

National Oral Health Strategy

A Sharing of Perspective from Singapore

By

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SOUTHEAST ASIA





SINGAPORE

Onward Singapore

5.9 million Population (2023)

5.5 million Population

113th most populous country on earth

Republic of Singapore



ASIA

SINGAPORE POPULATION



POPULATION



**TOTAL
POPULATION¹
in 2023**

(as at end-June)



5.92 Mil



5.0 %

growth over
previous year



**RESIDENT
POPULATION²
in 2023**

(as at end-June)



4.15 Mil



1.9 %

growth over
previous year



3.7

in 2023

**OLD-AGE SUPPORT
RATIO**

3.8

in 2022

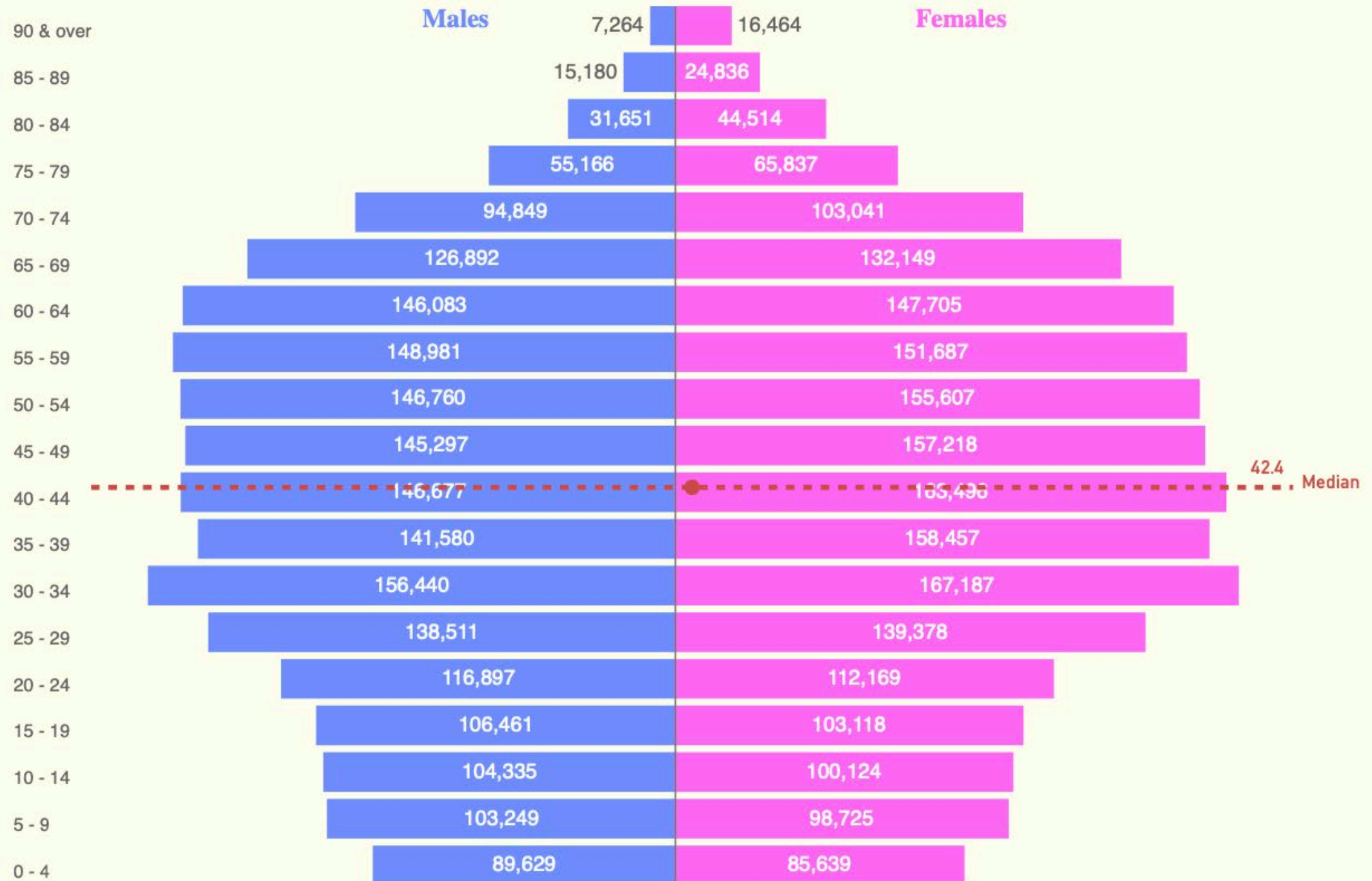
(residents aged 20-64 years
per resident aged 65 years and over)

Age Pyramid of Resident Population

2023

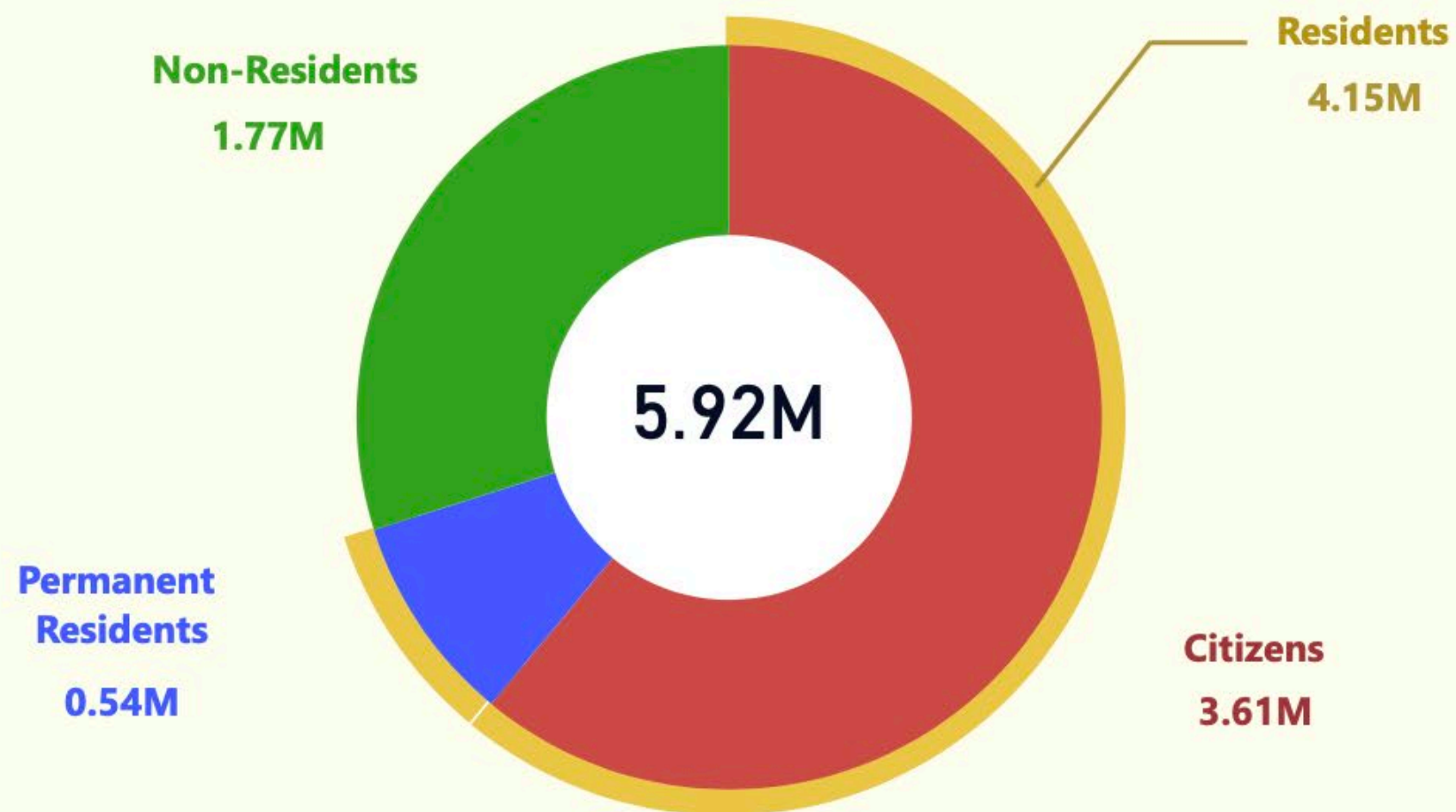


Age Group (Years)



For more information, please refer to the [Population Trends](#) publication.

Total Population as at end June 2023



State of Oral Healthcare in Singapore

Results from the National Oral Health Survey 2019

82.9% of Singaporean adults (21 years old and above) have 21 or more natural teeth.

35.7% of those above 65 years of age having 21 or more natural teeth.

Dental caries experience was highly prevalent, with 85.2% of the population having experienced it at some point and 34.8% having some form of untreated dental caries.

94.1% of the respondents presented moderate– severe gingival inflammation, 41.2% had moderate periodontitis, and 15.7% presented with severe periodontitis.

79.5% of respondents usually seek care in private clinics.

53.9% of respondents visited the dentist at least once a year, while 34.4% visited the dentist only when they experienced a problem with their teeth, mouth and/or dentures.

Cited barriers to regular dental attendance were no perceived need for treatment (55.1%), cost-related concerns (38.5%) and lack of time (15.2%).

The survey highlighted the need to heighten the awareness of common oral diseases and their prevention as well as the utilization of dental subsidy schemes.

Key Oral Health Policies

Aim is to provide oral healthcare that is **Accessible, Affordable and Appropriate.**

Oral health policies align with the broader health objectives of the Ministry.

One key oral health policy is the **National Dental Strategy** - as an overarching policy that guides the delivery of dental services across the public sector, including financing, workforce and capacity considerations.

The dental workforce distribution and various financial subsidies follow suit to support Singaporeans across the life course at different levels of the oral healthcare system.

Oral Health System

1. Dental Workforce / Manpower

- ▶ National University of Singapore (Faculty of Dentistry)
- ▶ Local & Overseas Graduates
- ▶ General Dentists & Dental Specialists
- ▶ Oral Health Therapists & Dental Hygienists
- ▶ Dental Surgery Assistants
- ▶ Dental Technicians

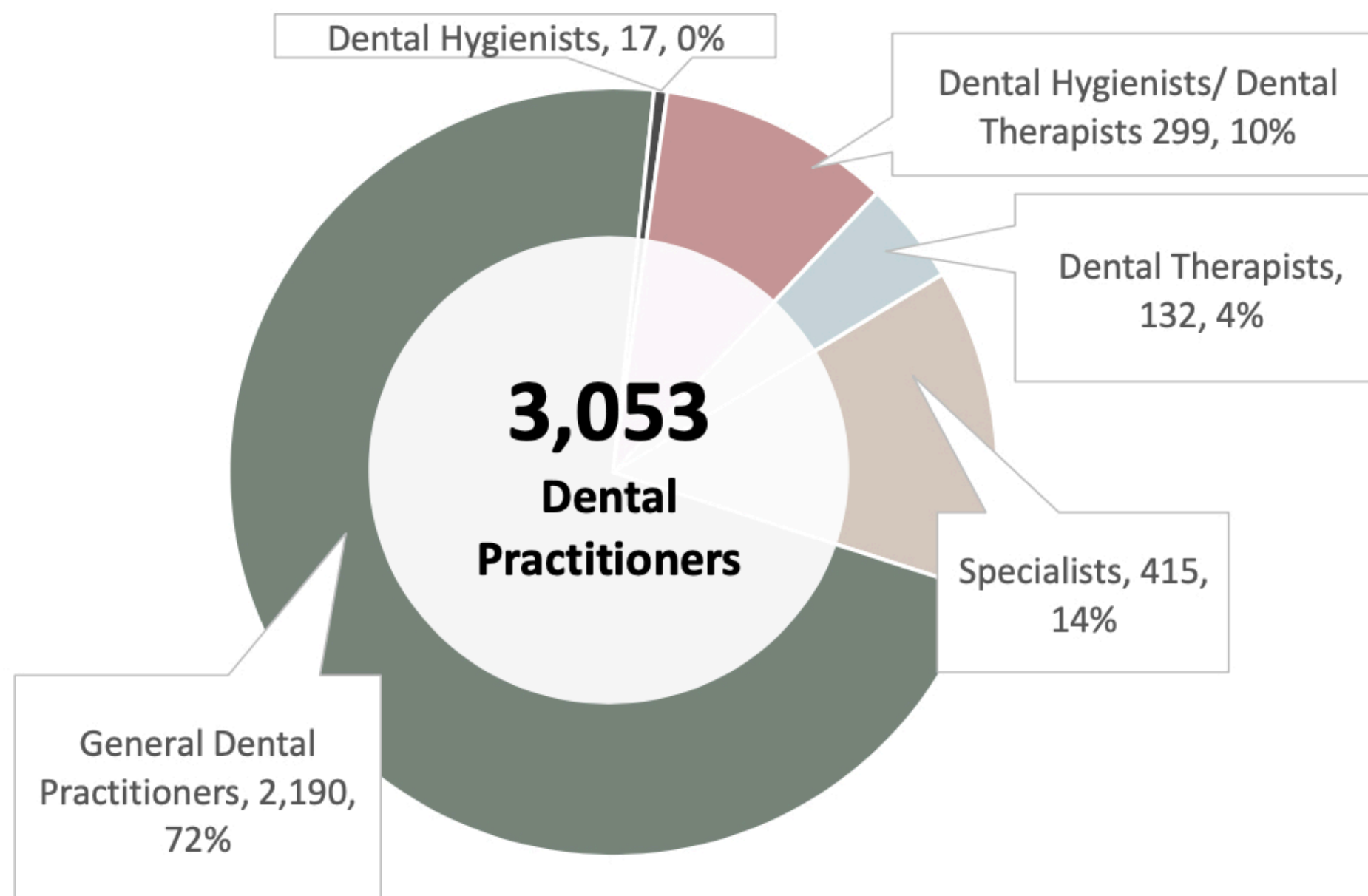
2. Dental Services

- ▶ Private / Public
- ▶ Primary / Tertiary
- ▶ National University Hospital
- ▶ National Dental Centre Singapore
- ▶ Polyclinics
- ▶ School Dental Services / Health Promotion Board
- ▶ Singapore Armed Forces

3. Dental Financing

While personal responsibility towards health remains the fundamental approach in Singapore's healthcare system, the government plays an active role to ensure that healthcare costs remain affordable and accessible.

As of 2022, there were 4.6 dentists to 10,000 people. The increase of dental practitioners* from year to year demonstrated the growing number of dental practitioners who will be able to meet the increasing dental care needs of the expanding population. The total population of Singapore in 2022 was 5,637,000.



As of Sep 2022, the ratio of dentists to population is:
2,605 dentists vs population (**5,637,000**) = **4.6** dentists vs **10,000** people
Source: singstat.gov.sg

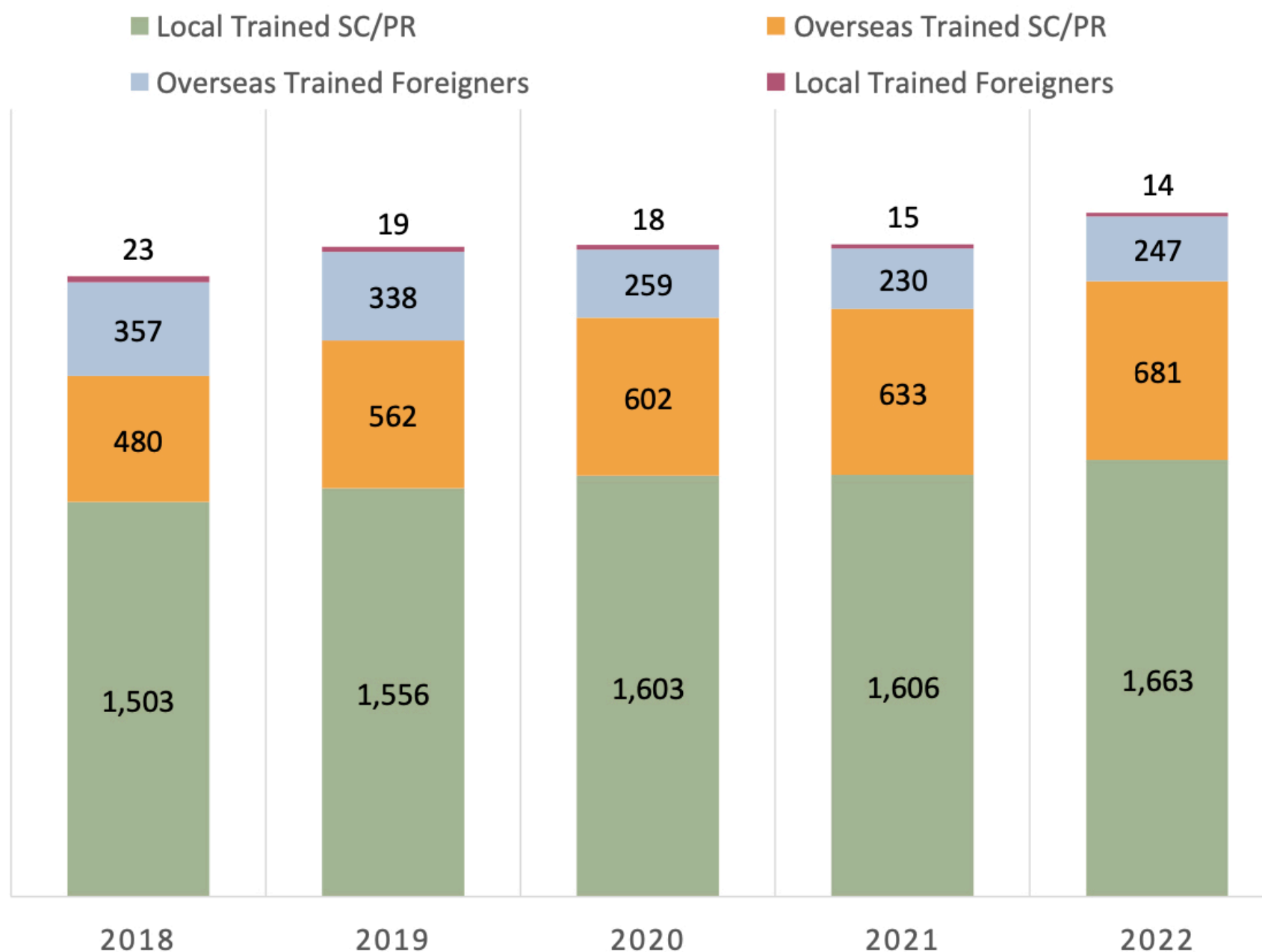
**Dental Practitioner refers to General Dental Practitioners, Dental Specialists and Oral Health Therapists*

Basic Training of Dentists by Country from 2018 to 2022

The percentage of local trained dentists was consistently around 64% in the past 5 years, making up the majority of dentists in Singapore. There were 1,677 locally trained dentists and 928 overseas-trained dentists as at 2022.

The proportion of overseas trained dentists, who are Singapore Citizens and Singapore Permanent Residents, practising in Singapore has been increasing in the past 5 years, from 20% (480 out of the total of 2,363) in 2018 to 26% (681 out of the total of 2,605) in 2022.

The proportion of overseas trained dentists, who are foreigners, practising in Singapore has been decreasing in the past 5 years, from 15% (357) in 2018 to 9% (247) in 2022.



Percentage of Dental Practitioners with valid Practising Certificate by Employment Sector

95% (2,478 out of the total of 2,605) of the registered dentists had valid practising certificates (PCs) and 82% (366 out of the total of 448) of the registered OHTs had valid PCs.

% of Dental Practitioners with valid Practicing Certificate (PC) by Employment sector



**Dental Practitioners who did not indicate Employment details excluded*

Dental Specialists

Number of Dental Specialists from 2018 to 2022

As at 2022, there were 415 Dental Specialists, an increase of 5% from 2021.



Dental Specialists by Specialty & Work Sectors as at 2022



Future Oral Health Strategies

- **Prevention**

- Integration of Oral Health into General Health
 - Smoking Cessation
 - Healthy SG
 - Reduce Sugar Intake
 - Project Silver Screen
 - Improve Oral Health Promotion
 - Increase dental coverage under CHAS

- **Quality & Transparency of Care**

- Dental Risk Assessment
- Clinical Practice Guidelines
- Appropriate Care Guidelines
- Certificate of Competency for Complex Procedures
- Harmonization of Dental Fees

- **Care Integration**

- Vertical integration between Tertiary and Primary Care providers
- Robust Primary Dental Care Network
- Horizontal integration between Public and Private Healthcare

- **Futureproof**

- Digital Dentistry
- Tele-Dentistry & Other Delivery Modes
- Scholarships

Conclusion:

The dental public health landscape is constantly evolving, shaped by changes in the population structure, demand for dental services, innovations in preventive dentistry and treatment procedures and the understanding of the link between oral health and systemic health.

Important to continuously monitor and review our national policies, service delivery models, financing schemes, workforce projections and population health outcomes for a more sustainable, equitable and resilient oral healthcare system.