



Creating a Narrative Dentistry Database for Oral Health Connections

E. Angeles Martinez Mier
Indiana University

Anubhuti Shukla
Temple University

Michelle McQuistan
University of Iowa

Laura Moorhead
San Francisco State University

Sheryl Syme
*University of Maryland, School
of Dentistry*

Eileen G. Harrington,

Assistant Director & Health and Life Sciences Librarian
Priddy Library, University of Maryland Libraries

Michelle V. Moncrieffe,

PGDip., MA, CHES®
Project Director, Narratives and Medical Education (NAME) Project
Senior Lecturer, *Department of English*
University of Maryland College Park

Agenda

Project Background

Oral Health Fairs at Public Libraries

Focus Groups/Narrative Excerpts

Narrative Dentistry Database

Other Examples of Databases of Community Stories in Libraries



“A silent epidemic of oral diseases is affecting... our most vulnerable citizens—poor children, the elderly, and many members of racial and ethnic minority groups.”

US Surgeon General, 2000

“In the United States, the largest of such disparities in access to dental care are related to income and race/ethnicity. A new understanding has emerged that the causes of poor oral health are the result of complex interactions of determinants.”

NIDCR, 2021



Do You Know His NAME?



Photo by Linda
Davidson/The Washington
Post via Getty Images)

Remembering Deamonte Driver



Photo by Linda
Davidson/The Washington
Post via Getty Images)

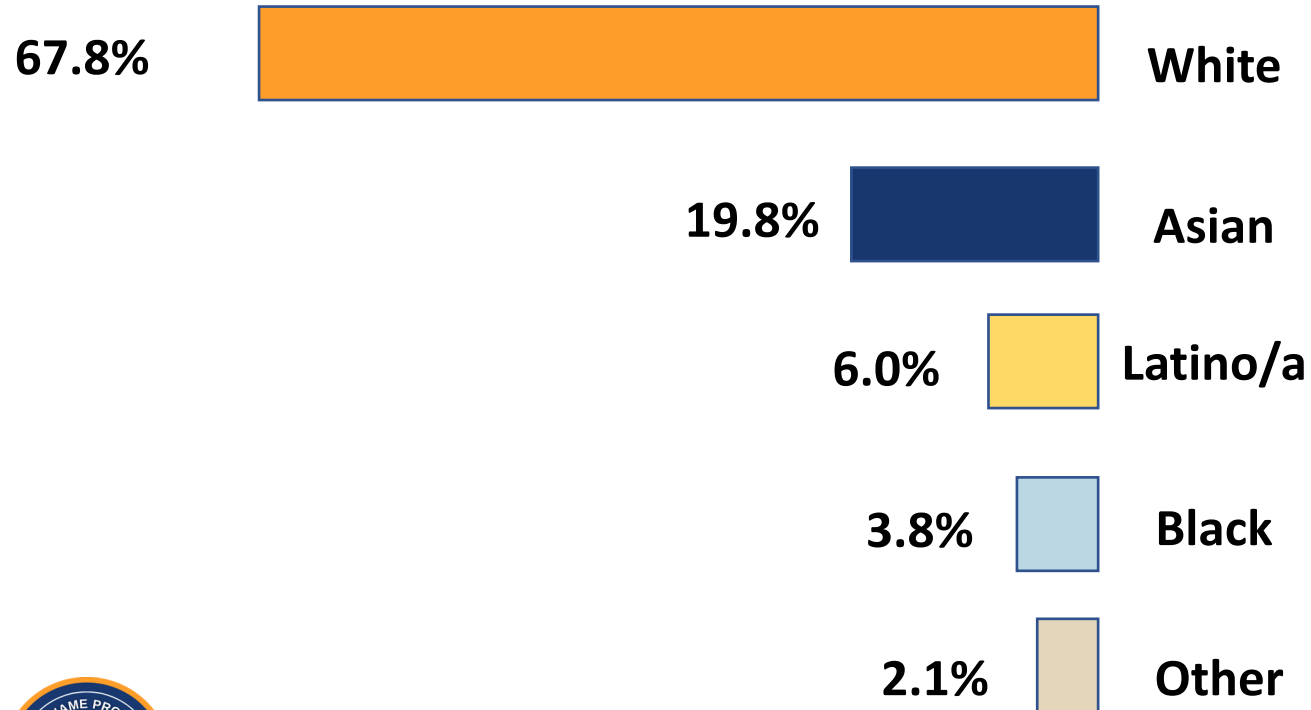
The Narratives And Medical Education(NAME) Project Est. 2020



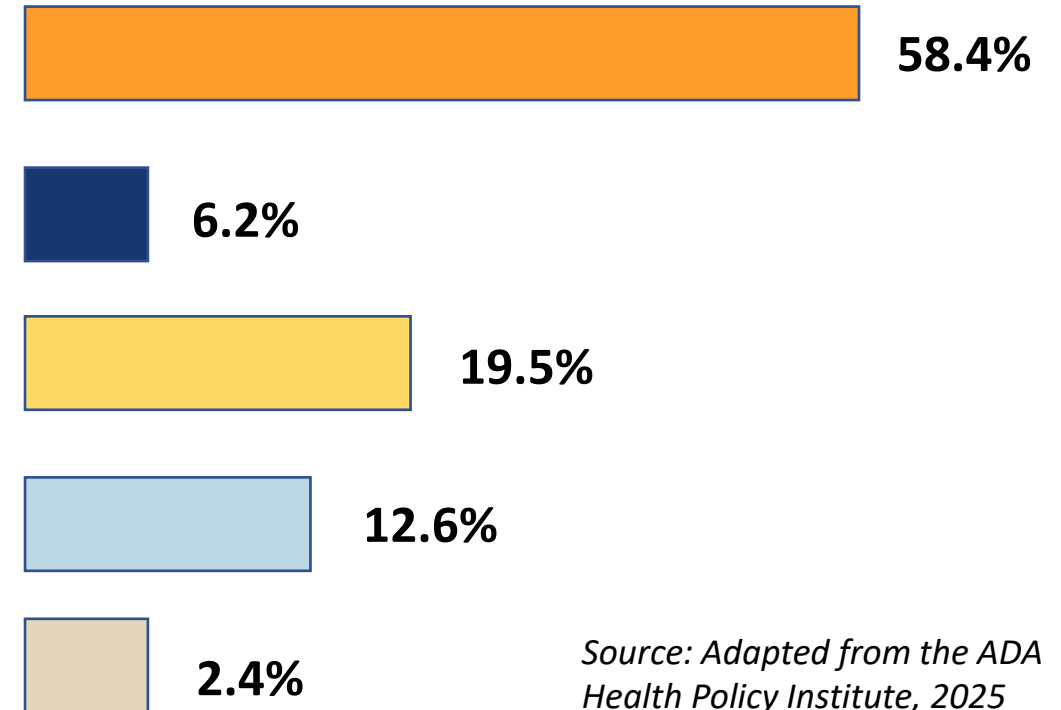
Can Sharing Stories Change
the Narrative in Dentistry for
Underserved Individuals?

Who are our Dentists?

2023 Distribution of Dentist Workforce



2023 Distribution of U.S. Population



*Source: Adapted from the ADA
Health Policy Institute, 2025*



Burden of Righting Inequities?

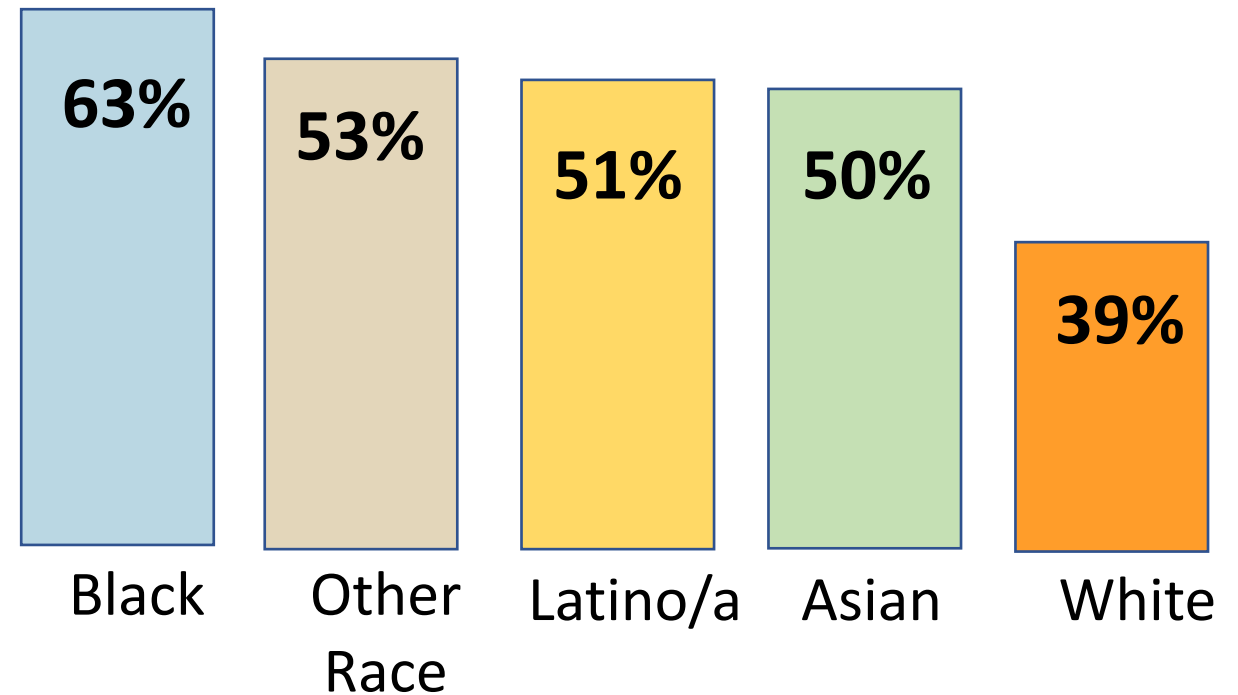


**43% of dentists
participate in
Medicaid or CHIP**

Source: ADA Health Policy Institute, 2023



Dentists who accept Medicaid/CHIP by race



Oral Health in the Community

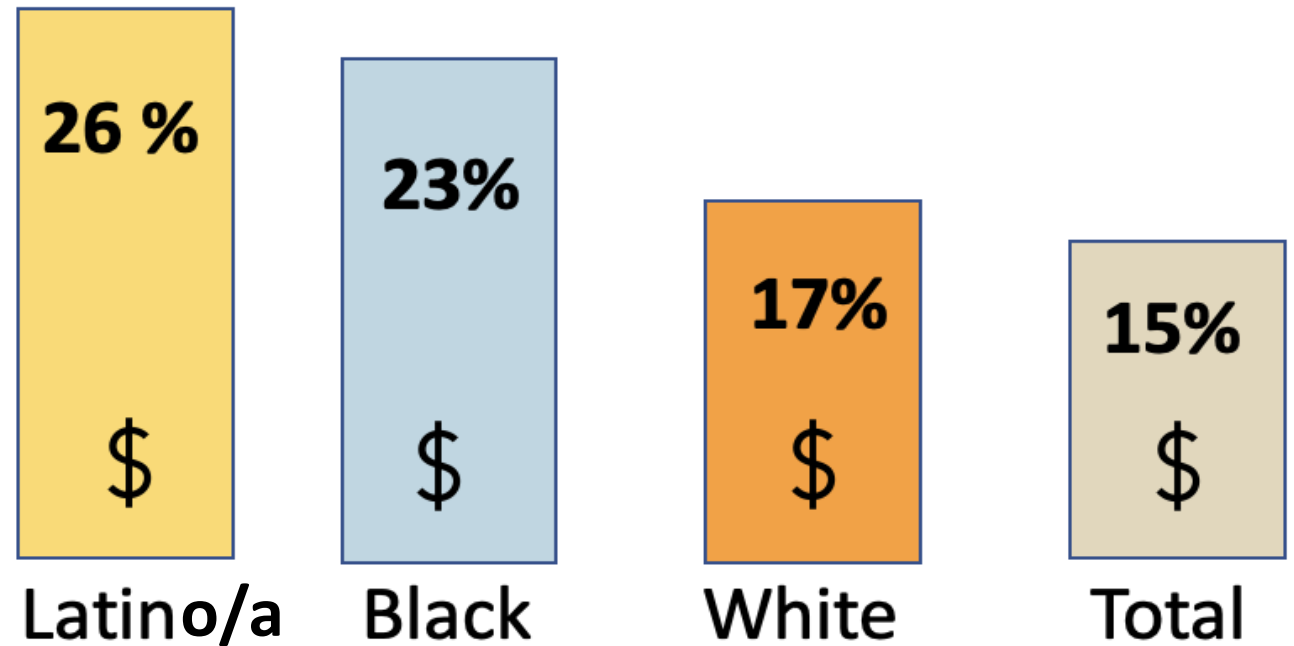
15% of Black and 9% of Hispanic parents report their children's poor oral health affected school performance/attendance compared to 2% of white parents

Hospital emergency rooms are the dental home for 1 in 9 Black adults

CareQuest Institute
for Oral Health, 2022



Adults/children who went without dental care due to cost



National Center for Health Statistics, 2022

The NAME Project - Overview

Four Study Sites:
CA, IA, IN, MD

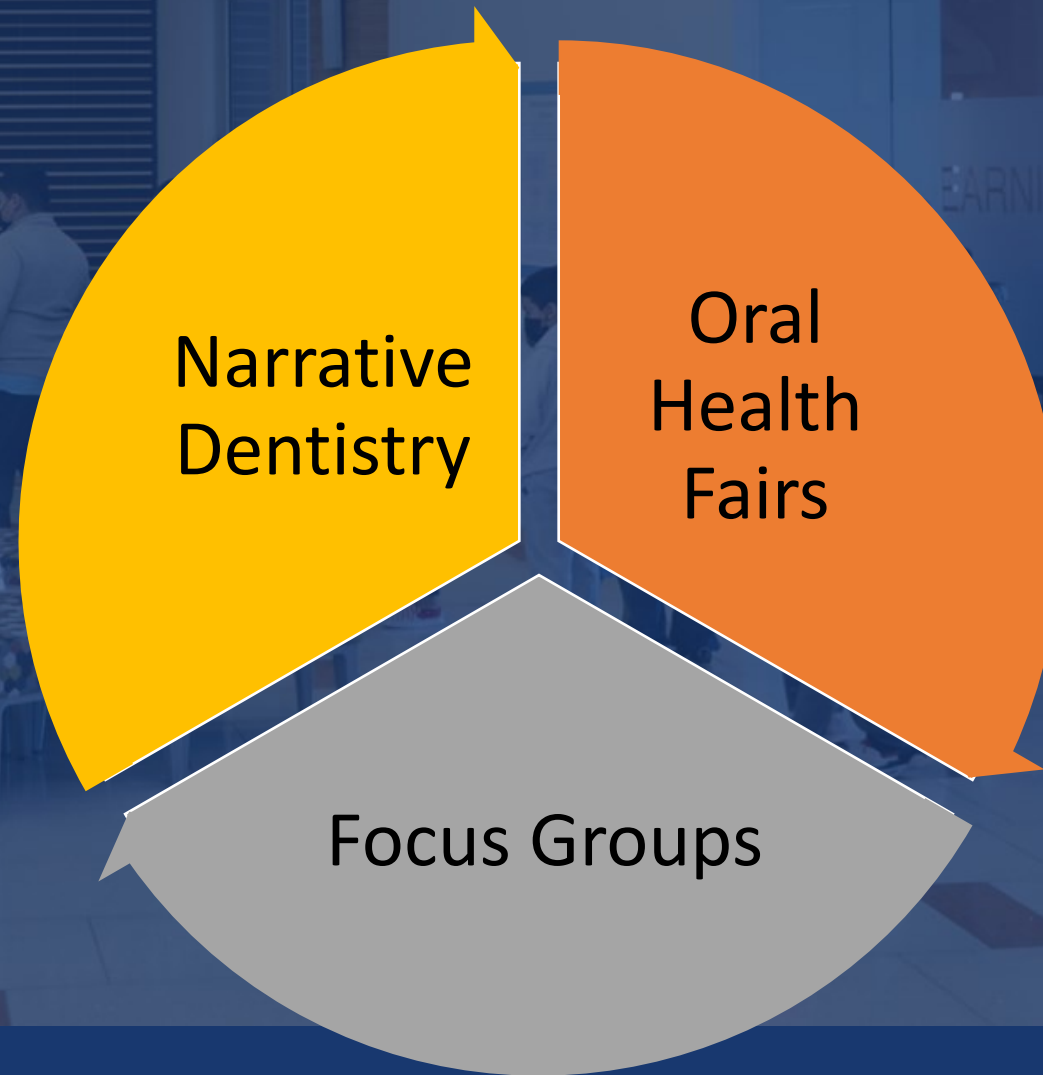
Team of multidisciplinary
researchers:

Public health dentistry,
journalism,
Writing/English,
librarianship



Hyattsville, MD Public Library - March 11, 2023

Project Components



Oral Health Fairs at Public Libraries

11 Oral Health Fairs across 4 project sites:



MD: UMB School of Dentistry collaborating with UMD and USG and 2 public libraries: Screenings and oral health education at 2 oral health fairs



Oral Health Fairs at Public Libraries



IN: IU School of Dentistry
& 1 public library: Oral
health education at 1 oral
health fair



Oral Health Fairs at Public Libraries



IN: IU School of Dentistry & 1 public library: Oral health education at 1 oral health fair



CA: SFSU journalism program collaborating with UCSF dental students at public libraries: Oral health education at 7 oral health fairs



Oral Health Fairs at Public Libraries



IN: IU School of Dentistry & 1 public library: Oral health education at 1 oral health fair



CA: SFSU journalism program collaborating with UCSF dental students at public libraries: Oral health education at 7 oral health fairs



IA: University of Iowa & 1 public library: Screenings, oral health education, & fluoride varnish applications at 1 oral health fair



Oral Health Fairs at Public Libraries

- Sites for experiential learning
- Way to gather stories:
 - Focus groups with dental/dental hygiene students and community members
- Sources for newspaper articles



Focus Group - Community

“

It's a lot of systematic oppression where people of color and immigrants always end up, like she said, on the bottom of the totem pole. So...



”



Focus Group - Community

“ ... oftentimes, we're not getting access to the things we need because of that systematic oppression. It's in the system and we have to kind of change the system to get the opportunities that we need. ”



Focus Group - Community

“

Obviously, we know they're educated, but I feel like they should educate themselves as to the community that they're going into...

”



Focus Group - Community

“

... Learn about the people that you're going to be working with. Learn about all ethnicities or the diversity of the community you're going into. Because I think that plays a big part in anybody trusting a doctor or feeling comfortable with them, them being understanding of the people that they're going to be working with.

”

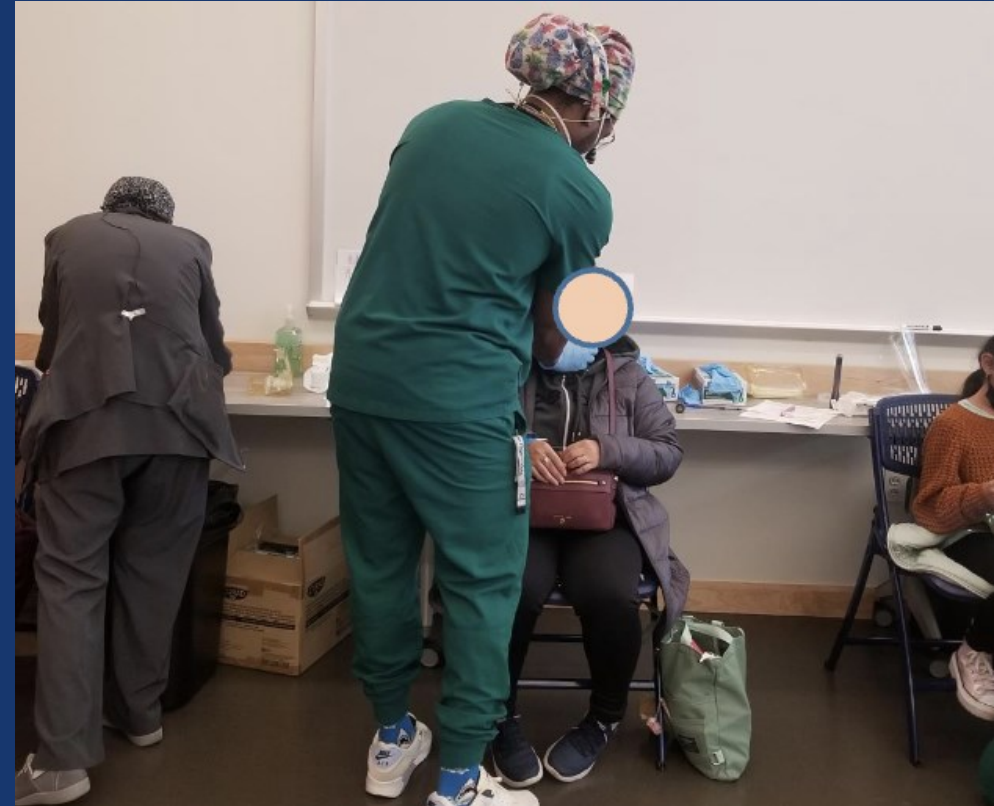


Focus Group - Dental/Dental Hygiene Students

“

I had an African-American patient who said, I've been treated different ways, different places, and a lot of people think that Black people don't need as much anesthetic. And so, she said that, and she almost got a little bit upset when she was telling me about it.

”



Focus Group - Dental/Dental Hygiene Students

“

I had an Amish patient in PEDS, who was 14. And I found my own bias creeping in there as well because that population usually has incredibly [inaudible] rates. And it was his first time in the dentist.

”

FERIA DE SALUD DENTAL

organizado por The NAME Project

FECHA: sábado, 22 de abril de 2023

HORA: 11:00AM - 3:00 PM

LUGAR: Long Branch Library

RECURSOS PARA OBTENER
CUIDADO DENTAL



CHEQUEOS GRATUITOS
DE SALUD DENTAL



CONSEJOS DE
SALUD



AYUDA PARA
ENCONTRAR
RECURSOS DE
CUIDADO DENTAL
A BAJO COSTO



MC PL Montgomery County
PUBLIC LIBRARIES

UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND

UNIVERSITY of MARYLAND
SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY

NOTA: UN CHEQUEO DENTAL ES UNA BREVE REVISIÓN BUCAL EN LA QUE SE PUEDEN HACER PREGUNTAS A LOS DENTISTAS Y APRENDICES.



Focus Group - Dental/Dental Hygiene Students

“

...Again, 14, so I was expecting like: "Oh, boy. Here we go." He had one cavity and a chipped tooth, and that was it. So, I mean, sometimes that **you have to keep training yourself out of it every time it slips in**, I guess.

”

FERIA DE SALUD DENTAL

organizado por The NAME Project

FECHA: sábado, 22 de abril de 2023

HORA: 11:00AM - 3:00 PM

LUGAR: Long Branch Library

RECURSOS PARA OBTENER
CUIDADO DENTAL



CHEQUEOS GRATUITOS
DE SALUD DENTAL



CONSEJOS DE
SALUD



AYUDA PARA
ENCONTRAR
RECURSOS DE
CUIDADO DENTAL
A BAJO COSTO



MC PL Montgomery County
PUBLIC LIBRARIES

UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND

UNIVERSITY of MARYLAND
SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY

NOTA: UN CHEQUEO DENTAL ES UNA BREVE REVISIÓN BUCAL EN LA QUE SE PUEDEN HACER PREGUNTAS A LOS DENTISTAS Y APRENDICES.



Focus Group - Dental/Dental Hygiene Students

“

...before I can even say, "oh, I'm born and raised in Maryland", I know she's insinuating what is my ethnic background.

She was like, "oh, you look Korean", which is, that's not offensive, but I'm not. I'm Chinese. And before, and then she just vaulted into "you look Korean because of your slanted eyes." And I was like, whoa, whoa.



”



Focus Group - Dental/Dental Hygiene Students

“

...I was so caught off guard that I didn't know how to respond. I think she would identify as a white female, probably in the baby boomer generation.

”



Themes from Focus Groups

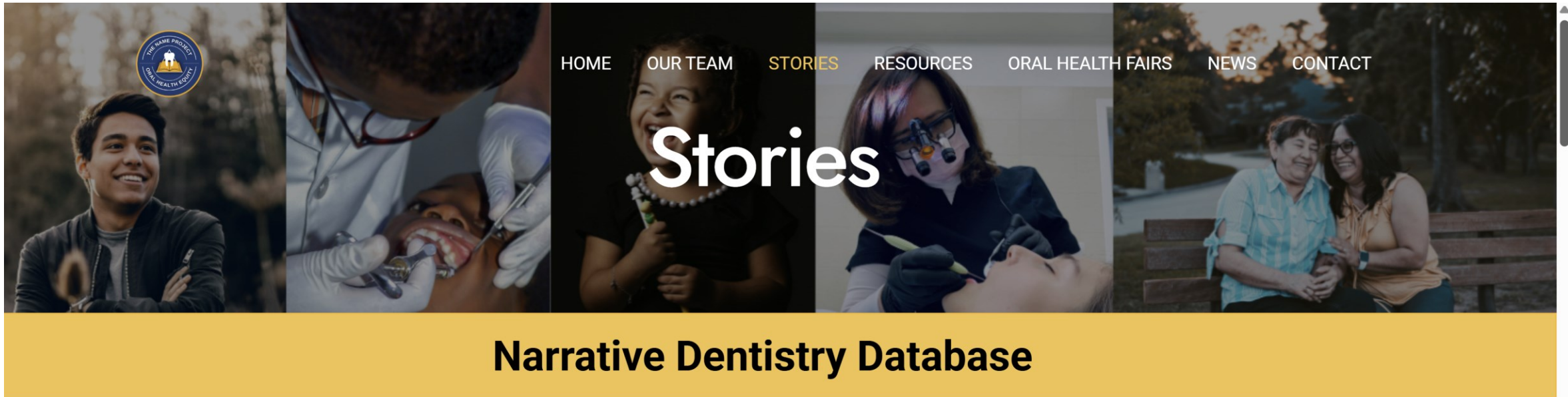
- Access to care
- Dental education/training
- Fear/Pain
- Health literacy
- Managing patient expectations
- Quality of patient care
- Race & Racism/Bias
- Social Determinants
- Time
- Treatment costs
- Trust



Categories for Narrative Dentistry Database



Narrative Dentistry Database



The NAME Project's Narrative Dentistry Database includes narrative excerpts from group and individual interviews, as well as poems, books, essays, news articles, and more.



<https://the-name-project.org/stories/>

Resources in the Database: Narrative Non-Fiction

The Smile Stealers: The Fine and Foul Art of Dentistry

Book by Richard Barnett. Thames & Hudson: London, 2017.

<https://thamesandhudson.com/the-smile-stealers-9780500519110>

Traces the evolution of dentistry in Europe and the United States through storytelling, historic texts, and images, many of which are from the Wellcome Collection. This beautifully designed book provides an engaging account of both the social and cultural aspects of dental care and the more [...]

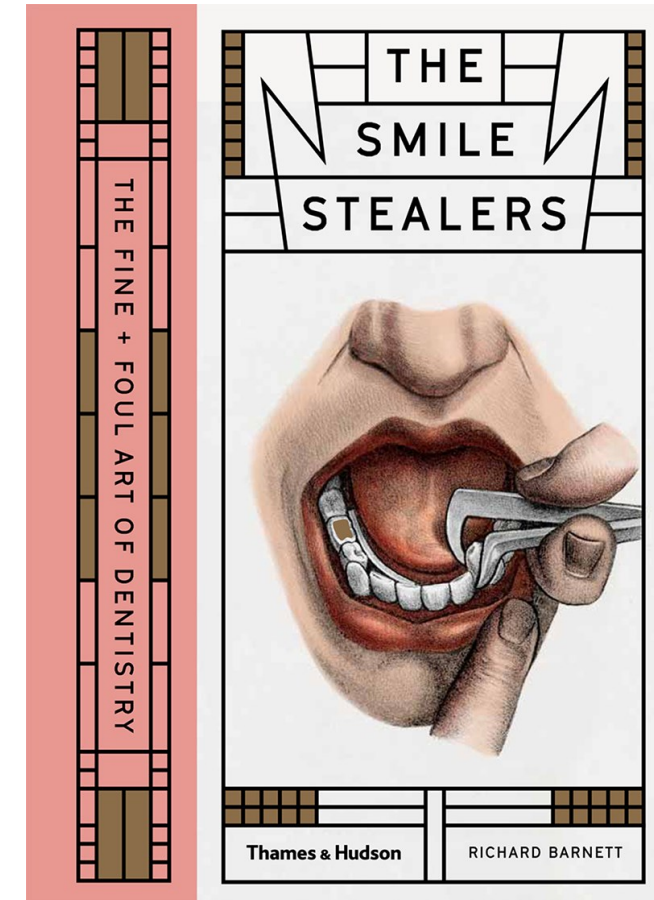
Poor Teeth

Essay by Sarah Smarsh, Aeon. October 23, 2014.

<https://aeon.co/essays/there-is-no-shame-worse-than-poor-teeth-in-a-rich-world>

Teeth: The Story of Beauty, Inequality, and the Struggle for Oral Health in America

Book by Mary Otto. The New Press: New York, 2017.



Resources in the Database: News Articles

Pop-up dental clinic lets students brush up on their training, put smiles on young faces

Online news article by Kyran Berlin. (May 7, 2023). Bay City News.
<https://localnewsmatters.org/2023/05/07/pop-up-dental-clinic-lets-students-brush-up-on-their-training-put-smiles-on-young-faces/>

Latinx children are receiving better dental care in San Francisco than the national average

Online news article by journalism students at San Francisco State and El Tecolote staff members. (December 18, 2022). El Tecolote.
<https://eltecolote.org/content/en/latinx-children-are-receiving-better-dental-care-in-san-francisco-than-the-national-average/>

Dental Robin Hood

Online news article by Daphne Young and Mariko Rath. (December 3, 2023). The San Francisco Bay View National Black Newspaper.
<https://sfbayview.com/2023/12/dental-robin-hood/>



Resources in the Database: Novels

Set My Heart to Five

/ Literature, Quality of patient care / By groupnameproject

Fiction book by Simon Stephenson. Hanover Square Press: Toronto, ON, 2020.

In 2054, certain careers are now the purview of extremely human-like bots, including dentistry. Jared, a bot-dentist in Ypsilanti, Michigan, discovers one day that, unlike his bot brethren, he has emotions. Specifically, with the help of his friend a human medical doctor, Dr. Glundenstein, they determine he is depressed. To test out if Jared can experience other emotions, Dr. Glundenstein recommends that Jared go to see classic movies. These differ from more recent popular movies that all tend to deal with bots trying to dominate humans and take over the world. Jared soon discovers he indeed is feeling emotions and sets off on an epic journey to California to try to change humans' views on bots and help humans find their hearts again by writing a novel screenplay.

Although, the storyline of Jared being a dentist is not a central theme of the book, there are some excerpts at the beginning of the book (listed below) that could be used to spark discussion about the profession. Also, overall, the book has themes around technology and humans' relationship to it, hierarchies and forms of enslavement in society, storytelling, and the human condition.

Excerpts that relate to dentistry:

"Hi!

My name is Jared.

I am sincerely pleased to meet you.

Also, I am a bot!

Unless you have been living under a rock in North Korea or New Zealand—Ha!—you of course know what a bot is. Nonetheless, I



Resources in the Database: Poetry

“He Has an Oral Fixation”

Poem by Natalie Scenters-Zapico. Poetry, February 2017

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/92043/he-has-an-oral-fixation>

“Sweet Tooth”

Poem by Russell Edson reprinted on The Poetry Foundation website, from *The Tormented Mirror: Poems by Russell Edson* © 2001. All rights are controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. Used by permission of the University of Pittsburgh Press.
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/50845/sweet-tooth>

“At the Dentist’s”

Poem by Deirdre O’Connor reprinted on The Poetry Foundation website. “At the Dentist’s,” published under the title “The Yoke,” from *The Cupped Field*, (Able Muse Press, 2019). Poem reprinted by permission of Deirdre O’Connor and the publisher.



The screenshot shows the Poetry Foundation website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Poetry Foundation logo (a stylized bird) and the text "POETRY FOUNDATION". To the right of the logo is a search bar with the placeholder text "Search by Poem or Poet" and a magnifying glass icon. Below the navigation bar are several menu items: "POEMS & POETS", "TOPICS & THEMES", "FEATURES", "EVENTS & PROGRAMS", and "ABOUT US". On the right side of the page, there is a section for "Poetry Magazine" with the text "June 2025" and a "SUBSCRIBE" button. Below the navigation bar is a large banner image with a pinkish-red background and a black box in the center containing the word "Poems" and a link "Explore Poems". Below the banner is a section titled "FEATURED POEMS". There are three featured poems listed: "Intentions to breathe [“fantasia”]" by Bruno Dario, "Overheard in the Herd" by Jorie Graham, and "Nikki-Rosa" by Nikki Giovanni. Each poem has a small "POEM OF THE DAY" badge.

POETRY FOUNDATION

Search by Poem or Poet

POEMS & POETS TOPICS & THEMES FEATURES EVENTS & PROGRAMS ABOUT US

Poetry Magazine

June 2025

SUBSCRIBE

Poems

Explore Poems

FEATURED POEMS

POEM OF THE DAY

Intentions to breathe
[“fantasia”]

BY BRUNO DARIO

I want to accompany you

AUDIO OF THE DAY

Overheard in the Herd

JUNE 9, 2025

By Jorie Graham

POEM OF THE DAY

Nikki-Rosa

BY NIKKI GIOVANNI

childhood remembrances are always a drag
if you’re Black
you always remember things like living in

Resources in the Database: Children's Books

Jawbreaker

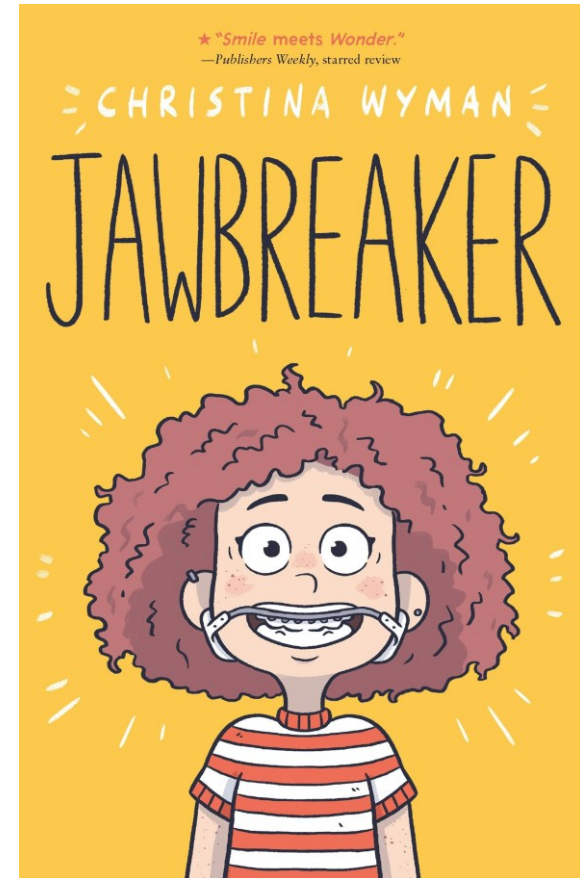
Children's chapter book by Christina Wyman. Farrar Straus Giroux: New York, 2023. More and more kids in the U.S. wear braces. Not all of them, though, are like 7th grader Max Plink, who has to wear braces and orthodontic headgear nicknamed the jawbreaker, because of her severe malocclusion. Even with these treatments, she might have [...]

Open Wide

Early chapter book by Nancy Krulik with illustrations by John & Wendy. Grosset & Dunlap: New York, 2007. Part of the "Katie Kazoo Switcheroo" series. From the smell—a mixture of bleach and mint mouthwash—to the water sucking tube that makes her drool to the pointy tool the dentist uses to pick at her teeth, [...]

Dr. Floss is the Boss

Children's book by Dan Gutman with illustrations by Jim Paillot. Harper: New York, 2019. Part of the "My Weirder-est School" series. It is



Ways to Use the Database



Created by Garis Tanam
from Noun Project

Patients or Caregivers

Make healthcare decisions
Learn about others' experiences



by Muhammad Naufal Subhanayah
from Noun Project

Pre-health or dental programs

Incorporate into courses
Help train new oral healthcare providers



Created by Siti Zulaikah
from Noun Project

Librarians

Find resources for programming
Share with library users




Dentists/Dental Hygienists

Reflect on ways to offer more equitable care



How to Search the Database



Search

All

Access to care

Bias

Children's Book

Dental training/education

Essay

Fear

Bite: An Incisive History of Teeth, From Hagfish to Humans

Non-fiction book for adults by Bill Schutt with illustrations by Patricia J. Wynne. Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill: Chapel Hill, NC, 2024. Schutt, a vertebrate zoologist, provides an overview of the evolutionary history of teeth and the myriad ways different animals, including humans, have developed and used their teeth. Teeth play important roles in [...]

85 Million Americans Lack Dental Coverage. Fixing that Requires More Than Just Money



How to Search the Database

Search Results for: underserved

Narrative excerpt from dental/dental hygiene trainee

Access to care, Dental training/education, Narrative excerpts, Treatment costs / thenameproject23

...We don't really get talked about all these different opportunities, where you can go out somewhere to people who are more **underserved** and provide for those people." So, I feel...

[Read More »](#)

Narrative excerpt from dental/dental hygiene trainee



How to Search the Database

Narrative non-fiction

News Article

Pain

Poetry

Quality of patient care

Race and racism

Social determinants of health

Time

Treatment costs

Trust

News article by Mary Otto. (March 2, 2007). The Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2007/03/03/boys-death-fuels-drives-to-fund-dental-aid-to-poor/e1a62a2e-b59d-4000-ba27-32f82ffdd763/>

5 Years After Boy Dies from Toothache, Maryland Medicaid Dental Care is On Mend

Newspaper article by Katherine Driessen. (February 15, 2012). The Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/5-years-after-boy-dies-from-toothache-maryland-medicaid-dental-care-is-on-mend/2012/02/15/gIQANEJoGR_story.html

Latinx children are receiving better dental care in San Francisco than the national average

Online news article by journalism students at San Francisco State and El Tecolote staff members. (December 18, 2022). El Tecolote. <https://eltecolote.org/content/en/latinx-children-are-receiving-better-dental-care-in-san-francisco-than-the-national-average/>



Examples of Other Databases:

Los Angeles COVID-19 Community Archive

- TESSA: Los Angeles Public Library Digital Collections
- Includes text and image resources
- Life & resilience during pandemic/social, economic and political impacts
- Uses [CONTENTdm \(OCLC\)](https://tessa.lapl.org/c13)

<https://tessa.lapl.org/c13>



Source: Los Angeles Public Library LA COVID-19 Archive

Examples of Other Databases:

Dig DC/The People's Archive

- DC Public Library
- Started in 1905, 3 major collections:
 - Washingtonia
 - Black Studies
 - The Peabody Room
- Includes oral histories, photos, records of organizations, maps, videos
- Uses [Archipelago](https://archipelago.org/)



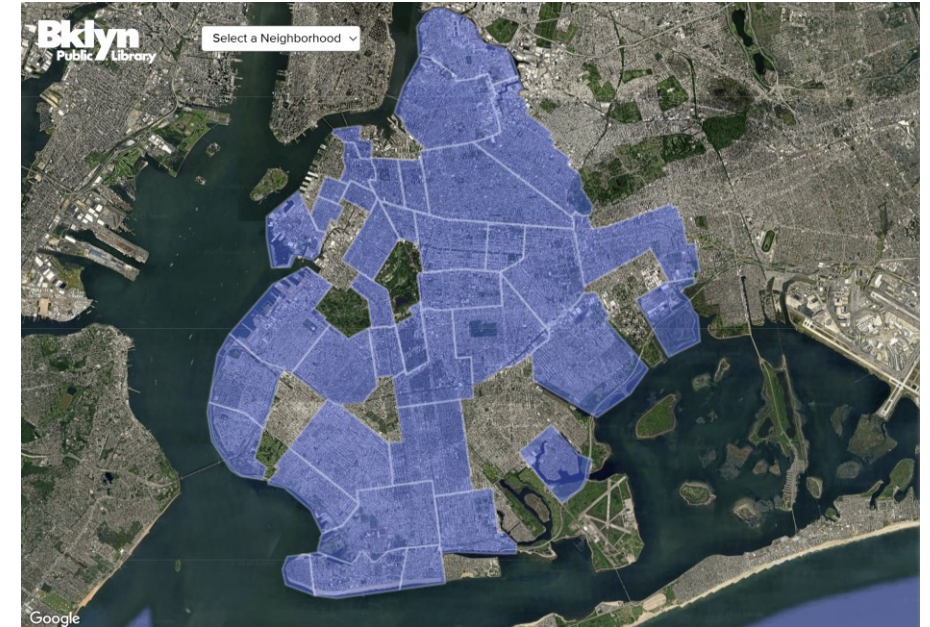
<https://digdc.dclibrary.org/>



Health official in Resurrection City. From *The Evening Star*

Examples of Other Databases: Our Streets, Our Stories

- Brooklyn Public Library
- Started in 2013 to collect and preserve stories of older adults
- Recorded in library by staff or volunteers
- Oral histories map
- Led to other projects:
 - Greenpoint Environmental History
 - Bridging the Gap



<https://www.bklynlibrary.org/podcasts/oral-histories>

Examples of Other Databases: Queens Memory Project

- Collaboration between Queens Public Library & Queens College Library (CUNY)
- Archives & public programs
 - Oral history workshops
 - Photo scanning
 - Panel discussions
 - Memoir writing workshops
- Focus on social justice & current events



Photo: Mary Jobaida, 2020.

<https://www.queenslibrary.org/programs-activities/arts-culture/queens-memory-project>

Examples of Other Databases: Veterans History Project

- Library of Congress/Volunteers across country (Way Public Library, Ohio)
- Established in 2000
- Collects stories of U.S. vets from WWI to present day conflicts
- Resources to get involved
- Story Maps & Research Guides for exploring collections



Screenshot of Story Map created by Library of Congress



<https://www.loc.gov/programs/veterans-history-project/about-this-program/>

Building a Database: Limitations

- ❖ **Building and Maintenance**
- ❖ **Privacy**
- ❖ **Usability**
- ❖ **Promoting Usage**
- ❖ **Time**



Community Stories/Narrative Projects: Questions for you

1. What similar databases/archives/programs are already in use?
2. What have you used or seen others use to build their models?
3. What ideas does this project spark for you?



Questions



Thank You



<https://the-name-project.org/>

Contact us: mmoncrie@umd.edu
eharring@umd.edu

Important Disclaimer – Funding

Research reported in this presentation was supported by the National Institute Of Dental & Craniofacial Research of the National Institutes of Health under Award Number R21DE032161. Additional support was made from the NNLM Regions 1 & 5.

The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.



References

- American Dental Association Health Policy Institute. U.S. (2025). *Dentists demographics dashboard (2023 data)*. <https://www.ada.org/resources/research/health-policy-institute/us-dentist-demographics>
- American Dental Association Health Policy Institute. (2023). *Racial and ethnic mix of the dentist workforce in the U.S.* https://www.ada.org/-/media/project/ada-organization/ada/ada-org/files/resources/research/hpi/hpigraphic_0421_1.pdf?rev=aa1f41177af94613a74a307adc11f2f0&hash=8F66BABF02828DB2E9A6D5D53908F2DD
- Baranowski, R. (2009). Now hear this! Veterans' stories live on in oral narratives as local library assists in congressional history project. *Public Libraries*, 48(3), 32–37. https://www.ala.org/sites/default/files/pla/content/publications/publiclibraries/pastissues/48n2_marapr09.pdf
- CareQuest Institute for Oral Health. (2022). *The glaring scope of racial disparities in oral health*. https://www.carequest.org/system/files/CareQuest_Institute_Glaring-Scope-of-Racial-Disparities-in-Oral-Health.pdf
- National Center for Health Statistics. (2022). *Health, United States, 2020-2021: Delay or nonreceipt of needed medical care, nonreceipt of needed prescription drugs, and nonreceipt of needed dental care during the past 12 months due to cost, by selected characteristics: United States, selected years 1997–2019*. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hsr/2020-2021/UnmtNd.pdf>
- National Institutes of Health. (2021). *Oral health in America: Advances and challenges*. National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research. <https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/research/oralhealthinamerica>
- Tummino, A., Wong, J.-A., & Mondésir, O. (2021). Uplifting diverse and marginalized voices through community archives and public programming. *Urban Library Journal*, 27(2), 1–9. <https://academicworks.cuny.edu/ulj/vol27/iss2/6/>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2000). *Oral health in America: A report of the Surgeon General*. <https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/sites/default/files/2017-10/hck1ocv.%40www.surgeon.fullrpt.pdf>

