

Experiences of Discrimination for Indigenous Participants in the OHTN Cohort Study (OCS)

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Conflict of Interest

- None to declare

Land Acknowledgment

- I acknowledge that the land on which we work and meet today is on the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat (Wendake-Nionwentsïo) Nations.





What is the OHTN Cohort Study (OCS)?

Study administered by the Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN) with funding from the Ministry of Health:

- Community governed open longitudinal cohort study of people living with HIV,
- >8000 participants since 1995,
- 15 clinics in Ontario,
- Clinical data and questionnaire data,
- >4000 questionnaires collected 2020-21.

All studies on Indigenous participants are reviewed by the OCS Indigenous Data Governance Circle.





OCS expands to assess experiences of discrimination

- The Major Experiences of Discrimination tool was added to the OCS questionnaire in 2020.
 - Tool was adapted from Williams Major Experiences of Discrimination (1996)
 - Changes of language for Canadian context (eg. carding)
 - Addition of HIV as a reason for discrimination
 - Addition of context for experience of discrimination in stores or pharmacies

Participant characteristics

- Indigenous respondents (n=100) completed the OCS survey between January 2020 and December 2021;
- 44% First Nations, 14% Metis, 12% Other (e.g., mixed identity), 33% missing specific FN/I/M;
- 63% Male, 35% Female, 2% Two-Spirit.



Two-part Question Design

Part 1 - Unfairness

Has a health care provider (including pharmacist) ever refused you care or service?

- No (0)
- Yes (1)
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

Part 2 - Discrimination

If yes, What do you think was the reason(s) for this experience? Check all that apply

- Your ancestry, race or ethnicity (1)
- Your gender (1)
- Your age (1)
- Your religion (1)
- Your sexual orientation (1)
- Your education or income level (1)
- A disability (1)
- Your HIV status (1)
- Other (1)
- Don't know (88)
- Prefer not to answer (99)





Types of discrimination included

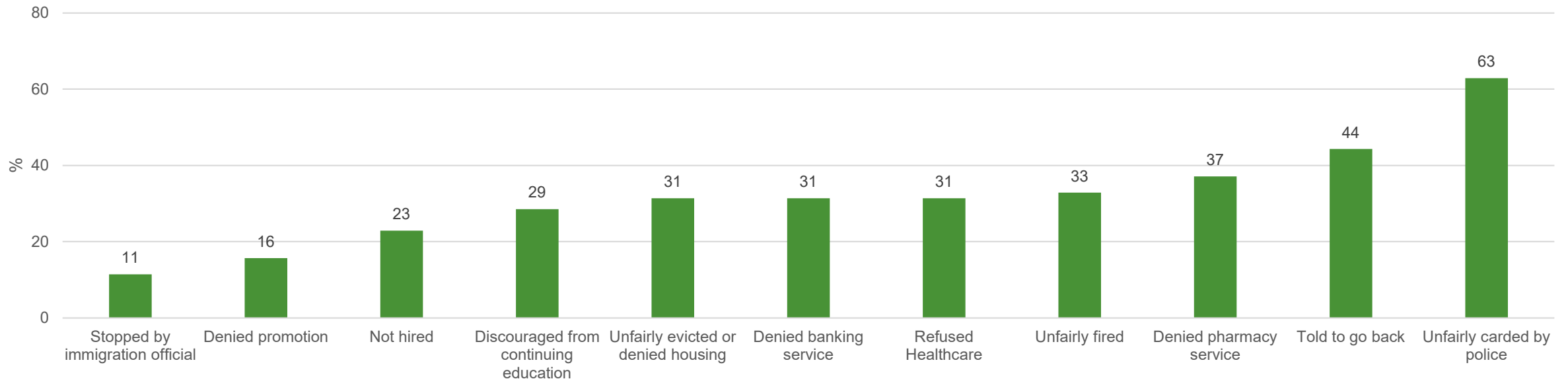
- Refusal of healthcare
- Denied entry to store or pharmacy
- Carded or stopped by police
- Evicted, denied housing
- Denied banking
- Fired
- Discouraged in school
- Told to “go back to where you come from”
- Stopped by immigration
- Not hired
- Denied promotion



Results: Self-reported unfairness

- **70%** of participants experienced any form of unfairness
- The most common forms include being carded, told to go back, and denied store / pharmacy service

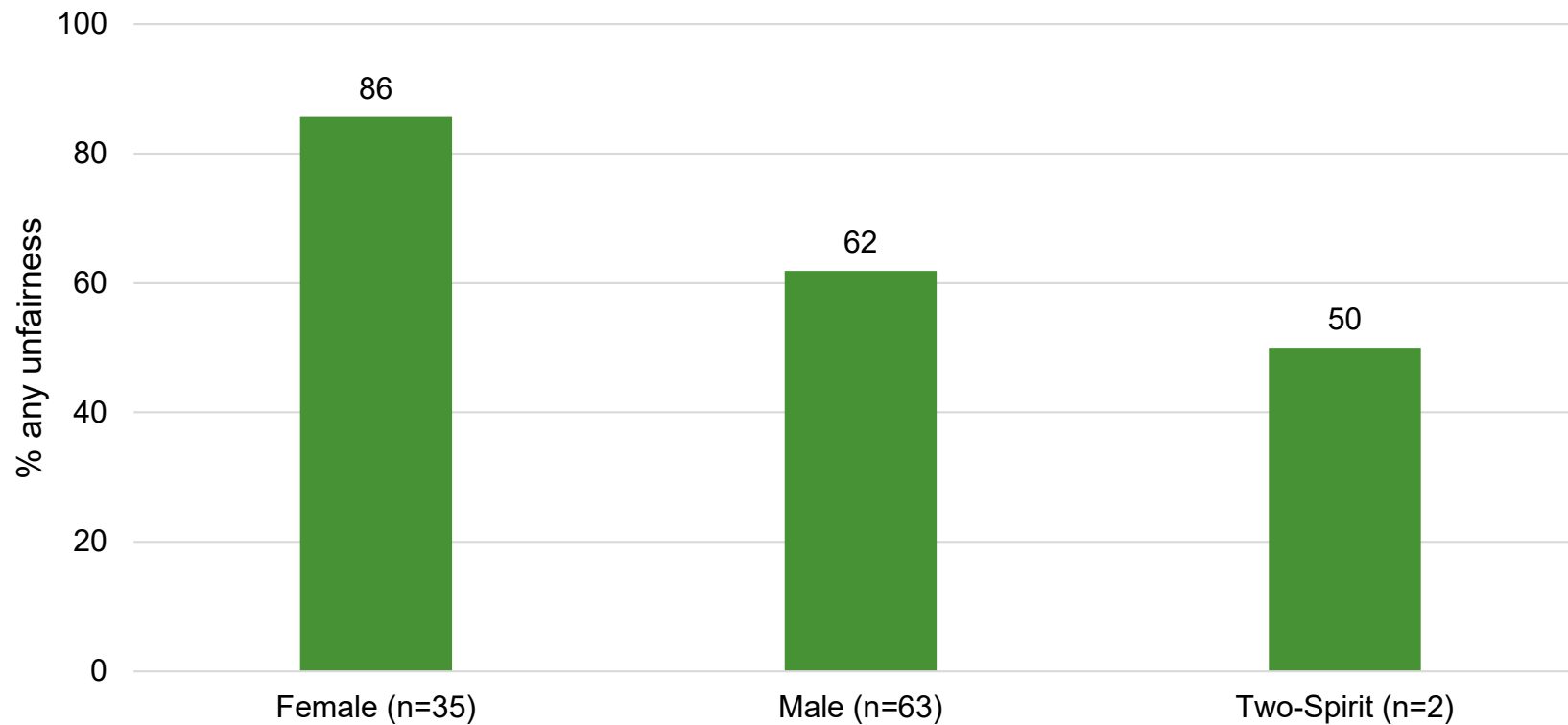
Type of unfairness (n=70)





Results: Gender

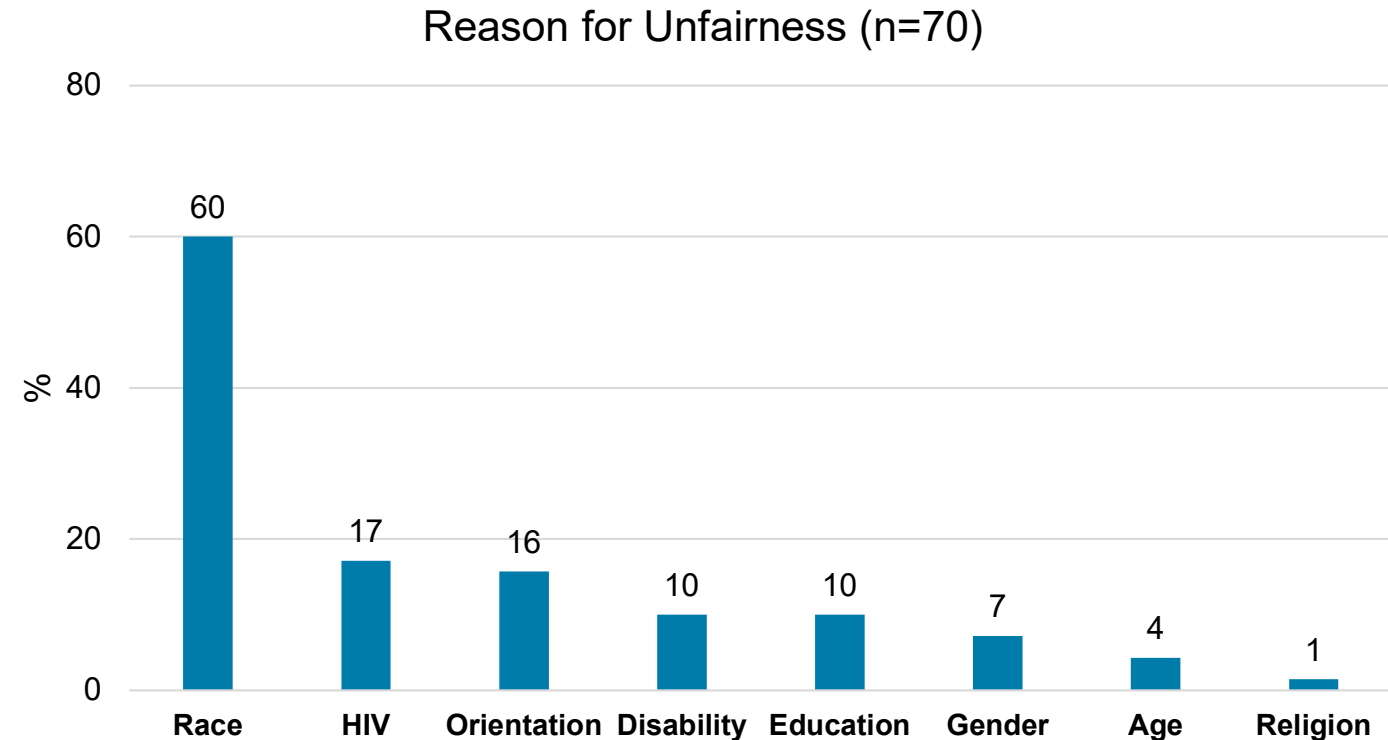
- Females had more experiences of unfairness compared to males and Two-Spirit people (85.7% vs 61.9% vs 50.0%, $p=0.023$)





Self-reported unfairness and discrimination

- Racial discrimination was the most common, reported by 60% of individuals who faced unfairness
- Discrimination due to HIV status (17%) and orientation (16%) were also commonly reported
- Discrimination due to age, religion, education level, and disability was less common ($\leq 10\%$ of participants who experienced unfairness)

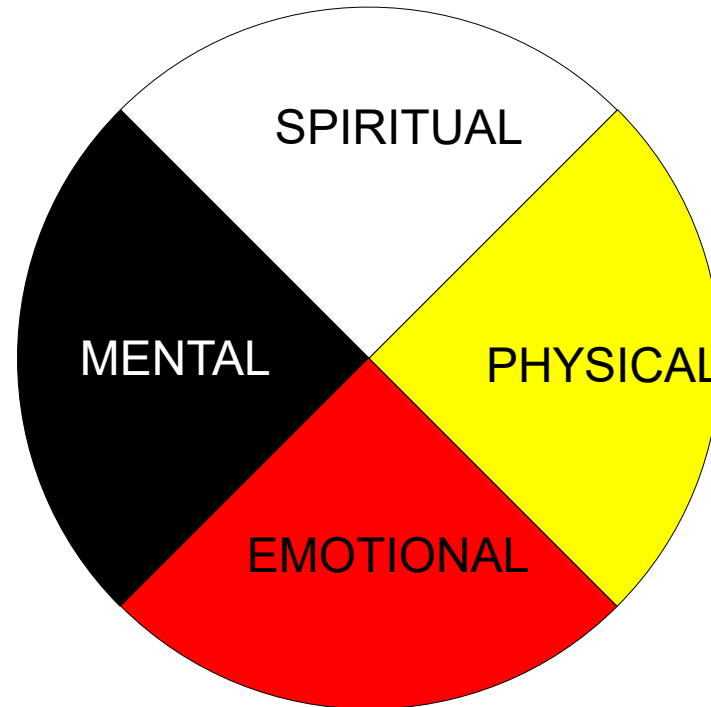




Understanding wholistic experiences due to discrimination

Cultural service use
Social support

Education attainment
Depression (PHQ-4)
Any mental health diagnosis



Gender, orientation, employment, income
Self-rated general health
Currently on ARV therapy
CD4 count
Viral load
PCS-12

Loneliness
MCS-12





Methods - Measures

Depressive Symptoms

- Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9)
- PHQ-4 summary score used for this analysis¹
 - Cutoff score for depression is 3

PCS-12 and MCS-12

- Physical and mental health summary measures from the SF-12
- Higher score indicates better physical and mental health, respectively

Social Support

- 8-item modified MOS Social Support Questionnaire
- Scaled score used for analysis where a higher score indicates more social support

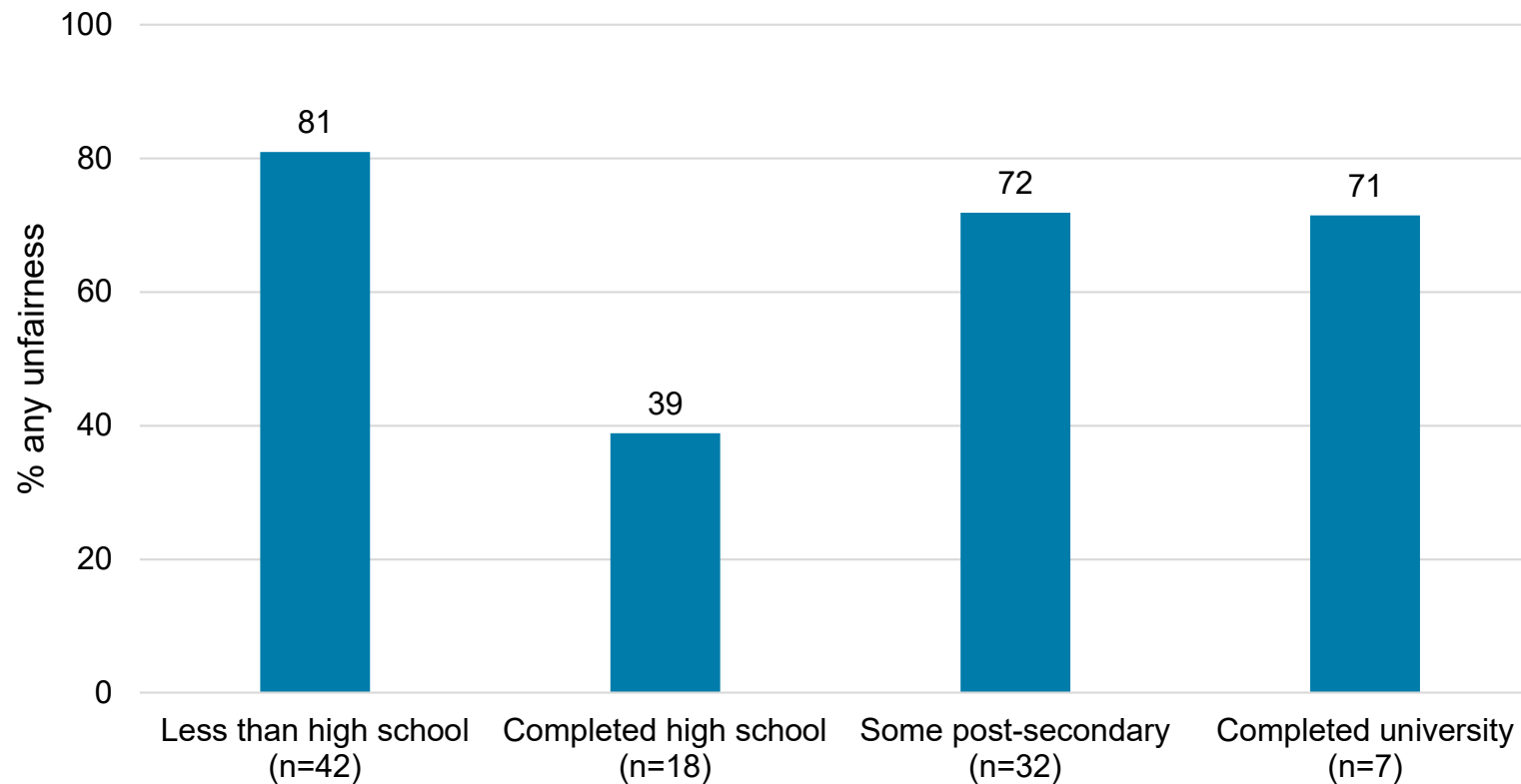
1. Kroenke, K., Spitzer, R. L., Williams, J. B., & Löwe, B. (2009). An ultra-brief screening scale for anxiety and depression: The PHQ-4. *Psychosomatics*, 50(6), 613-621. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.psy.50.6.613>





Mental Quadrant: Education

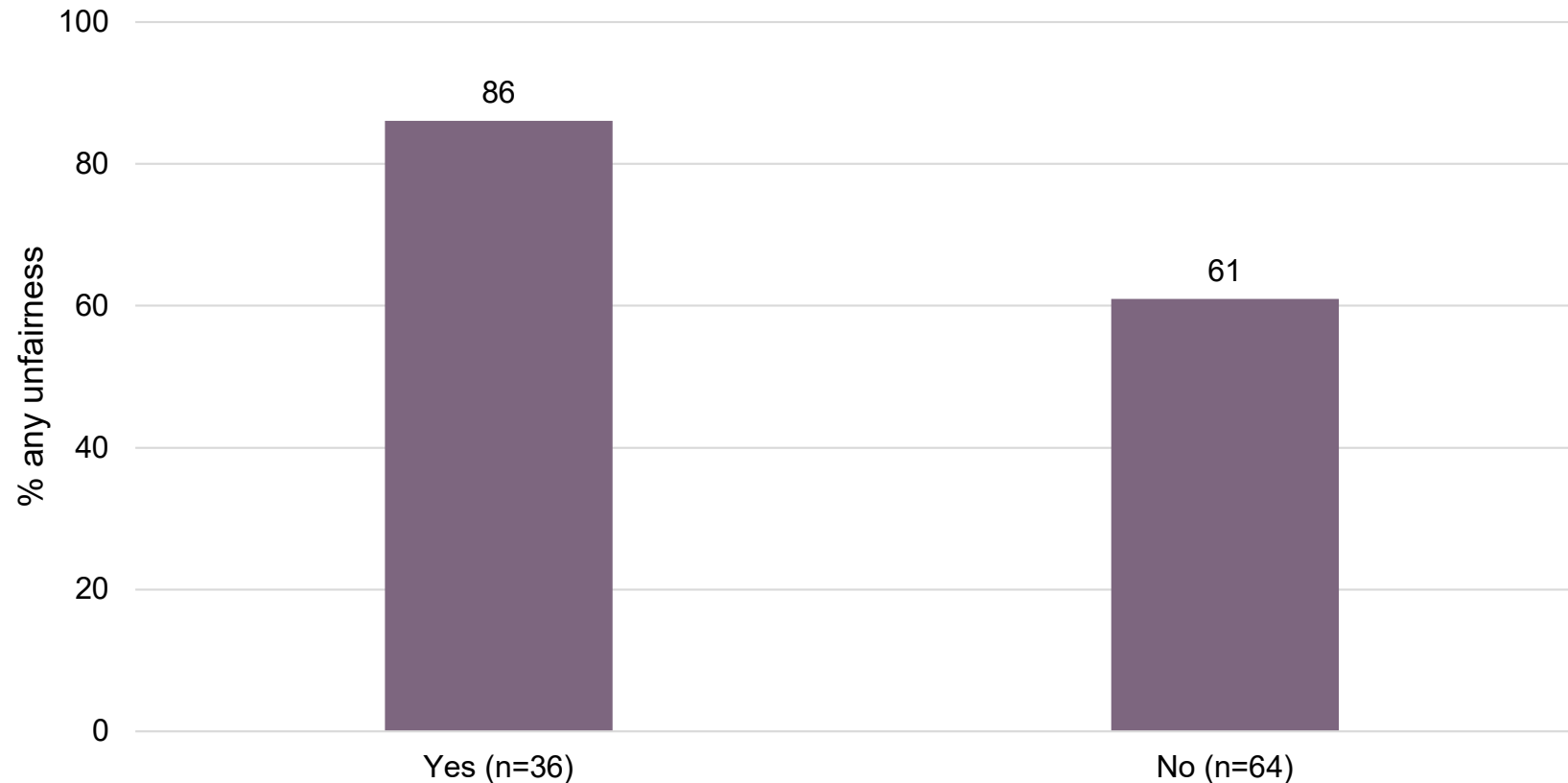
- Experiences of unfairness decreased with education level ($p=0.015$)
 - Those who completed high school had the least experiences of unfairness





Spiritual Quadrant: Cultural service access

- Those who accessed cultural services had more experiences of unfairness compared to those who did not access these services (86.1% vs 60.9%, $p=0.005$)





Physical, Mental, & Emotional Quadrants

- Individuals with higher scores for physical health, mental health and social support were less likely to have experienced unfairness.
- Simple logistic regression

Measure	Odds Ratio (95% CI)	P-value
Mental Health (MCS-12)	0.96 (0.920, 0.999)	0.045
Physical Health (PCS-12)	0.92 (0.876, 0.976)	0.0045
Social support (MOS)	0.98 (0.965, 0.999)	0.037





Conclusions

- The OCS sample for Indigenous participants is small, but informative on the experiences of Indigenous People living with HIV.
- Indigenous People experience greater levels of discrimination due to race in the healthcare and community settings.
- These experiences may be a deterrent for the cascade of care and overall adherence to anti-retroviral treatment.
- Impacts to the 90-90-90 targets.





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