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Background

- There are approximately 1300 people on a given day who have experienced homelessness in the city of Detroit, MI¹
- Sheltered beds within the 24 homeless shelters in the city were drastically cut in half during the COVID-19 pandemic due to concerns of overcrowding perpetuating SARS-CoV-2 outbreaks, forcing many people to live unsheltered and on the streets
- **It was estimated in February 2021 that only 27% of clients living in homeless shelters in Detroit received the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, though it was available³**
- **The work of Street Medicine Organizations (SMO) facilitate and enhance the direct provision of health care to unsheltered homeless where they live on the street²**

Methods

- **Target population included individuals who were unsheltered – defined as those living on the streets, encampment sites, abandoned buildings in the city of Detroit**

COVID-19 INFECTION PREVENTION BUNDLE

Hygiene kits, which included masks, hand sanitizer and gloves were distributed thrice weekly at churches and encampment sites	10 hand washing stations were built throughout the city by SMO due to drastically limited access to hand hygiene
Education sessions were provided every SMO run. Targeted COVID-19 informational pamphlets were distributed, regarding transmission, symptomatology and vaccination	Johnson & Johnson [®] vaccinations were provided at patient's location on the streets in April 2021 over a period of 4 days

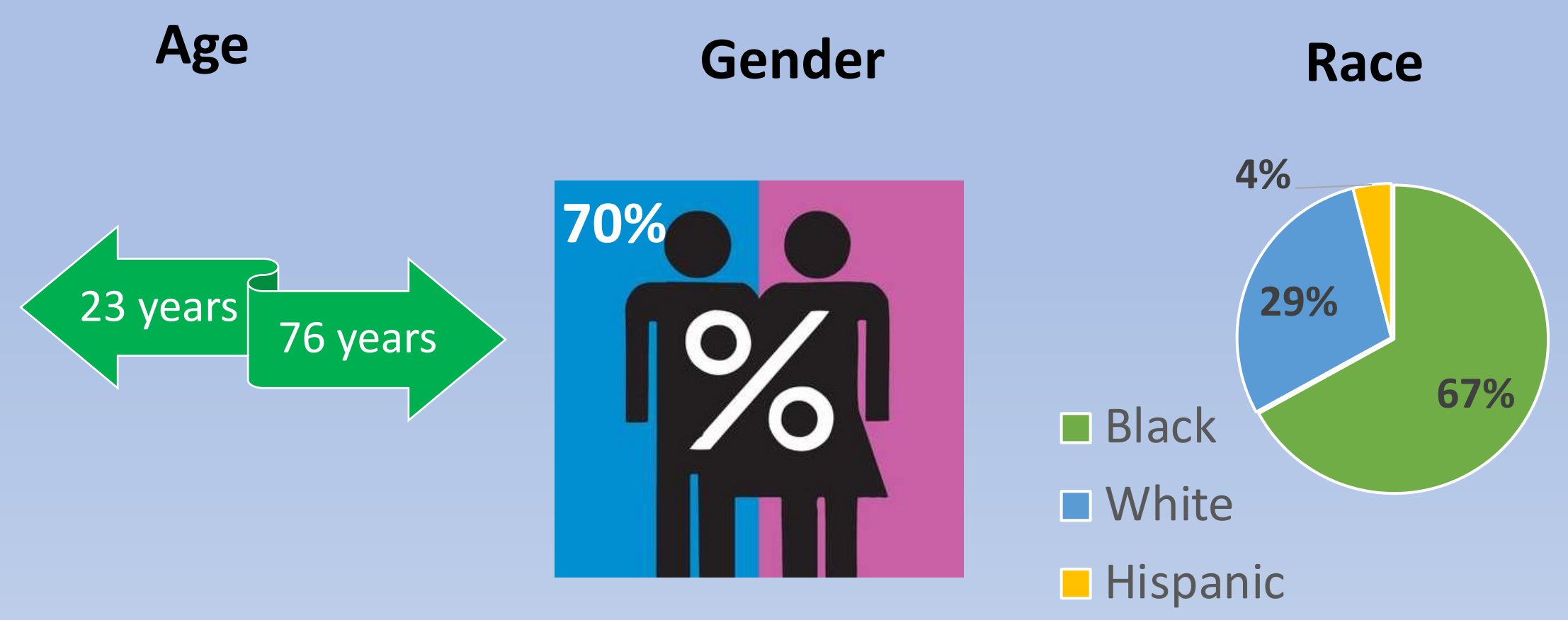
OBJECTIVE

To describe amongst the unsheltered homeless in the city of Detroit:

- 1) **Infection prevention and control bundles to reduce transmission of SARS-CoV-2**
- 2) **COVID-19 vaccination dissemination strategies**

Results

- SMO prioritized a 60 square mile range within the city of Detroit
- Approximately 500 persons from the months of April 2020 – April 2021 were provided care
- Patient demographics were collected through electronic medical records which were accessed during SMO visits
- 2000 hygiene kits were distributed throughout intervention period
- 128 individuals were offered the vaccine, 91 individuals accepted the vaccine (71%)
- Demographics for vaccinated individuals were noted as below
- Zero patients who were vaccinated were hospitalized for COVID-19 or developed adverse vaccine effects causing hospitalization from April 2021 – February 2022



Conclusions

- Individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness face unique challenges to accessing timely medical care, which was further exacerbated during the pandemic
- In this observational, noncomparative study, we described a focused organization's approach to reaching individuals who have very limited lack of access to necessary measures needed to prevent the spread and severity of diseases of SARS-CoV-2
- The utilization of established SMO provides a trusted community resource to bridge gap in healthcare disparities

Future Direction

- Improve targeted healthcare assessments, vaccinations and healthcare screenings in patients experiencing unsheltered homelessness
- Standardize inpatient hospital consults and improve outpatient follow up on street runs
- Compare data on vaccination uptake between sheltered and unsheltered individuals to assess gaps in vaccine uptake

References

1. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2020
2. Street medicine institute (streetmedicine.org)
3. Meehan AA, Yeh M, Gardner A, et al. COVID-19 Vaccine Acceptability Among Clients and Staff of Homeless Shelters in Detroit, Michigan, February 2021. *Health Promotion Practice*. 2022;23(1):35-41. doi:[10.1177/15248399211049202](https://doi.org/10.1177/15248399211049202)

