526)	58.9%
Routine treatment (n=621)	70.7%
Emergency care (n=73)	89.0%
Unknown (n=0)	

Table 6-15

Perceived Need of Parents of High School Students for Different Types of Dental Care

<u>Type of Dental Care</u>	<u>Perceived Need</u> % of Parents Responding Yes
Teeth Cleaning (n=335)	77.3%
Orthodontic Care (n=337)	46.0%
Other Dental Care (n=331)	46.5%
Any of the Above (n=339)	89.1%

Table 6-16

Perceived Need of Parents of High School Students for Orthodontic Care by Orthodontic Treatment Priority Index Score

Perceived Need for Orthodontic Care

% of Parents Responding Yes

Treatment Priority
Index Score

All cases (n=337)	46.0%
Normal/Minor (n=170)	35.9%
Elective (n=55)	56.4%
Severe (N=40)	37.5%
Handicapping (n=29)	79.3%
Unknown (n=43)	

Table 6-17

Intensity of Assessed Restorative Treatment Needs by Perceived Need for Other * Dental Care by Parents of High School Students

Perceived Need for Other Dental Care

% of Parents Responding Yes

Intensity of
Restorative
Treatment
Required

All Cases (n=331)	46.5%
0 teeth (n=242)	44.6%
1-3 teeth (n=41)	56.1%
4 + teeth (n=8)	75.0%
Unknown (n=40)	

* Other Dental Care excludes need for teeth cleaning and Orthodontic Care

Table 6-18

Assessed Severity of all Dental Treatment Required by Perceived Need for Dental Care (excluding teeth cleaning) by Parents of High School Students

Perceived Need for Dental Care
(excluding teeth cleaning)

% of Parents Responding Yes

Severity of
Treatment
Required

All cases (n=296)	63.5%
No treatment (n=142)	59.2%
Routine treatment (n=150)	66.7%
Emergency care (n=4)	100%
Unknown (n=0)	