



# Access Gaps in Pediatric Dermatology Care: The Role of General Dermatologists



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## Background

- Studies show that 30-47% of general pediatric visits involve the management of a dermatologic condition.<sup>1-2</sup>
- Despite its need, pediatric dermatology remains one of the most underserved pediatric specialties, and dermatology care for children is difficult to access.<sup>3-5</sup>

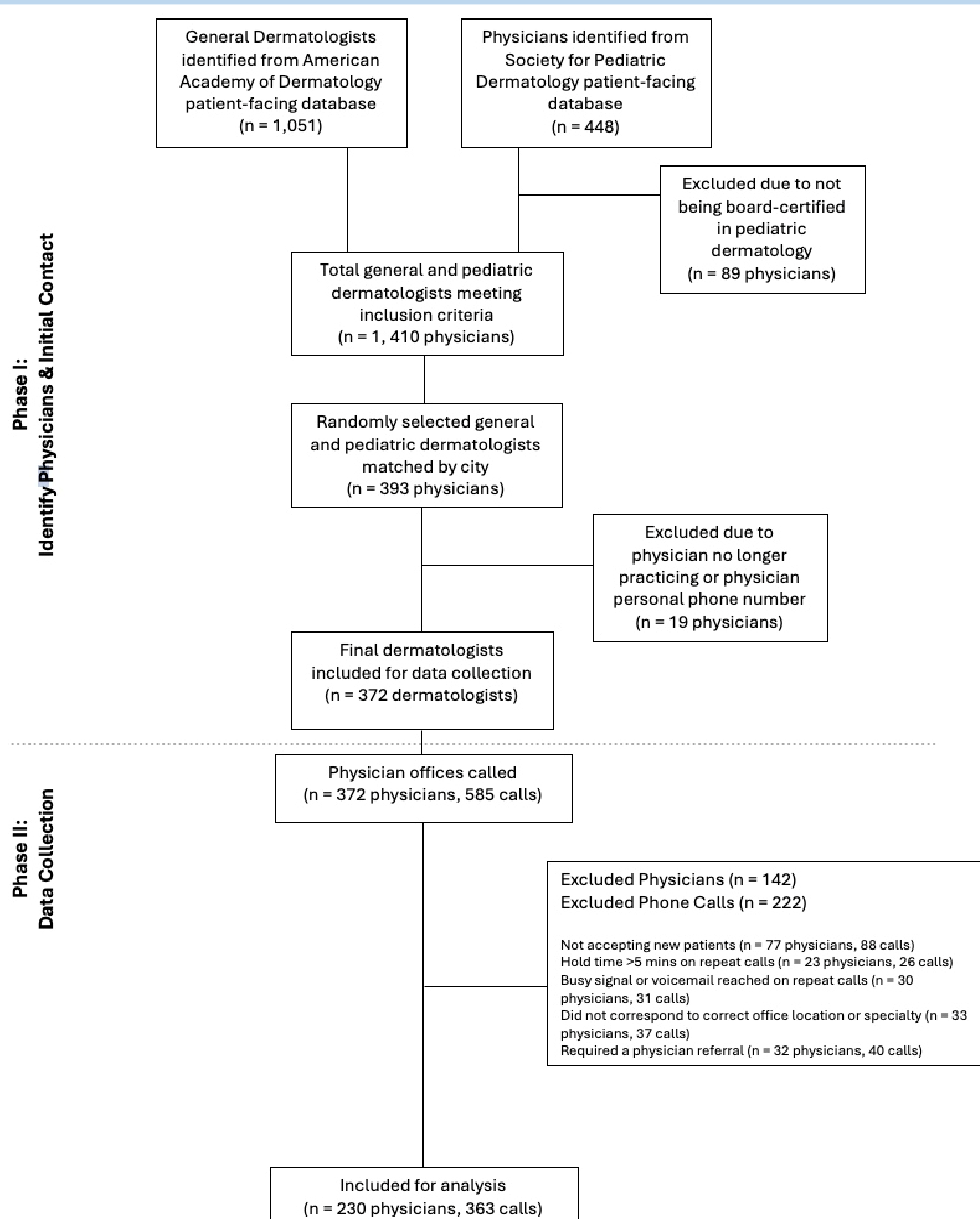
## Objectives

- The rates and comfort levels of general dermatologists caring for pediatric patients are unexplored.
- This study aimed to characterize appointment access and wait times for pediatric patients presenting with common childhood skin conditions to general or pediatric dermatologists.

## Methods

- General and pediatric dermatologists were identified using the AAD and SPD patient-facing databases (exclusion and inclusion criteria seen in Figure 1).
- Mystery callers posing as parents of patients with either a hemangioma, eczema, or acne contacted pediatric and general dermatology offices during a 1-week period to request the next available new patient appointment.
- Business days until the first available appointment were recorded and analyzed using a linear mixed Poisson regression model.

## Results



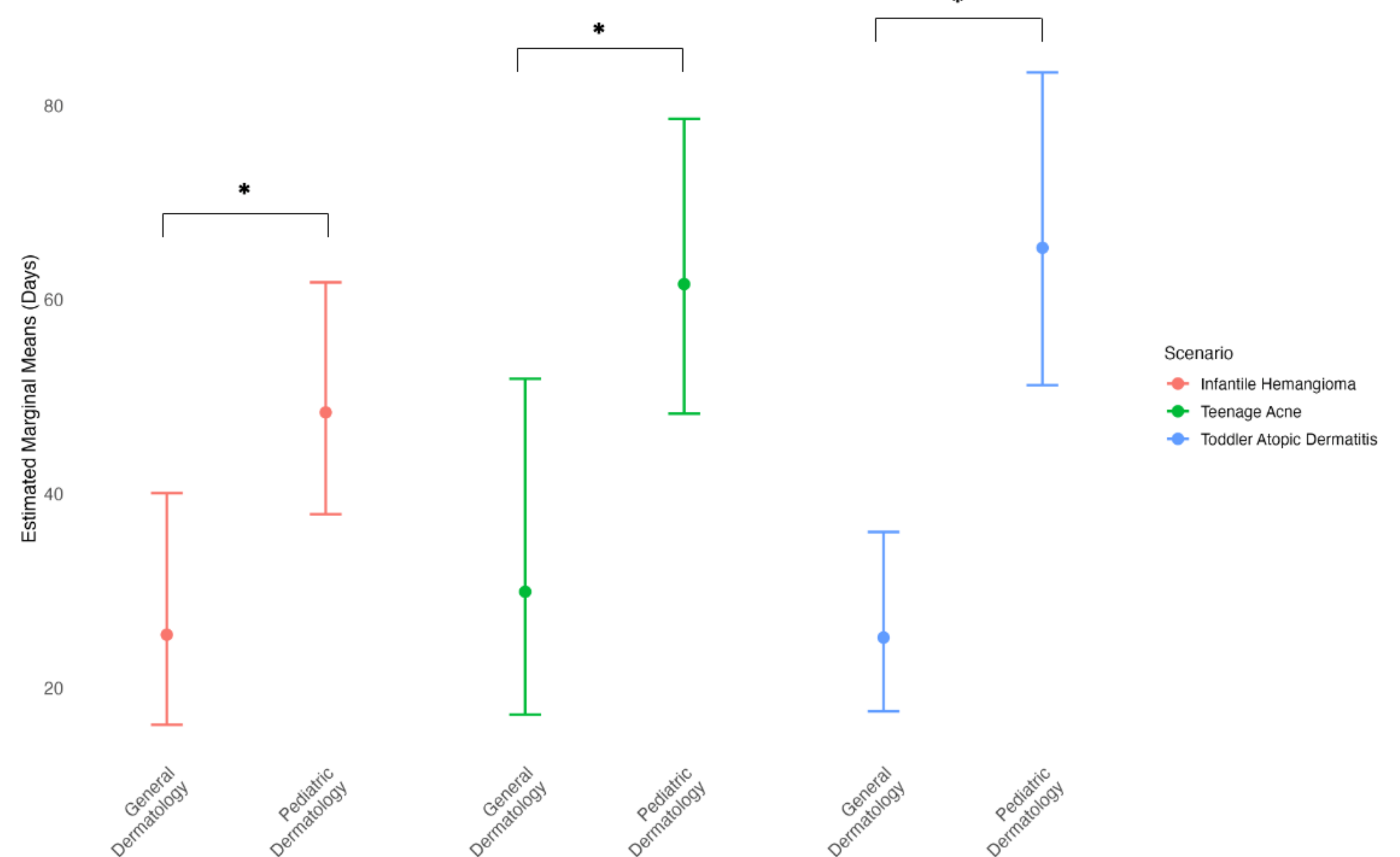
**Figure 1:** Exclusion and inclusion process of phone calls made to dermatology physician offices. Each box represents a specific step, while lines indicate the flow of the process.

**Table 1.** Median wait times for pediatric vs. general dermatology appointments.

	Pediatric Dermatology Appointment	General Dermatology Appointment	IRR (95% CI)	p-value
<b>Overall Median Wait Time (business days)</b>	89	53	1.68 (1.60–1.70)	<0.01

**Table 2.** Responses of dermatology offices contacted.

Dermatologists Sees Children	General Dermatologist (N=137)	Pediatric Dermatologist (N=226)	Total (N=363)	p-value
Yes	94 (69%)	226 (100%)	320 (88%)	< 0.01
No	43 (31%)	0 (0%)	43 (12%)	< 0.01



**Figure 2.** A comparison of appointment wait times by physician subspecialty and clinical scenario. \*Represents statistical significance.

## Discussion and Conclusions

- Wait times for pediatric dermatology appointments are significantly longer than for general dermatology appointments. Additionally, over 30% of general dermatologists do not offer appointments for children.
- A combination of prolonged wait times for pediatric dermatology appointments and lower rates of general dermatologists seeing pediatric patients places children with skin disease at a unique disadvantage when seeking dermatology care.
- These findings highlight a critical gap in care and an opportunity to improve access to general dermatology for pediatric patients. Further investigation is warranted to explore why many general dermatologists do not see pediatric patients with common skin conditions.

## References

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