

Experiences of Discrimination Among People Living with HIV in Ontario

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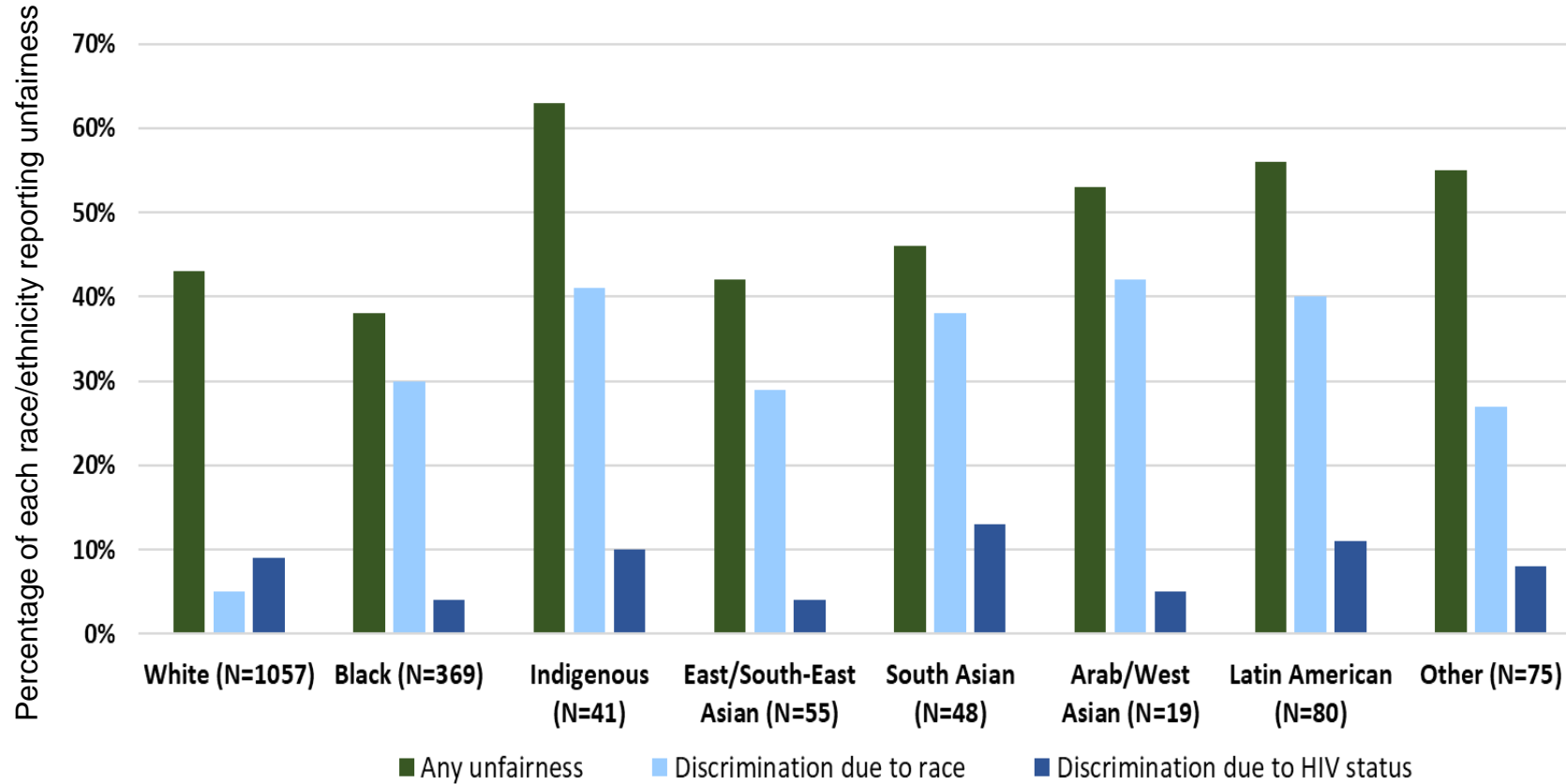
Background/Methods

- The Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN) Cohort Study (OCS) is a community-governed longitudinal study of people receiving HIV care at 15 clinics in Ontario.
- This tool was adapted from the Major Experiences of Discrimination Tool (Williams, 1997) and included in the OCS questionnaire for all participants starting in January 2020.
- Participants were asked about experiences of unfairness in different settings and then asked if they attribute those experiences to discrimination by various aspects of their identity, including race and HIV status.
- There were 1811 respondents (60% White, 21% Black, 5% Latin American, 3% East/South-East Asian, 2% Indigenous, 3% South Asian.)
- The median age of the participants was 54.





Results: Self-reported cases of unfairness and discrimination.

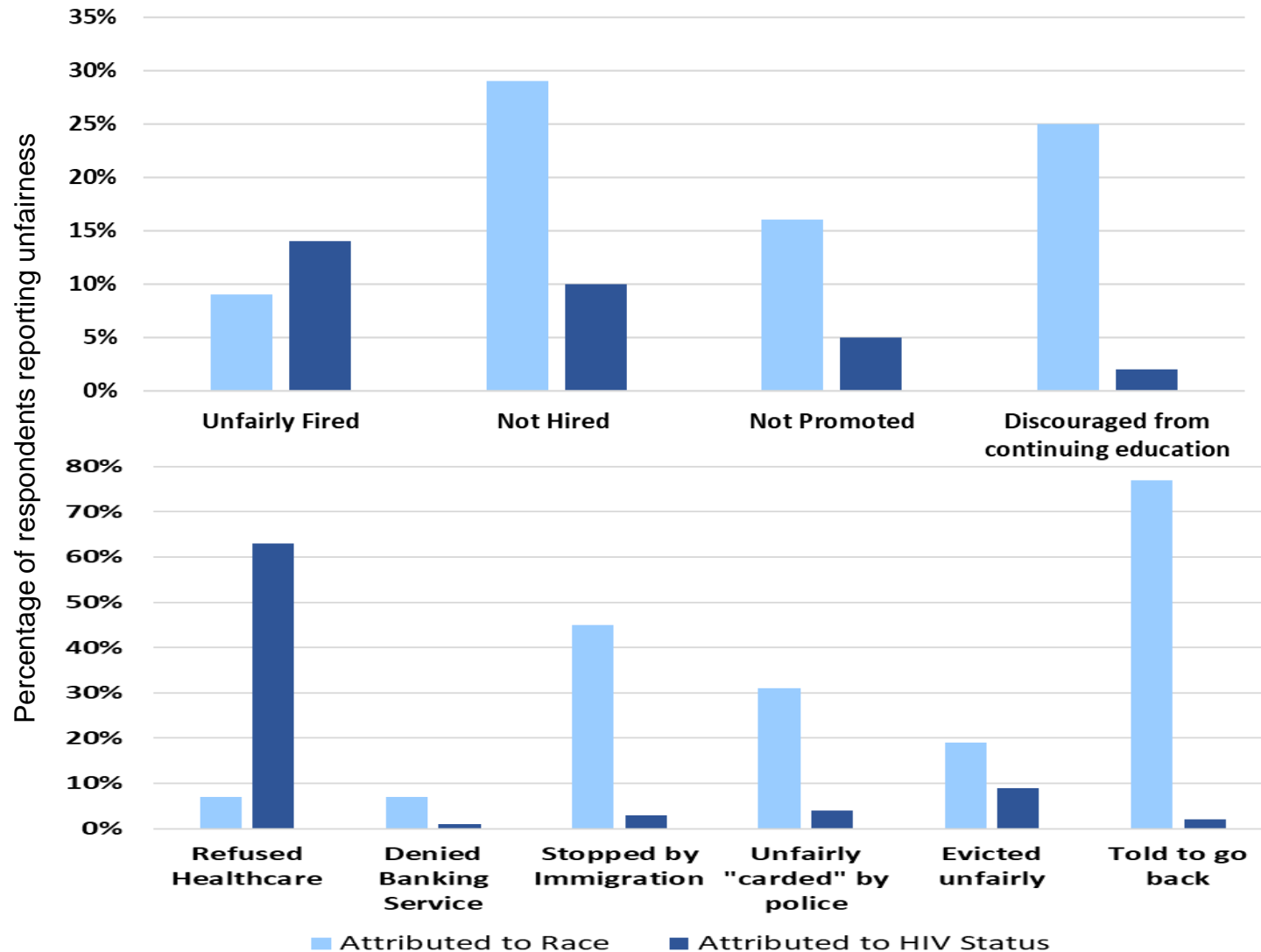


- 44% of respondents reported that they had experienced some type of unfairness.
- 36% of these having had experienced racial discrimination and 18% having experienced discrimination attributed to their HIV status.
- Discrimination by race and HIV status were most frequently reported.





Results: Unfairness and discrimination experienced in structural settings



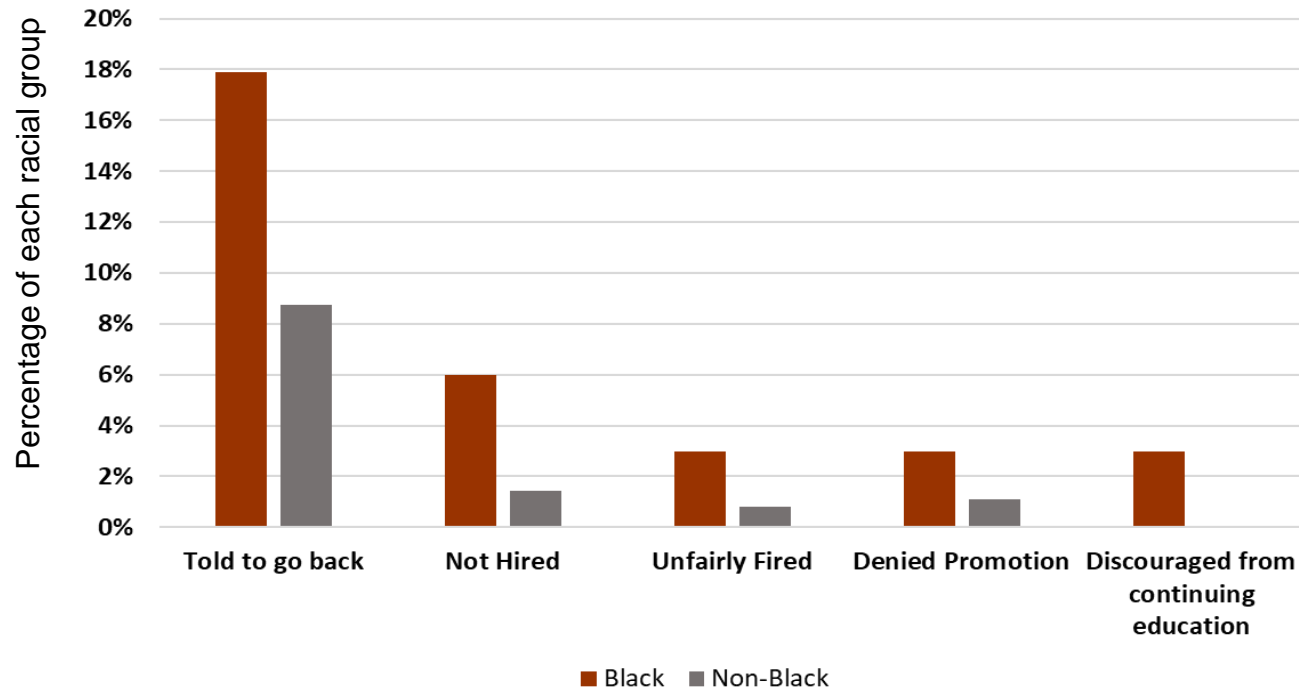
- 9% of participants reported that they had been unfairly denied employment with 29% of them attributing it to their race/ethnicity.
- Racial discrimination is more evident in community and institutional settings e.g. interactions with police, immigrants being told to go back to where they came from, being denied employment or promotion.
- Discrimination due to HIV status was particularly evident as a reason for refusal of healthcare. 63% of those who were refused healthcare attributed it their HIV status
- 77% of participants who attributed being stopped by immigration to their race/ethnicity and 88% of those who attributed being carded by police to the same belonged to racialized groups.





Results: Unfairness and discrimination experienced in community settings.

Discrimination Attributed to Race



Conclusion

People living with HIV (PLWH) experience unfairness and discrimination in employment, interactions with police and others and in accessing healthcare services. The effects of discrimination are multi-faceted and can impact the overall well-being of individuals. In addition to the effects of HIV stigmatization, PLWH experience financial insecurity, isolation, xenophobia, and negative mental and physical health outcomes. Through an intersectional lens, we recognize that people living with HIV have many identities that make them vulnerable to discrimination.

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- Black people reported the most racial discrimination in employment/school settings - accounting for 50% of those who were unfairly fired or not hired and 62% of those discouraged from continuing their education because of their race/ethnicity.

