

Mexican Oral Health

Latin America is a region of stark contrasts, where wealth and prosperity coexist with vulnerability and extreme poverty. Mexico is one of the countries in Latin America with higher inequality in the region, as only 10% of the population concentrates 59% of the country's income and 1% accounts for 29%. These economic inequalities are associated with health, where people with lower socioeconomic status have the worst oral health conditions but the least access to healthcare services.

Dental health in Mexico is provided primarily by private services. Public services have dental offices in ambulatory care units, urban and rural, that provide limited services to their patients. In the public sector, the human resources contracted to provide oral healthcare services represent less than 20% of all dentists in Mexico. Thus public institutions grapple with high volumes of patients and short consultation times per dentist, ranging from 20 minutes in ISSSTE (Institute for Social Security and Services for State Employees) to 45 minutes in Ministry of Health units. However, Mexico has oral health policies such as the School Health Program as well as preventive health regulations for the iodization and fluoridation of salt. Public sector ambulatory care units monitor dental health at various stages of life, and monitoring oral health is also integrated into the National System of Health Records and the Epidemiological Surveillance System of Oral Pathologies (SIVEPAB), with 413 units throughout the country that provide epidemiological information on the most important oral problems. All these initiatives are regulated by the Official Mexican Standard for the Prevention and Control of Oral Diseases and are applied mainly in the public sector.

There is diverse, and not enough up-to-date information regarding dentistry professionals to generalize about trends in dental services in Mexico. However, according to *Data México, Gobierno de México* (Mexican Ministry of Economy), in 2021 the country had a total of 147,000 dentists (AMIC – The Mexican Industry Association, estimates around 100,000). The state with the largest number of dentists was the Federal District (39.05%), followed by Guadalajara and Monterrey. **However, the high percentage of inactive licensed dentists points to a severe problem, being Mexico, according to the Organization for**

Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), among the countries with the lowest number of experts in dental care per 100,000 inhabitants. Furthermore, according to DENU, the Mexican National Statistical Directory of Economic Units, there were 72,707 registered dental offices/economic units in 2024 (59,930 in 2019). The states with the highest number were the State of Mexico (9,747), Mexico City (7,236), and Jalisco (4,660). According to data from the Economic Census, total income reached \$18.6B MX in 2019, being the states with the highest income Mexico City (\$2.84B MX) and the State of Mexico (\$2.02B MX). During the third quarter of 2024 the total dental workforce was 451,000 people, with average age 41.4, 31.7% of which men and 68.3% women.

Mexico has one of the highest rates of

dental caries in the world. According to data from two national studies, around 50% of students aged 5-16 have or reported having dental caries. Other estimates mention that between 70% and 85% of 12-year-old children have caries in permanent dentition, and 50% of 6-year-old children have caries in primary dentition. According to the IMSS (Mexican Institute of Social Security), nine out of every 10 people in Mexico has dental cavities and other gum diseases such as periodontitis or periodontal disease. Eight of every 10 adults between 50 and 60 years of age only have 10 of their teeth. A large reason for this data is the lack of consistency with which Mexicans seek professional dental health services as well as geographical, economic and transportation factors, representing an important barrier.

Registered dentists, 2021 (Data México)	147,000
Percentage men/women	38.4% men - 61.6% women
Working hours per week	33
Average monthly salary	\$5.32k MX
Average age	39.8
No. of dental offices	72,707-80,000
Dentists per 10 000 pop., 2014-2019	1.4
No. of Dental Technicians, 2000	18,598
No. of Dental Assistants and Therapists, 2010	12,543

Source: *Data México, Gobierno de México/WHO – Oral Health Country Profile*

Economic Impact Related to Treatment and Prevention of Oral Diseases

Total expenditure on dental healthcare in million (US\$)	2,103
Per capita expenditure on dental healthcare (US\$)	17
Total productivity losses due to 5 oral diseases in million (US\$)	4,517
Affordability of fluoride toothpaste	Affordable
Number of labor days needed to buy annual supply of fluoride toothpaste per person	0.5

NOTES: Total expenditure on dental healthcare in million (US \$): Estimate of total annual national expenditure on dental healthcare in outpatient dental care (public and private) in 2019. Per capita expenditure on dental healthcare (US \$): Estimate of the annual national per capita expenditure on dental healthcare for outpatient dental care (public and private) in 2019. Total productivity losses due to 5 oral diseases in million (US \$): Estimate of total productivity losses in 2019 resulting from combined impact of 5 untreated oral diseases including caries in deciduous and permanent teeth, severe periodontal disease, edentulism, and other oral conditions as defined by GBD. (Data source: Jevdjevic & Listl 2022.) Affordability of fluoride toothpaste (number of labour days needed to buy annual supply of fluoride toothpaste per person): Number of labour days needed to buy the recommended annual supply of fluoride toothpaste for one person based on the daily wage of the lowest-skilled government worker. Fluoride toothpaste is categorized as affordable if one day or less (≤ 1) of labour is needed and as unaffordable if more than one day (>1) of labour is needed to buy the annual supply for one individual. (Data source: WHO; 2019.) WHO – Oral Health Country Profile.

	Worldwide	African countries	Latin America	Mexico
Dental caries in primary teeth, est.	46.2%		56%	50%
Dental caries in permanent teeth, est.	53.8%		58%	
Dental caries among 12-year-olds		36.0%		70-85%

Oral Health Interventions as Part of Health Benefit Packages

Coverage of the largest government health financing scheme (% of the population)	51
Routine and preventive oral health care	yes
Essential curative oral health care	yes
Advanced curative oral health care	yes
‘Rehabilitation oral health care	yes

Inclusion of oral health interventions in public Health Benefit Packages: The extent to which oral health interventions are included in the largest government health financing scheme. The term “largest” is defined as having the highest total population eligible to receive services, while the term “government” is defined as including any public sector scheme for health service provision, including coverage for groups such as the general population, public sector employees and/or the military. Interventions comprise:

- Routine and preventive oral health care.
- Essential curative oral health care (including non-surgical extraction and drainage of abscesses).
- Advanced curative oral/dental care (including resin composite and dental amalgam including x-rays, complex fillings, root canal treatment).
- Rehabilitative oral health care (including crowns and bridges, dentures, orthodontics, dental implants).

(Data source: WHO Health Technology Assessment and Health Benefit Package Survey; 2021.) WHO – Oral Health Country Profile

Economic Impact Related to Treatment and Prevention of Oral Diseases

Prevalence of untreated caries of deciduous teeth in children 1-9 years	Prevalence of untreated caries of permanent teeth in people 5+ years	Prevalence of severe periodontal disease in people 15+ years	Prevalence of edentulism in people 20+ years
44.0%	23.6%	22.7%	9.5%

2019 data. WHO – Oral Health Country Profile

Policies, Measures and Resources

Implementation of tax on sugar-sweetened beverages	yes
Existence of a national oral health policy/strategy/action plan (operational/drafting stage)	yes
Presence of dedicated staff for oral health working on NCDs at the MoH	yes

NOTES: Presence of technical/professional staff in the unit/branch/department working on NCDs in the Ministry of Health (MoH) dedicating a sizable portion of their time to oral health. (Data source: WHO NCD Country Capacity Survey, NCD CCS; 2021.) WHO – Oral Health Country Profile

Among Main Sources:

-World Health Organization. Regional Office for Europe, European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, Miguel Á González Block, Hortensia Reyes Morales, Lucero Cahuana Hurtado. et al. (2020). Mexico: health system review. World Health Organization. Regional Office for Europe. <https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/334334>. Health Systems in Transition; Vol. 22 (1)

-Infographic | How Do Mexicans Get Healthcare?, By Valeria Villarreal - <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/infographic-how-do-mexicans-get-healthcare>

-U.S. Central Intelligence Agency: www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/mexico/

-Mexico's physician shortage: struggling to bridge the gap. Ramonfaur, Diego et al. The Lancet Regional Health – Americas, Volume 41, 100966 -[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanam/article/PIIS2667-193X\(24\)00293-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanam/article/PIIS2667-193X(24)00293-X/fulltext)

-<https://mexicobusiness.news/health/news/national-doctors-day-mexico-numbers>

-<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10001530/>

-Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (US) : <https://www.cms.gov/data-research/statistics-trends-and-reports/national-health-expenditure-data/historical#~:text=U.S.%20health%20care%20spending%20grew,For%20additional%20information%2C%20see%20below>

-“The Rise and Fall of Seguro Popular: Mexico's Health Care Odyssey” - <https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/rise-and-fall-seguro-popular-mexicos-health-care-odyssey>

-Main types of health insurance in Mexico 2021, Published by Jennifer Mendoza, May 24, 2024. -<https://www.statista.com/topics/5042/health-in-mexico/#editorsPicks>

-WHO – Oral Health Country Profile

-United States of America Department of Commerce, <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/mexico-healthcare-products-services>

- The Pandemic Has Worsened Dental Health, By Alfonso Núñez | Journalist & Industry Analyst, <https://mexicobusiness.news/health/news/pandemic-has-worsened-dental-health>

- Vera-Virrueta CG, Sansores-Ambrosio F, Casanova-Rosado JF, Minaya-Sánchez MI, Casanova-Rosado AJ, Casanova-Sarmiento JA, Guadarrama-Reyes SC, de la Rosa-Santillana R, Medina-Solís CE, Maupomé G. Experience, Prevalence, and Severity of Dental Caries in Mexican Preschool and School-Aged Children. Cureus. 2023 Dec 25;15(12):e51079. doi: 10.7759/cureus.51079. PMID: 38269237; PMCID: PMC10806378. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10806378/>

-Data Mexico, Gobierno de México, Offices of Dentists: <https://www.economia.gob.mx/datamexico/en/profile/industry/offices-of-dentists>

-Data Mexico, Gobierno de México, Dentists (2021-Q2): <https://www.economia.gob.mx/datamexico/en/profile/occupation/dentistas>

-Data Mexico, Gobierno de México: [https://www.economia.gob.mx/datamexico/en/profile/industry/offices-of-physicians#~:text=According%20DENUE%20to%24%2C%20Offices%20of%2C%20and%20Jalisco%20\(5%2C163\),https://wedc.org/market-intelligence/posts/dental-services-boom-in-mexico/](https://www.economia.gob.mx/datamexico/en/profile/industry/offices-of-physicians#~:text=According%20DENUE%20to%24%2C%20Offices%20of%2C%20and%20Jalisco%20(5%2C163),https://wedc.org/market-intelligence/posts/dental-services-boom-in-mexico/)

-<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24984634/>

