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Healthcare Needs and Experiences of Detained Youth

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BACKGROUND

- The COVID-19 pandemic amplified health disparities among youth in detention
- Detained individuals are more susceptible to contract COVID-19
- Limited data is available on perspectives of youth in correctional facilities on the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccinations

OBJECTIVES

- To explore perspectives of youth in detention on the COVID-19 pandemic including the effect of the pandemic on their detention experience and the COVID-19 vaccine

METHODS

- Youth (14-17 years) detained in two urban midwestern juvenile detention centers, recruited January-November 2021
- Individual, semi-structured interviews
- Themes were identified using thematic analysis approach
- Participants completed an anonymous demographic questionnaire after the interview

COVID-19: Perspectives from Youth in Detention

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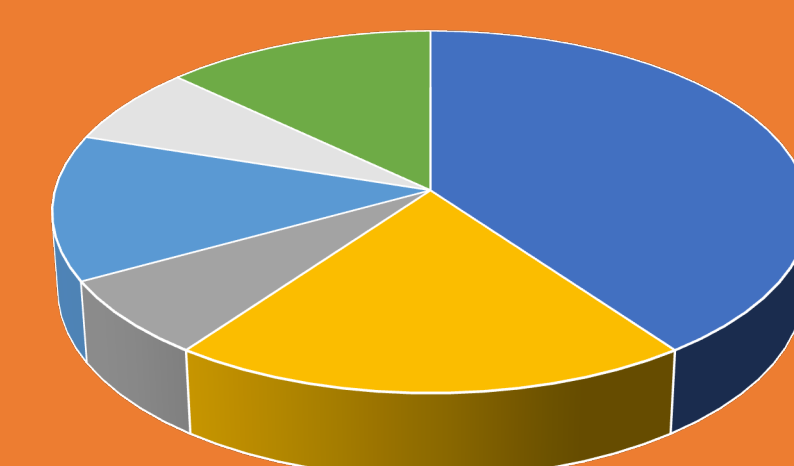
RESULTS

15 Youth Interviewed
(100% participation rate)

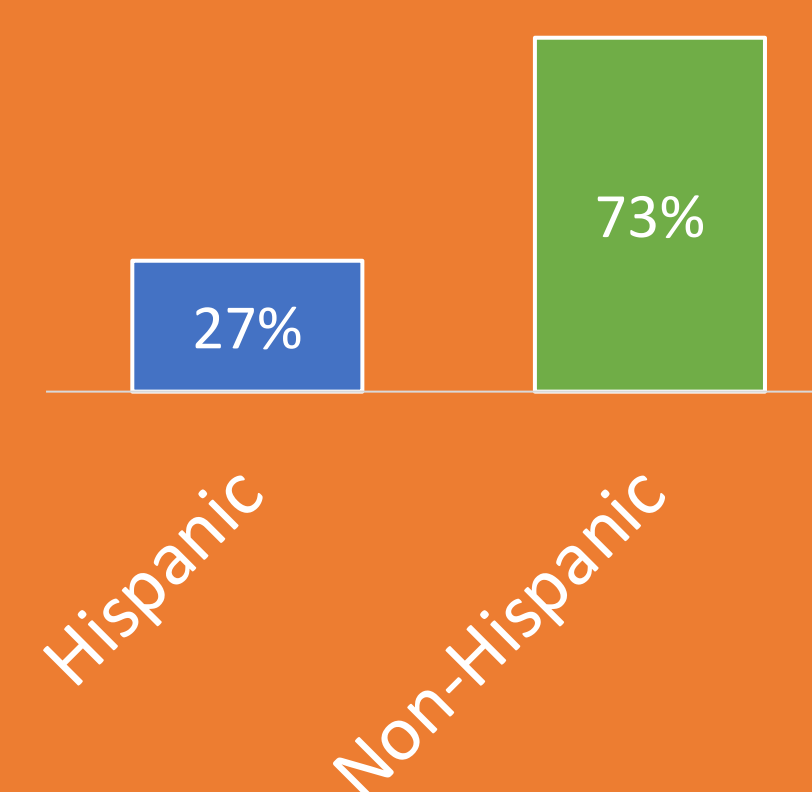
73%
Males

Median Age 15.7
(Range 14-17)

20% had
received
COVID-19
vaccine



■ African American
■ Caucasian
■ Native American
■ Mixed Race
■ Unknown
■ Prefer not to say



Most youth would not get the COVID Vaccine

Varied perspectives on the COVID-19 Pandemic

- “I feel like it’s dangerous, and it affects your immune system.”
- “Why should I believe something that I don’t have so much information on?”

Vaccine hesitancy

- “I feel like that vaccine is the COVID.”
- “I don’t really trust the vaccine because they made it too fast, I think”
- “I just feel like I got a good immune system”

COVID-19 vaccine motivation

- “If you want to go on a airplane, you have to show them your vaccine card”
- “My mom told me I had to get it to participated in sports”
- “My mama forced me to get both of them.”

Pandemic mitigation strategies impacted the detention experience

- “My momma tried to buy me some [toothpaste]. But they said no because of COVID”
- “You can still have [family] visit, but you just can’t have physical visits and touching and stuff”
- “When we first get in here you be in quarantine, and it’s like a whose side, away from the actual cells”

Youth-targeted education may facilitate COVID-19 vaccination

- “You got to send me a notification on my phone. If I get a notification, I’ll take it serious”

LIMITATIONS

- Generalizability is limited due to a small sample size recruited from two detention centers within a single Midwest city

DISCUSSION

- Although most participants recognized COVID-19 was real and should be taken seriously:
 - Some thought the pandemic was fictitious
 - Most expressed hesitancy or refusal to get the COVID-19 vaccine
- Pandemic mitigation efforts negatively impacted multiple aspects of youths’ detention experience
- Centering youth voices may identify opportunities to mitigate pandemic-associated health impacts and health disparities among youth in detention. Further work is needed:
 - Exploration of correctional facility staff insight on the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigation efforts
 - Partnering with youth to create protocols, support services, and educational tools to decrease infection and impact of COVID-19 amongst youth in detention

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