

Looking through the Yellow Pages...

Experiences of hearing parents navigating childhood hearing loss

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Introduction

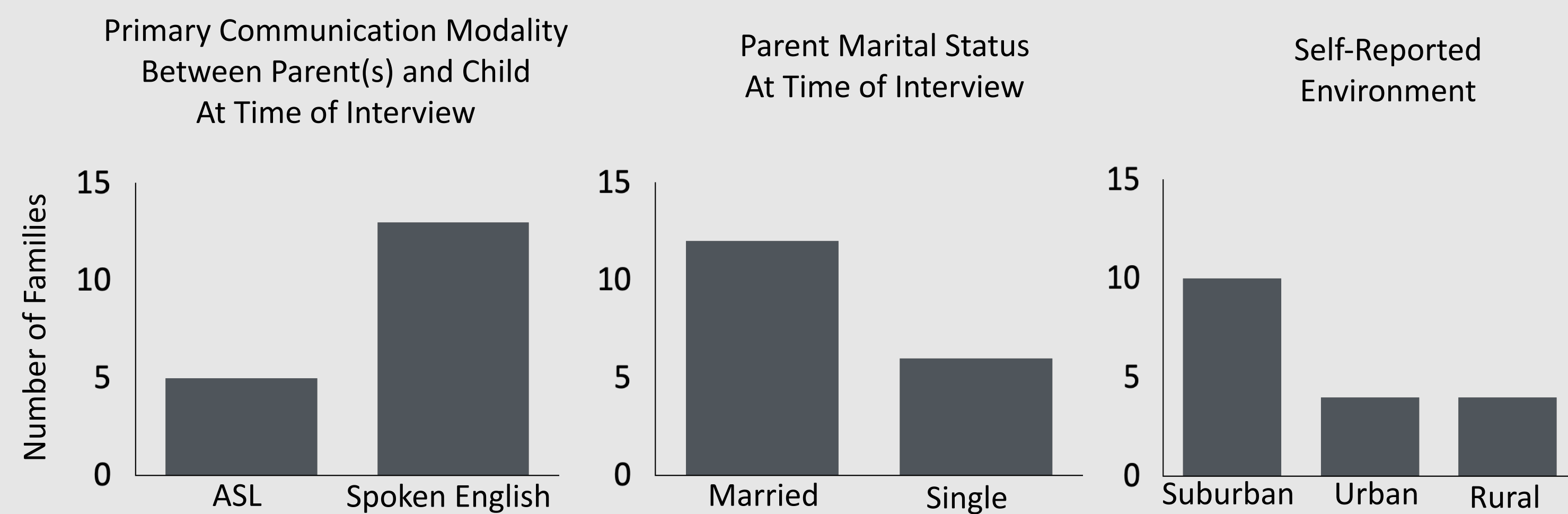
- Critical period of language acquisition is approximately first 5 years of life.
- Language deprivation syndrome is "a constellation of recognizable social, emotional, intellectual, and other consequences" and is an unintended outcome of a well-intentioned care team.
- The majority of deaf/Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (d/DHH) children are born to hearing parents.
- This study explored three aspects of experiences encountered by hearing parents with a d/DHH child: emotional experiences after hearing loss identification, barriers to early and adequate language exposure, and facilitators of early and adequate language exposure.

Methods

- Hearing parents with a d/DHH child from across the US participated in individual, qualitative, semi-structured interviews.
- Purposive sampling was used to identify families with diverse communication modalities that they adapted over time.
- Data collection occurred over the span of one year.
- Interview transcripts were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach.
- The analysis was completed by three medical students: one identifies as Hard-of-Hearing, the other two identify as hearing.

Participant Demographics

- Parents came from 12 US states.
- All parents had completed at least some post-high school education.



Discussion

- Parent perspectives are critical to assess existing programs and inform new interventions to support families with d/DHH children.
- Current education and support services are not meeting the needs of families with a d/DHH child.
- Increased education about hearing loss in the healthcare field is needed.
- Increased involvement of d/DHH community members will be critical to creating successful systems improvement.

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Results

