



# Towards National Needs Assessment – Perceived CPD Needs of Qatar Healthcare Practitioners



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## BACKGROUND

Adequate educational planning (including proper needs assessment) is considered an essential prerequisite to assure quality of Continuing Medical Education (CME) / Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities. It is, therefore, one of the core standards of accreditation systems, including Qatar's National accreditation system.

In March 7 2016, Qatar Council for Healthcare Practitioner – Accreditation Department (QCHP-AD) launched Qatar's National CME / CPD Accreditation system and framework. Since that date, all licensed healthcare practitioners (Physicians, Nurses, Pharmacists, Dentists, Allied Health Professionals and Complementary Medicine Practitioners) working in the state of Qatar are mandated to participate in CPD activities and fulfill CPD credit requirements to be able to renew their license of practice. Fifty percent of such CPD requirements are mandated to be collected from participation in accredited group learning activities.

A comprehensive National Needs assessment, therefore, would be of great importance to provide quality CME / CPD to healthcare practitioners in Qatar, improve their competence and performance and achieve Qatar's Health strategy and National Vision 2030. And though a comprehensive National CPD needs assessment is not yet conducted, several efforts towards assessing the CPD needs of different healthcare professions in Qatar were initiated. One of them, targeting dentist and dental allied health practitioners, will be presented in this research work.

## METHODOLOGY

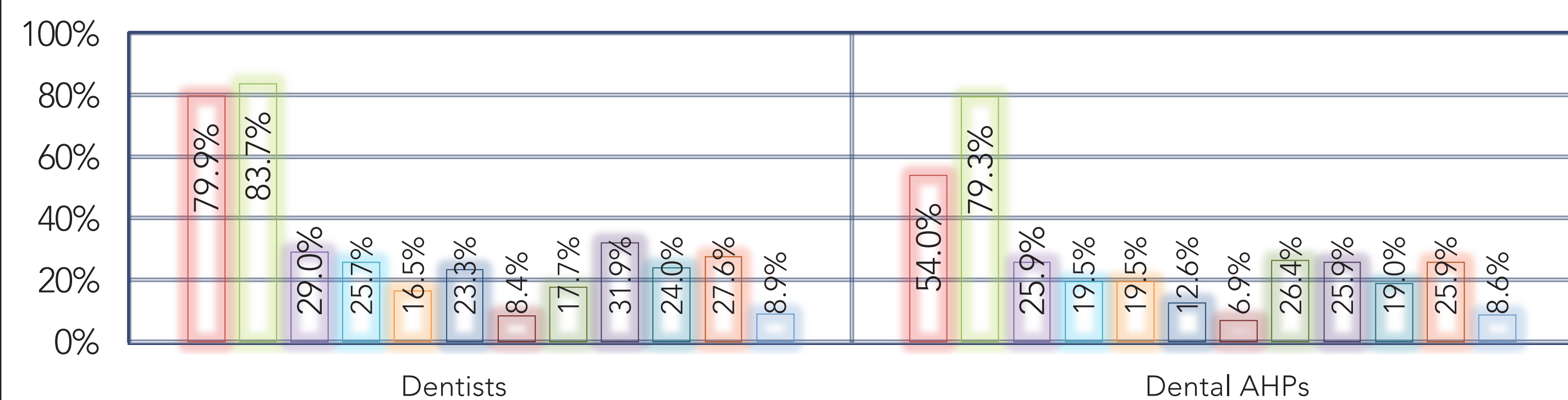
A survey questionnaire to assess the perceived needs of dentists and dental allied health practitioners was developed by Qatar's National Oral Health Committee (as one of the deliverables and shrines of the National Oral Health Strategy) in collaboration with Qatar Council for Healthcare Practitioners – Accreditation Department (QCHP-AD). The survey questionnaire was electronically distributed to 590 Healthcare Practitioner (HCP), 417 dentists and 174 dental Allied Health Practitioner (AHP), working in different sectors of the healthcare system (Governmental and private) in Qatar. Responses were received over 1 month (December 15, 2015 – January 15, 2016 and analyzed by statistical package software and presented in this research.

## RESULTS

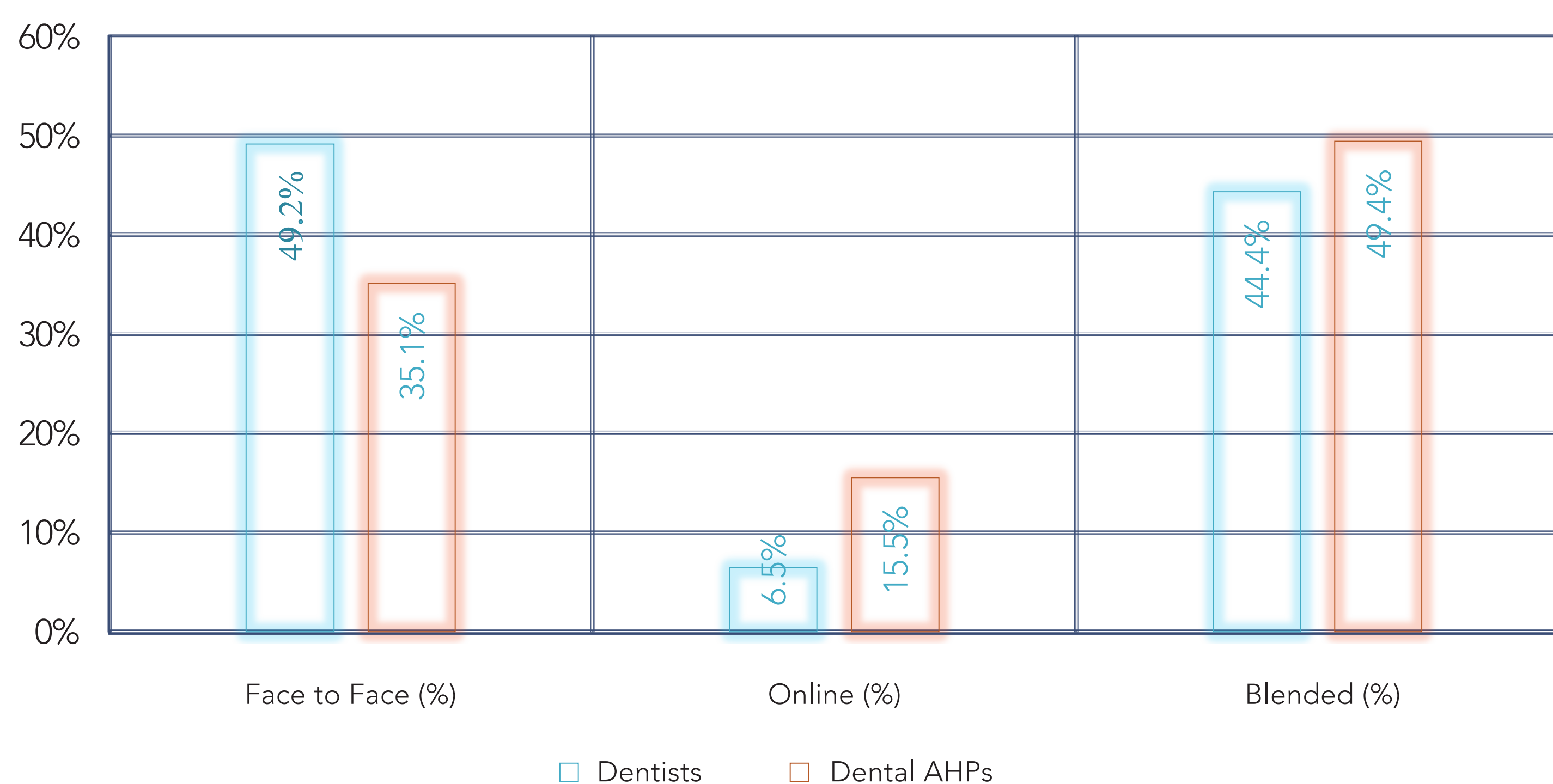
The results of distributed questionnaire showed the national CPD needs perceived by dental and allied health professionals in terms of preferred CPD activity types, format and common perceived gaps in knowledge/practice that needs to be addressed by CPD activities.

### Activity Type Preferred by Dental Health Professionals

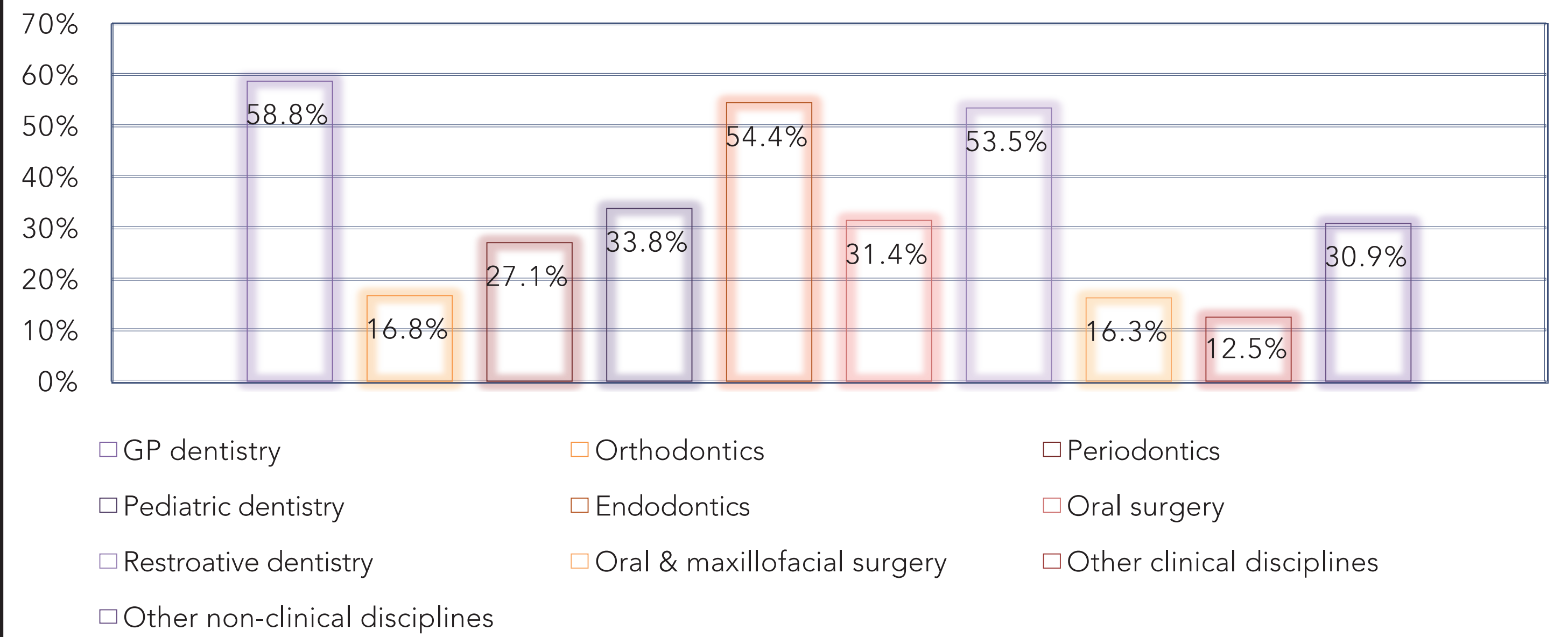
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|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hands on workshop                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Conference, symposia, seminars and workshop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge assessment programs                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Educational rounds                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Simulation activities                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Journal clubs/study clubs                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Multi source feedback                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Online synchronous learning activities      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Direct observation of procedures or performance | <input type="checkbox"/> Blended learning activities                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-directed learning activities               | <input type="checkbox"/> Other formal assessment                     |



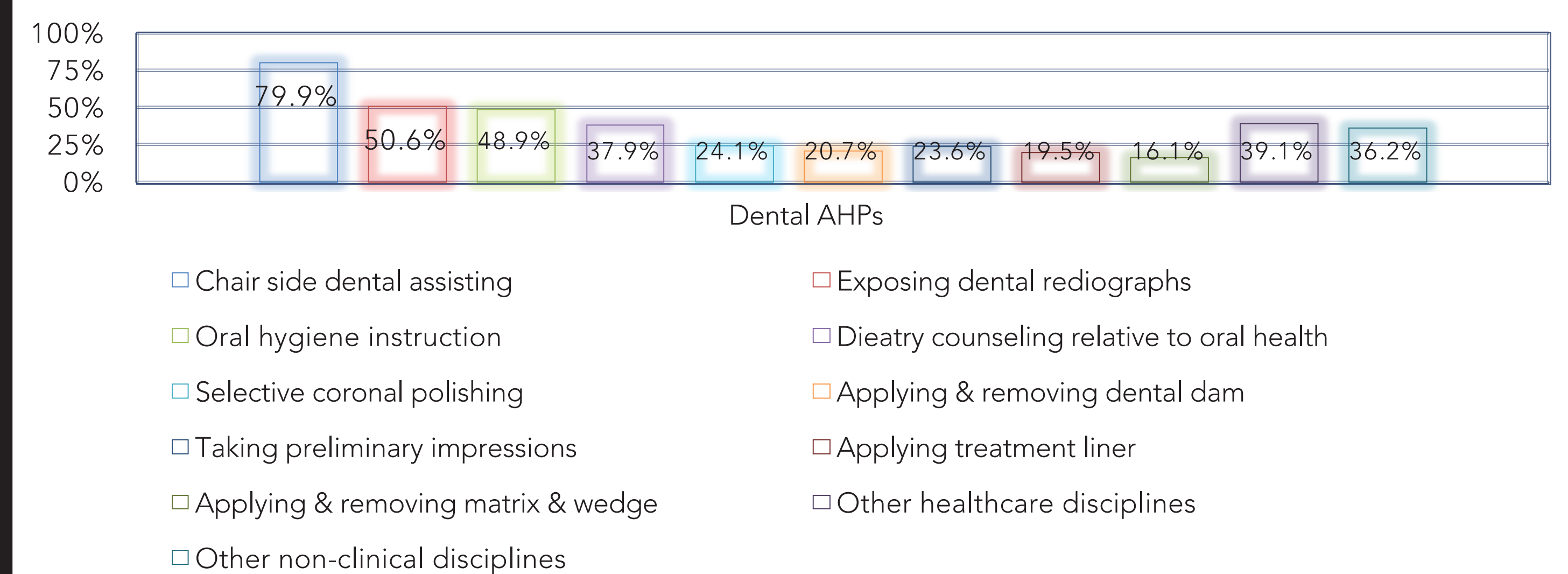
### CPD Format Preferred by Dental Health Professionals



### Preferred Disciplines for Dentists



### Preferred Disciplines for Dental AHPs



## CONCLUSIONS

The ultimate goal of CME/CPD is to improve patient outcomes by changing healthcare practitioners performance, knowledge and skills. Evidence from systematic reviews of the literature shows that CPD programs that are predicated on well conducted needs assessments are effective in reaching this goal (Fox and Bennett, 1998). Therefore, Learning needs assessment is a crucial stage in the educational process and an integral part of educational planning of CPD activities (Grant, 2002).

Learning needs of the individual practitioner, however, must be differentiated from educational needs identified by bodies for CME/CPD. Learning needs are personal, specific, and identified by the individual learner through practice experience, reflection, self-assessment tests, practice audits, peer review, etc. (Slotnick, 1999). Educational needs, on the other hand, are the interests of a whole target audience and can be identified through surveys, focus groups, analysis of regional practice patterns, and evaluations of CME/CPD programs (Fox and Bennett, 1998).

For the state of Qatar, educational needs assessment of healthcare workforce is a necessary step to better plan for the CPD of healthcare practitioners and align with the National Health Strategy, National Workforce plans and Qatar's National Vision 2030. Though a comprehensive National CPD needs assessment is not yet conducted, several efforts towards assessing the CPD needs of different healthcare professions in Qatar were initiated. One of them, targeting dentist and dental allied health practitioners is presented here and it shows that Dental health professionals in Qatar identified some common gaps in knowledge, competence and skills that should be addressed to ensure proper CPD of such healthcare practitioners. Involved HCPs identified online and blended CPD formats as the most convenient formats for provision of CPD activities which can be explained by their ease of access and convenient timings. Hands-on workshops and other group-learning activities were also the preferred activity types.

The conducted needs assessment, however, should be fostered by unperceived needs assessment tools to ensure proper identification of the actual CPD needs of Dental health professionals in Qatar. The conducted needs assessment can present a step towards national CPD needs assessment and can be mocked (considering discussed enhancements) to plan for national CPD needs assessment of other healthcare practitioners in the state of Qatar.

Conclusions: Qatar's dentists and dental allied health professionals perceive some common gaps in practice that should be considered in planning for CPD activities targeting such professionals. The conducted needs assessment represents a step that should be built-upon to have a national CPD needs assessment for all healthcare professions in the state of Qatar.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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## REFERENCES

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- 2 Grant J (2002): Learning needs assessment: assessing the need. BMJ; 324:156.
- 3 Slotnick HB (1999): How doctors learn: physicians' self-directed learning episodes. Acad Med 74; 1106–17.