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Background

Since 1995, the OHTN Cohort Study (OCS) has collected data from people living with HIV. Efforts to increase representativeness of key populations and geographies began in 2017. The OCS collects clinical data and conducts an annual interview with participants at 15 clinical sites in Ontario. Public Health Ontario (PHO) analyzes linked diagnostic and viral load data for the provincial HIV Care Cascade. Our goal is to examine the representativeness of the OCS.

Methods

We examined the demographics of OCS participants who were active and consented as of 2021 compared to people living with diagnosed HIV in Ontario estimated by PHO in 2020. OCS and PHO data are compared by health region, key population and sex. PHO demographic and population data is collected through forms completed by testing providers, while the OCS captures it in a participant interview.

Figure 2: Distribution of key populations (by exposure category) OCS participants compared to Public Health Ontario HIV Datamart

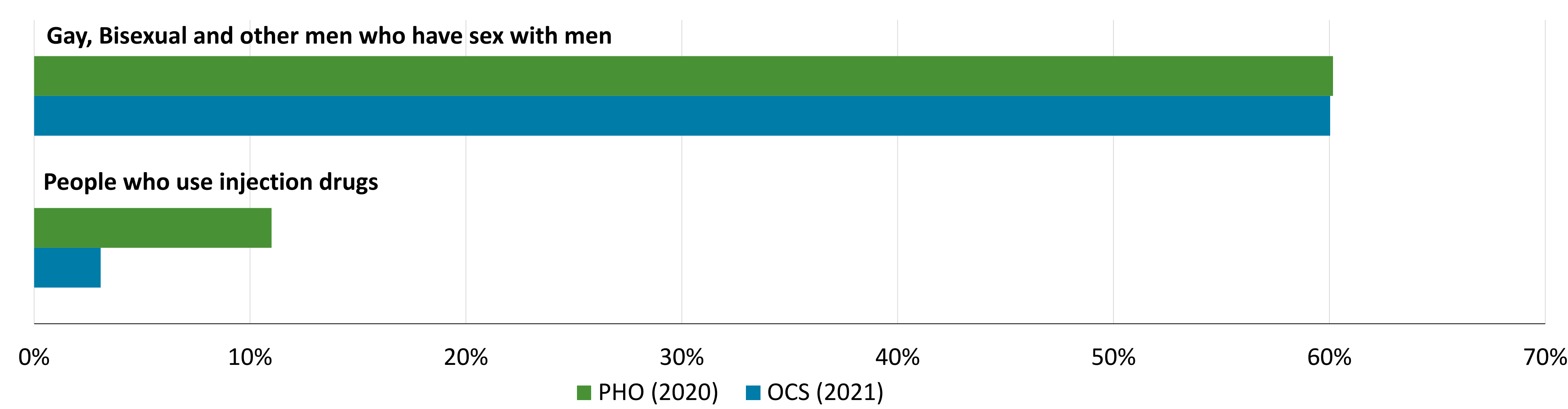


Figure 3: Median age of OCS participants compared to Public Health Ontario HIV Datamart

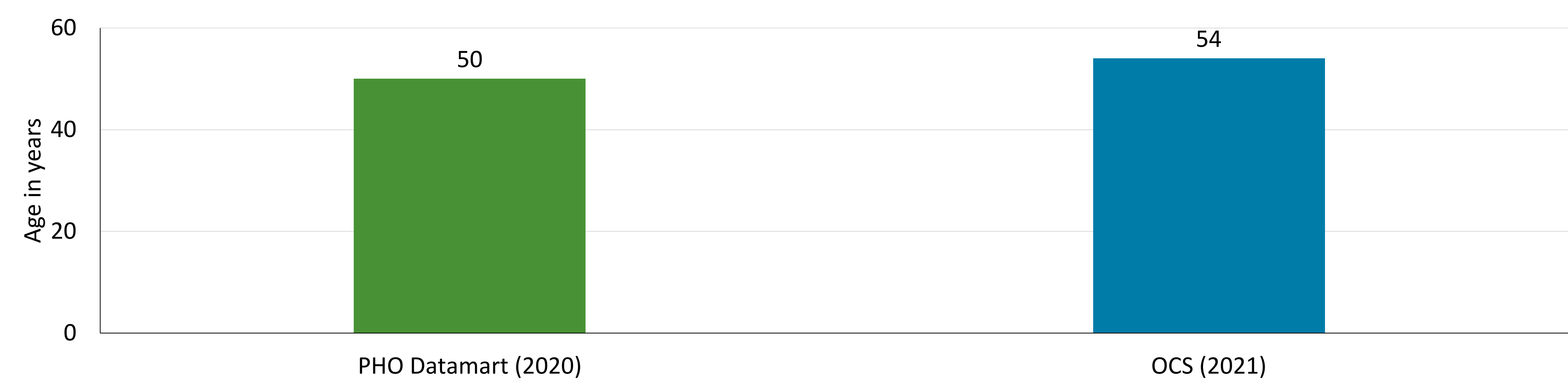


Figure 4: Sex distribution of OCS participants compared to Public Health Ontario HIV Datamart

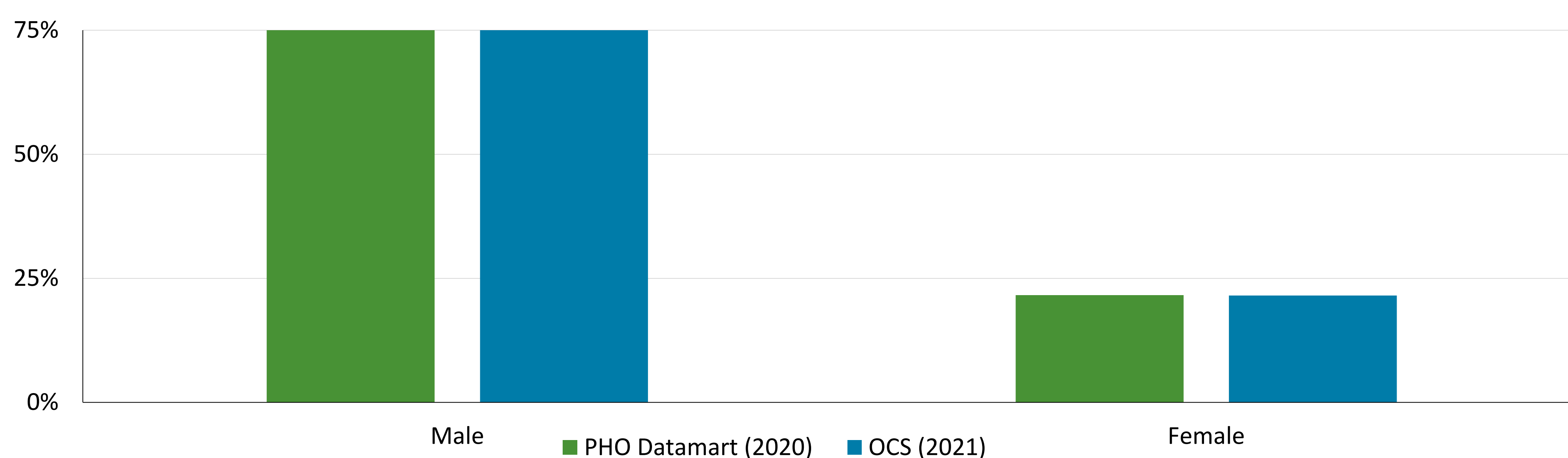
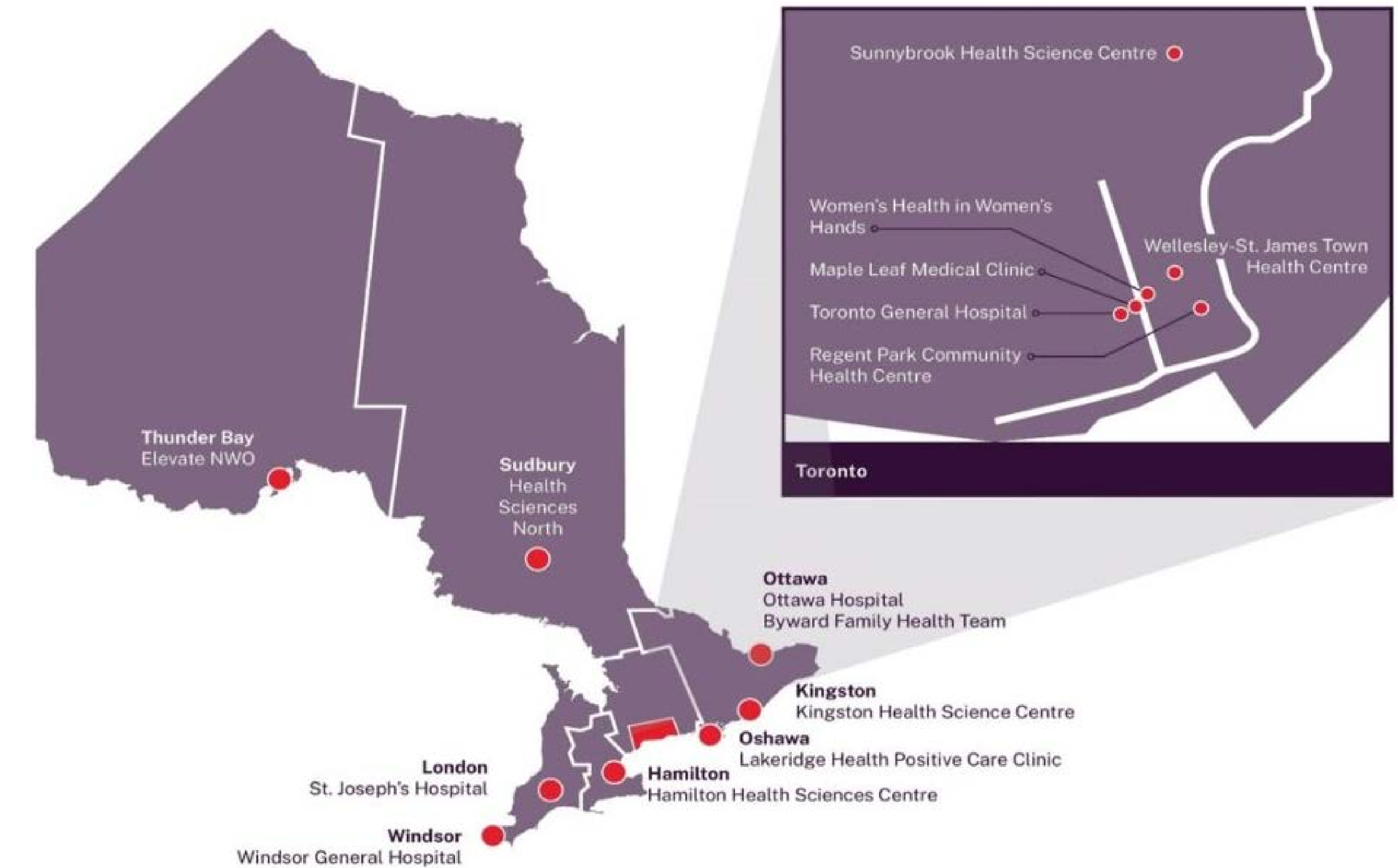


Figure 1: Location of OCS clinics sites in Ontario (2022)



Results

Overall, the OCS is fairly representative of the population of people living with HIV in Ontario, but there are key differences. The OCS over-represents Toronto and under-represents Central East and West regions. It represents gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men well but under-represents people who use injection drugs. Both ACB and Indigenous participants are represented proportionally. The median age in the OCS is slightly higher than the province overall and the length of time living with HIV in the OCS is 18 years.

Figure 5: Distribution of ACB and Indigenous populations as OCS participants compared to Public Health Ontario Percent of New Diagnoses (2011-2020)

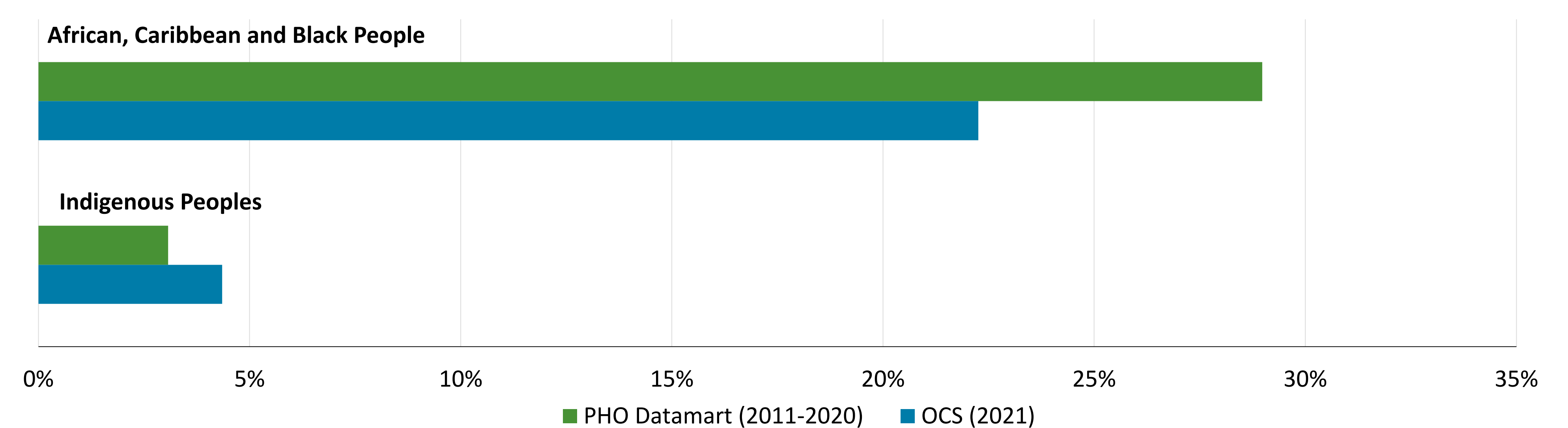
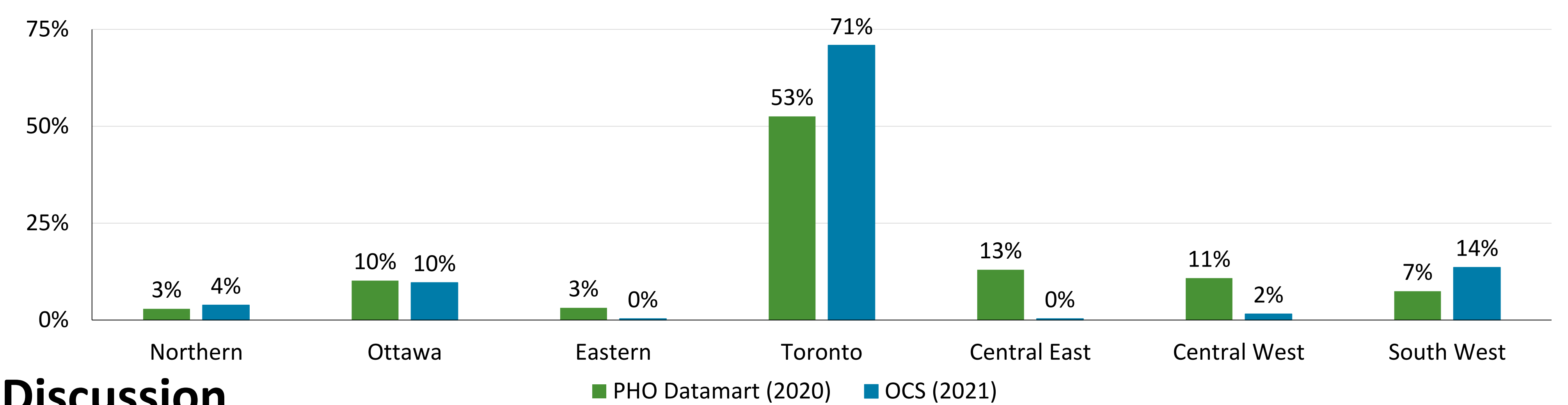


Figure 6: Geographic distribution of OCS participants compared to Public Health Ontario HIV Datamart



Discussion

OCS participants reflect people living with HIV in Ontario. More efforts should be made to improve geographic representation and recruitment from key populations.

Acknowledgements