

10-12-2022

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Recommended Citation

Han, J. and Phan, T. L., "Disparities in Confidence Levels among Parents of Children Seeking Weight Management Treatment" (2022). *Student Papers, Posters & Projects*. Paper 90.
https://jdc.jefferson.edu/student_papers/90

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Disparities in Confidence Levels among Parents of Children Seeking Weight Management Treatment

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Introduction

The prevalence of obesity in children (body mass index \geq 95th percentile for age and sex) between 2-19 years in 2017-2018 was 19.3%, with prevalence being higher among Hispanic children (25.6%) and non-Hispanic Black children (24.2%). Childhood obesity has many health effects, including cardiometabolic disease, pulmonary disease, and mental health problems. It is known that the etiology of childhood obesity is complex and includes not only child lifestyle behaviors, genetic predispositions, and a child's environment, but also family and parent-level factors.

There has been less focus in the literature on how parent confidence can influence a child's success with achieving a healthy weight. The few studies that do assess parent confidence in managing their child's weight suggests that there may be racial/ethnic disparities, as well as differences in parent confidence based on their own ability to implement lifestyle changes and their interactions with their child's healthcare provider.

Objectives

- 1) To evaluate racial and ethnic disparities in confidence levels among parents of children seeking weight management treatment.
- 2) To evaluate disparities in confidence levels among parents of children seeking weight management treatment based on parent weight status.
- 3) To evaluate the association between parent confidence levels and parent perceptions of their weight management provider.

Methods

Participants and Design

- This was a prospective cohort study of families of children with obesity between 4-12 years of age at their initial visit to a pediatric weight management clinic. Children with genetic/endocrine disorders or medications that would predispose them to excessive weight gain were excluded.
- We present secondary analysis of baseline cross-sectional data from this prospective cohort study.

Measures and Analysis

- We administered the validated Psychosocial Assessment Tool (PAT), adapted for children with obesity, to parents.
- We focused on four questions assessing parent confidence levels on a 4-item Likert scale

14. How certain are you that you (or other caregivers) can... (✓ one box for each question)	Not at all	Somewhat	Fairly	Very
a. Find the time for her / his appointments (ex: time off, child care, arranging travel)?				
b. Follow through on her / his weight management treatment plan?				
c. Cope with difficult or upsetting changes that we will have to make?				
d. Handle your child being upset about the changes he/she has to make?				

- The adapted PAT included a section on parental beliefs, including an item about how helpful the parent believed their weight management provider would be.
- The adapted PAT included a section for parent-reported height and weight for calculation of parental BMI.
- Data on the child's age, sex, race and ethnicity, height, and weight were extracted from the child's EHR.
- We conducted chi-square analyses to examine associations between responses to confidence questions and the following categorical variables (child race/ethnicity, parent obesity, and parent belief about their weight management providers).

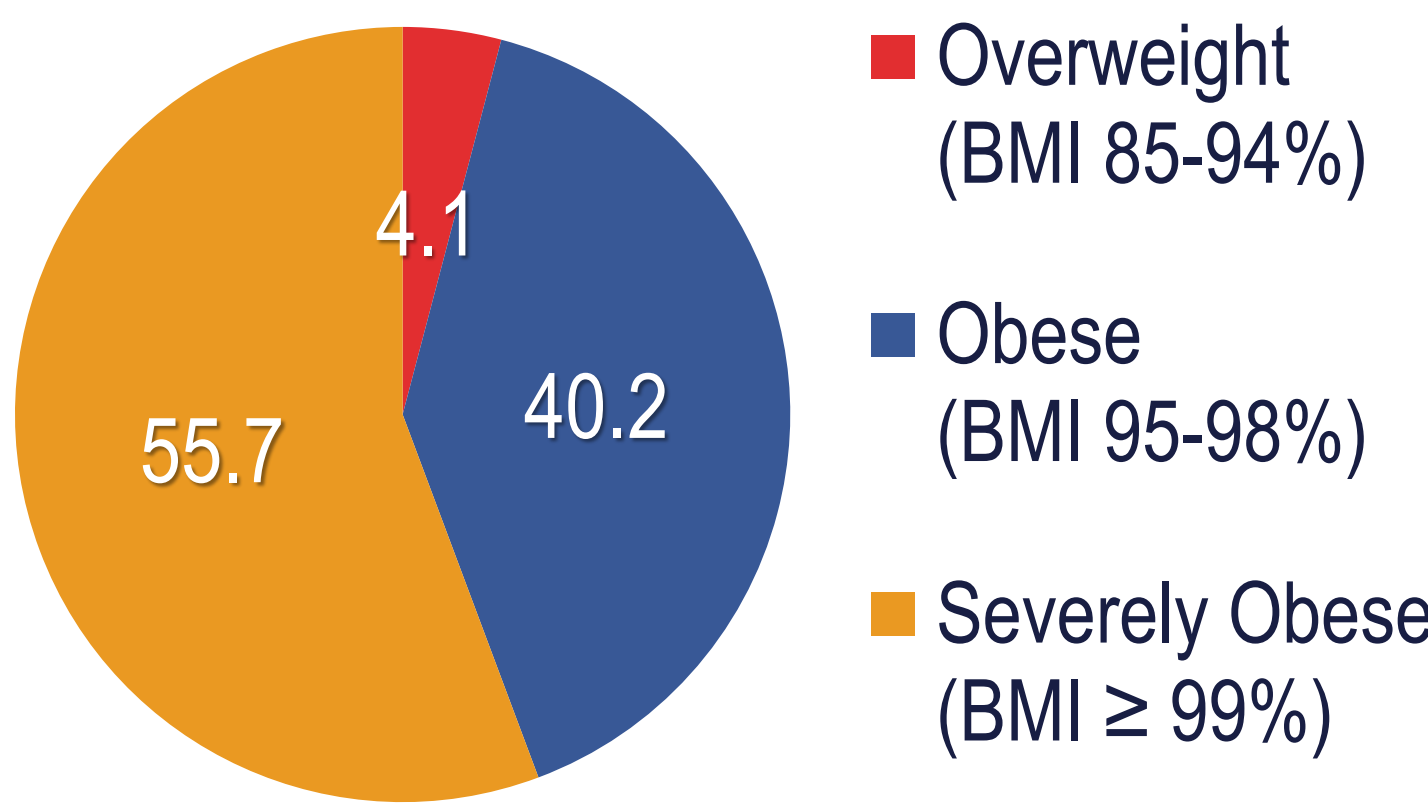
Patient Demographics

Demographics

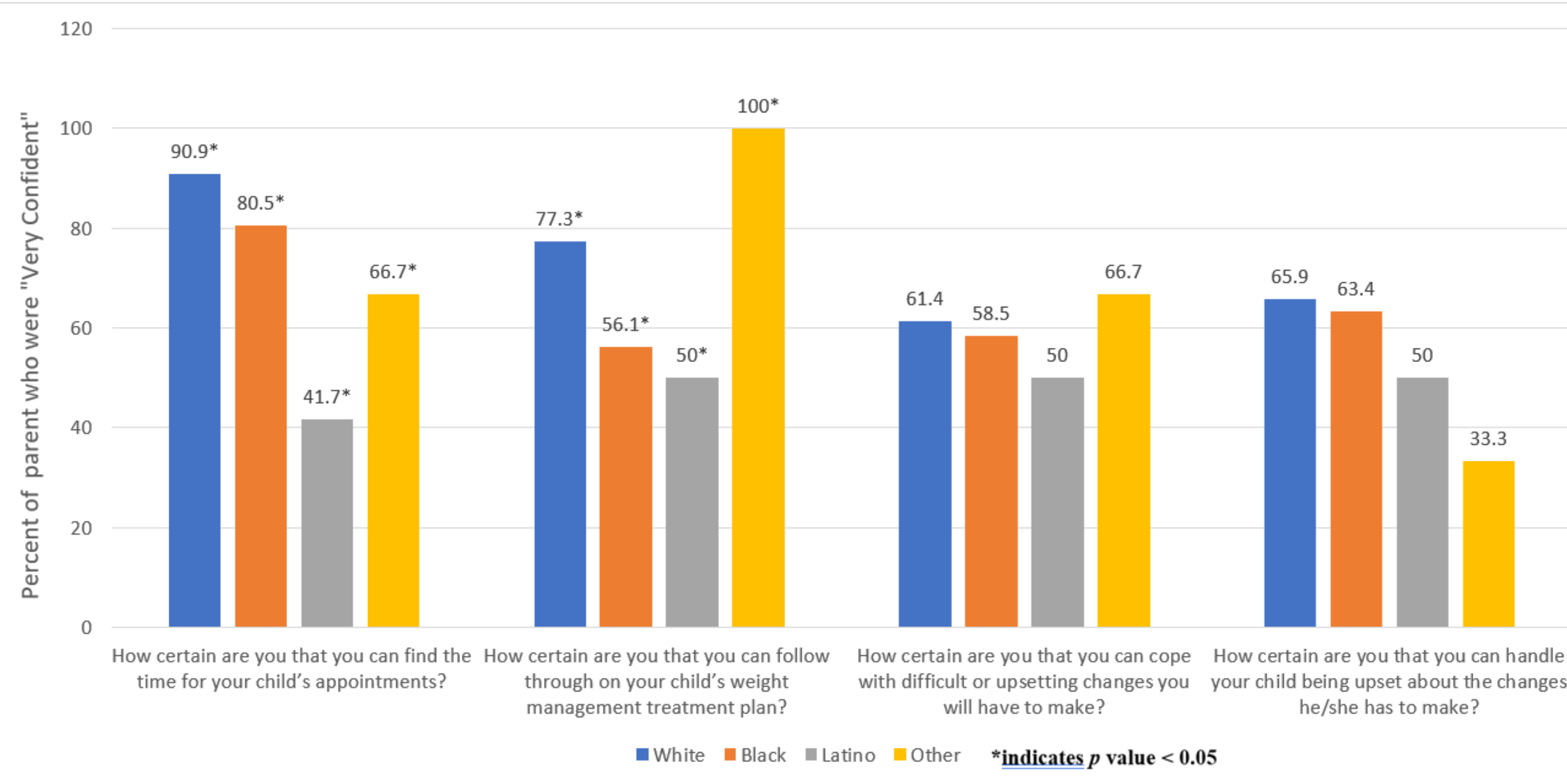
Male [N (%)]	57 (58.8)
Race [N (%)]	
Asian	2 (2.1)
Black	36 (37.1)
Other	9 (9.3)
White	43 (44.3)
Multiracial	7 (7.2)
Hispanic [N (%)]	11 (11.3)
Medicaid [N (%)]	42 (43.3)
Age [years, mean (SD)]	9.7 (2.1)

Weight Status

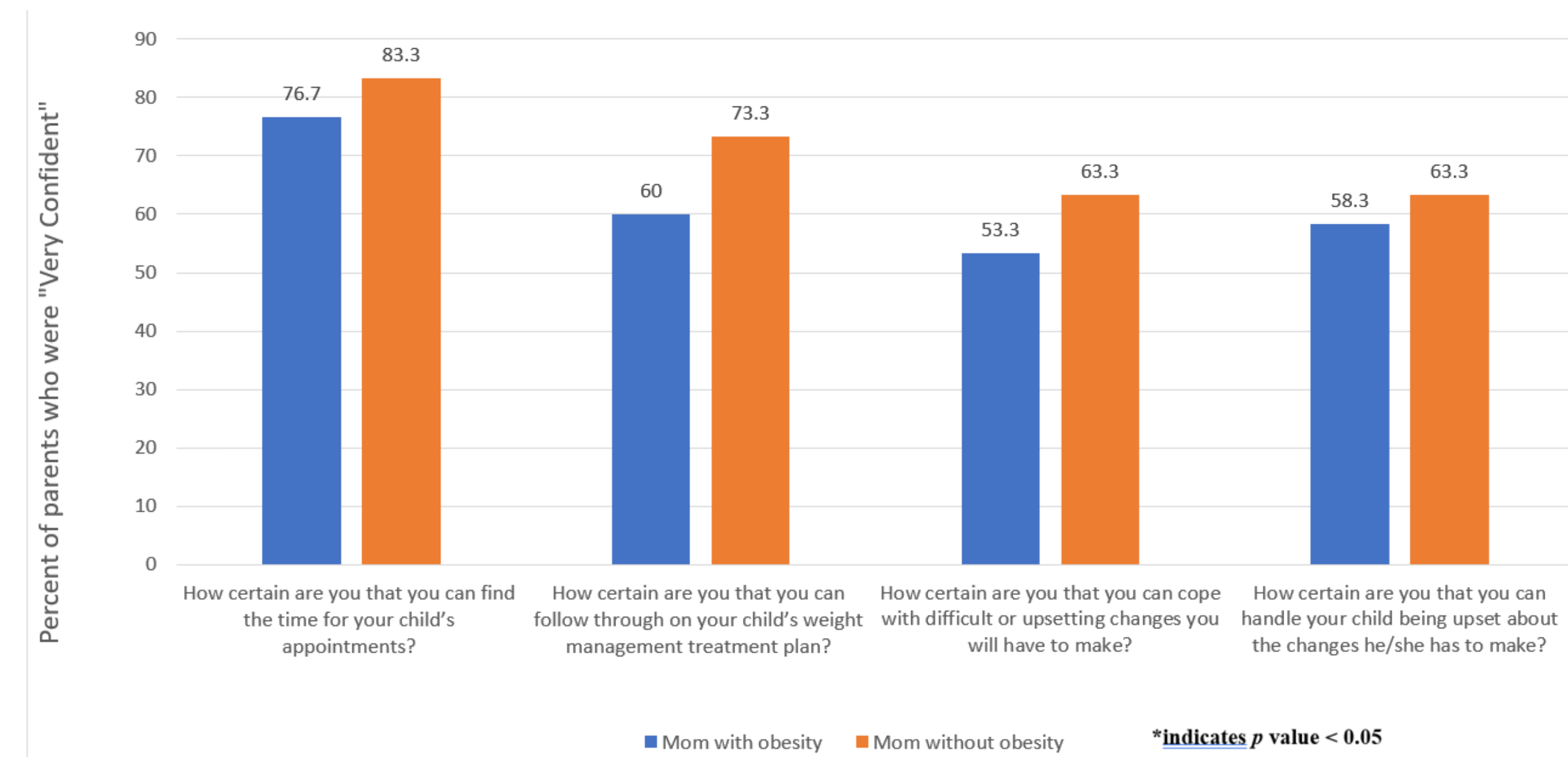
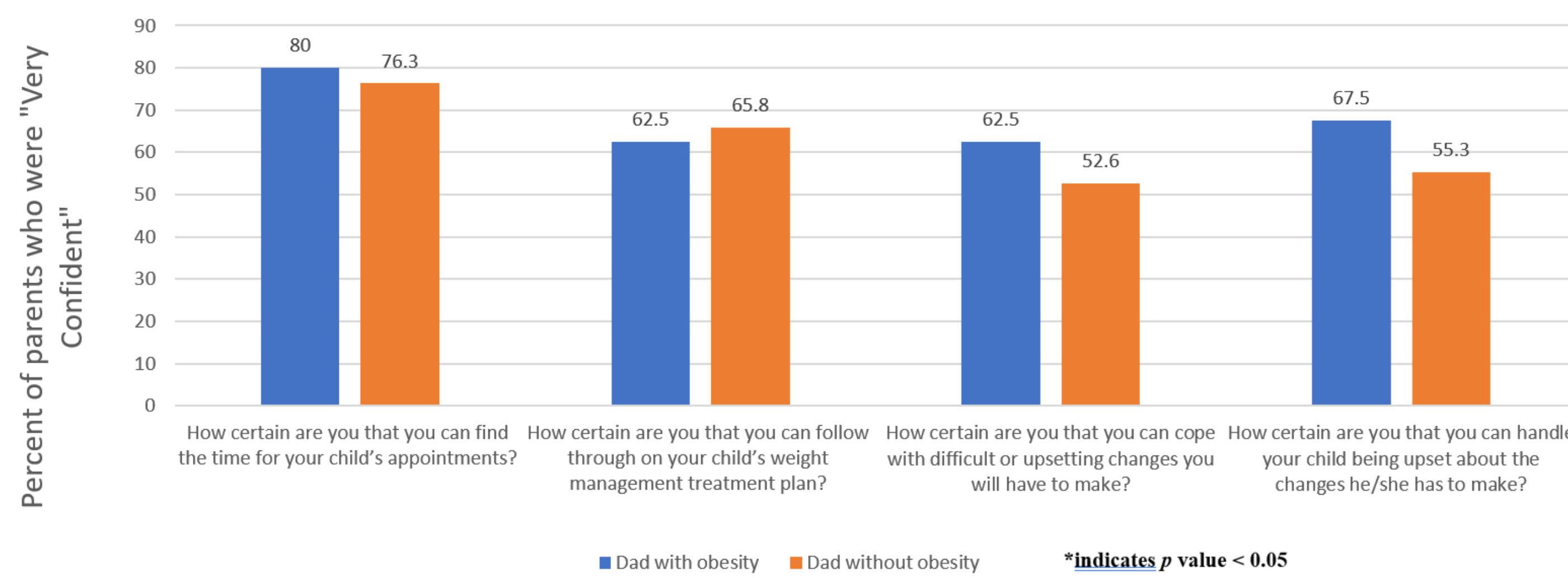
BMI-z [mean (SD)]	2.4 (0.5)
BMI percentile [mean (SD)]	98.7 (1.5)



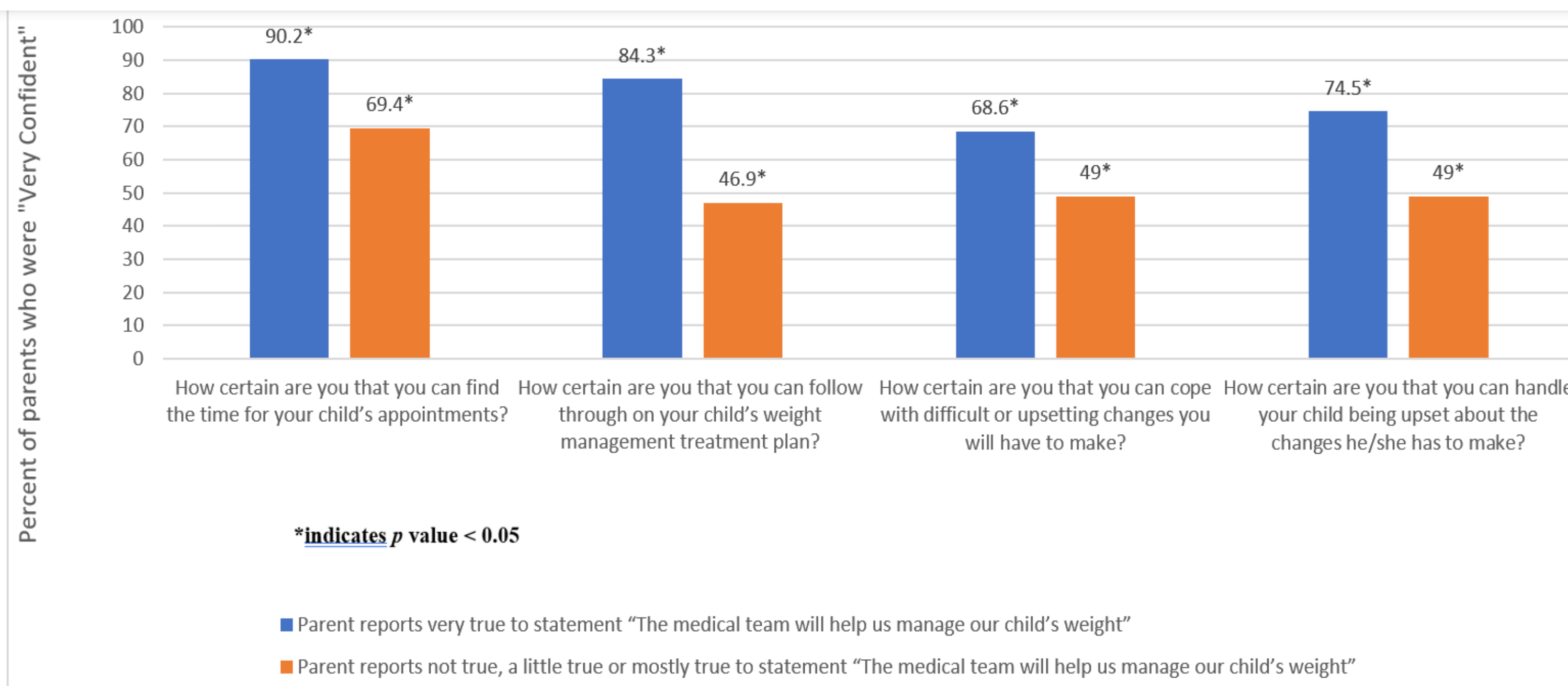
Aim 1: Disparities in Parent Confidence by Child Race/Ethnicity



Aim 2: Disparities in Parent Confidence by Parent Weight Status



Aim 3: Association between Parent Confidence and Parent Beliefs about Weight Management Provider



Conclusions

- Parents of White children were more confident than parents of Black and Hispanic children in how certain they could find time for their child's weight appointments.
- Providing resources or adapting clinic schedules to accommodate family schedules may be important, especially to ensuring that Black and Latino families are able to attend their visits.
- Parents who believed their weight management provider would be helpful were more likely to be very confident across all domains of their child's weight management care.
- A healthy, supportive parent-provider relationship is critical to increasing parent confidence in their ability to manage their child's weight and follow through with weight management treatment.
- Future studies should evaluate other factors that may be important to the parent-provider relationship and the impact not only on parent confidence levels but weight outcomes.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by:
• Academic Pediatric Association Research in Academic Pediatrics Initiative on Diversity Award (PI Phan, sponsor NIDDK)

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