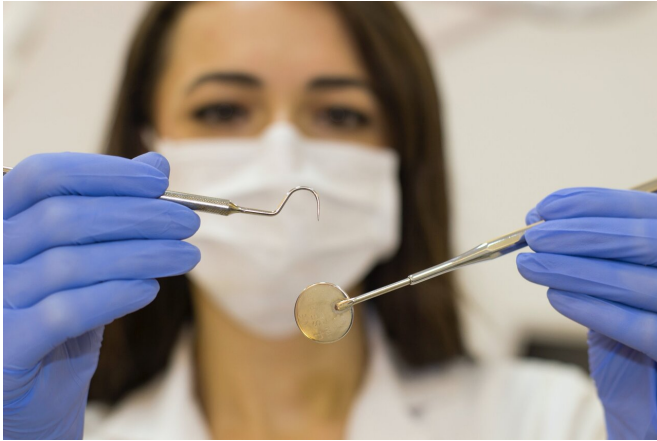


COVID-19 infection rates of dentists remain lower than other health professionals

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More than a year after COVID-19 appeared in the U.S., dentists continue to have a lower infection rate than other front-line health professionals, such as nurses and physicians, according to a study published online ahead of the June print issue in the *Journal of the American Dental Association*. The study, "COVID-2019 among dentists in the United States," is based on data collected June 9-Nov. 13, 2020.

According to the study, based on the number of dentists with confirmed or probable COVID-19 infections over more than six months, the cumulative [infection](#) rate for U.S. dentists is 2.6%. The monthly incidence rate varied, ranging from 0.2% to 1.1% per month. By comparison, in June 2020, the cumulative COVID-19 prevalence rate for other U.S. health professionals ranged from 3.3% (Chicago-based hospital physicians) to 35.3% (U.S. based emergency medicine services).

"We're pleased to see that dentists have demonstrated continued low monthly incidence of disease despite several regional and national COVID-19 rate spikes during the study period,"

said American Dental Association (ADA) Science and Research Institute Chief Executive Officer Marcelo Araujo, D.D.S., M.S., Ph.D., the senior author of the report.

Dr. Araujo added, "This study shows high rates of pre-appointment screening of patients and appropriate infection control measures throughout the study period, demonstrating that adhering to very strict protocols for enhanced infection control helps protect their patients, their dental team and themselves."

In addition to Dr. Araujo, other authors of the report include researchers from the ADA Science and Research Institute and Health Policy Institute based in Chicago, as well as Maria L Geisinger, D.D.S., M.S. with University of Alabama at Birmingham in Birmingham, Ala., and Effie Ioannidou, D.D.S., M.D.S., with the University of Connecticut in Farmington, Conn., and a member of the ADA Council on Scientific Affairs.

This study is a continuation of the first large-scale report of incidence rates of COVID-19 among dentists in the U.S published in October 2020. The present six-month [longitudinal study](#) aimed to:

- Determine the cumulative prevalence rate of COVID-19 among dentists;
- Calculate the monthly incidence rate for the same population over the course of the study; and
- Assess the level of engagement in specific infection control practices among dentists over a six-month period of time.

The results of this present study, as well as the earlier study, show that prevalence and incidence rates among dentists continue to be very low when compared to the population as a whole and to other [health care professionals](#).

"This study reinforces that the dental care sector is

up and running safely," said Chief Economist and Vice President of the ADA Health Policy Institute Marko Vujicic, Ph.D. "Nowhere is this proof point more evident than by the fact that more than 90% of patients surveyed indicate they have already visited the [dentist](#) or soon will."

The authors plan future research projects on the barriers and facilitators to wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) according to CDC recommendations, and levels of protection against COVID-19 provided by different levels of PPE use and infection control procedures.

More information: Marcelo W.B. Araujo et al, COVID-2019 among dentists in the United States, *The Journal of the American Dental Association* (2021). [DOI: 10.1016/j.adaj.2021.03.021](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adaj.2021.03.021)

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