

# UCLA Dentistry

## Sequestration of Speciality Providers in California's MediCal Dental Program

DANIEL E. MISHAIL, Naderah Pourat PhD  
UCLA School of Dentistry  
UCLA School of Public Health, Division of Health Policy and Management

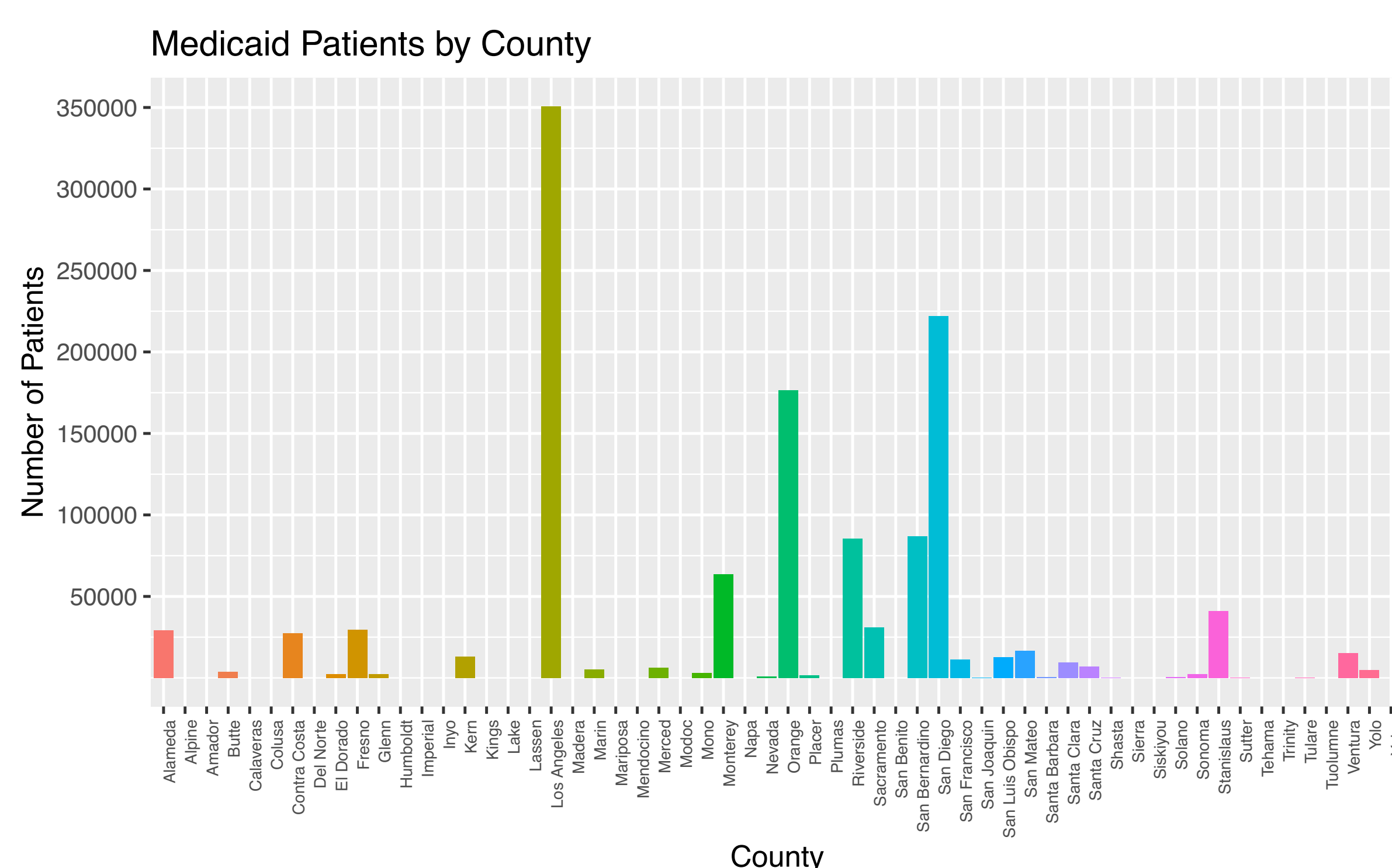
### Introduction

The California MediCal Dental Program is an insurance coverage designed to fill the need for critical dental care for low-income patients. By analyzing patterns of enrollment and payment in healthcare services, research can shed light to the dental care that low-income patients are receiving, and will further support programs that raise the standard of care for DentiCal patients. While the number of registered dental specialists rises from year to year, this does not necessarily indicate that the providers are localized where they are needed, and might reflect a sequestration of providers in urban locations, for example, leaving more rural patients at risk.

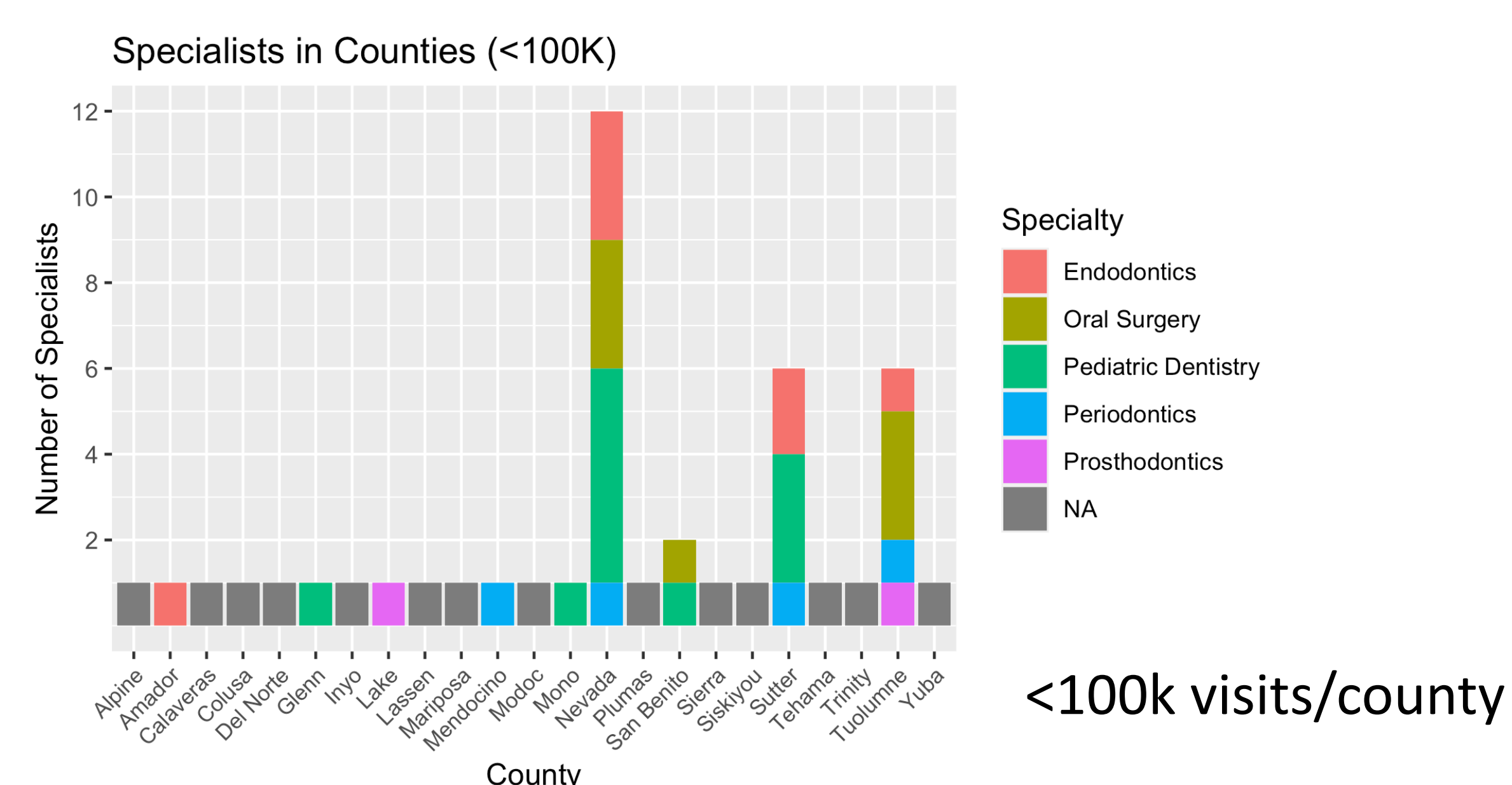
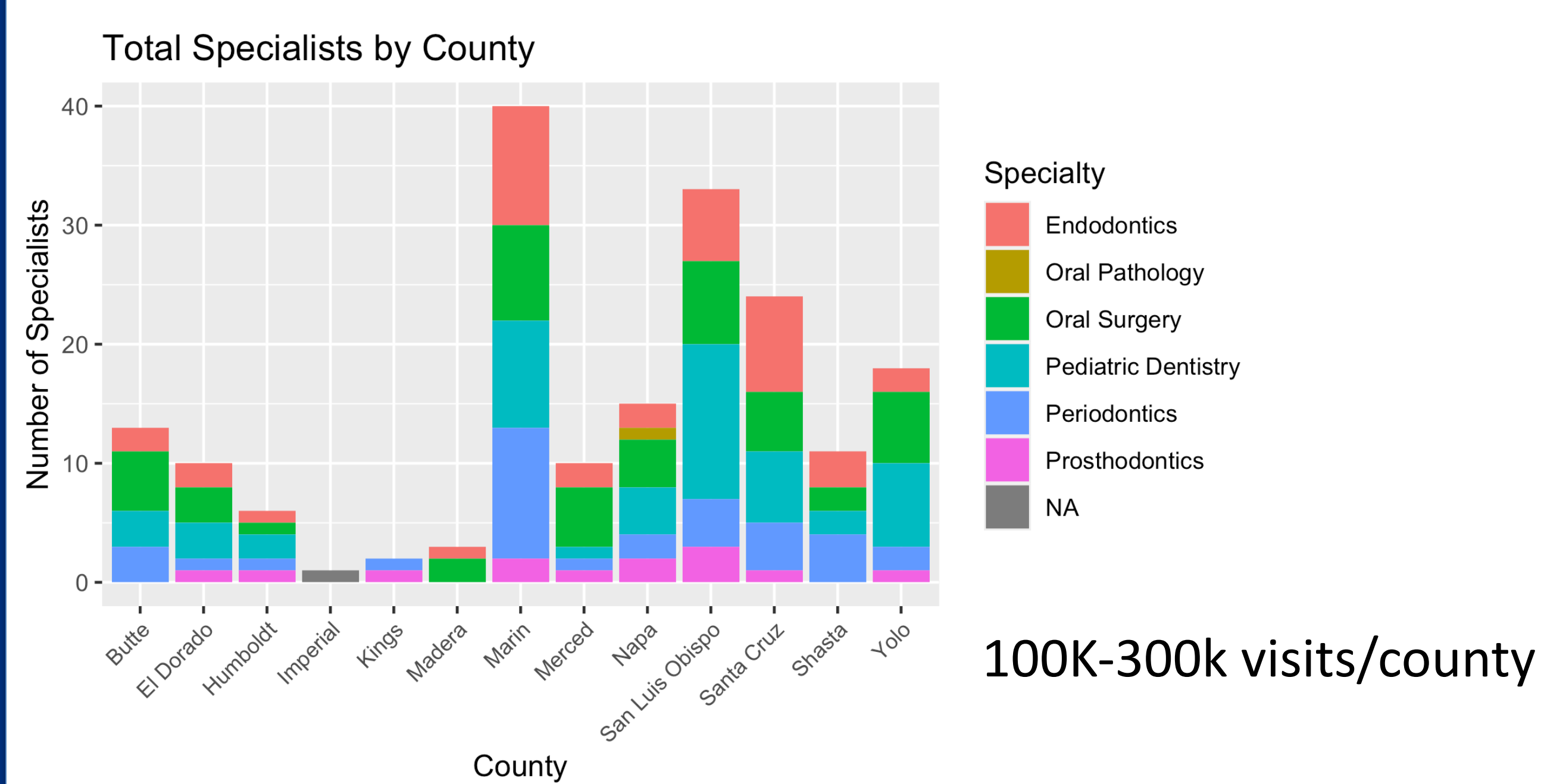
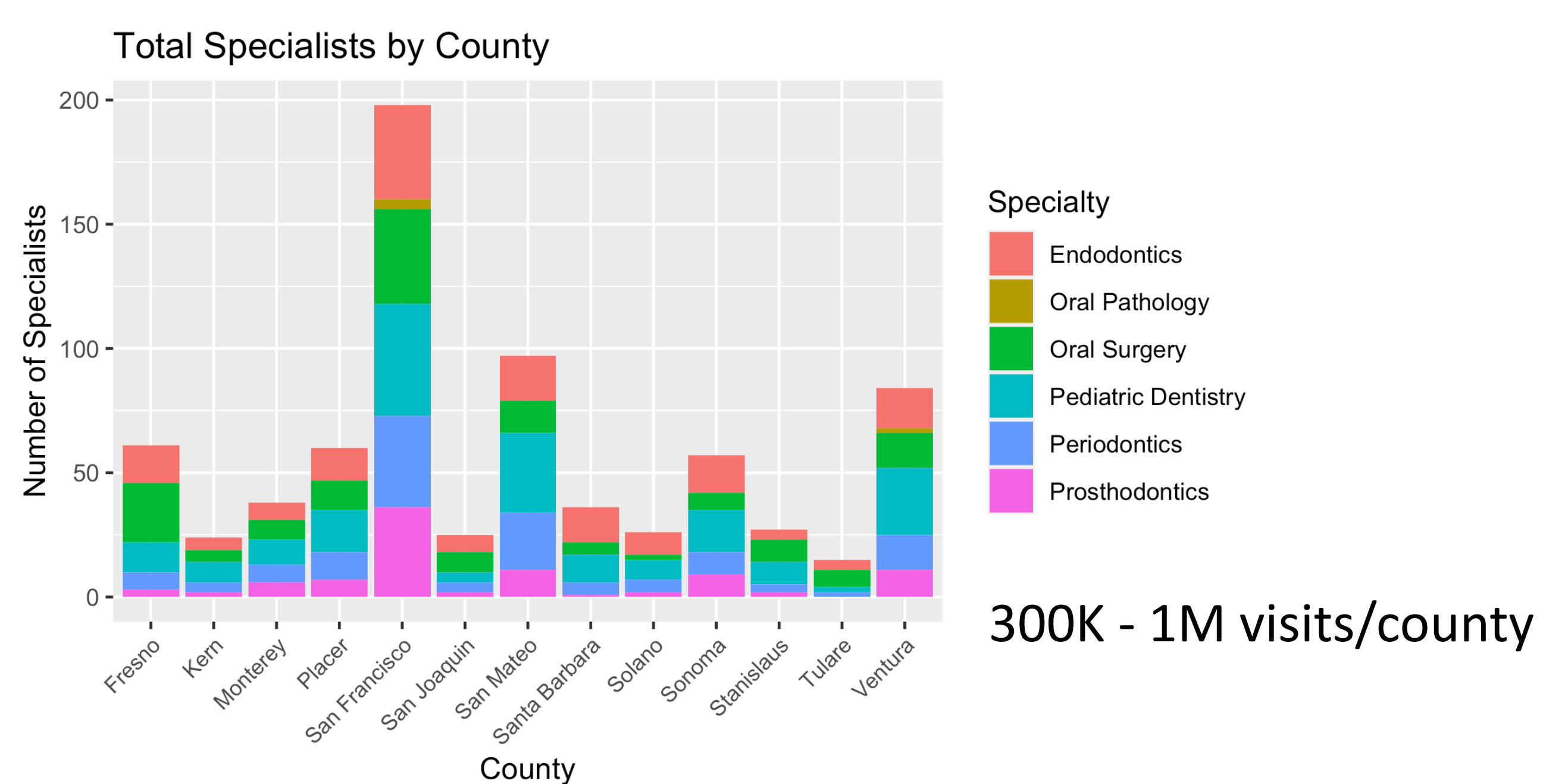
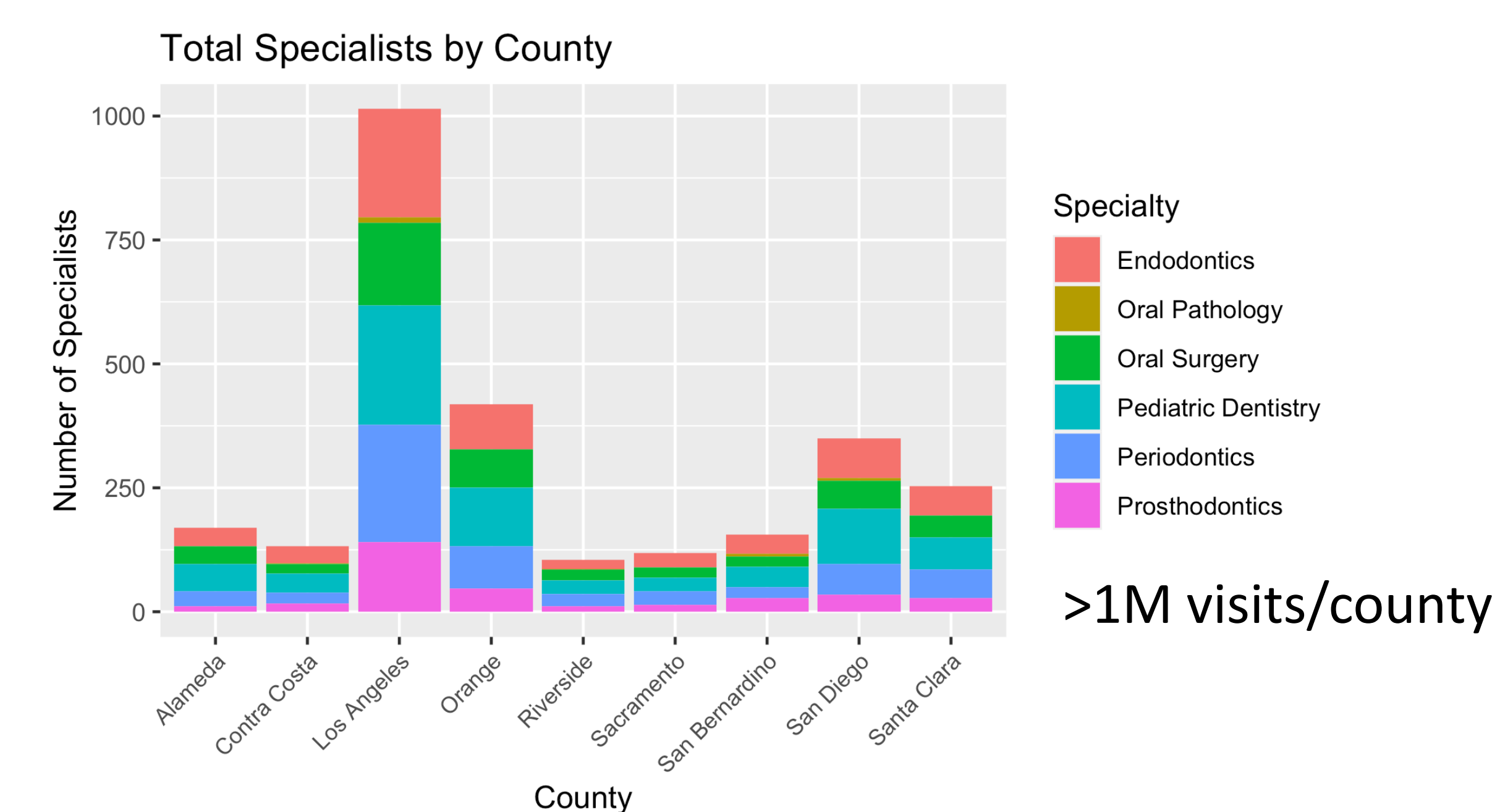
### Materials & Methods

Utilized known datasets from the California Dental Association (includes licensure data, speciality, and location of practice), as well as Medi-Cal enrollment and dental claims data from the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS).

### Results



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### Discussion

~ There is an uneven distribution of dental specialists compared to the density of DentiCal patient visits in each county. While some counties have an overabundance of providers, including specialists, such as Los Angeles, other similar dense populations do not have sufficient access (ie endodontics).

~ Further studies are indicated to understand if the sheer number of providers in high-population counties are indicated. It is possible that the provider-patient ratio is well-above the recommended numbers. Given that previous data (Pourat et al) has indicated that the general provider to patient ratio being 1:5000 being sufficient, this conclusion might be self-evident for counties such as Los Angeles, but not for medium level counties, such as Napa.

~This Medicare claims data only highlights the total number of claims that were filed with Medicare and does not actually represent the total number of patients in the county. This means that these visitations could have been accrued by a smaller number of people, further highlighting the limited reach of the DentiCal program to its intended audience.

~Given that only 15% of dentists are specialists, this study highlights that should the patients who had utilized their insurance coverage need specialty care, this would be the likely access to care that they would have.

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