

Direct observation methods provide a unique opportunity to gather data about services provided in dental practice as compared to provider surveys, record review, or billing data alone.

Objective: To determine the type and frequency of services provided in a private dental practice setting using a direct observation method. **Methods:** 120 practices from 22 Ohio counties were directly observed over a 16 month period. This preliminary report includes data from 73 practices. Two observation teams of 2 hygienist researchers and a patient intake coordinator visited each practice for 4 days to directly observe dentist and hygienist patient visits, review records, and administer patient and provider surveys. **Results:** 2269 patient visits were observed. Patients were 57% female and 43% male, mean age 45.7 ± 21.1 years, 88% Caucasian, 10% African-American, and 2% Other. The services most frequently provided during dentist visits were oral examinations (34.4%), composite restorations (23.5%) and single or multiple crowns (16.1%). Additional details appear below.

<u>Observed Service Provided</u>	<u>% of Visits</u>
Dentist Visits (N=1400)	
Oral Examination	34.4
Composite restoration	23.5
Single or multiple crowns (any stage)	16.1
Preventive Service (excluding oral prophylaxis)	14.4
Removable prosthesis (partial or complete, any stage)	10.1
Oral prophylaxis	7.4
Amalgam restoration	6.9
Endodontic treatment	5.9
Extraction	4.9
Fixed partial denture (any stage)	2.8
Veneers, bleaching, esthetic bonding	2.3
Implant treatment (any stage)	0.6
Hygienist Visits (N=869)	
Oral prophylaxis	94.6
Oral examination	94.4
Preventive Service (excluding oral prophylaxis)	79.9
Radiographs	45.5

Conclusion: These descriptive data reflect the range of services provided during dentist and hygienist patient visits. Oral examinations were provided frequently, underscoring the diagnostic role of the dental visit.

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