

Cost is big factor in dental care, UK survey results show

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Just over a quarter (26 per cent) of adults say the type of dental treatment they chose in the past has been affected by the cost of treatment. And almost a fifth (19 per cent) said that they have delayed dental treatment for the same reason, according to a major survey published today.

The Executive Summary of the 2009 Adult [Dental Health](#) Survey, which Newcastle University experts were heavily involved in, shows that adults' dental health continues to improve over time and that whilst the large majority of adults who tried to get an NHS dental appointment in the three years prior to being interviewed successfully made and attended the appointment, accessing NHS dental services remained difficult for a small minority.

The 2009 Adult Dental Health Survey for England, Wales and Northern Ireland was commissioned by The NHS Information Centre and carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

The findings show that, overall, half (50 per cent) of all adults with at least one natural tooth ('dentate') reported that they attended the [dentist](#) at least once every six months, 21 per cent indicated that they attended at least once a year, and a further 6 per cent once every two years.

Almost two-thirds (61 per cent) of dentate adults said the usual reason they attended the dentist is for a regular check-up. Furthermore, 10 per cent said that they attended for an occasional check-up, whilst 27 per

cent said that they attended when having trouble with their teeth, and 2 per cent said that they never attended the dentist.

Professor Jimmy Steele, head of the Dental School at Newcastle University, said: "The Adult Dental Health Survey has shown a remarkable continued improvement in the dental health of British people. People under the age of 45 have better teeth than ever before, which bodes well for the future.

"Whilst more people than ever before are regularly visiting their dentist and British teeth are better than they ever have been, for some people visiting the dentist is still difficult for reasons of cost and particularly anxiety, more than one in 10 British Adults are still classed as extremely anxious about attending the dentist and this can still be a major barrier to ensuring good teeth."

Seventy-one per cent of dentate adults had received NHS care at their last completed course of [dental treatment](#): 45 per cent said that they paid for this care and 25 per cent said it was free. Private dental care was reported by 27 per cent and very few dentate adults (1 per cent) reported receiving mixed NHS and private care. The majority of adults (80 per cent) were positive about their last visit to the dentist.

The NHS Information Centre and ONS worked in partnership with the National Centre for Social Research, the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, and a team of academics from the Universities of Birmingham, Cardiff, Dundee, Newcastle and University College London to produce the findings.

Preliminary findings from the survey, published in December 2010, have shown that just over half (51 per cent) of adults who had ever been to the dentist were classified as having low or no dental anxiety, but over a third (36 per cent) were classified as having moderate dental anxiety,

and 12 per cent of adults were shown to have ‘extreme anxiety’.

Provided by Newcastle University

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