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# Dental Patient Engagement: 2024 Benchmark Report

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Why This Report is Necessary

Patient engagement is something every dental or oral surgery practice has to consider. Every dental professional has to ask themselves how they are going to engage their patients meaningfully - and, perhaps even more importantly, how they are going to measure if that engagement is succeeding?

This report can help you answer that question. What we offer is never-before-seen insight into the success metrics that matter.

We accumulated data from **over 1700 dental and oral surgery practices** to show the scope of what is possible when patient engagement is a priority for your practice. For full transparency, we have included an asterisk next to data sets under 200 practices. Our data set encompasses **the last 12 months, June 2023 - June 2024.**
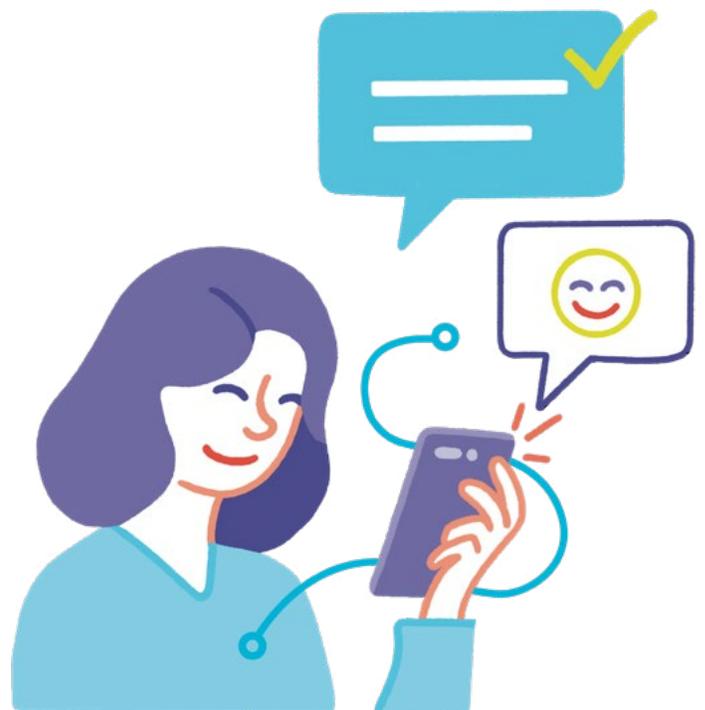
How We Segmented the Data

Here's a breakdown of the different segments of dental and oral surgery practices that we included in this sample data set:

Enterprise:
This category encompasses dental schools, DSOs, and multi-location practices of 10+. *Note: due to differences in how Enterprise operates, not every report will include this segment.

General:
This category comprises general practitioners of dentistry.

Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons:
This category includes OMS practices exclusively.

Specialty:
This category encompasses non-OMS specialty practices, such as endodontic, orthodontic, pediatric, periodontic, prosthodontic, and more.

French:
Francophone clients, specifically those in Québec, often encounter specific laws governing patient engagement and communication, so we wanted to provide information about these practices specifically.
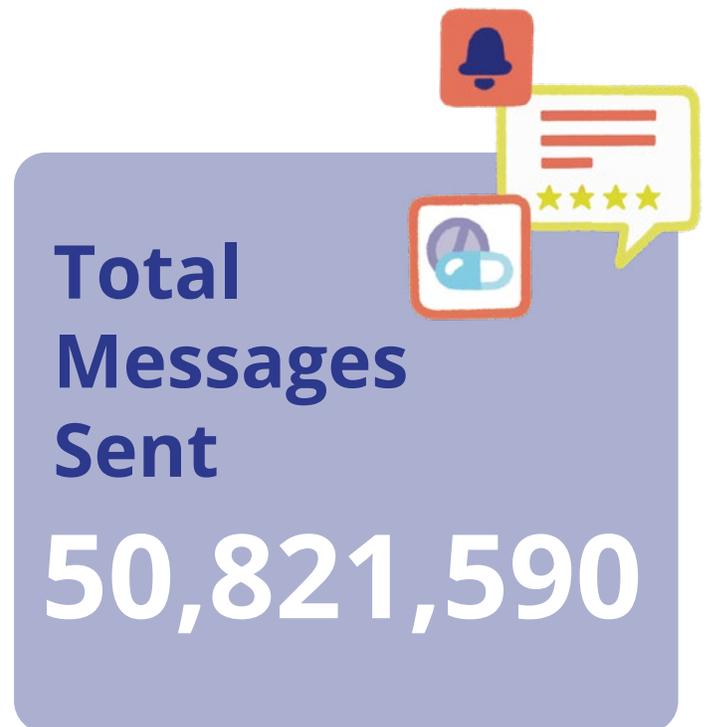
Communication Method

Why This Metric Matters

Knowing what method patients prefer to communicate with can help you strategize. Whether your patients prefer automated voice messages, emails, or communicating by text, having an understanding of this information allows you to plan your patient engagement strategy around how your patients communicate. Or, it can help provide a roadmap if you want to move your patients more into one method of communicating!

Why This Metric Matters

What we see is that texting is preferred by the majority of the dental and oral practices in our data set. This indicates a common trend: patients often prefer the convenience of texting with their dental (or other healthcare) providers on their phones, as opposed to an automated voice message or email. This makes both healthcare providers and patients accessible to each other. And, we can see the positive effects of this when we look a little deeper into what that means in the field.

Total Messages Sent

50,821,590

Monthly Average Number of Messages Sent

Legend: Voice | Text | Email

	Voice	Text	Email
French	43	2081	1181
General	73	1915	1050
OMS	43	1666	604
Specialty	34	2037	1099

Y-axis: 0, 500, 1000, 1500, 2000, 2500
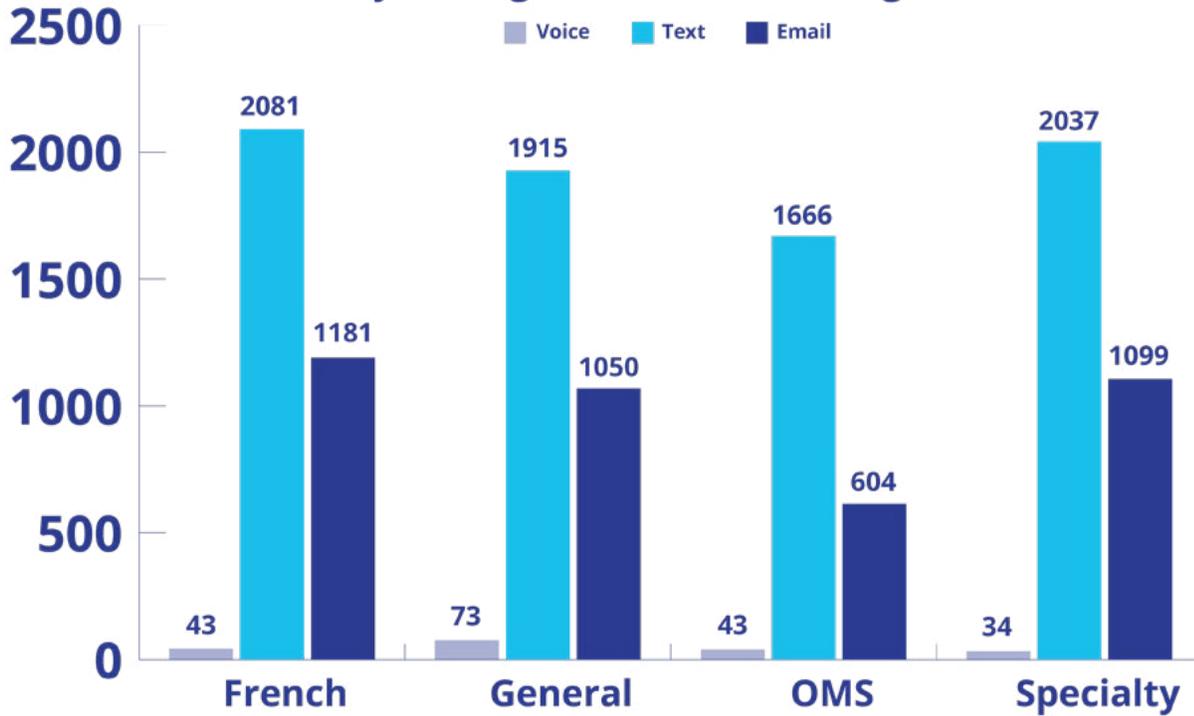
What Communication Methods Were Used (Yearly)

Voice 2.13%
Email 31.55%
Text 66.33%
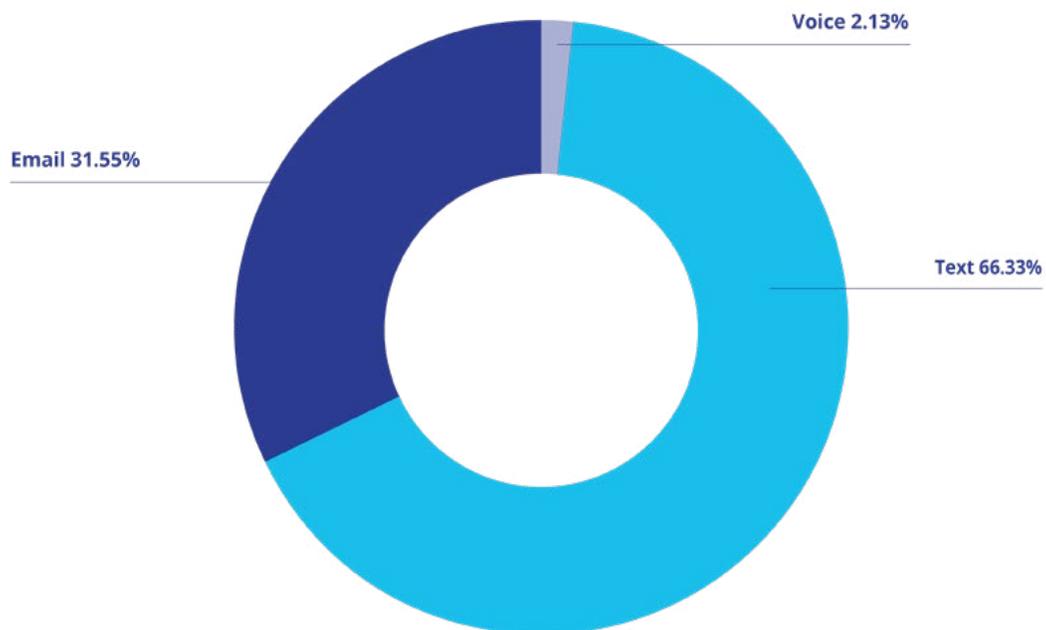
*Note: Specialty and French data sets contain fewer than 200 practices.

Texting With Your Patients

Average Text Messages Sent: Why Does This Metric Matter?

Because text messaging is now so common among dental and oral surgery patients, we decided to take a closer look at how it's being used. The number of chat messages between a dental or oral surgery practice and their patients can tell us a lot about their engagement. If the practice 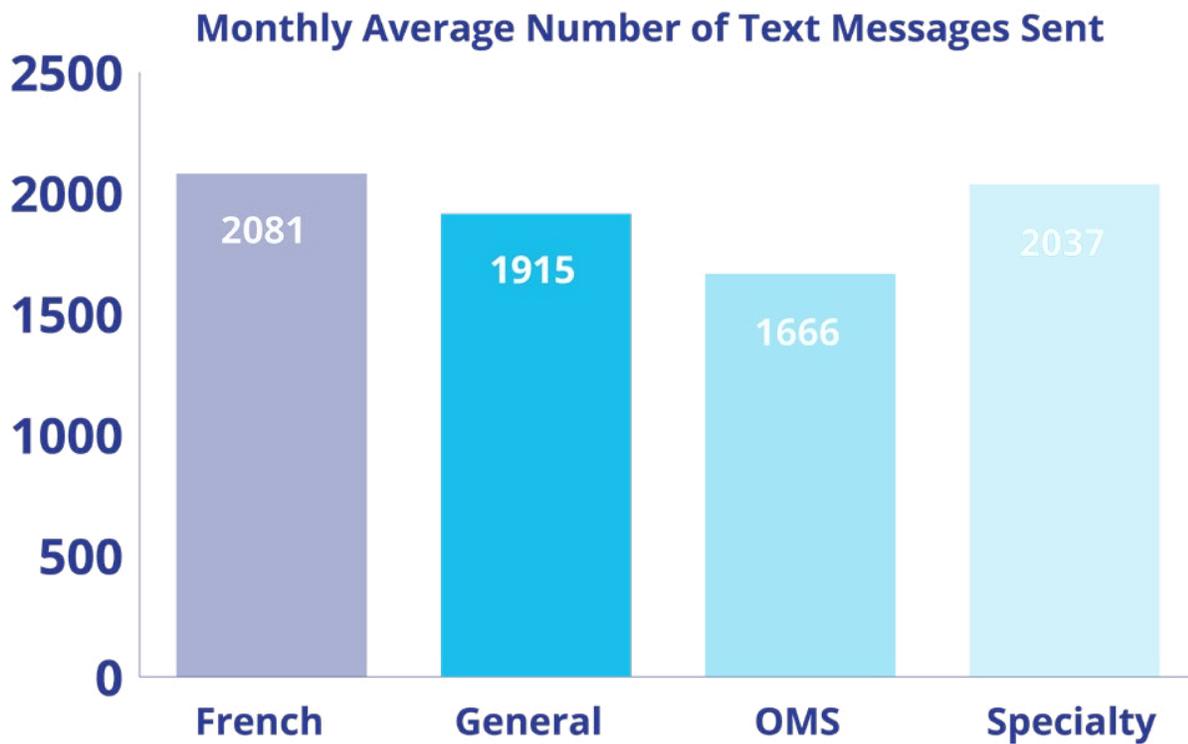employs a chat feature at all, in fact, that tells us something: their patients can reach them easily, without having to wait on hold until a receptionist can take their call or for an email to be read. This indicates a high level of accessibility and the responsiveness of the practice, which is ultimately a huge benefit to patients. This metric also matters because it indicates a fair amount about patient involvement. A high level of chats tells us that practices are communicating with their patients frequently.

Monthly Average Number of Text Messages Sent

Category	Value
French	2081
General	1915
OMS	1666
Specialty	2037

*Note: Specialty and French data sets contain fewer than 200 practices.

Average Number of Patients Texted:
Why Does This Metric Matter?

This metric tells us something different than the total number of chat messages. It might be tempting to assume that this tells us how many patients each location sees. However, despite the prevalence of texting between healthcare providers and their patients, many still prefer email or a phone call! This number will tell us a lot about how many patients have chosen to use chat specifically, and, when we look at this with unique patients chatted with, that tells us something about the nature of these exchanges.

Monthly Average Number of Patients Texted

French 55 · General 95 · OMS 71 · Specialty 72
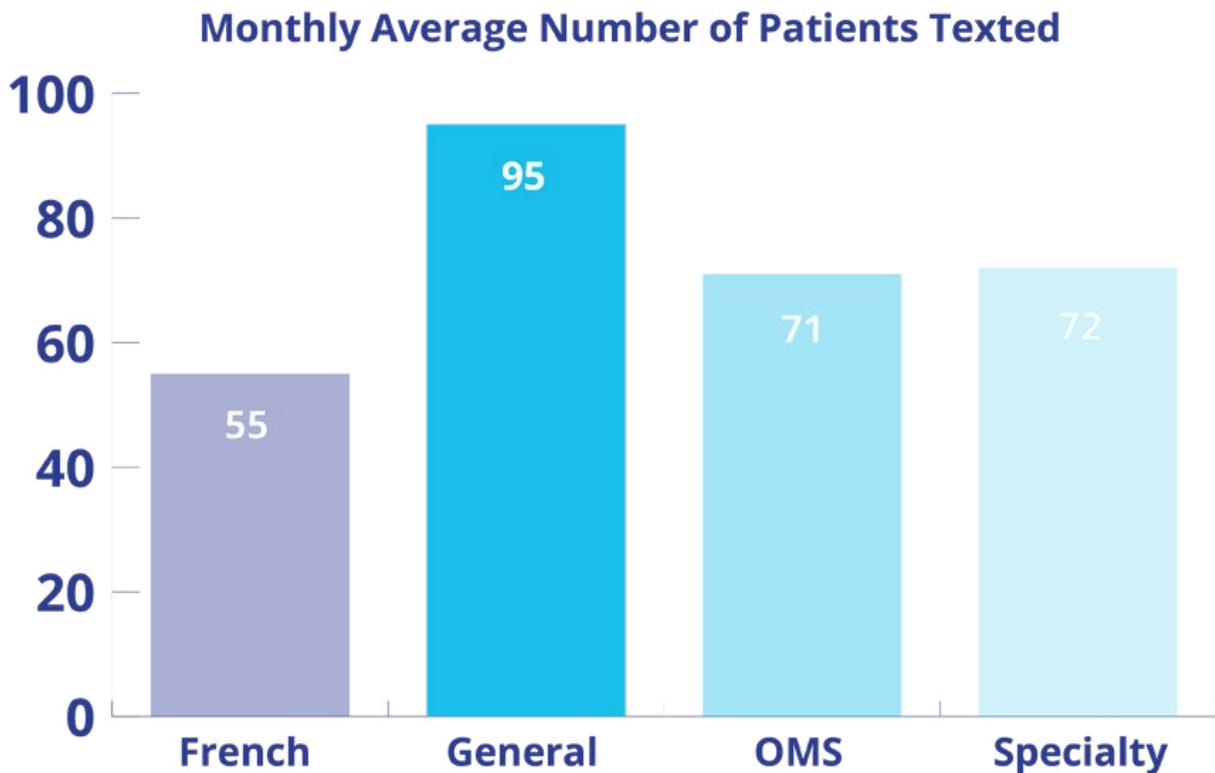
*Note: Specialty and French data sets contain fewer than 200 practices.

What We See in the Data

Texting and chatting is commonplace for the majority of our total data set, who are using it to chat with both contacts and non-contacts. This facilitates extensive communication with patients, their caregivers, other dental practices, and more.

Naturally, the French category encompasses several different types of practices, so it is no surprise that we should see more messages sent by this category per month. Of the other three categories, we can see that the Specialty category is sending messages far more frequently. This may seem surprising at first, since GPs are often seeing patients for multiple different procedures, such as check-ups, teeth cleanings, follow-ups, and more. However, the complex messaging cadence that is needed for most specialty procedures, from fasting to pre-medication reminders and more, results in more messages being sent. We do see of course that more patients are texted by GPs monthly, speaking to their wider patient base.

GPs are often seeing patients for multiple different procedures - check-ups, teeth cleanings, follow-ups, and more.

Recall Rates & Successes

Why Does This Metric Matter?

It goes without saying that recall visits are a key part of dental healthcare. Recall successes and success rates tell us a lot about patient engagement for several reasons. It certainly indicates that patients are invested in their dental health, because they are coming to those recall appointments. But it can also indicate that dental and oral surgery practices are successfully educating patients about the importance of their oral health. Or, they are otherwise engaging with them in a way that brings home the importance of the recall visit. It also indicates that patients are satisfied enough with the healthcare they receive to be a returning patient.

If we take a closer look, we see these averages of recall successes for general dentists, oral and maxillofacial surgery practices, and for Francophone practices:

What We See in the Data

The recall success rate for OMS and Specialty shouldn't surprise us too much. After all, oral surgery and other specialty procedures often involve a number of follow-up appointments. The positive result here is that patients are engaged: they are returning for their recall appointments, indicating both their investment and that the practice is communicating effectively. We also saw that all of the data set that texting was a preferred method to achieve a high recall success rate.

Average Recall Success Rate (Yearly)

French	General	OMS	Specialty
21%	34%	44%	36%
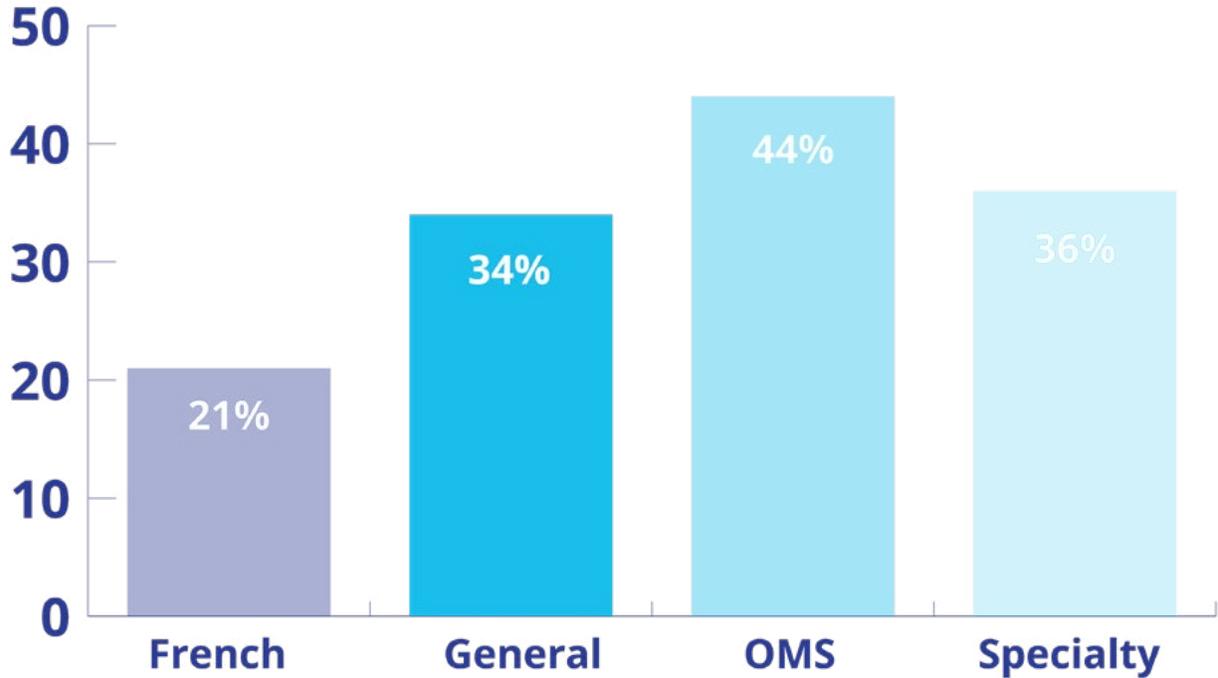
Monthly Average of Recall Successes

French	General	OMS	Specialty
24	49	19	65
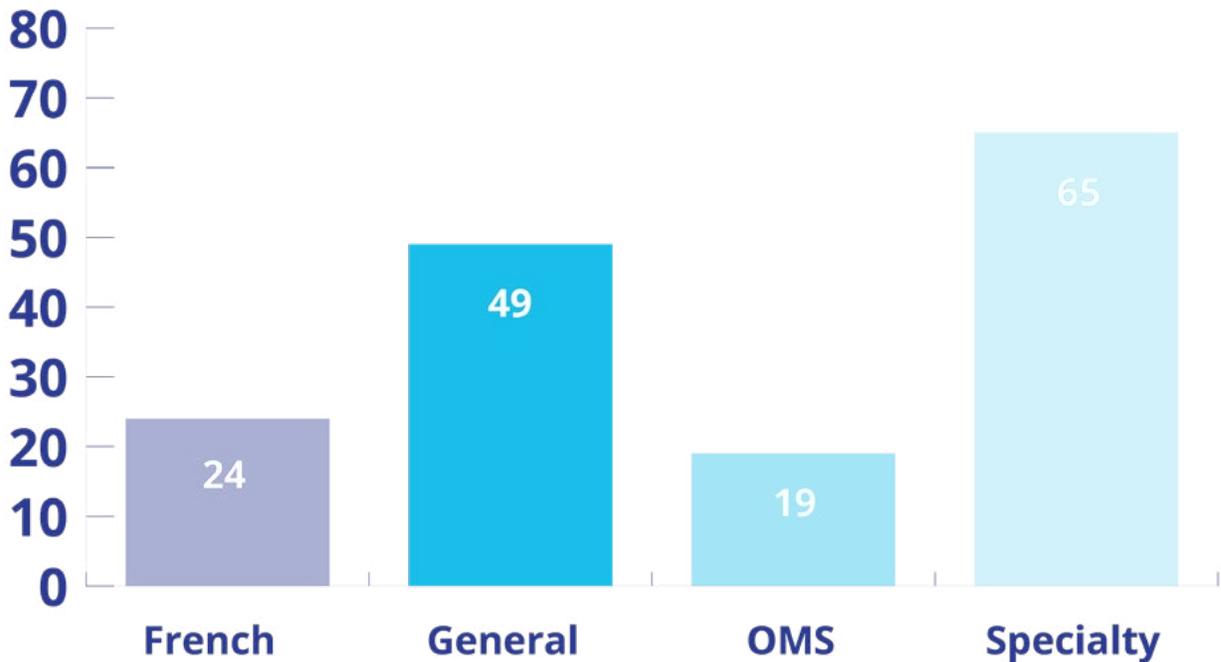
*Note: OMS, Specialty, and French data sets contain fewer than 200 practices.

Confirmation Rate

Why Does This Metric Matter?

A solid confirmation rate tells us a lot of positive things about a dental or oral surgery practice. It certainly indicates patient commitment: patients are engaged and committed enough to let their practice know that they're coming to their appointments. This indicates emotional investment, as well as trust and satisfaction. It also shows that the practice is likely communicating effectively, in the sense that they are sending the right amount of reminders and appointment information. A high confirmation rate will also usually be correlated to a low no-show rate, in part because practices have implemented a good appointment reminder cadence that is likely to include the option to confirm[1]. This indicates patient investment - and also bodes well for the practice's bottom line.

What We See in the Data

To put this in context, this means that about 4 out of 5 patients are confirming their appointments across these practices. This indicates that practices can fairly accurately predict who is coming to their appointments. It also shows that a successful part of their patient engagement is making confirmation accessible. Utilizing phone, text, and email, the practice is able to meet patients where they're at by communicating in the way they prefer.

Average Confirmation Rates (Yearly)

Enterprise	French	General	OMS	Specialty
76%	80%	78%	76%	77%
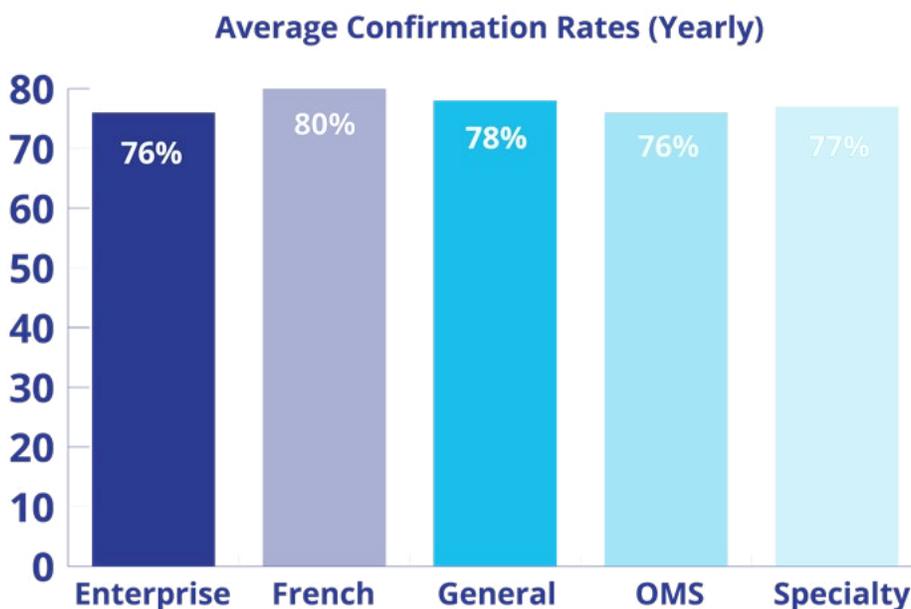
*Note: Enterprise, Specialty, and French data sets contain fewer than 200 practices.
[1][See endnotes]

New Social Reviews

Why Does This Metric Matter?

Patients are both your greatest advocates and your greatest source of feedback. The majority of patients who leave reviews will leave positive ones[2]. A high number of social reviews indicates happy patients who feel positive enough about your dental or oral surgery practice to leave a review. This is a key metric because it tells you how happy your patients are. And, it gives you a good sense of how likely your practice will be trusted and chosen by prospective patients. On Google, for example, the Speigel Research Centre found that businesses with an average review rating of 4.2 to 4.5 stars are the most trusted[3].

What We See in the Data

If we consider a general trend of between 35 and 60, and that most patient reviewers are writing positive reviews, that bodes well for moving up in the algorithm with a positive star rating. This averages out to about 3 to 6 new reviews per month.

Consider this high number of new social reviews for OMS practices. This is an extremely positive sign for OMS practices, since reviews are one of the guides that GPs use to select a practice to refer to. In this instance, a number of reviews translates directly into higher potential revenue for OMS practices. Of course, since the emotional impact of a complex procedure can be quite intense, patients are more likely to leave a review, giving GP and OMs practices alike a full picture of their experiences.

Average rating for most trusted

4.2-4.5 stars

[2][See endnotes]
[3][See endnotes]

" *If we consider a general trend of between 40 and 60, and that most patient reviewers are writing positive reviews, that bodes well for moving up in the algorithm with a positive star rating.*

Average of New Social Reviews (Yearly)

Enterprise	French	General	OMS	Specialty
35	34	39	59	37
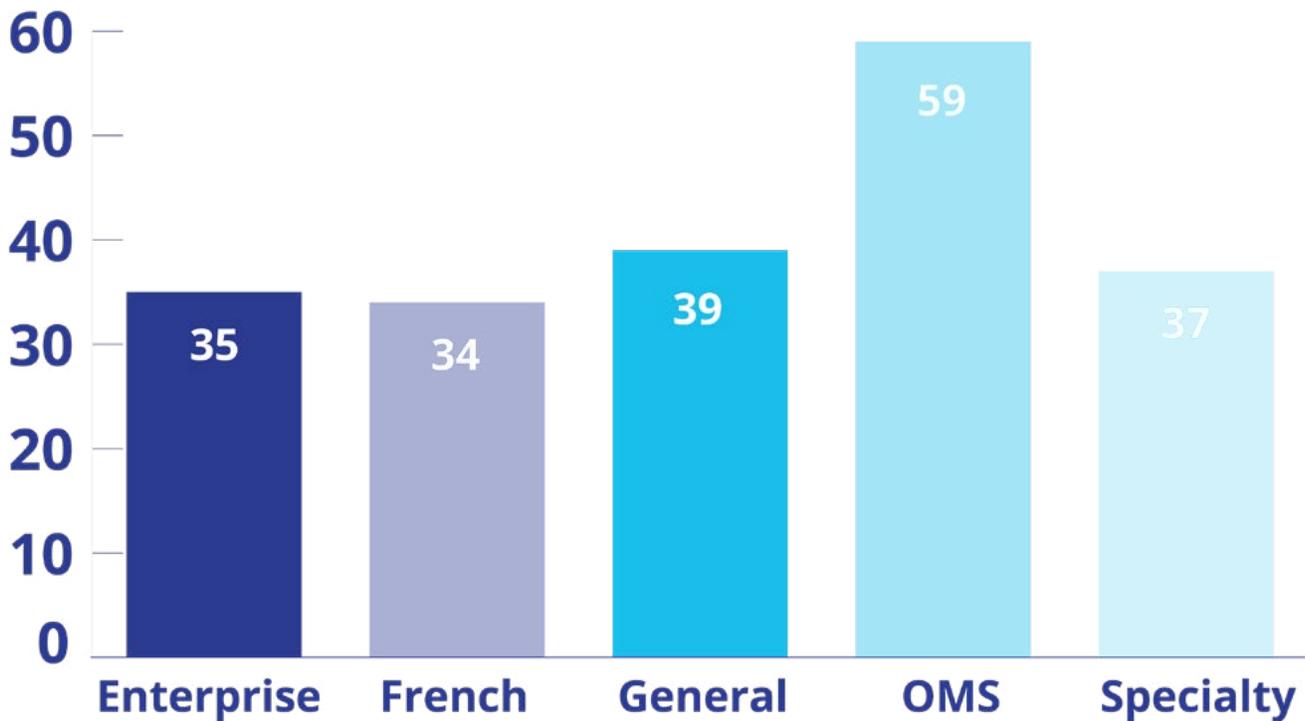
*Note: Specialty and French data sets contain fewer than 200 practices.

Survey Response Rate

Why Does This Metric Matter?

A survey is a powerful tool for your practice. You can utilize a survey to get a clearer picture of the patient experience at your dental practice. This gives you the ability to identify common trends and areas of improvement. But, it's impossible to pull this information unless the survey has respondents. This is why a survey response rate is such a key metric: the higher the response rate, the more accurate your information. And, just as importantly, it shows you that your patients are passionate enough about their experience to give you feedback.

What We See in the Data

Becker's DSO + Dental Review reported that in 2022, dentists had an average of 3798.4 patient visits[4]. If a dental or oral surgery practice sends out a survey after every appointment, even at the lowest number on this chart, 4% of 3798 is 152 responses. This provides these practices a strong data set from which to base trends and insights into their practice. This facilitates strategy for how to improve or build on current patient engagement and experience.

4% of 3798 is

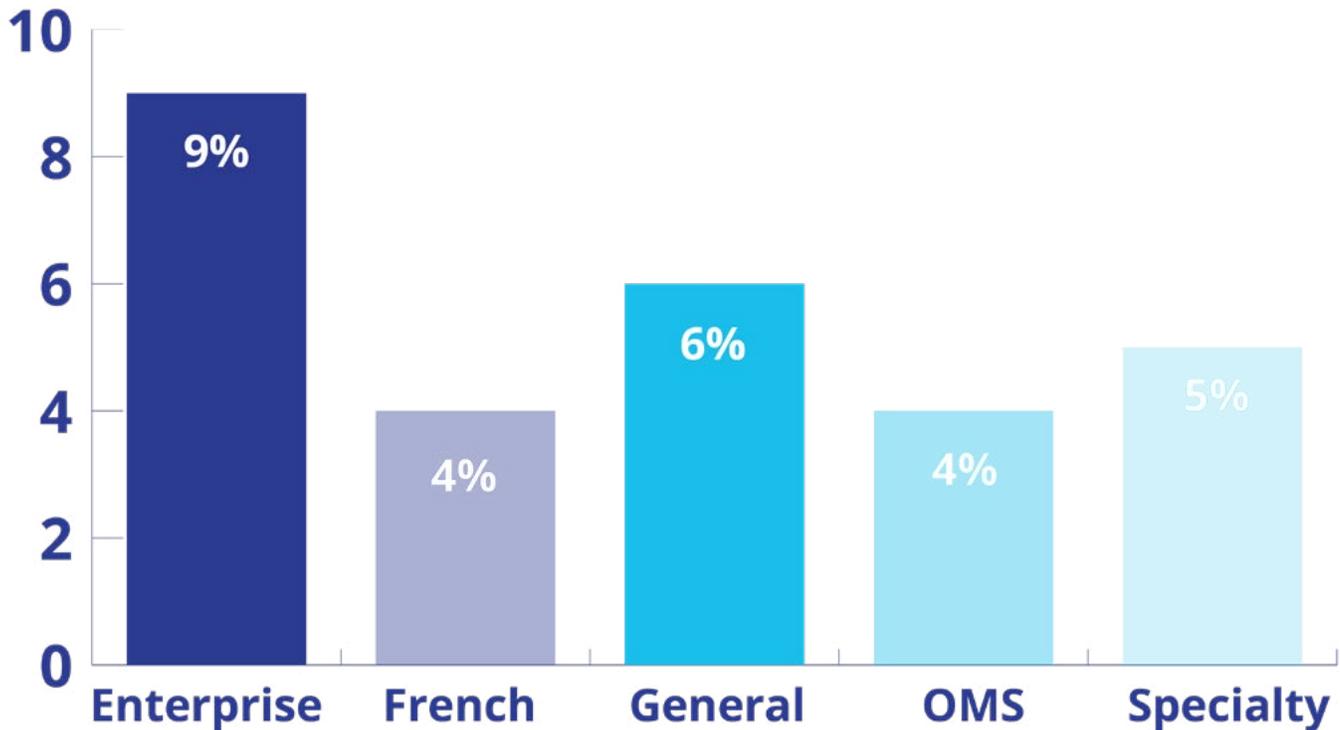**152**

responses

[4][See endnotes]

> *This is why a survey response rate is such a key metric: the higher the response rate, the more accurate your information.*

Average Survey Response Rate (Yearly)

Enterprise	French	General	OMS	Specialty
9%	4%	6%	4%	5%

*Note: Specialty and French data sets contain fewer than 200 practices.

A Day in the Life: Time & Cost Savings

To learn more about time and cost savings while using patient engagement software, we can look more closely at specific practices.

For example, Clinique Poirier Dentaire Caron, a general practice, reported 5 hours in time savings. Another general practice, Slipacoff Dental Centre, reported 3 hours in time savings. SVSA and Altoona Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery, both OMS surgery practices, reported 2 and 6 hours of time-savings respectively. If we look at other specialties, Graft Periodontics and Lakeside Pediatric Dentistry, saved 1 and 3 hours respectively.

Let us put that in perspective: this frees up extra time not only for work, it also facilitates a stronger work-life balance. This leaves staff emotionally resourced to manage patients, helping to create the right conditions for a positive patient experience. Indeed, this is one of the reasons that time-savings is so important to dental and oral surgery practices. Well-resourced staff members facilitate strong patient engagement.

Ultimately, it also facilitates significant cost savings. Let's consider what staff may be present at dental and oral surgery practices on a day-to-day basic

- The dentist, oral surgeon, or specialist
- The office administrator or manager
- The dental assistant(s)
- The dental hygienist
- The office receptionist(s)

> *Both OMS surgery practices, reported 2 and 6 hours of time-savings respectively.*

"

These average total daily time savings, across all practices regardless of specialty or geographical location, was 4.6 hours.

Considering the average salaries, per hour, of these staff members, we estimate the cost of staff per hour to your practice would be as follows:

	In the US[5]	In Canada[6]
General Practice	**$235 per hour**	**$238 per hour**
OMS Practice	**$317 per hour**	**$257 per hour**
Specialty Practice	**$244 per hour**	**$223 per hour**

If we take an average from the dental and oral surgery practice that we spoke to directly*, we learned that these average total daily time savings, across all practices regardless of specialty or geographical location, was 4.6 hours. If we break that down, we find:

	Daily Time Savings Per Specialty	Daily Cost Savings in the US	Daily Cost Savings in Canada
General Practice	3	**$705**	**$684**
OMS Practice	2.5	**$792.5**	**$642.5**
Specialty Practice	2	**$488**	**$446**

These are significant savings. Using this data, we can gain significant insight into the value of prioritizing patient engagement - and, specifically, choosing a patient engagement software that fits for your practice.
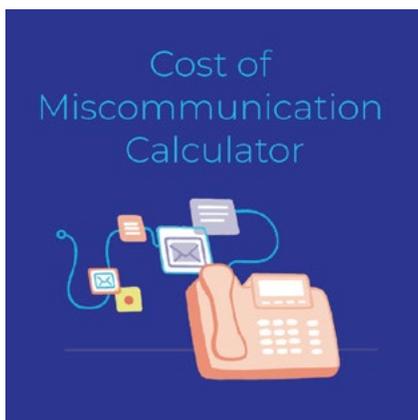
[5][See endnotes]
[6][See endnotes]

The Path To Engaging Your Patients

Now that you understand the metrics and benchmarks, you can create a customized patient engagement strategy tailored to your dental or oral surgery practice. A well-crafted plan takes into account the tools available, such as patient portals, communication platforms, and feedback systems. By leveraging these resources, you can enhance patient satisfaction, improve outcomes, and foster loyalty.

About Intiveo

Intiveo is a time-saving solution tailored for dental practices, oral surgeries, and dental specialists in Canada and the US. Since our inception, we have been proud to work with dental schools. We currently serve 85% of dental schools in the US, where we also serve 1 in 5 OMS practices. It seamlessly integrates with patient management software, ensuring exceptional patient experiences from the very first contact. Intiveo empowers your practice with a host of features that maximize engagement and efficiency, to provide the best patient experience possible.

This is not the only Intiveo resource that you can use to gain insights into your practice. We also offer three key calculators to support you in creating strategies for your practice:

Cost of Miscommunication Calculator

Diagnose Your OMS Practice

Intiveo Self-Assessment: Are Your Patients Engaged?

We wish you the best of luck as you implement your strategy and elevate your practice to new heights!

End Notes

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