

# The Changing Dentist Workforce

The Newest Data from HPI

March 9, 2022

**HPI** Health Policy Institute

ADA American Dental Association®



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ADA Health Policy Institute

# Today

- Latest data on key dentist workforce characteristics
  - Number of practicing dentists
  - Age, gender, race/ethnicity breakdown
  - Solo vs. group practice and practice ownership
- Big picture takeaways for the future
- Q&A

# New on ada.org/hpi

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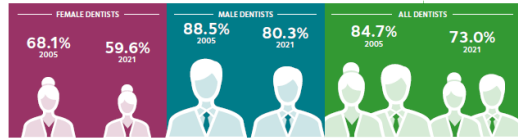
## Practice Ownership Among Dentists Continues to Decline

MARCH 2022



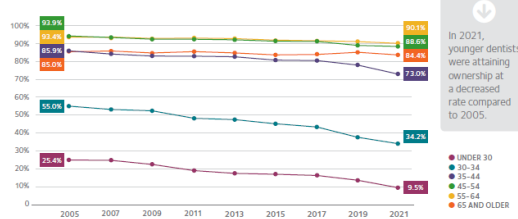
Practice ownership among dentists in private practice has been declining over the years, dropping from **84.7% in 2005 to 73.0% in 2021**.

### PERCENTAGE OF DENTISTS IN PRIVATE PRACTICES WHO ARE OWNERS, BY GENDER



Female dentists have been **consistently less likely** than male dentists to own their practice.

### PERCENTAGE OF DENTISTS IN PRIVATE PRACTICES WHO ARE OWNERS, BY AGE GROUP



In 2021, younger dentists were attaining ownership at a decreased rate compared to 2005.

Source: ADA Health Policy Institute analysis of Distribution of Dentists survey and Survey of Dental Graduates. Notes: Results are weighted to adjust for nonresponse bias.

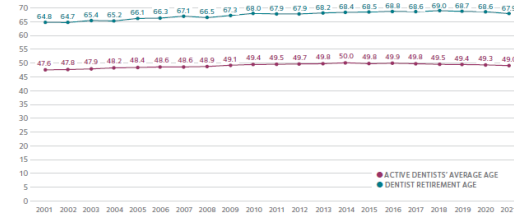
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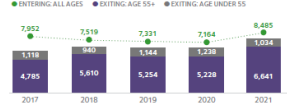
## Dentist Retirements Increase

MARCH 2022

### AVERAGE AGE OF ACTIVE DENTISTS AND AVERAGE DENTIST RETIREMENT AGE (YEARS), 2001-2021

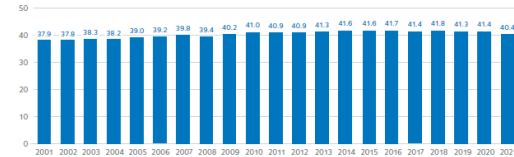


### DENTISTS ENTERING, EXITING THE WORKFORCE PER YEAR



HPI's dentist workforce model projects that dentists per capita will be **STABLE THROUGH 2025** and then **INCREASE THROUGH 2040**.

### AVERAGE DENTIST CAREER SPAN (YEARS), 2001-2021



Source: ADA Health Policy Institute analysis of ADA masterfile. ADA Health Policy Institute workforce projection analysis available here.

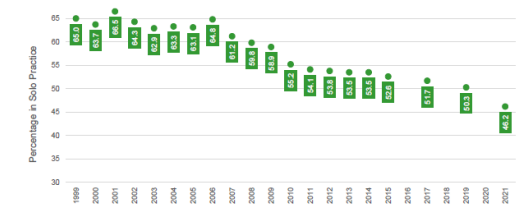
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## Solo Practice Continues to Decrease

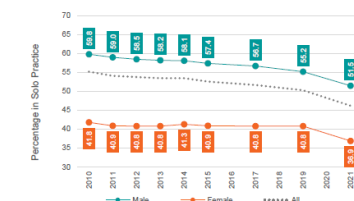
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### DENTISTS IN PRIVATE PRACTICE



**FEWER DENTISTS ARE WORKING AS SOLO PRACTITIONERS.** About 65% of private practice dentists were in solo practice in 1999. That proportion decreased to 49% in 2021.

### BY GENDER

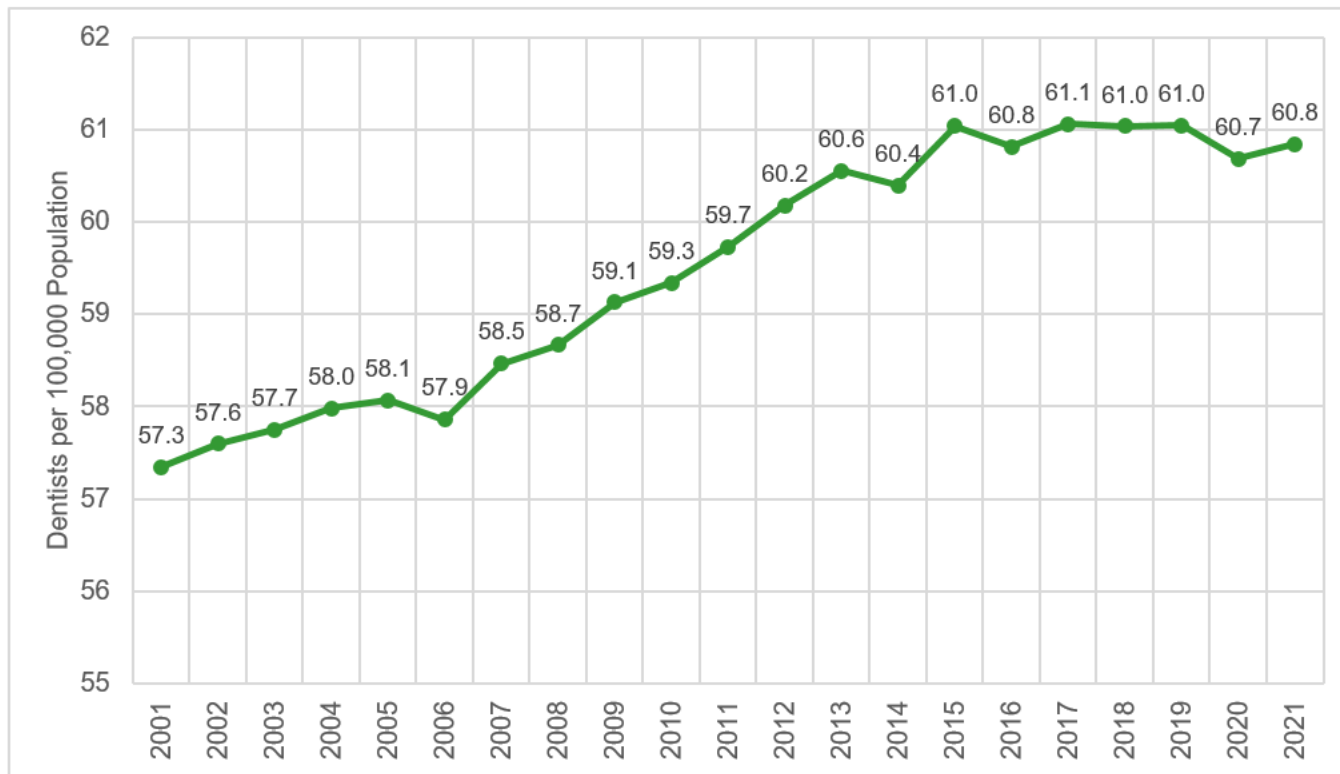


**FEMALE DENTISTS ARE LESS LIKELY TO BE IN SOLO PRACTICE.** Female dentists will make up a larger proportion of the dentist workforce in the future. In 2020, 51.4% of dental school graduates were female.

Sources: ADA Health Policy Institute Survey of Dental Practice (1999 – 2009), Distribution of Dentists survey (2010 – 2021), and Survey of Dental Graduates 2021. Distribution of Dentists results are based on three pooled years of data collection per data point. Notes: Results are for dentists in private practice only. A solo dentist works in a dental practice with no other dentists. There was no Distribution of Dentists survey for 2016, 2018, or 2020. Published in February 2022.

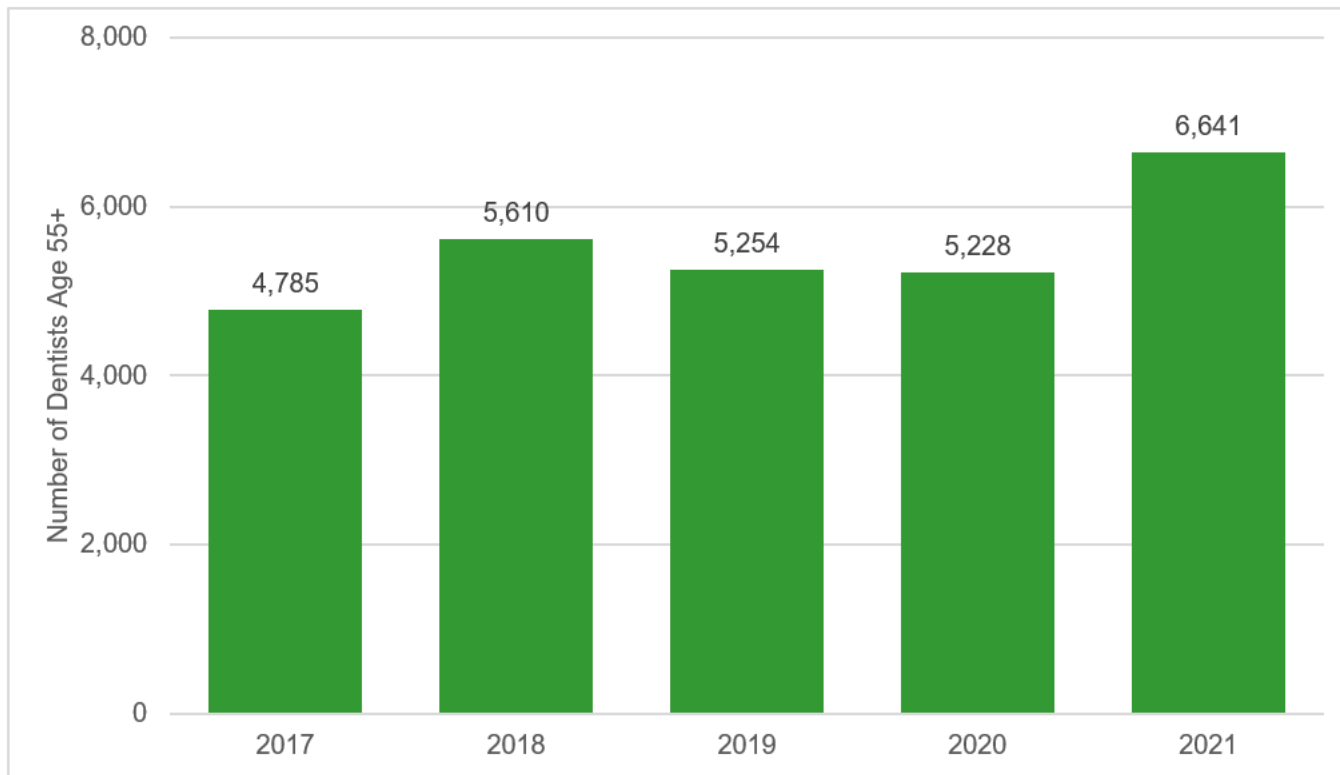
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# Dentists per 100,000 Population



*The number of dentists per capita is stable.*

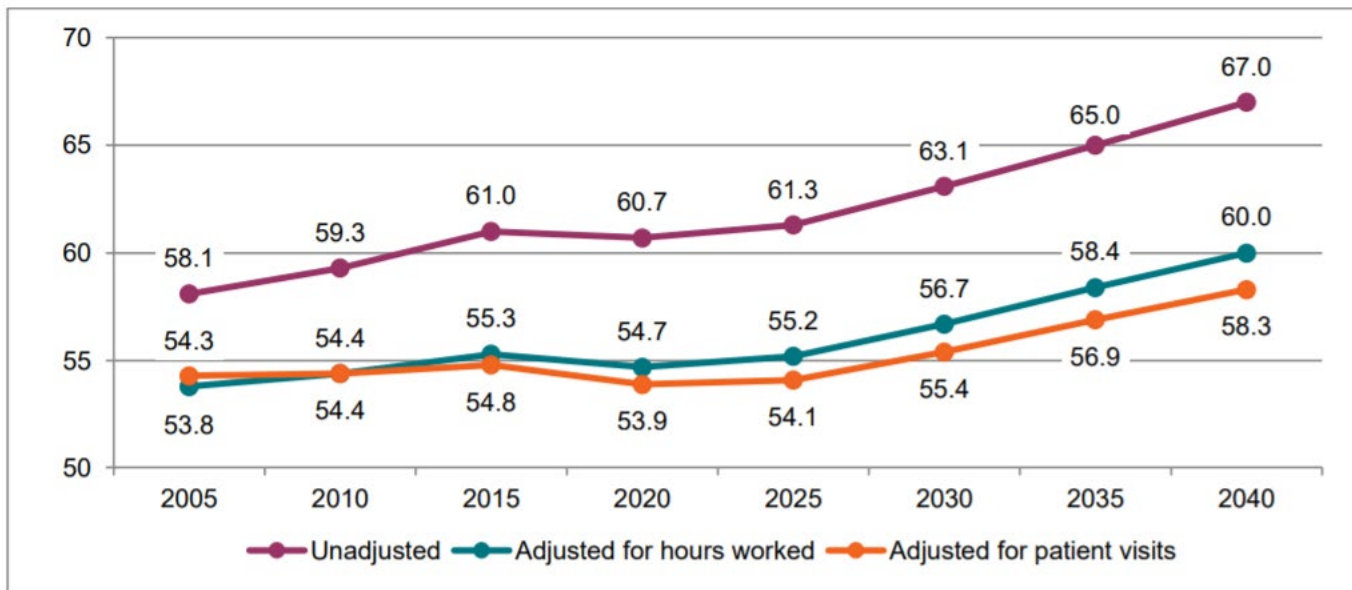
# Dentists Aged 55 and Older Exiting the Workforce per Year



*A higher share of dentists aged 55 and older left the workforce in 2021. This is likely related to the pandemic.*

# Dentists per 100,000 Population, Projected

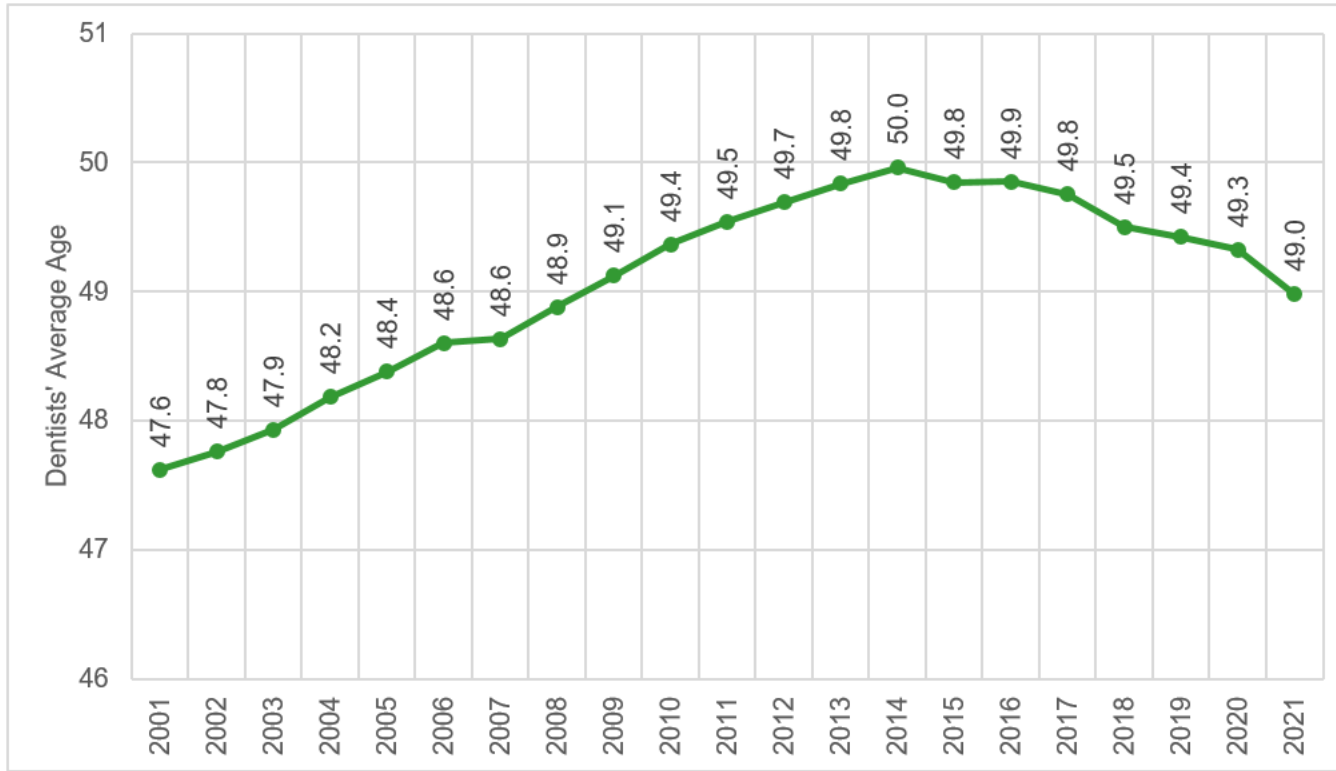
Figure 1: Historical and Projected Dentists per 100,000 Population in the U.S., Baseline Scenario



*We predict that the number of dentists per capita will remain stable through 2025 and then increase.*

*Retirement #s are expected to shrink while graduate #s will not, beginning in 2025.*

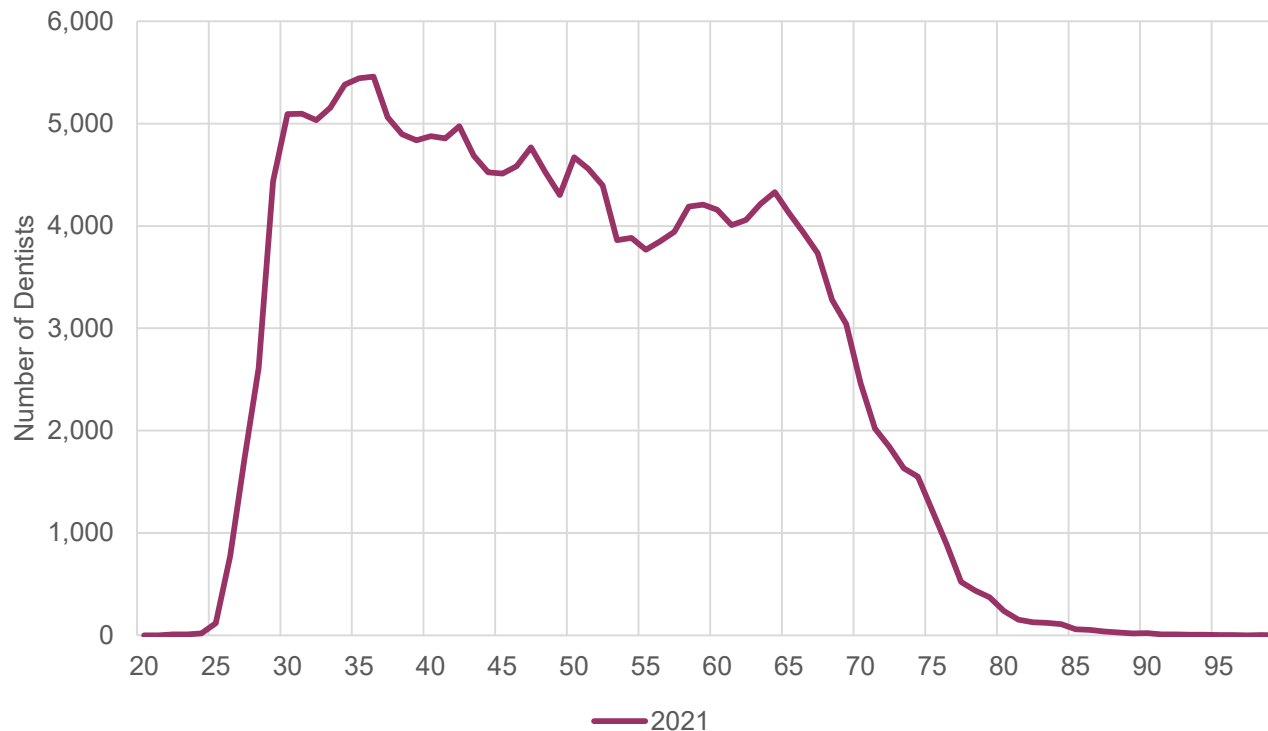
# Dentists' Average Age



*The dentist workforce is getting younger, on average.*

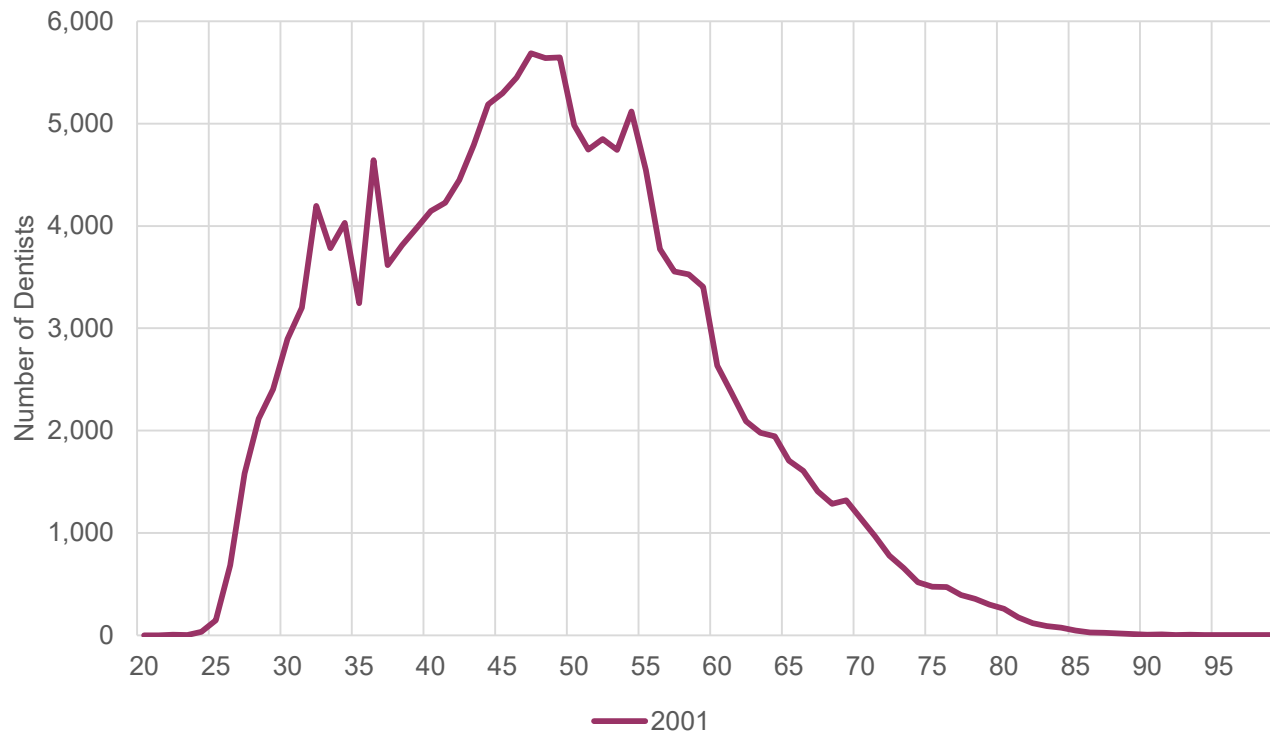


# Dentists per Age, 2021



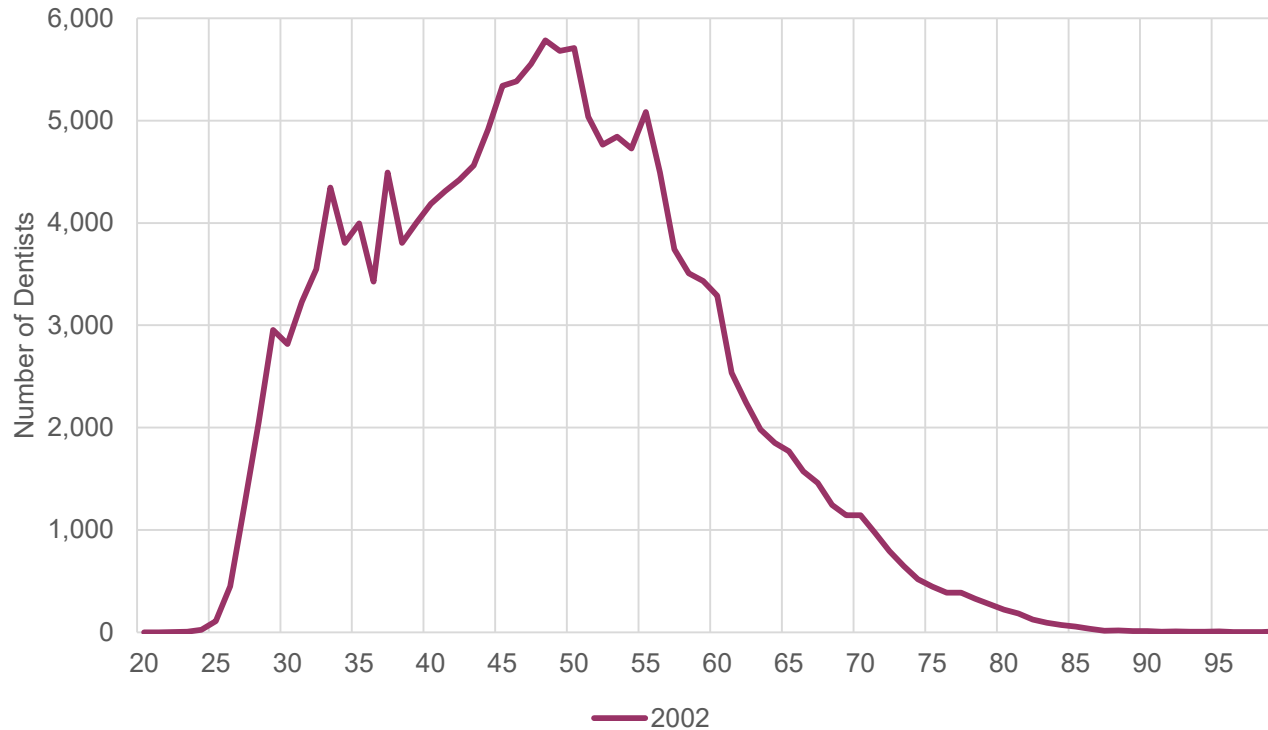
*Dentists entering the workforce have outnumbered those leaving the workforce.*

# Dentists per Age, 2001



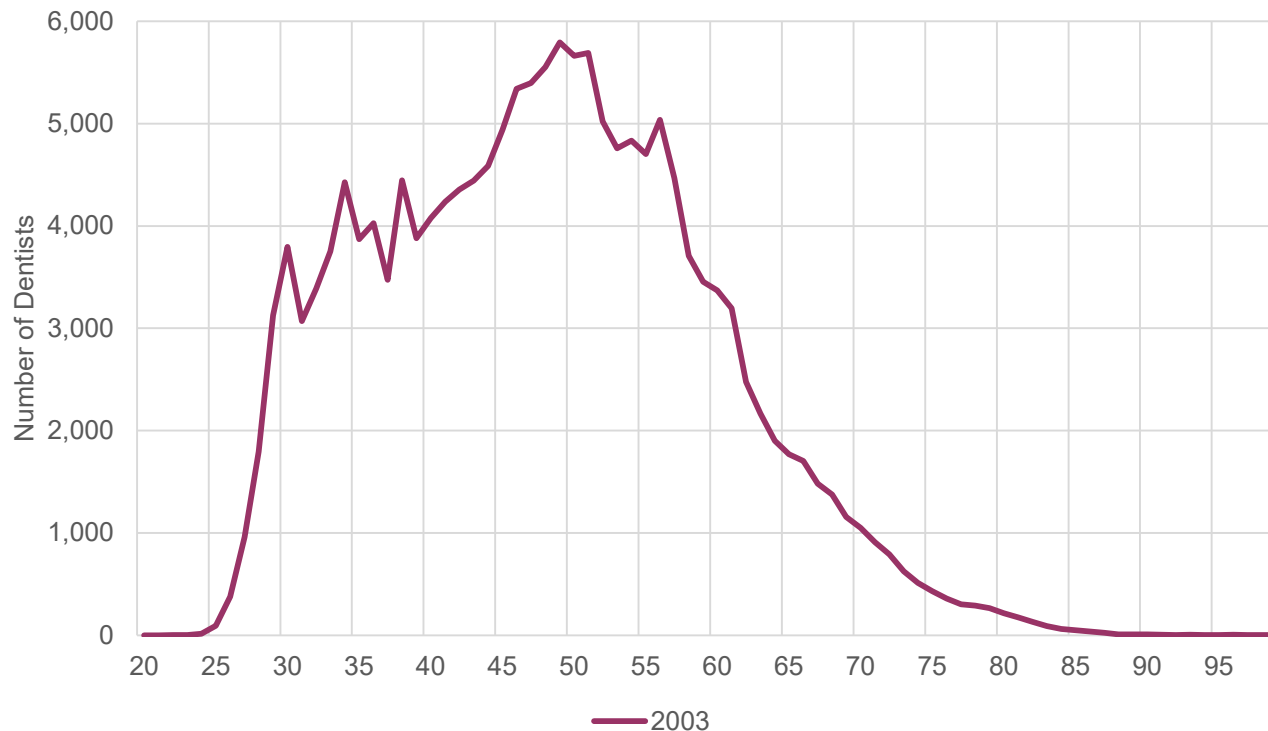
*Dentists entering the workforce have outnumbered those leaving the workforce.*

# Dentists per Age, 2002



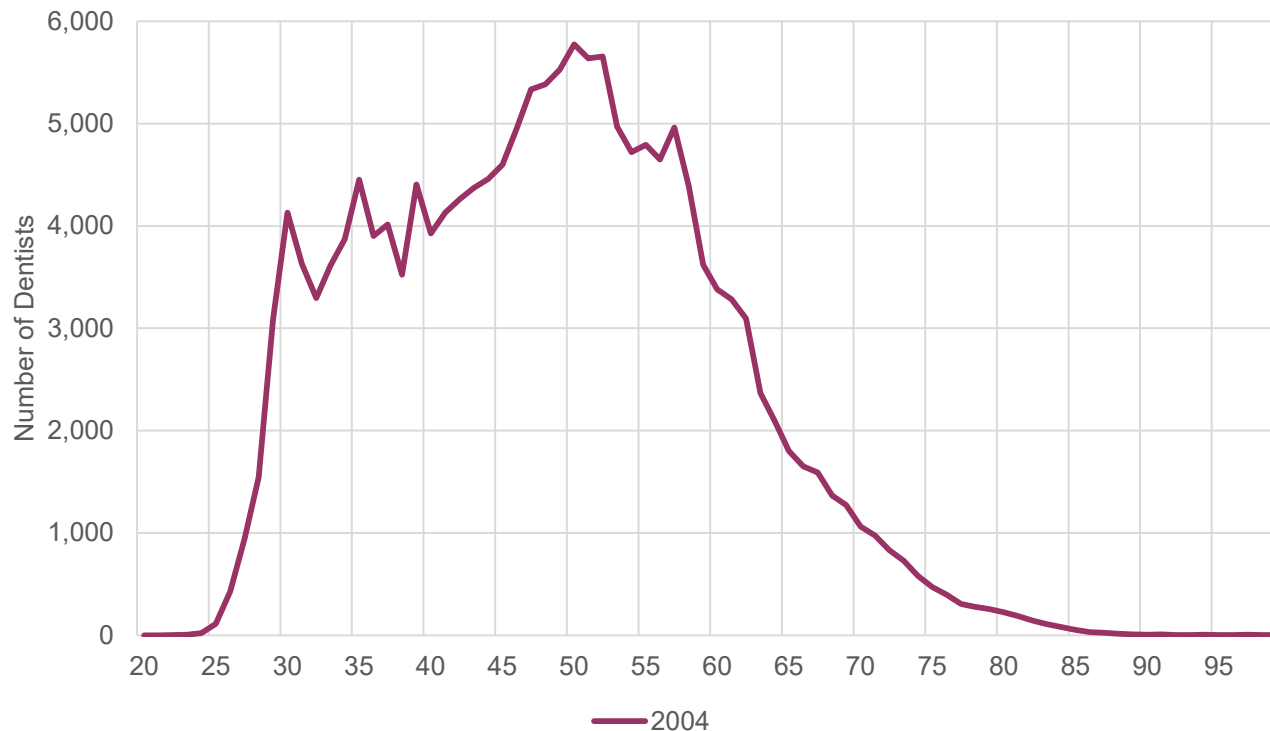
*Dentists entering the workforce have outnumbered those leaving the workforce.*

# Dentists per Age, 2003



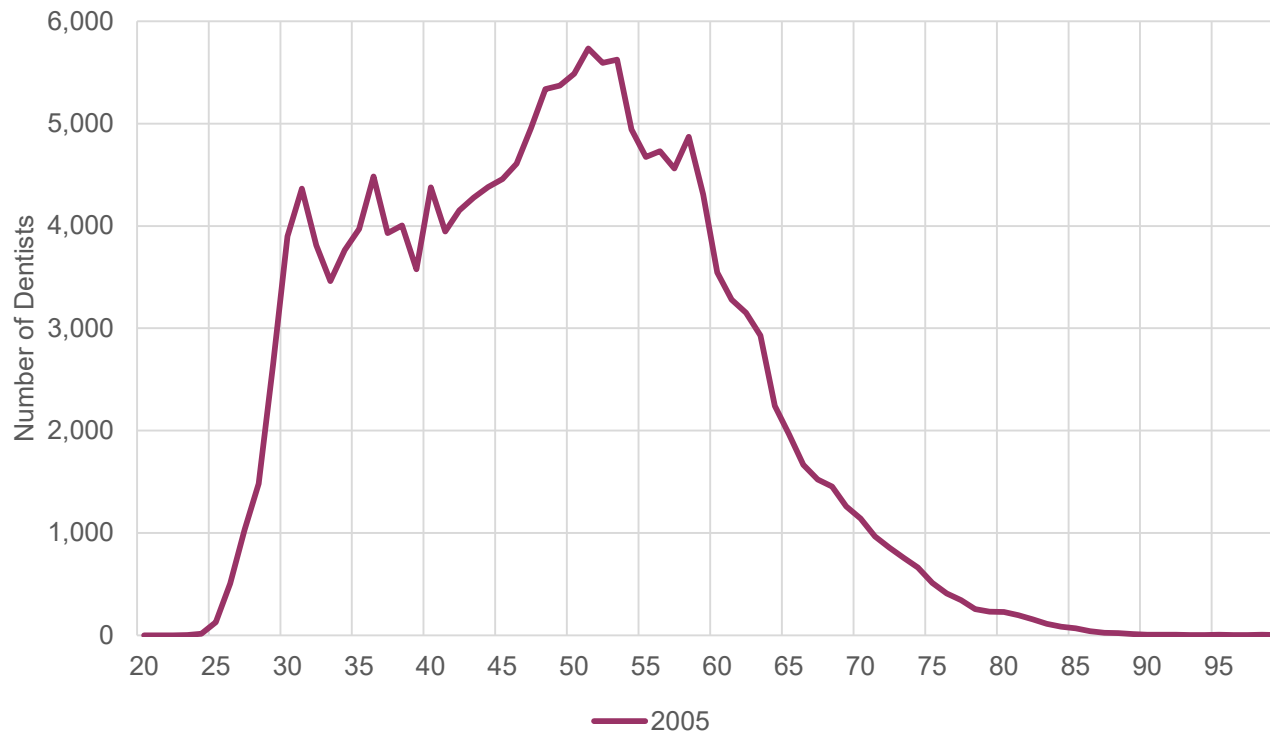
*Dentists entering the workforce have outnumbered those leaving the workforce.*

# Dentists per Age, 2004



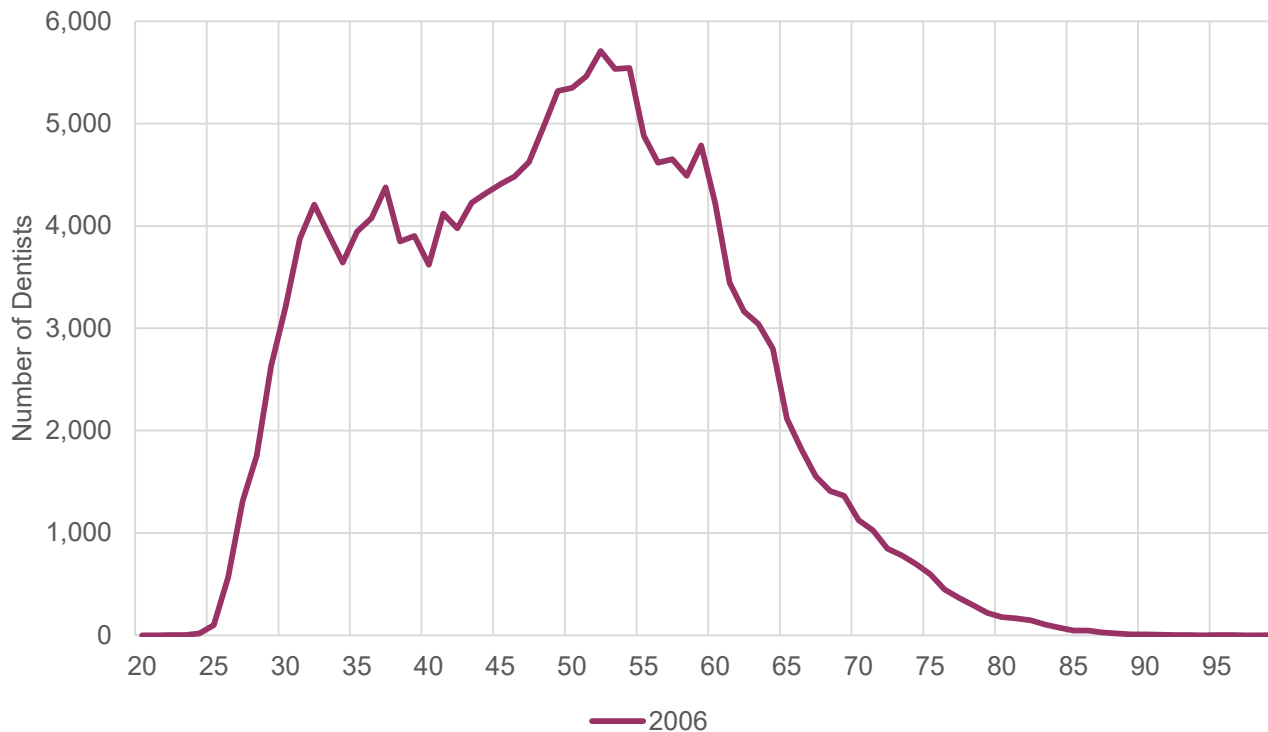
*Dentists entering the workforce have outnumbered those leaving the workforce.*

# Dentists per Age, 2005



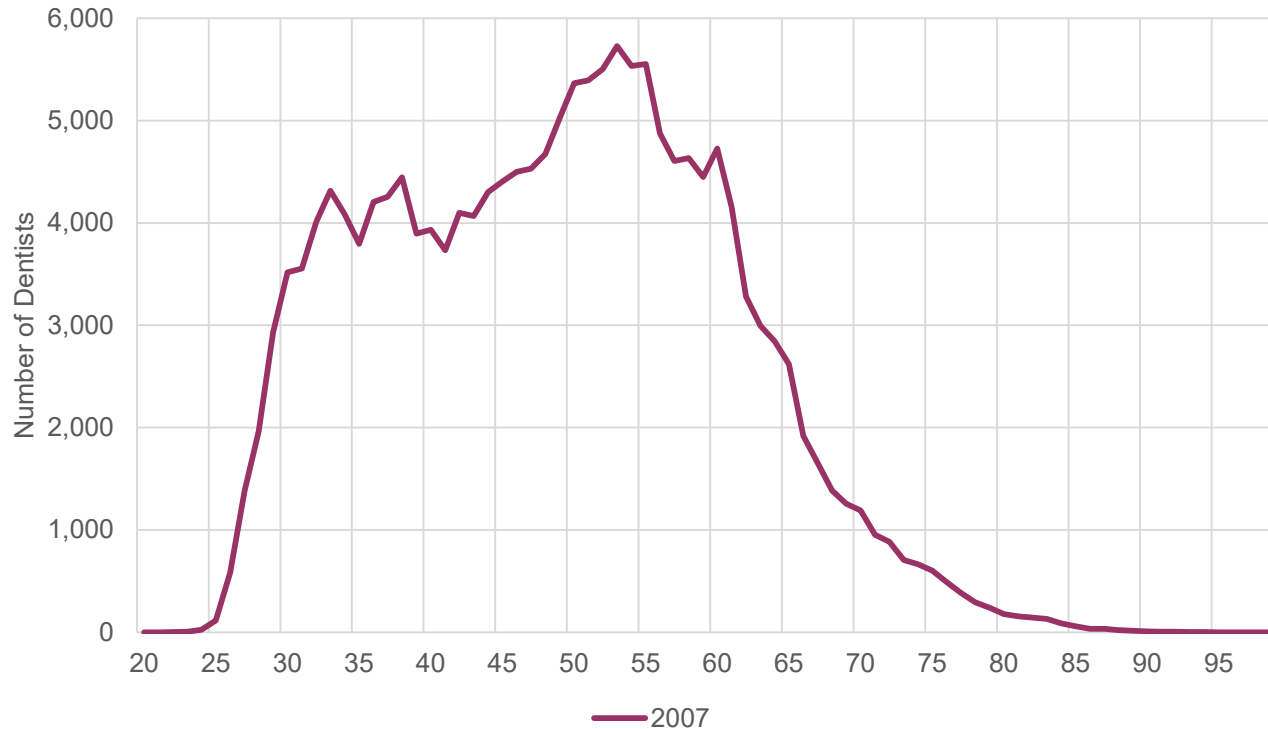
*Dentists entering the workforce have outnumbered those leaving the workforce.*

# Dentists per Age, 2006



*Dentists entering the workforce have outnumbered those leaving the workforce.*

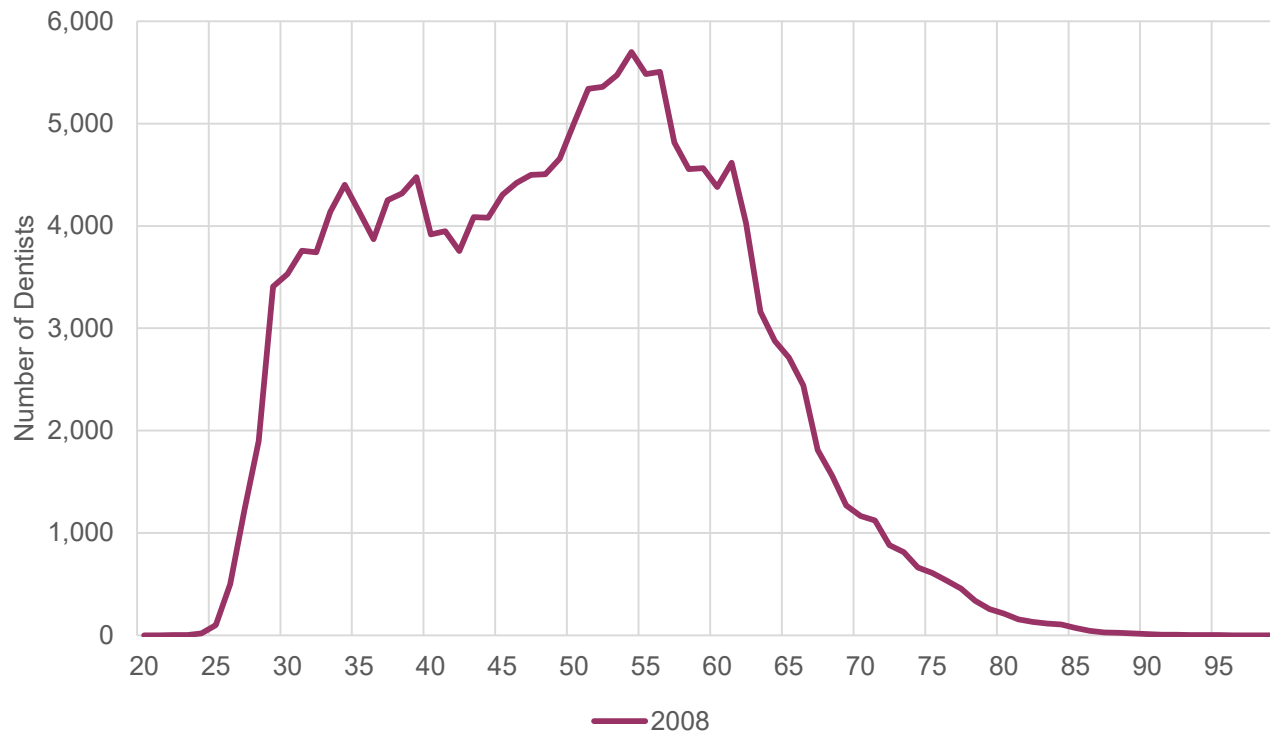
# Dentists per Age, 2007



*Dentists entering the workforce have outnumbered those leaving the workforce.*

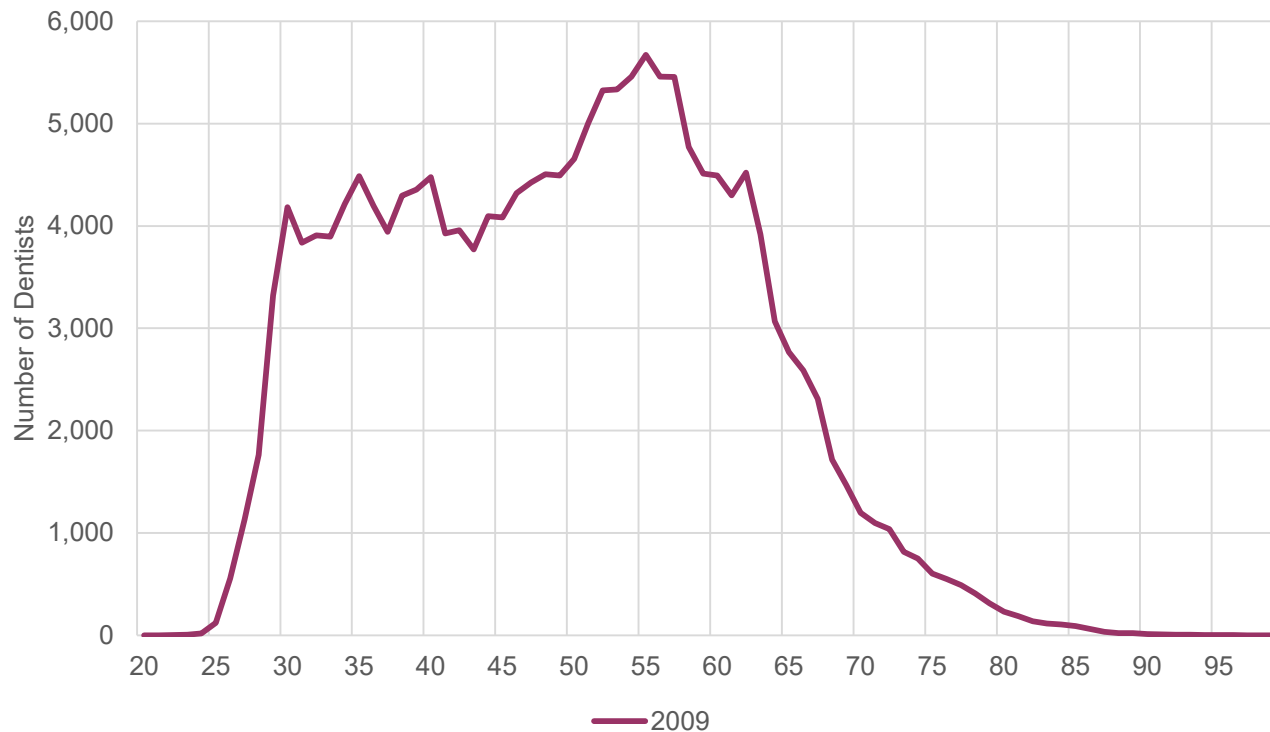


# Dentists per Age, 2008



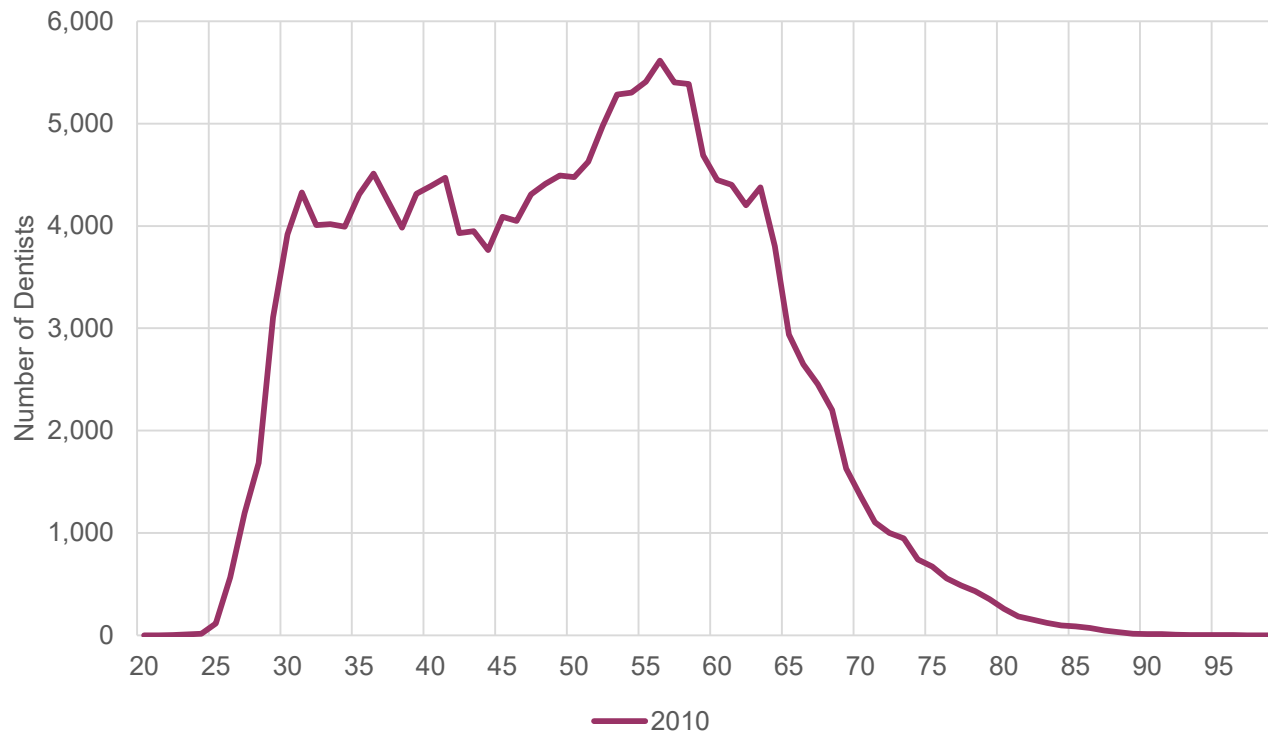
*Dentists entering the workforce have outnumbered those leaving the workforce.*

# Dentists per Age, 2009



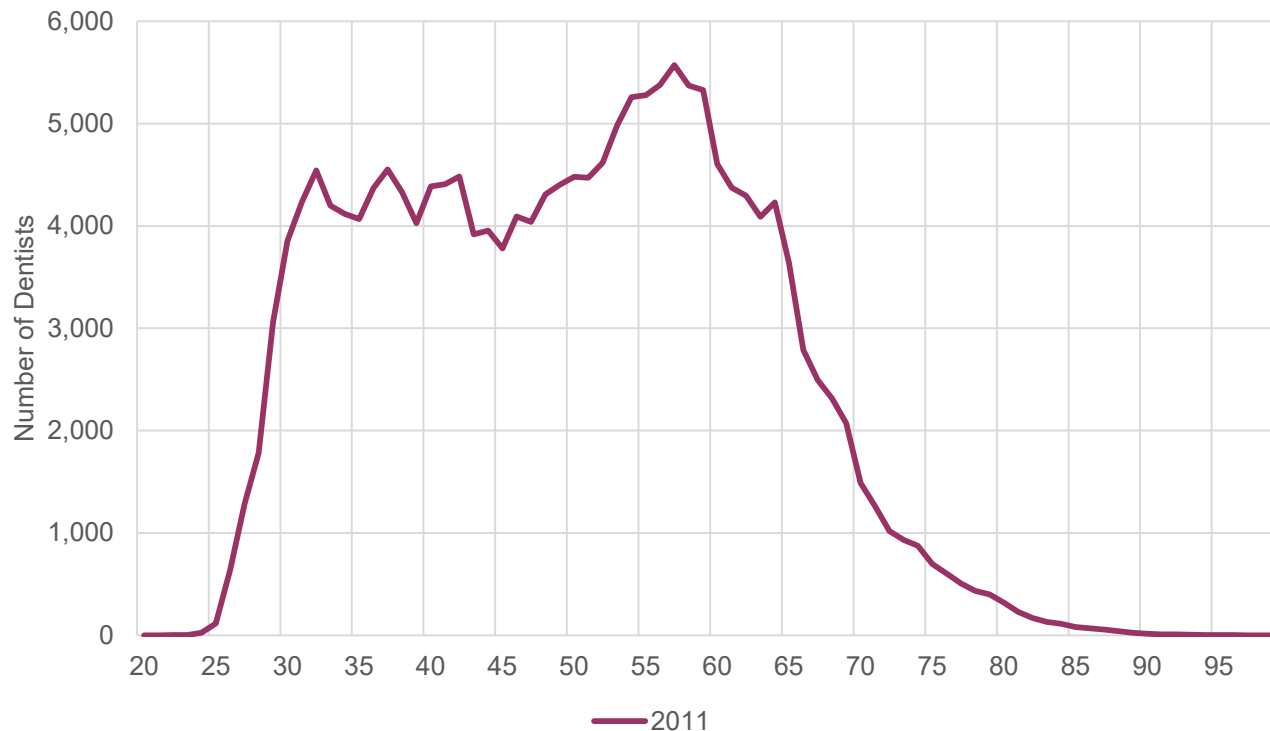
*Dentists entering the workforce have outnumbered those leaving the workforce.*

# Dentists per Age, 2010



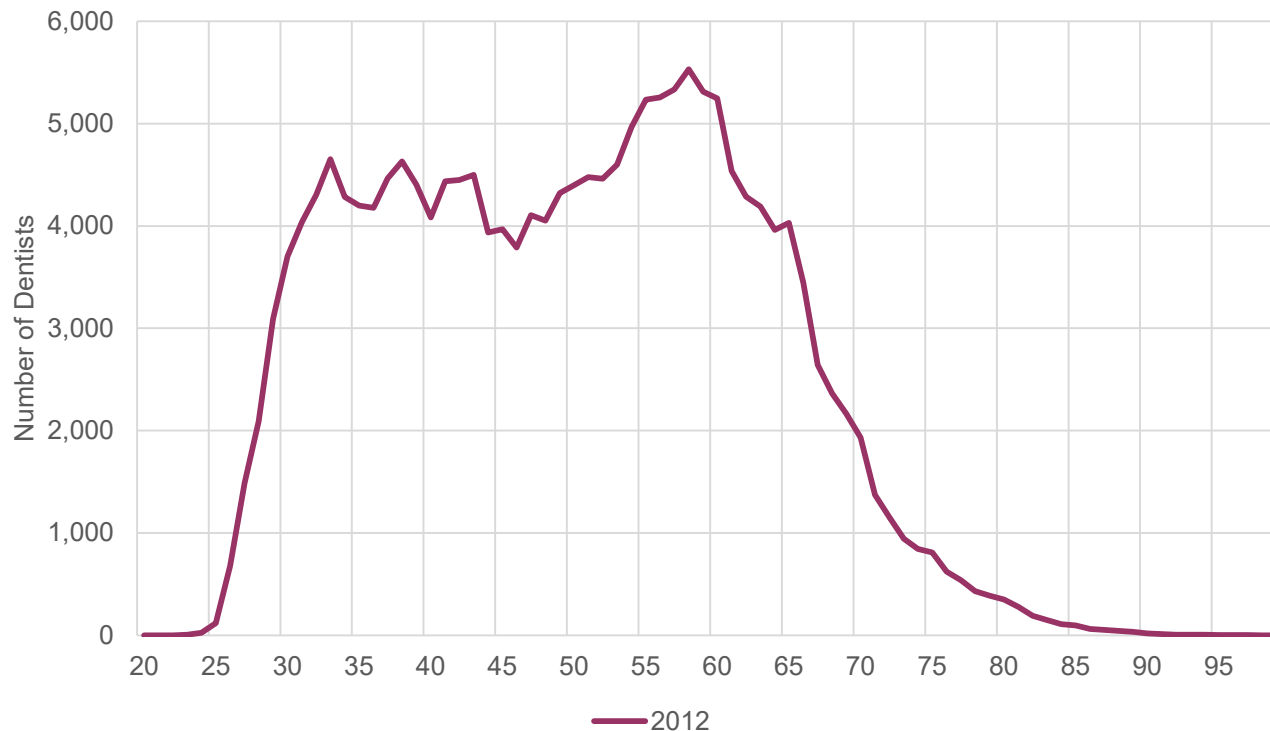
*Dentists entering the workforce have outnumbered those leaving the workforce.*

# Dentists per Age, 2011



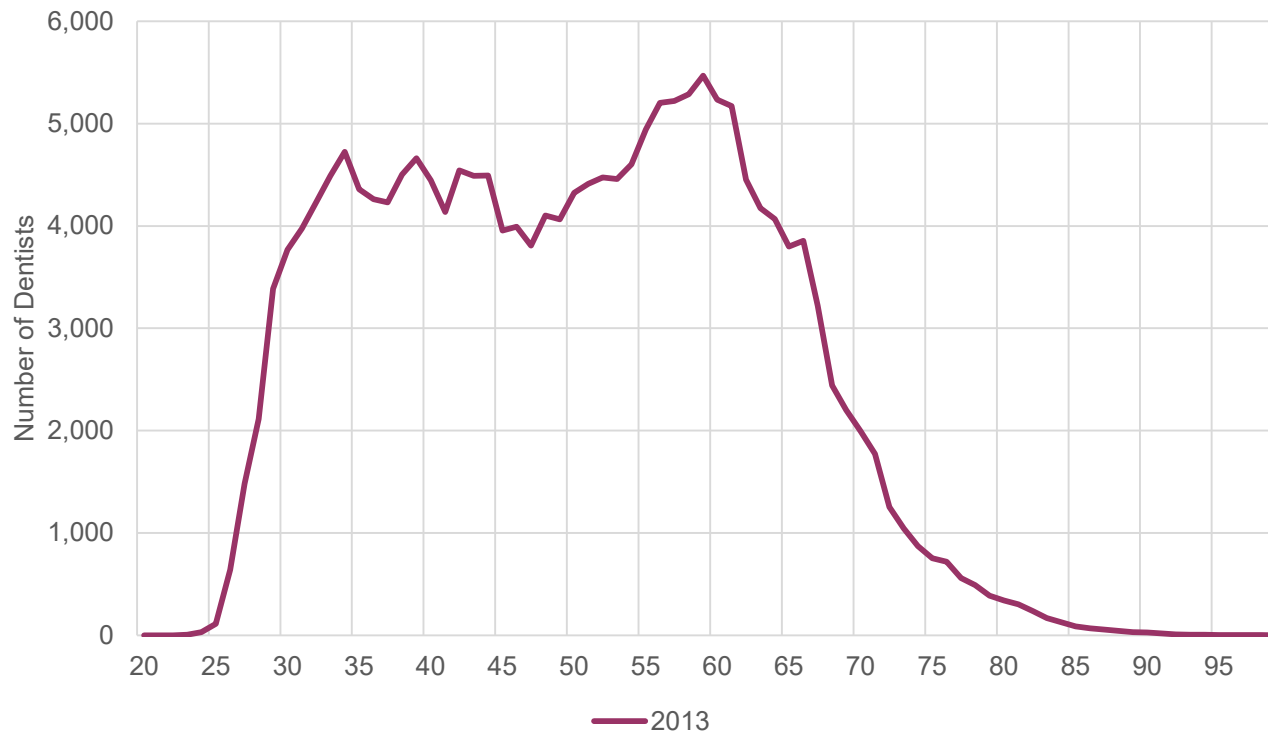
*Dentists entering the workforce have outnumbered those leaving the workforce.*

# Dentists per Age, 2012



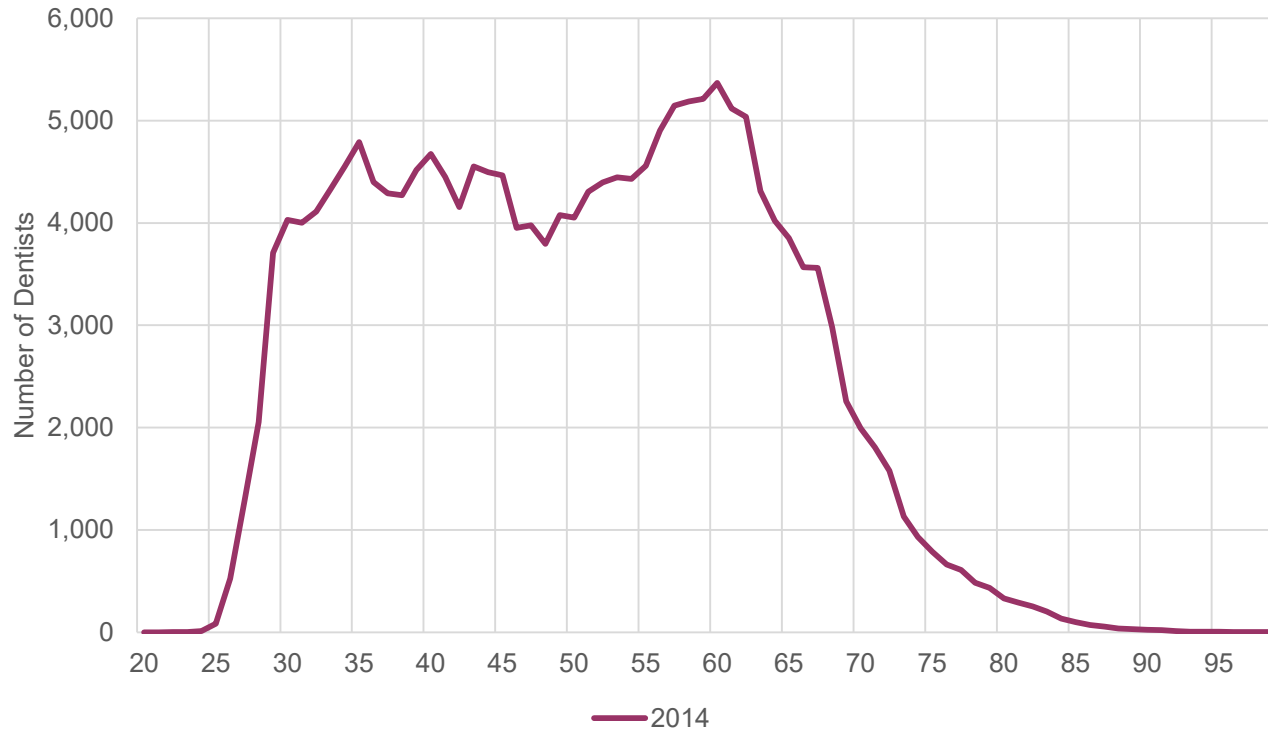
*Dentists entering the workforce have outnumbered those leaving the workforce.*

# Dentists per Age, 2013



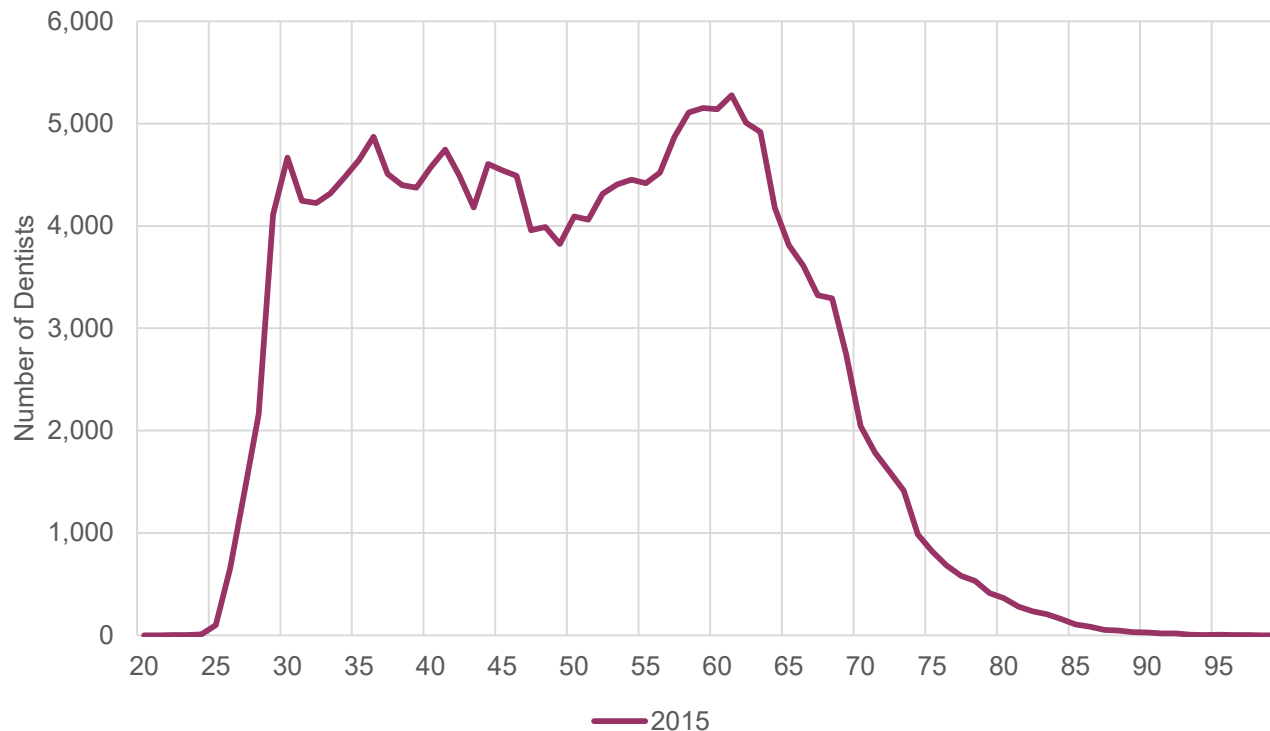
*Dentists entering the workforce have outnumbered those leaving the workforce.*

# Dentists per Age, 2014



*Dentists entering the workforce have outnumbered those leaving the workforce.*

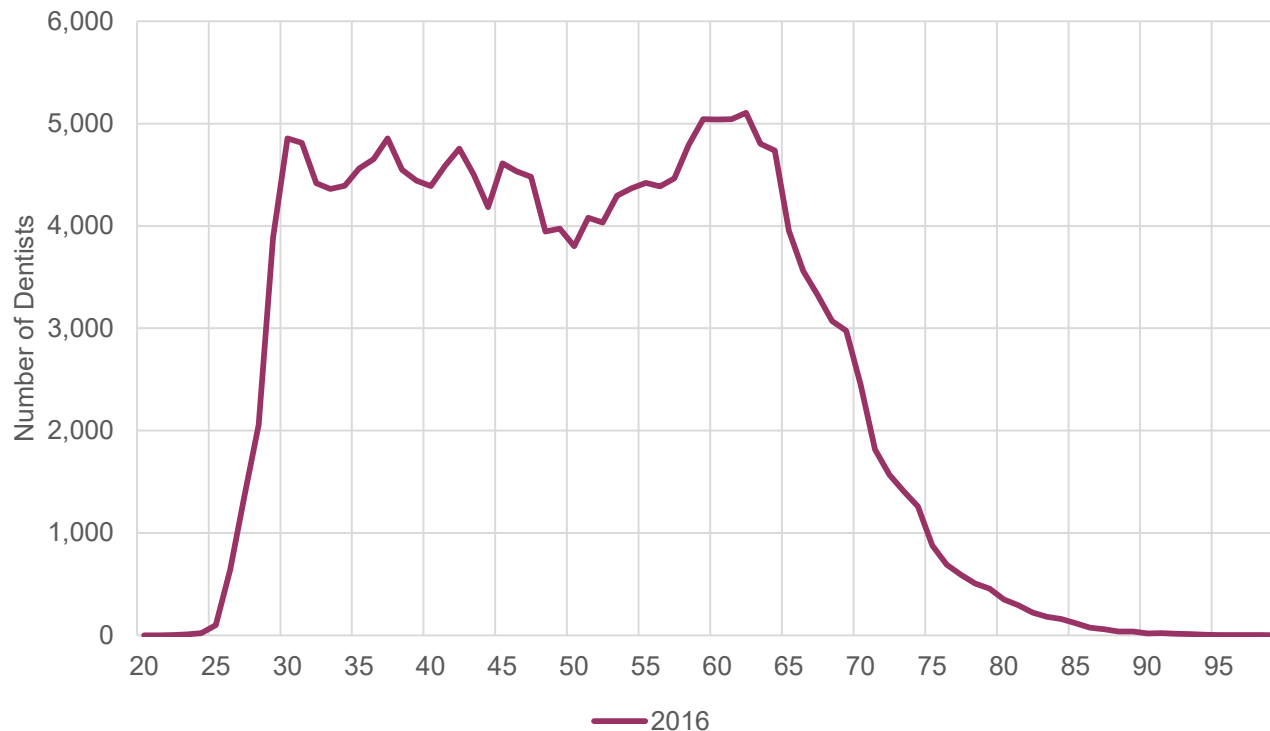
# Dentists per Age, 2015



*Dentists entering the workforce have outnumbered those leaving the workforce.*

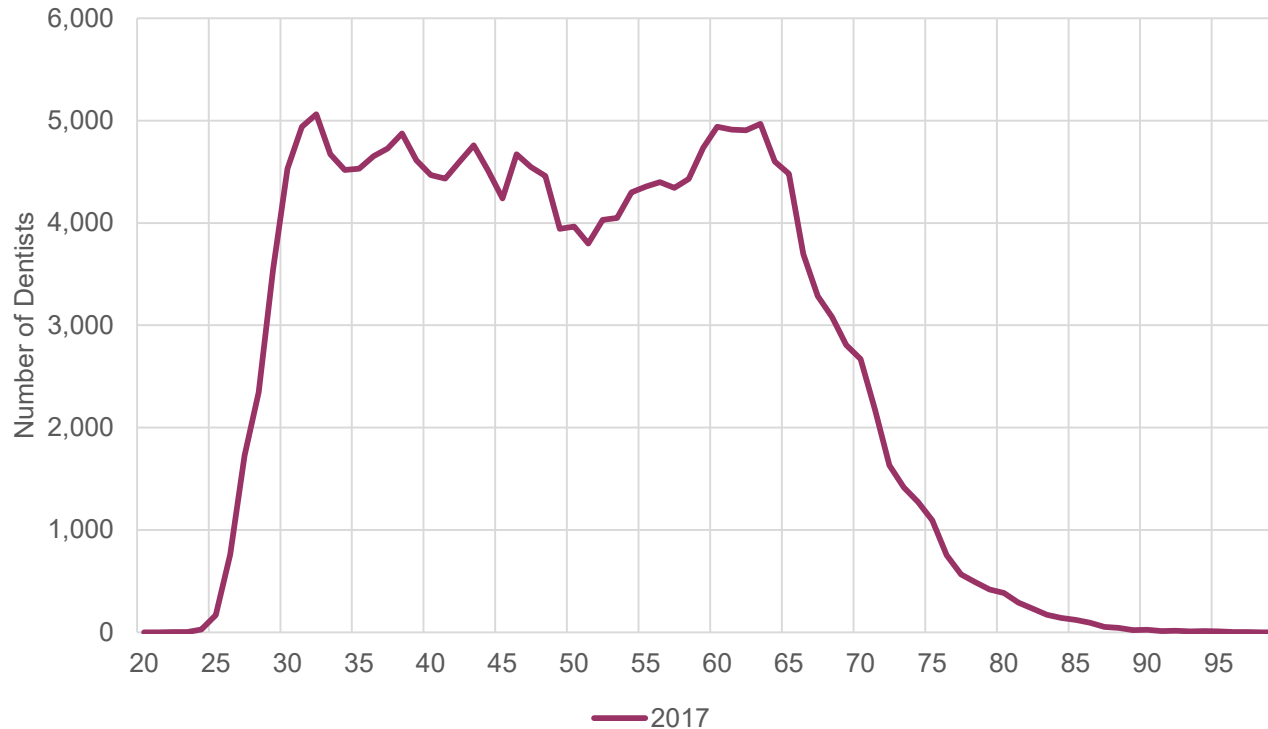


# Dentists per Age, 2016



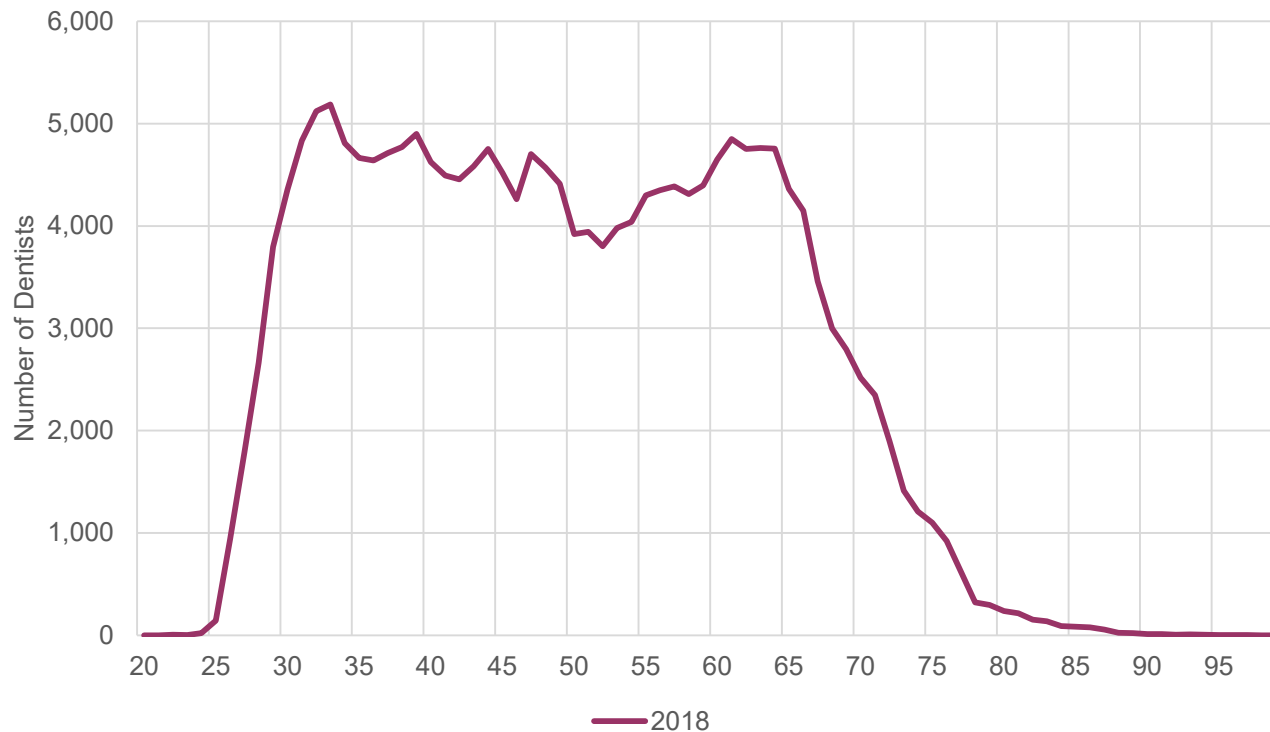
*Dentists entering the workforce have outnumbered those leaving the workforce.*

# Dentists per Age, 2017



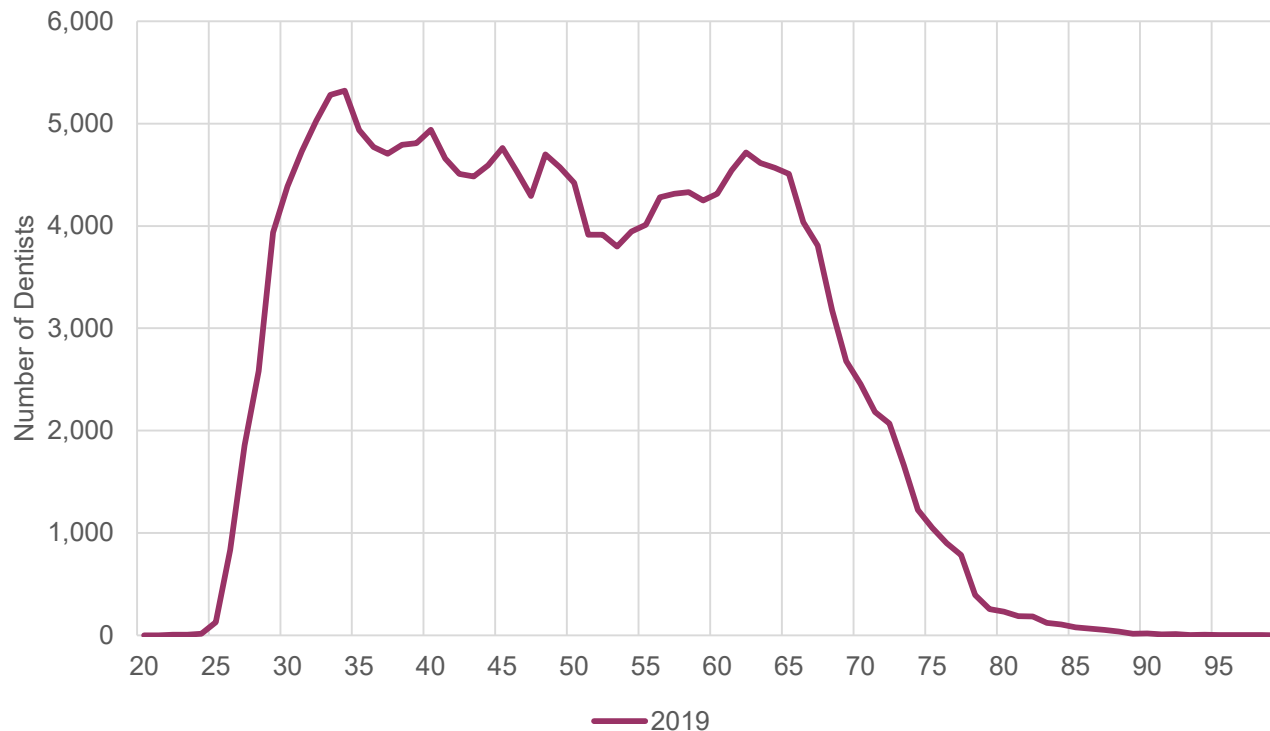
*Dentists entering the workforce have outnumbered those leaving the workforce.*

# Dentists per Age, 2018



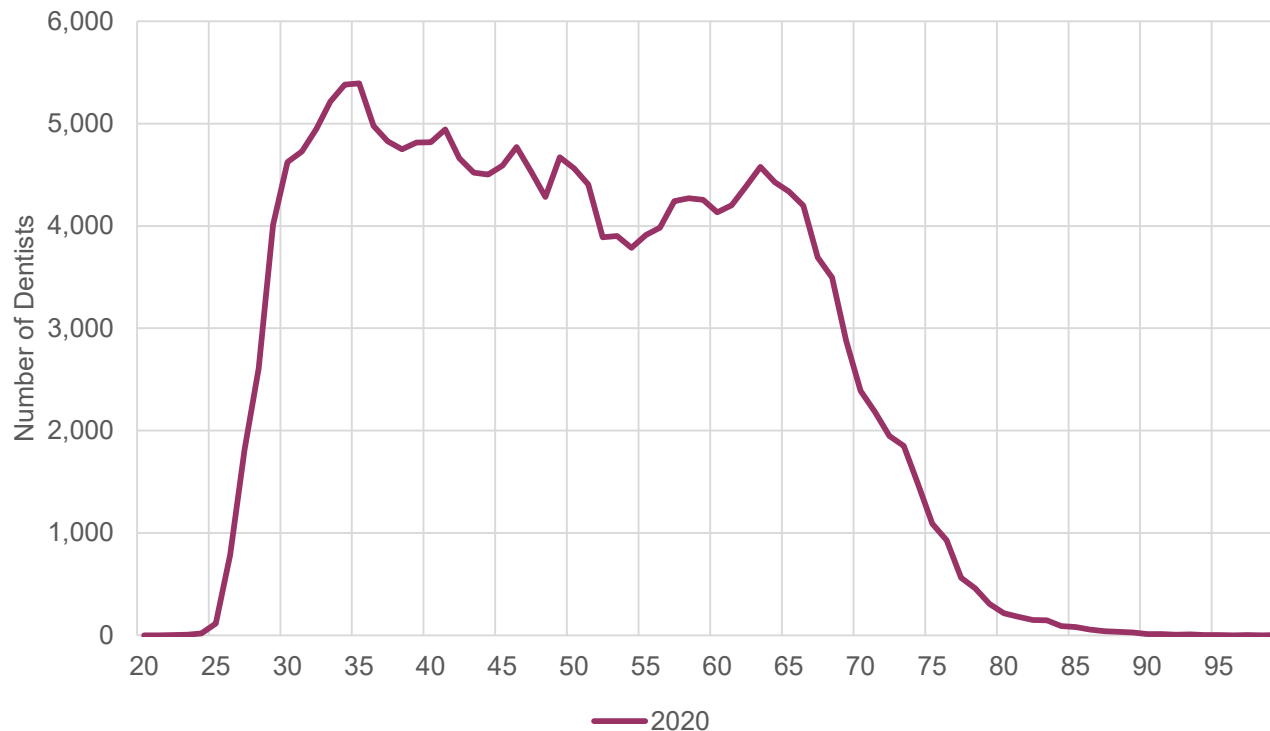
*Dentists entering the workforce have outnumbered those leaving the workforce.*

# Dentists per Age, 2019



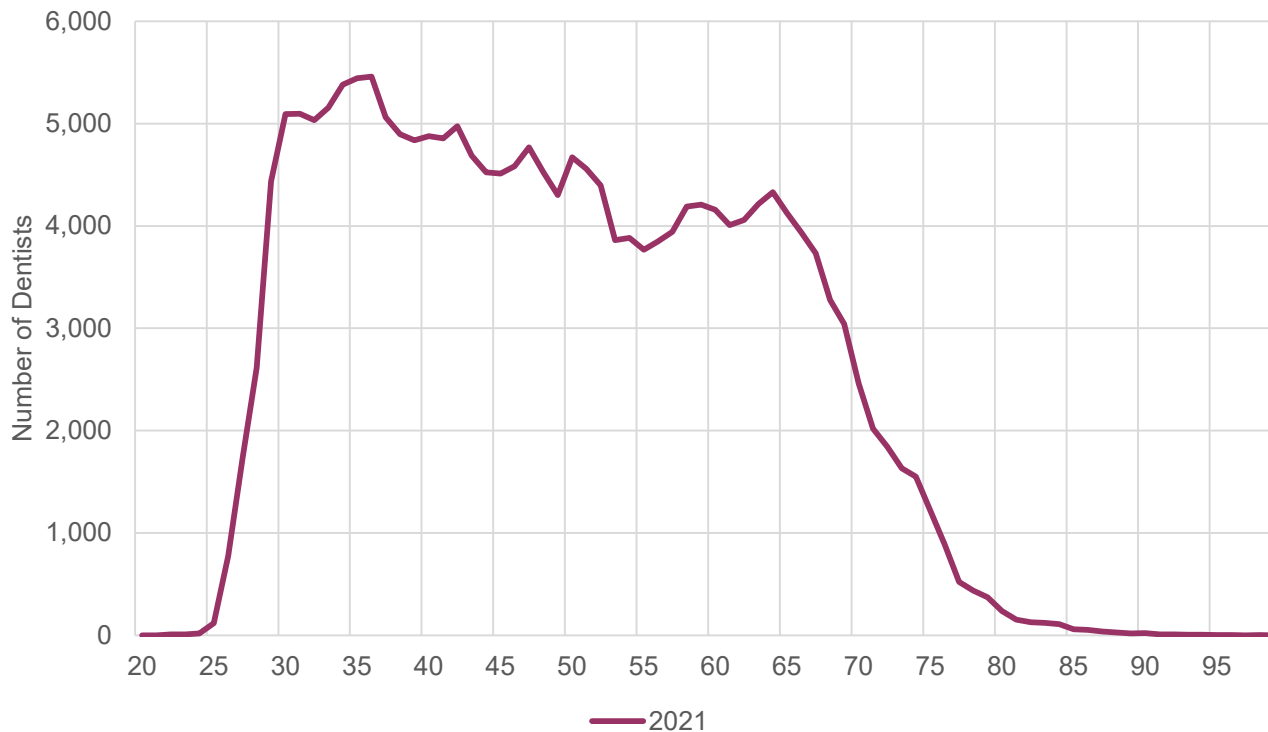
*Dentists entering the workforce have outnumbered those leaving the workforce.*

# Dentists per Age, 2020



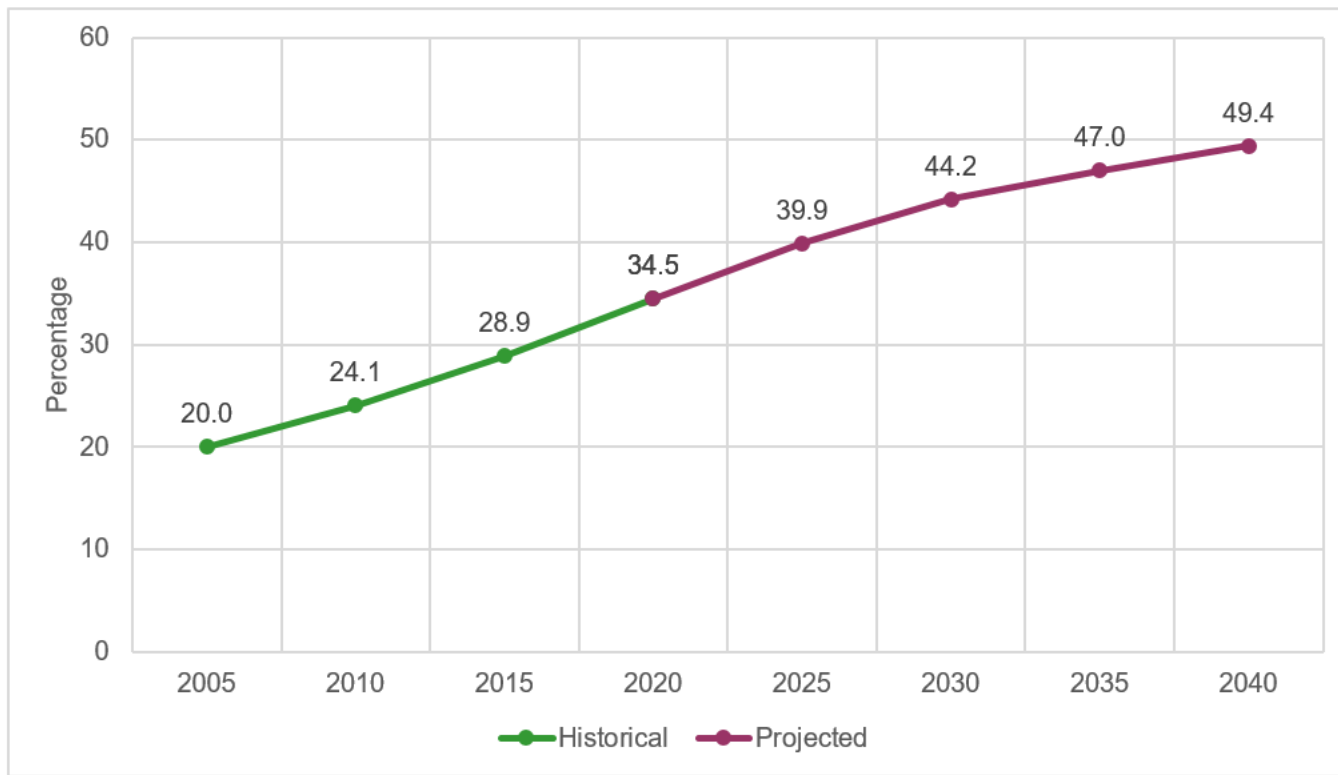
*Dentists entering the workforce have outnumbered those leaving the workforce.*

# Dentists per Age, 2021



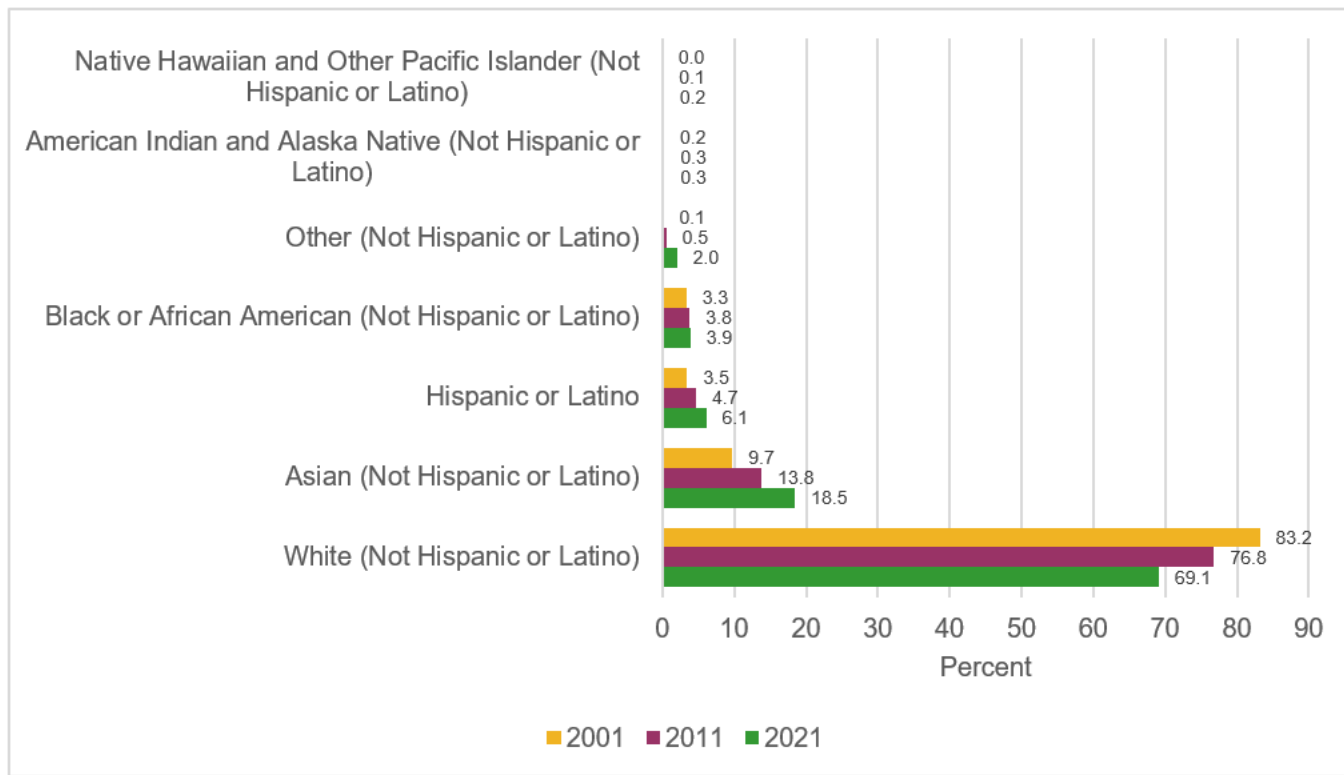
*Dentists entering the workforce have outnumbered those leaving the workforce.*

# Female Share of the Dentist Workforce



*We predict gender parity in the dentist workforce by 2040.*

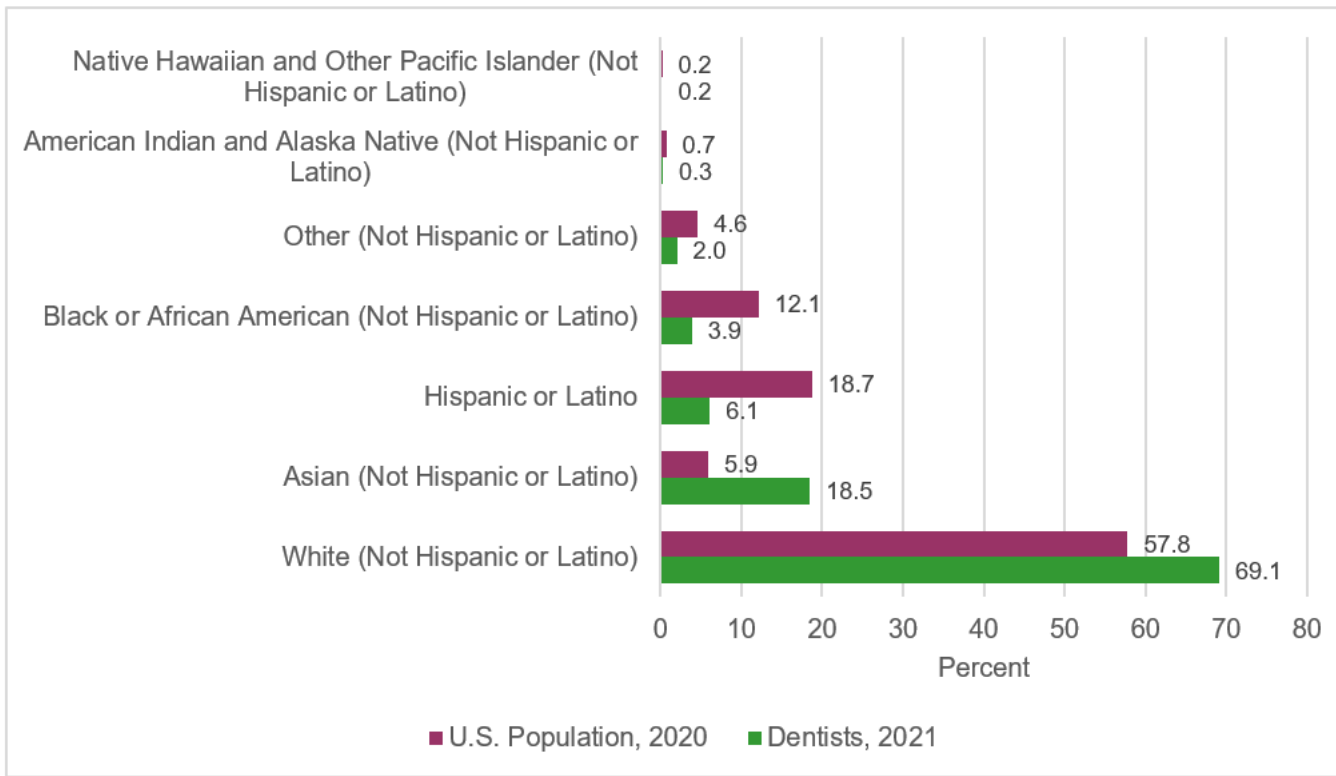
# Dentist Workforce Race/Ethnicity



*From 2001 to 2021, the share of the dentist workforce that is White has decreased, while for Asian and Hispanic or Latino it has increased.*

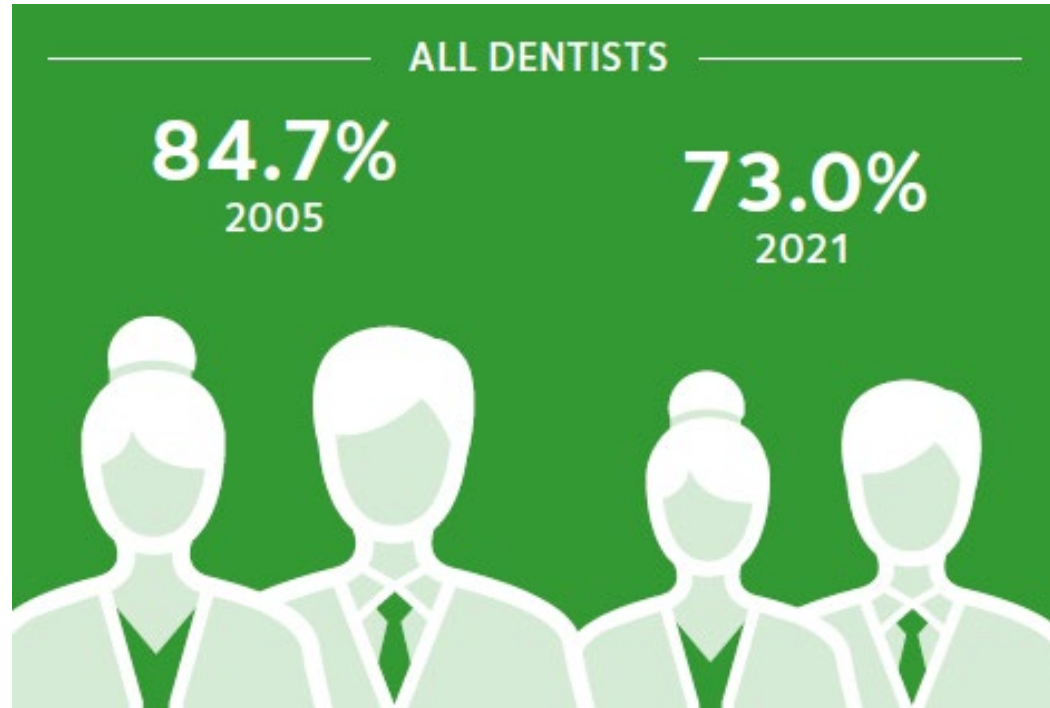


# Race/Ethnicity of the U.S. Population and Dentist Workforce



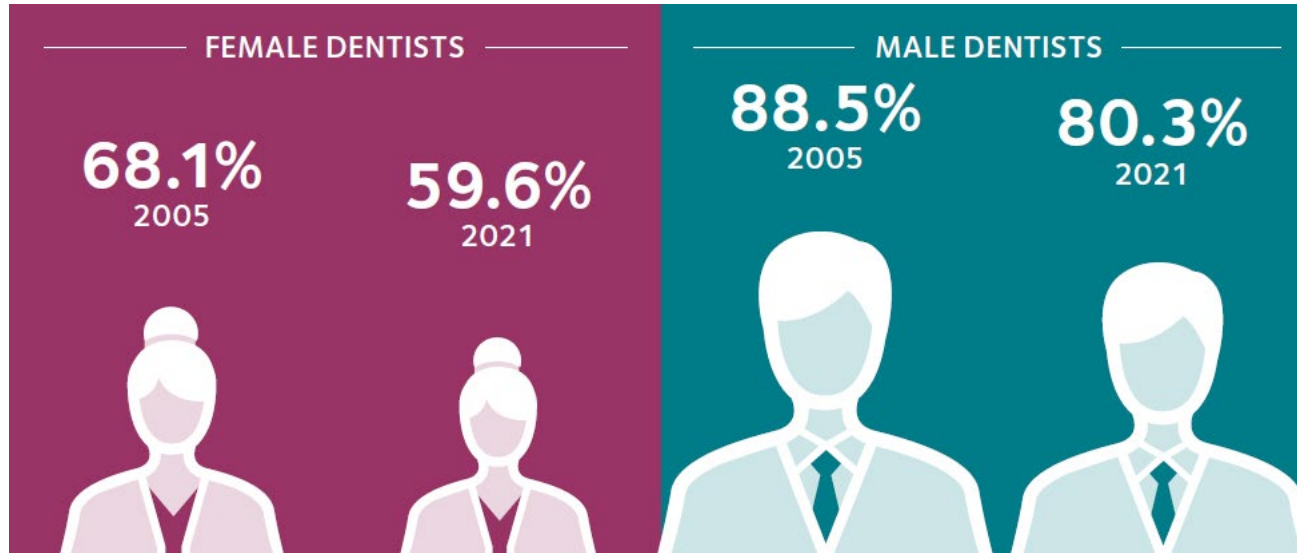
*The dentist workforce skews more Asian and White when compared to the U.S. population. In contrast, it skews less Hispanic and Black.*

# Ownership Status of Private Practice Dentists



*Practice ownership rates continue to decline.*

# Ownership Status of Private Practice Dentists

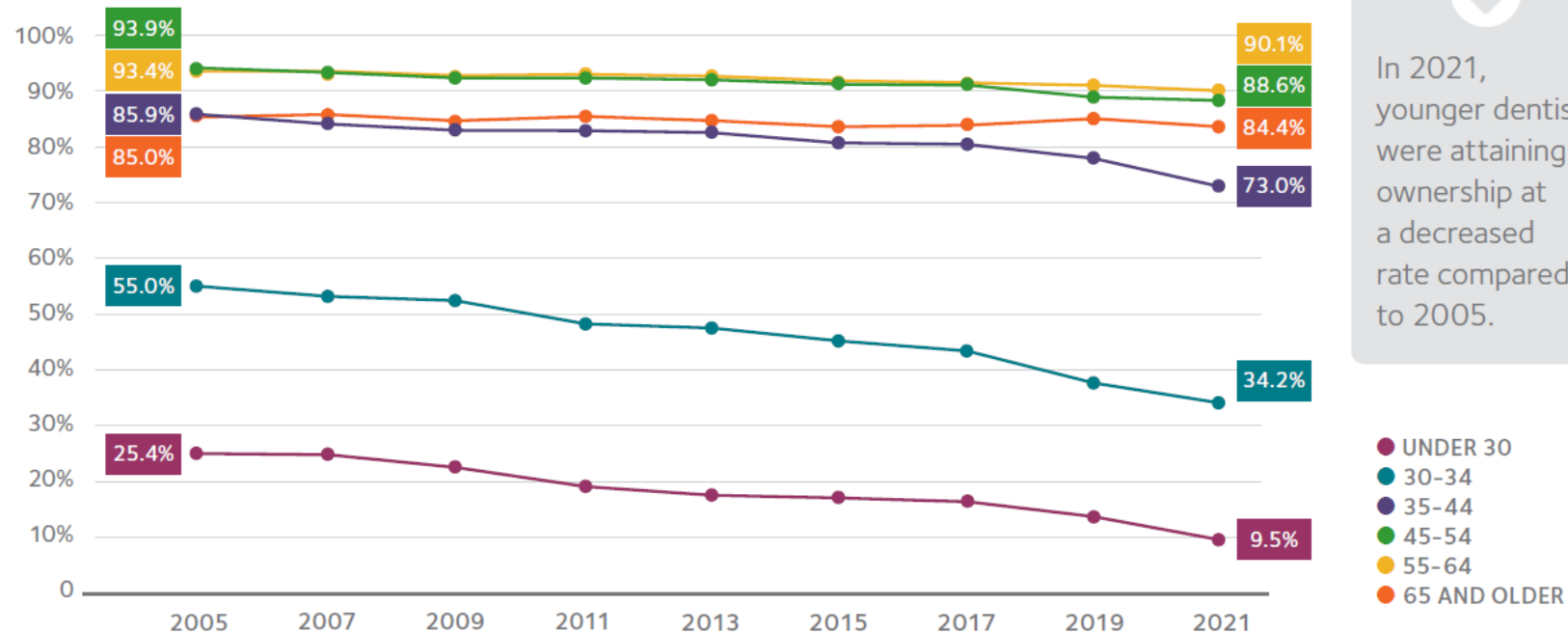


*Female dentists have been consistently less likely than male dentists to own their practice.*

*Ownership rates for male and female dentists are declining.*

# Ownership Status of Private Practice Dentists

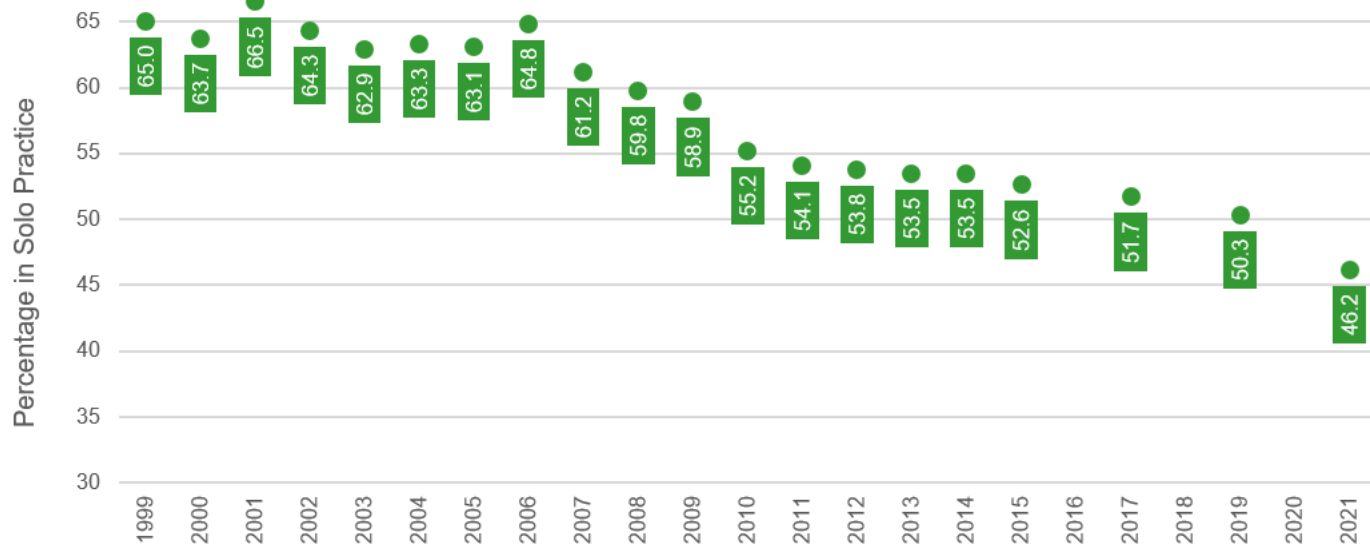
PERCENTAGE OF DENTISTS IN PRIVATE PRACTICES WHO ARE OWNERS, BY AGE GROUP



In 2021, younger dentists were attaining ownership at a decreased rate compared to 2005.

- UNDER 30
- 30-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 AND OLDER

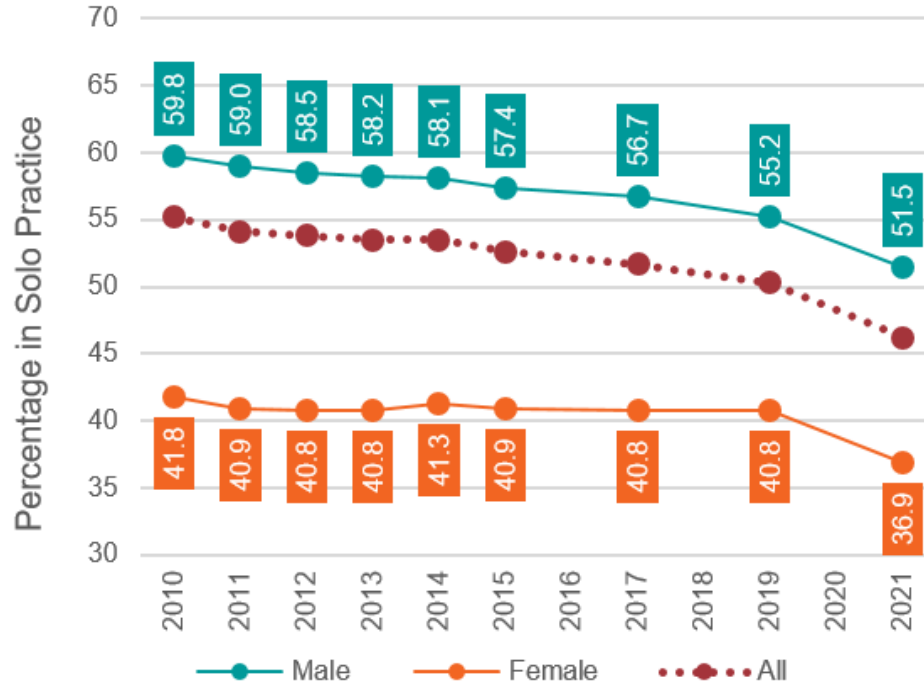
# Percentage of Private Practice Dentists in Solo Practice



*Solo practice continues to decline. The pandemic has accelerated this trend.*

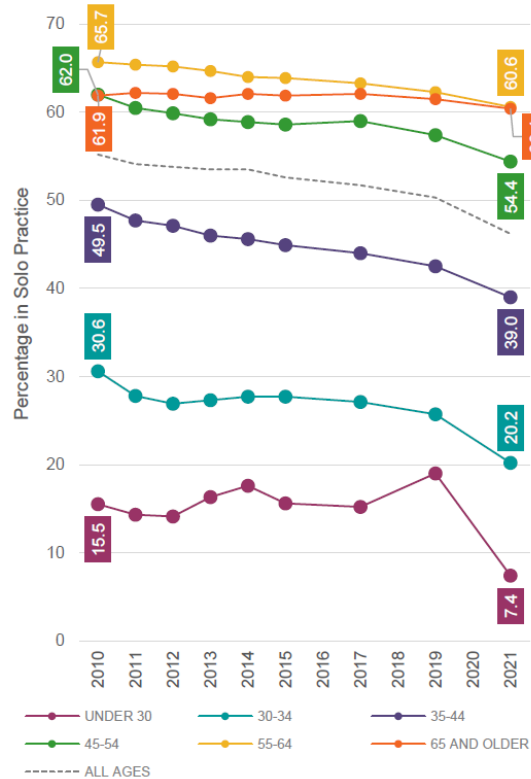
# Percentage of Private Practice Dentists in Solo Practice

## BY GENDER



*The gender shift in the workforce is likely to significantly accelerate the trend away from solo practice. But both male and female dentists are seeing this trend.*

# Percentage of Private Practice Dentists in Solo Practice



*While a decrease in the prevalence of solo practices is seen among all dentists, the trend is pronounced among younger dentists.*

# Practice Consolidation Accelerates



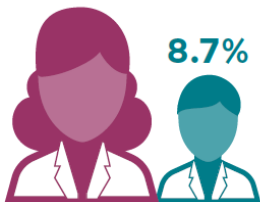
**10.4%**

OF U.S. DENTISTS were affiliated with dental service organizations (DSOs) in 2019. In 2017, it was 8.8%.

## How Big are Dental Service Organizations?

BY GENDER

**13.3%**



FEMALE DENTISTS

**8.7%**



MALE DENTISTS

BY AGE

**20.4%**



21-34



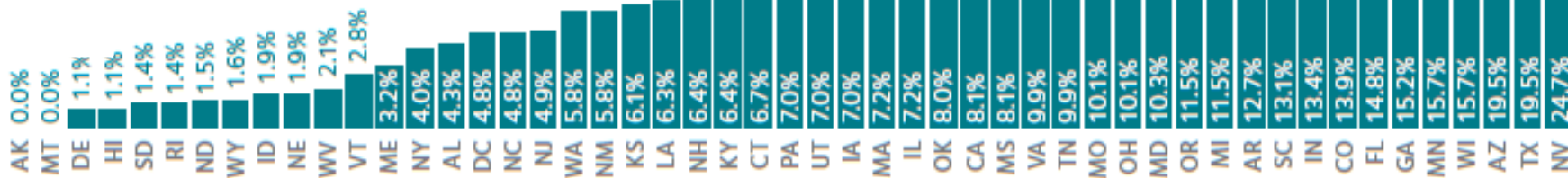
35-49



50-64

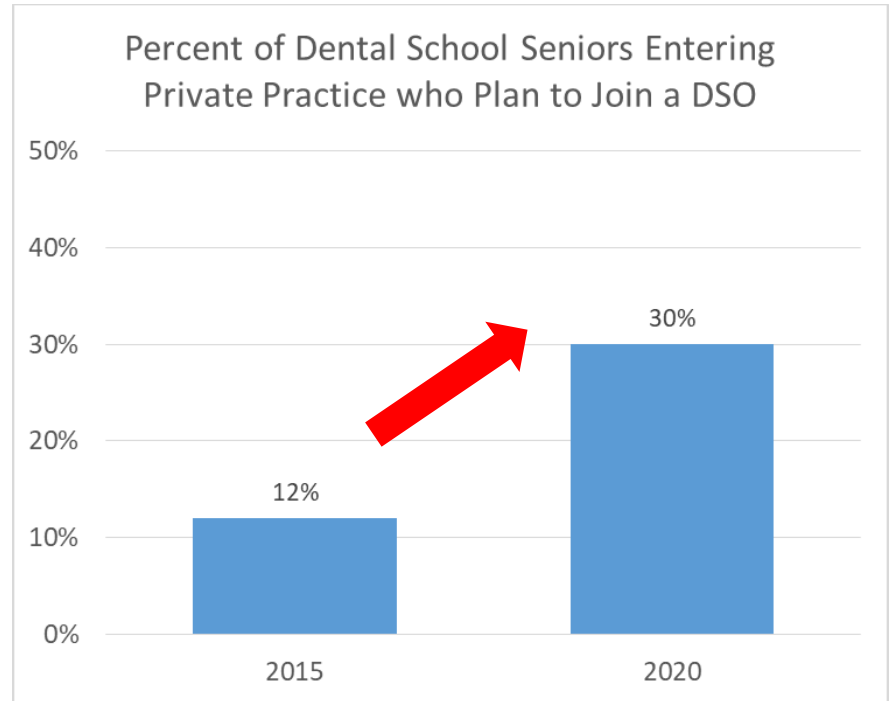
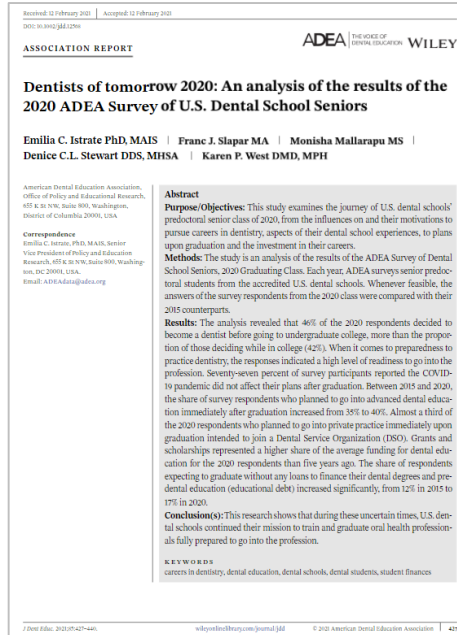


65+





# Practice Consolidation Accelerates



# Key Takeaways

- Our latest data confirm key trends in the dentist workforce: dentists are getting younger, more likely to be female, more likely to be non-White. Solo practice is disappearing and fewer dentists own their practice. Moreover, due to various factors, these trends are about to accelerate.
- We're at a point where there is a sharp generational divide in the dentist workforce: We have a large number of young dentists in the workforce and a large number of retirement-age dentists.
- The COVID-19 pandemic appears to have accelerated the practice modality shifts.

# Thank You!

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