



Social Determinants and Comorbidity in North Florida

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Abstract

Social determinants, such as socioeconomic status or environmental factors, impact the way people live their lives and their overall health and wellbeing. Comorbidity refers to the state of an individual having more than one illness simultaneously. Emerging research indicates that social determinants can increase the likelihood of comorbidity across the lifespan. When considering the relationship between social determinants and comorbidity, the impact that these factors have on minority groups is foundational to understanding its correlation with socioeconomic disadvantages. This present study investigates the relationship between social determinants and comorbidity in a cohort study of young adults of color (aged 18-29) living in North Florida. Quantitative measures of social and physical wellbeing were administered electronically via REDCap and Qualtrics at two-time points (baseline and six-month follow-up). A non-random sample of participants was recruited through online advertisements and flyers. There was a sample size of 207 people in the study. Preliminary results suggest that participants in this sample are experiencing stress, anxiety, and fatigue. This research will be useful in finding solutions to improving the overall health of minorities and socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals.

Keywords: Social determinants, minority groups, comorbidity, public health, prevention, minority health, young adults

Introduction

Cardiovascular disease is one of the leading illnesses that affect minority groups across the nation. Along with this illness are a plethora of other illnesses such as diabetes and hypertension that affect these underserved and underrepresented populations. The occurrence of these illnesses disproportionately affects black people compared to other ethnicities and races in the United States (Commodore-Mensah, 2018, p.995). Although instances of cardiovascular disease are most prominent among black people in the United States, its occurrence is noticeable among Hispanic/Latino individuals (Guadamuz, 2021). Many barriers to these socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals include immigration, homelessness, and lack of health care. The accumulation of these factors contributes to the comorbidity of the illnesses experienced by these individuals and their families.

Although a budding area of research, studies concerning the correlation between social determinants and comorbidity have indicated that these factors primarily affect minority groups (Commodore-Mensah, 2018, p.995). The research conducted has consisted of the investigation of black and Hispanic/Latino individuals and considered many social determinants such as immigration status, social class, and other factors. Because this is a newly developed topic, there is a limited amount of data to fully support the correlation between social determinants and comorbidity within minority groups. The purpose of this study is to thoroughly investigate how social determinants and comorbidity affect minority groups.

Method

This study consisted of the use of various online methods of data collection via survey.

Figure 1. Exemplar of Perceived Stress Scale form administered to participants

Results

This is a continuing study; therefore, we are still in the process of collecting data. When asked, "In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and stressed?" participants reported high levels of stress. Nearly 1/3 (32.75%) said that in the past month, they fairly often felt stressed and nervous, with another 7% saying reported feeling stressed and nervous very often. Only 0.84% of participants reported never feeling stressed and nervous.

When asked, "In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?" participants reported high levels of difficulties. More than half (54.51%) said that in the past month, they sometimes experienced difficulties, with another 14.41% saying they fairly often experienced difficulties. Only 5% of participants reported never experiencing difficulties.

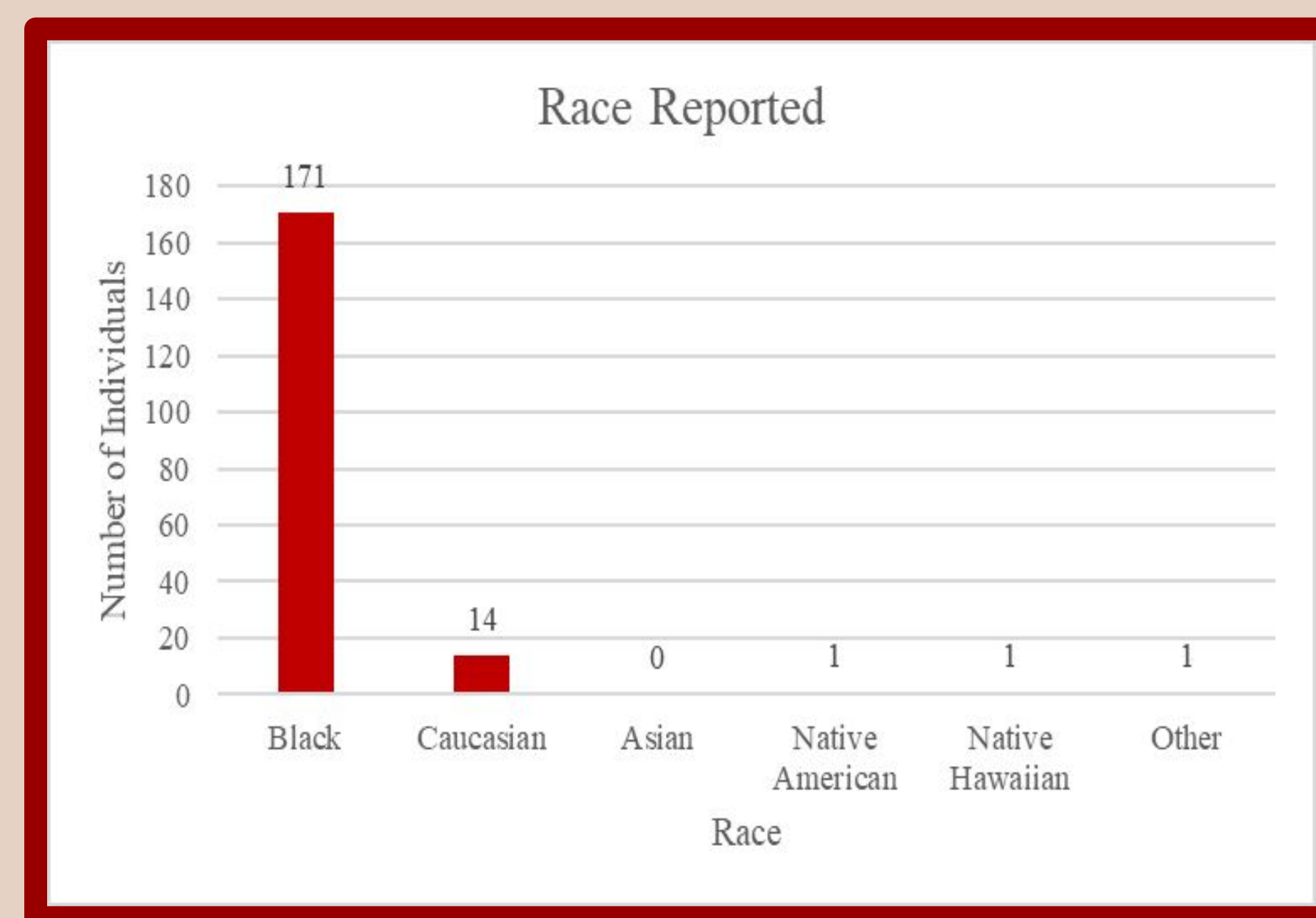


Figure 2. Race reported from survey

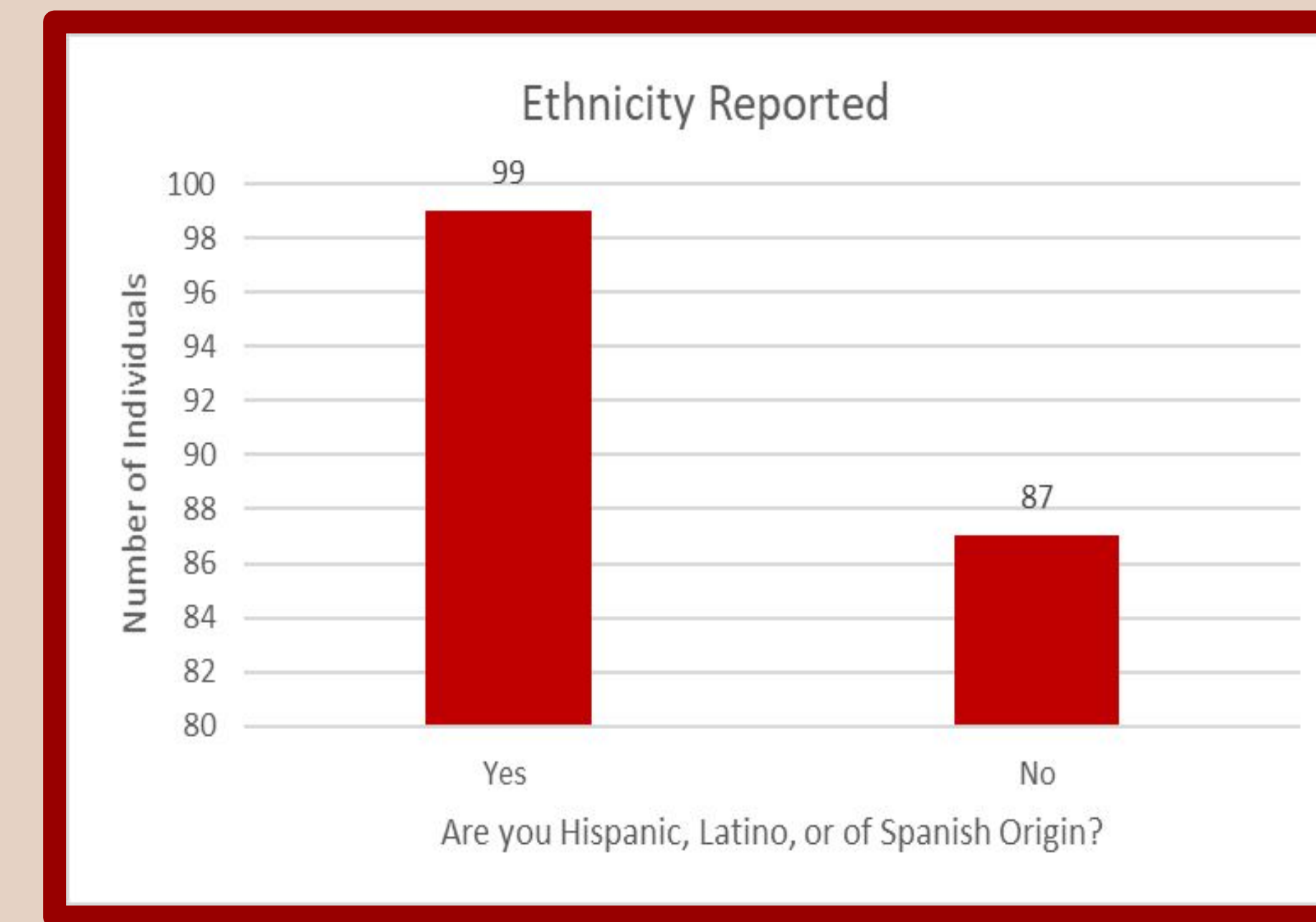


Figure 3. Ethnicity reported from survey

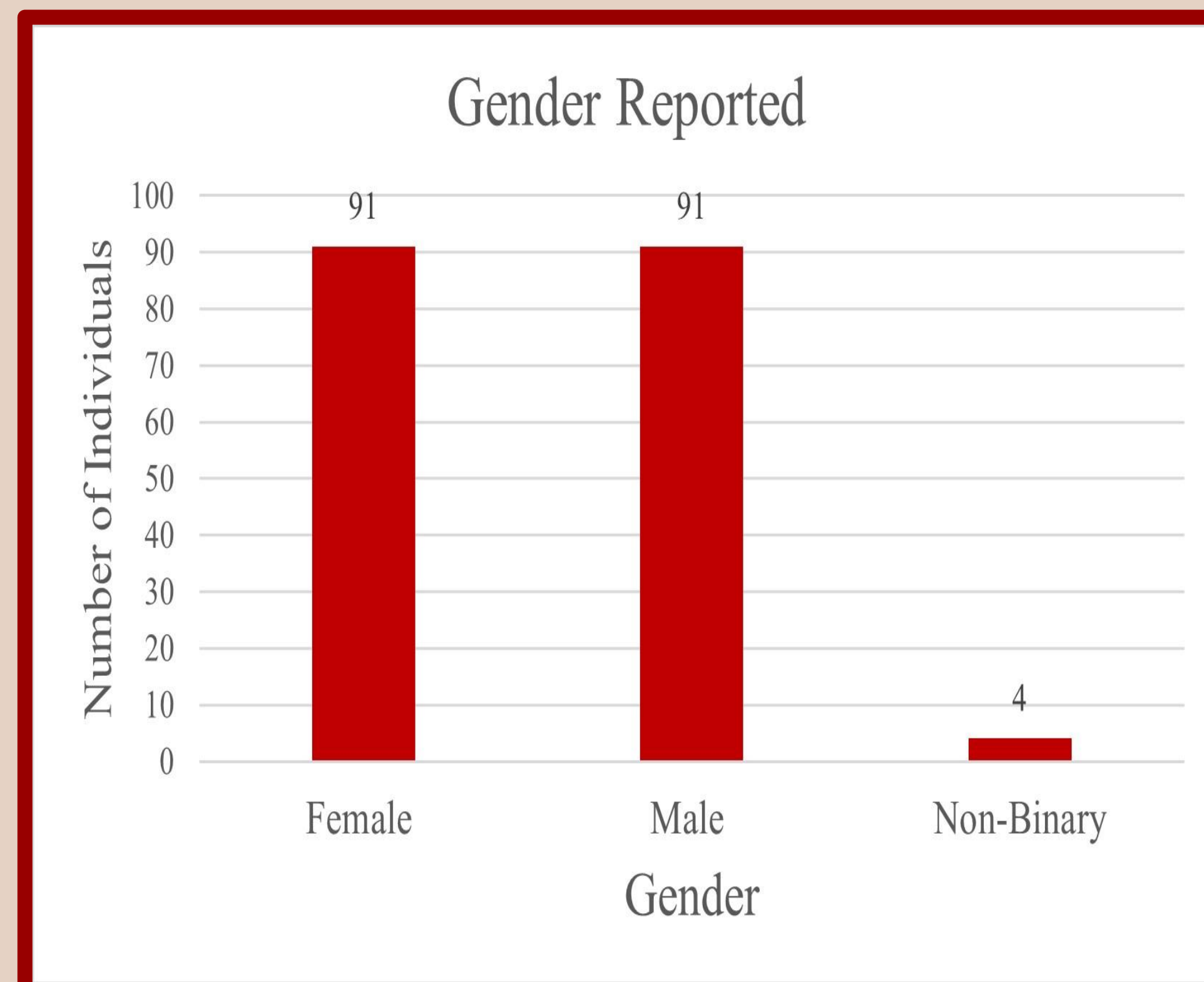


Figure 4. Gender reported from survey

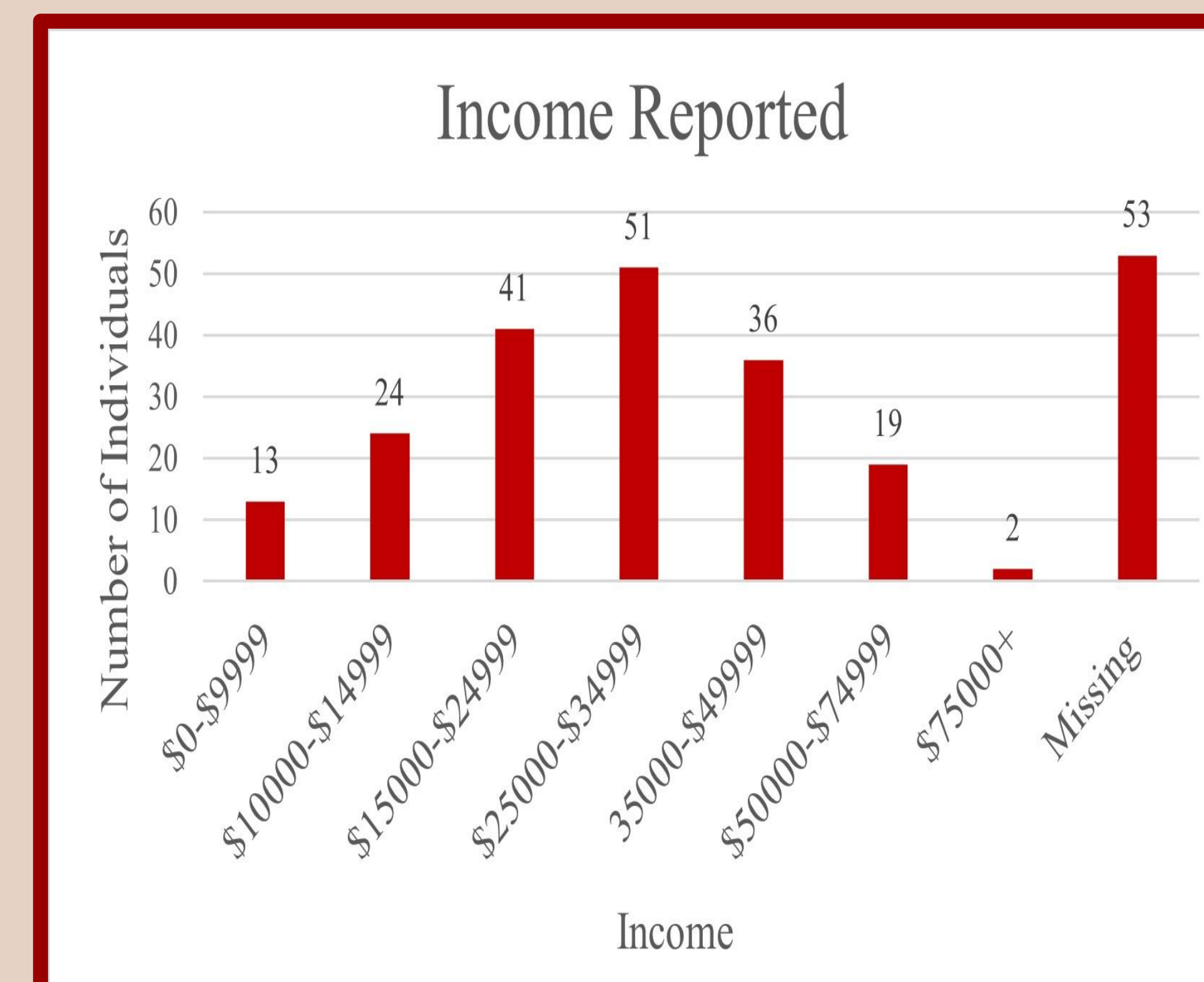


Figure 5. Income reported from survey

Conclusion

These preliminary findings indicate that there is a correlation between social determinants, comorbidity, and socioeconomic status. Our next steps will be to perform a full analysis of the dataset.

Figure 6. Welcome to study for participants



References

- Commodore-Mensah, Yvonne, et al. (2017). African Americans, African Immigrants, and Afro-Caribbeans Differ in Social Determinants of Hypertension and Diabetes: Evidence from the National Health Interview Survey. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, 5(5), 995–1002. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40615-017-0446-x>
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