

Assessing Barriers Among HIV, Substance Use Disorders, and Trans Patients During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Alla Yousif of University of Colorado School of Medicine

Christeebella Akpala of Marshall University School of Medicine

Luke Patten, M.S. of University of Colorado Center of Innovative Design and Analysis

John-Paul Bettencourt, D.O. of Fenway Health in Boston, MA

BACKGROUND

- COVID-19's effects on the health of vulnerable populations (i.e. racial and ethnic minority groups) are still emerging; however, current data suggest a disproportionate burden of illness and death among groups with substance use disorders (SUD), HIV/AIDS and the transgender community.
- The widening of healthcare disparities in the setting of COVID-19, makes it important to explore the new implicit and explicit barriers faced by vulnerable populations in accessing healthcare during this time

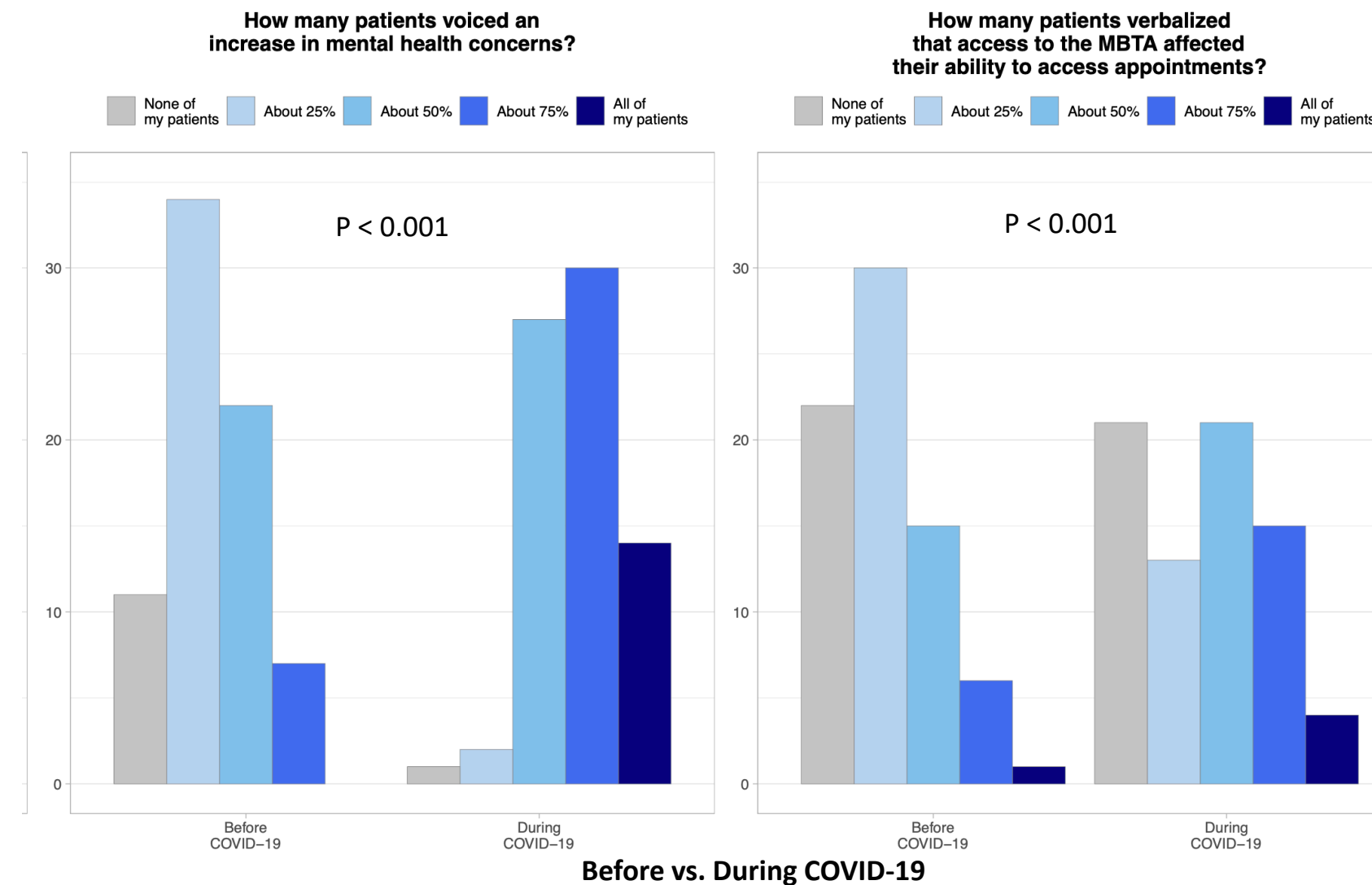
OBJECTIVES

- To explore socioeconomic barriers by surveying healthcare providers at Fenway Health about the impacts of COVID-19 on their patient's healthcare access.
- To create avenues to mitigate barriers that widen the health disparities for vulnerable patients, especially in a public health crisis.

METHODOLOGY

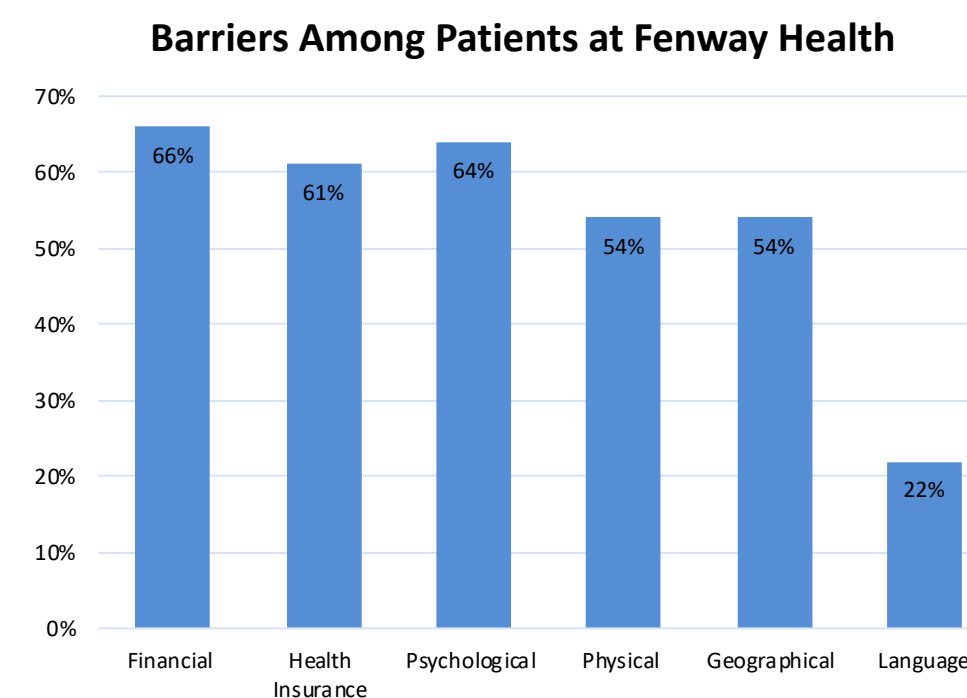
- Cross-sectional pilot study
- Sample: Fenway Health Providers & Staff
- Measure: Barriers to healthcare access
 - Self-administered
 - Qualitative and quantitative questions
- Procedure: Survey links were sent via email
- Statistical analysis: Z-test, Fisher's exact test

RESULTS



Significant correlation with frequency of outcomes reported when comparing "before" and "during" COVID-19 ($p < 0.001$).

My patients/clients are informed of the resources available to them under the CARES Act.	
Strongly Disagree	15 (20.3%)
Disagree	21 (28.4%)
Unsure	31 (41.9%)
Agree	7 (9.5%)
Strongly Agree	0 (0%)



Frequency of barrier types reported were significantly different ($p < 0.001$).

CONCLUSION

- It is evident that a lot of work needs to be done to facilitate efficient transportation, provide mental health services, and make appointments more convenient.
- Most providers identified a lack of education and understanding among their patients to access resources under the CARES Act.
- Financial barriers were the most common and language barriers were the least common.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Appropriate educational tools that Fenway Health can use to educate their patients about the CARES Act. Educational materials such as brochures, pamphlets, and leaflets,.
- Addition of CARES Act link to the patient portal
- Proposal to provide transportation vouchers to patients with no transportation
- Propose an increase in mental health screenings during COVID-19 & other public health crisis

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