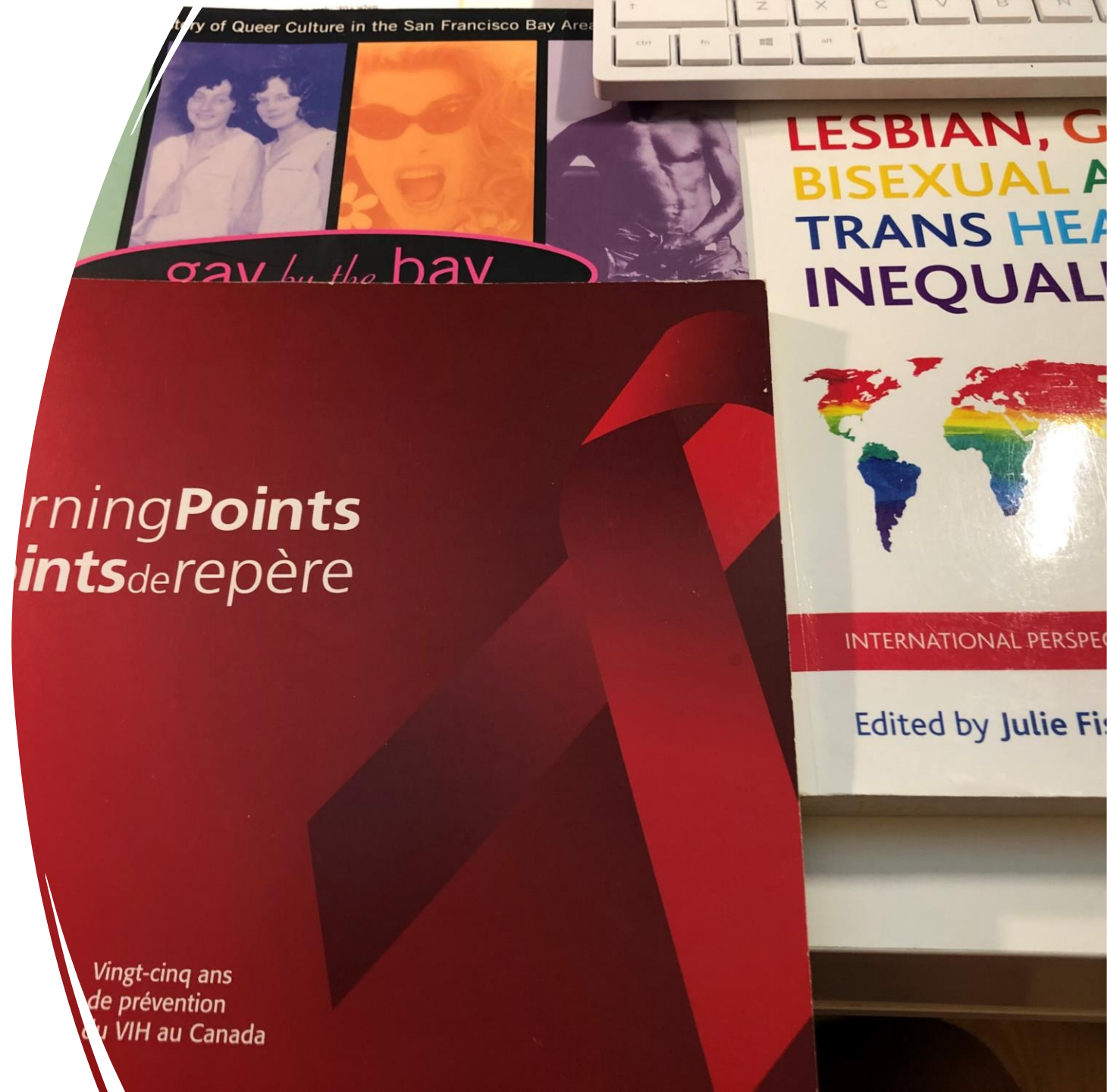


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- No VACCINE for this -The case of Latinx communities and HIV in Ontario during COVID times: societal barriers, disabled factors, and current challenges - a critical perspective -yet.

No conflict of interest is declared.

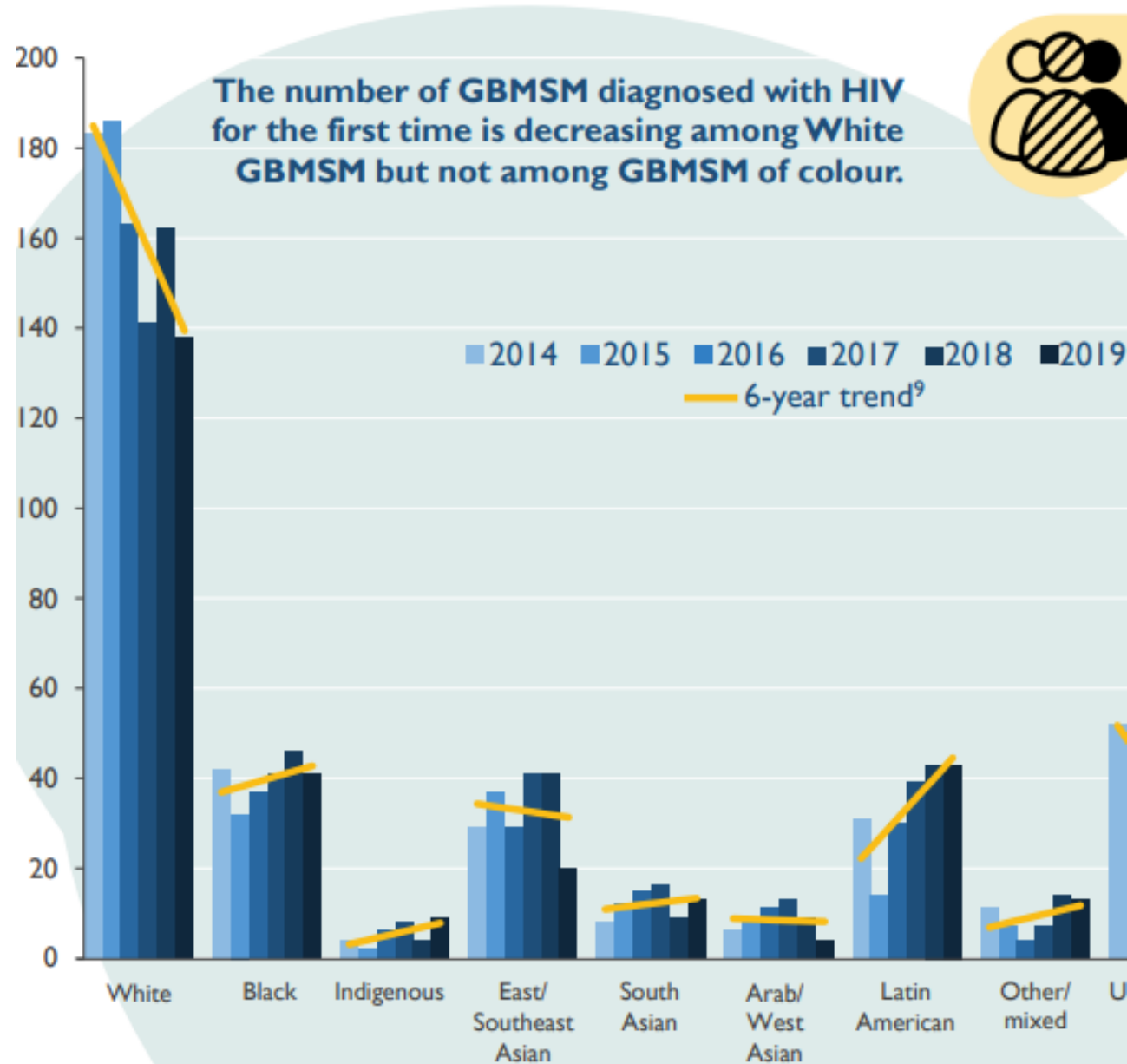


Latin American individuals (GBMSM) are showing a steep increase in HIV infections in Ontario (2014-2019).

Background

The Ontario HIV Epidemiology and Surveillance Initiative (OHESI) (Dec. 2021) pointed out the diverse barriers, disablers and obstacles that individuals and communities may have experienced on HIV testing and treatment due to COVID effects. This might be particularly true within marginalized communities in Ontario.

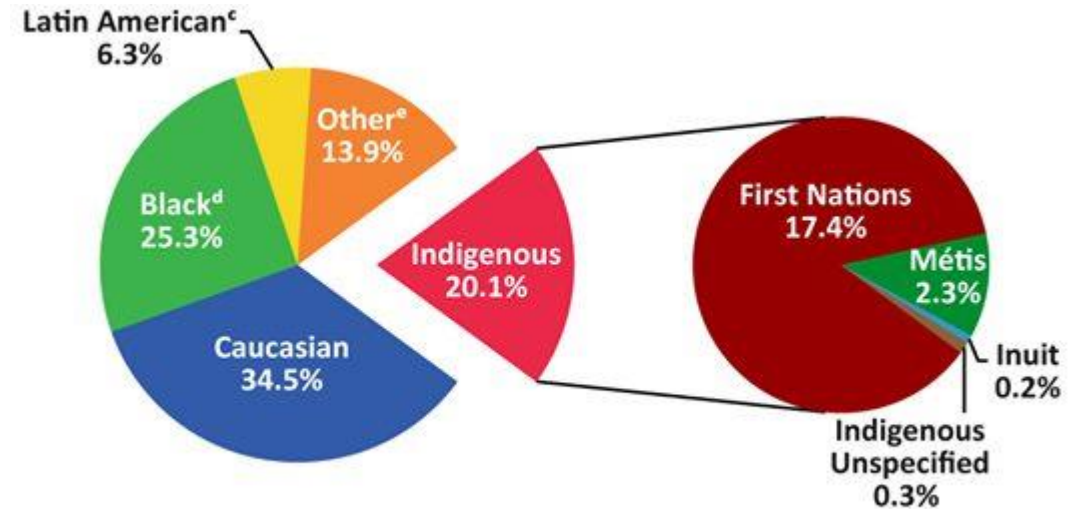
How is the ethno-racial distribution of first-time HIV diagnoses among GBMSM changing over time?



The impact of the social determinants of health permeates the health lives of Latinx Immigrants. COVID only made things worse. (PHAC, 2017).

Description

According to the OHESI (2019) estimates report, Latin American individuals testing HIV+ showed a steady increase for the past measured years (2017-2019) in the province of Ontario. Marginalized communities have traditionally been left behind when dealing with HIV testing in Canada. Many social determinants of health: e.g., immigration status, language barriers, poverty and lack of access to free/anonymous health services, among other factors, have impacted Spanish-speaking communities' HIV prevention efforts, even before COVID hit. There is a lack of knowledge on how the current epidemic, vaccinations, and variables, would have affected HIV testing, treatment, and access to services at the core of different communities in the province.



Soc. Determinants of Health on Latinx Immigrants + COVID= Marginalization



Lessons Learned

COVID took nations around the world by surprise. The leadership of Ontario as a province that provides efficient health services has been up to question. Although global responses to COVID have moved faster (when compared to other pandemics, including HIV), it is necessary to map out how COVID has added up sexual health challenges among Latinx individuals in Canada, for an intersectional, equal and multilevel lenses approach.

There is a need of new approaches for Outreach, using social media tools

Conclusion/Next Steps

- There is paucity in supporting research, mental health services and community education that specializes in Spanish-speaking culture and immigrants, focusing on language and culturally sensitive Latinx minorities in Ontario.
- Policies supporting PrEP/U=U/condoms/self-testing with access to Spanish-speaking individuals are a must, addressing regular HIV care and acknowledging the particularities of Latinx in Canada (such as lack of immigration status, language barriers, sexual orientation, and/or gender diversity specific needs) in order to effectively curve new HIV infections and meet Canada's HIV prevention's present and future goals.

