



autism speaks[®]

COVID-19 Impact and Utilization of Support Systems in Time of Change

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Objective

- Describe the experiences of individuals with ASD and their families prior to the pandemic
- Describe the experiences of individuals with ASD and their families during the pandemic
- Potential opportunities in systems change

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic

Children with ASD had high unmet health care needs

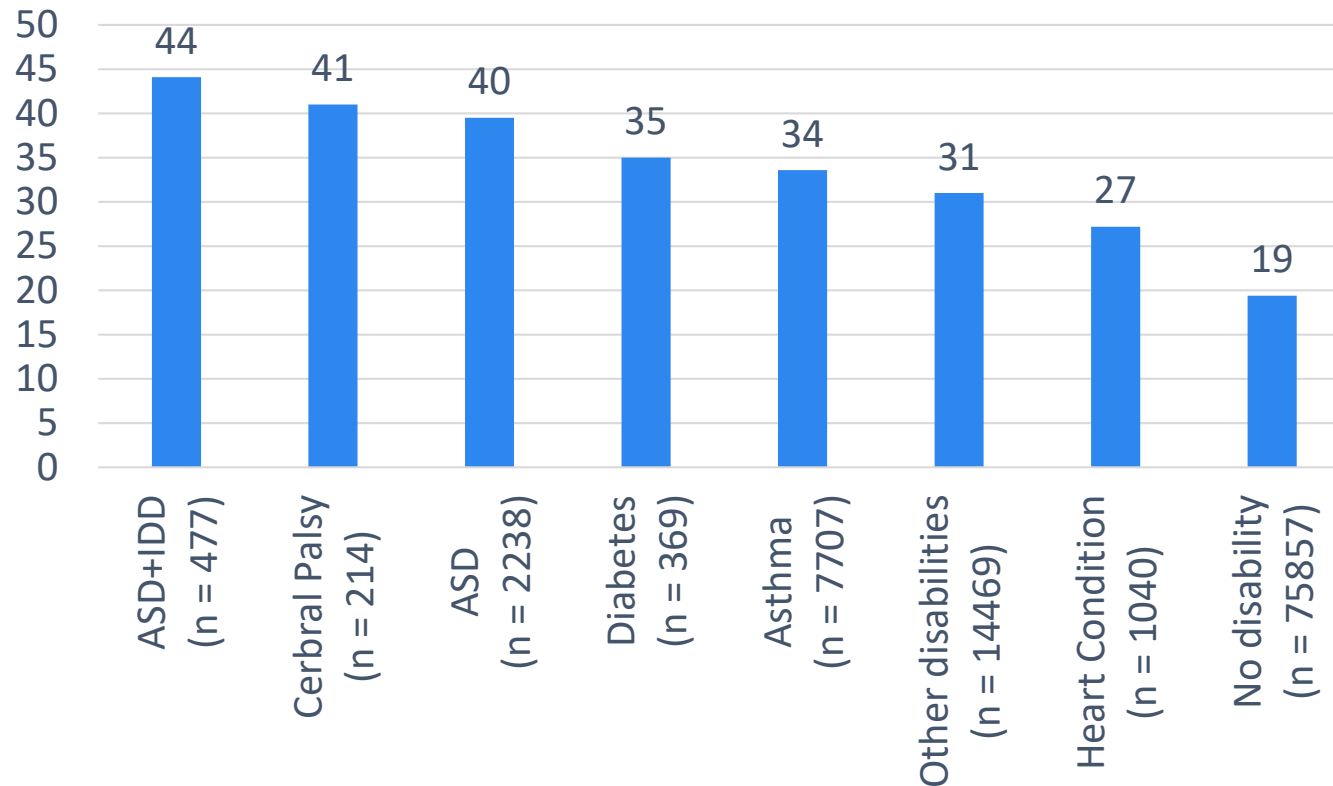
- 3.5 times more likely to report unmet health care needs compared to their peers without disabilities. *
- 5 times more likely to report facing barriers in receiving health care services compared to children without disabilities. *
- 2 times more likely to face problems in paying medical bills, compared to children without disabilities.*

Parents of children with ASD are 3 times more likely to quit working compared with those without disabilities. *

* These results are based on multivariate logistic regression models using the NSCH 2016 – 18 data that controlled for several individual characteristics such as race/ethnicity, income-levels, extent of functional limitations, and parental factors such as having a job, health insurance for child, health insurance quality, as well as neighborhood factors. Lower quality of health insurance and lack of access to family-centered care predicted adverse outcomes.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic

Percentage of Food Insecurity Across the Comparison Groups: NSCH 2016-18

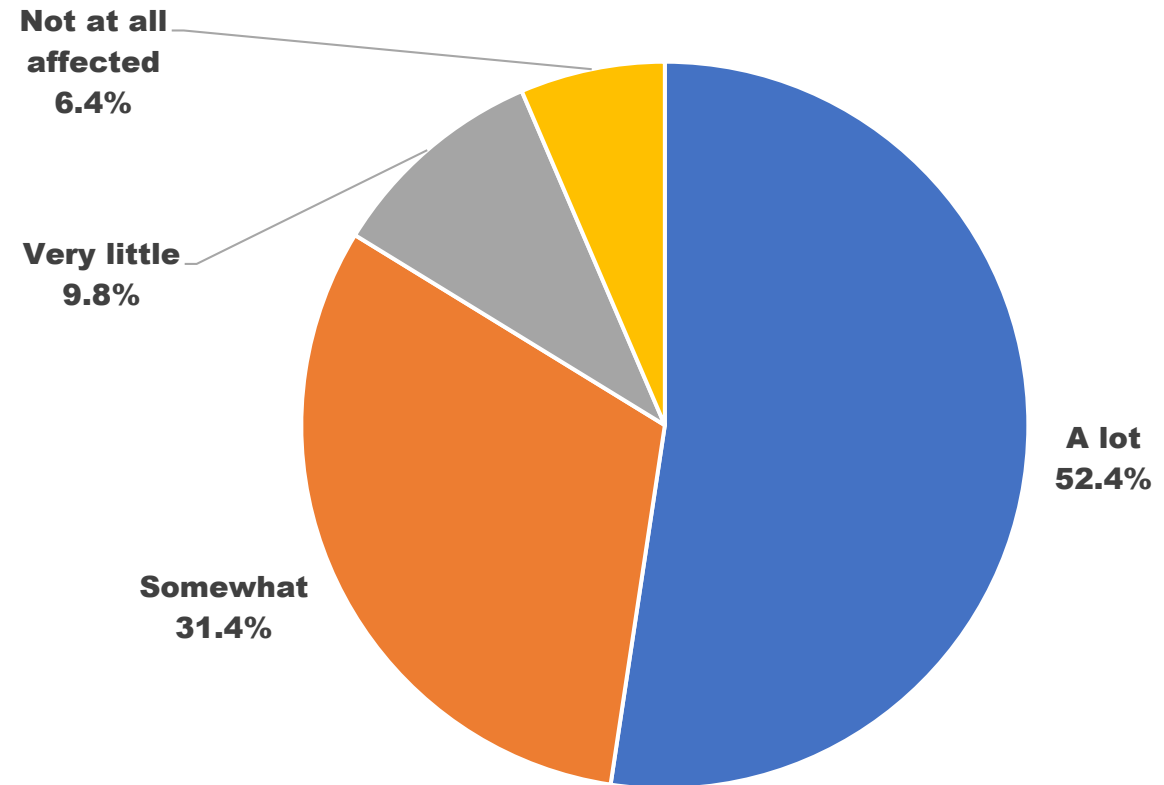


- **Families of children with ASD and IDD are more food insecure** than compared to any other families with children living in the United States.
- Families of children with ASD and IDD that are food insecure experience a **triple disadvantage**. These families:
 - have **greater** healthcare needs
 - experience **poor** parental health and well-being
 - live in **less supportive** neighborhoods

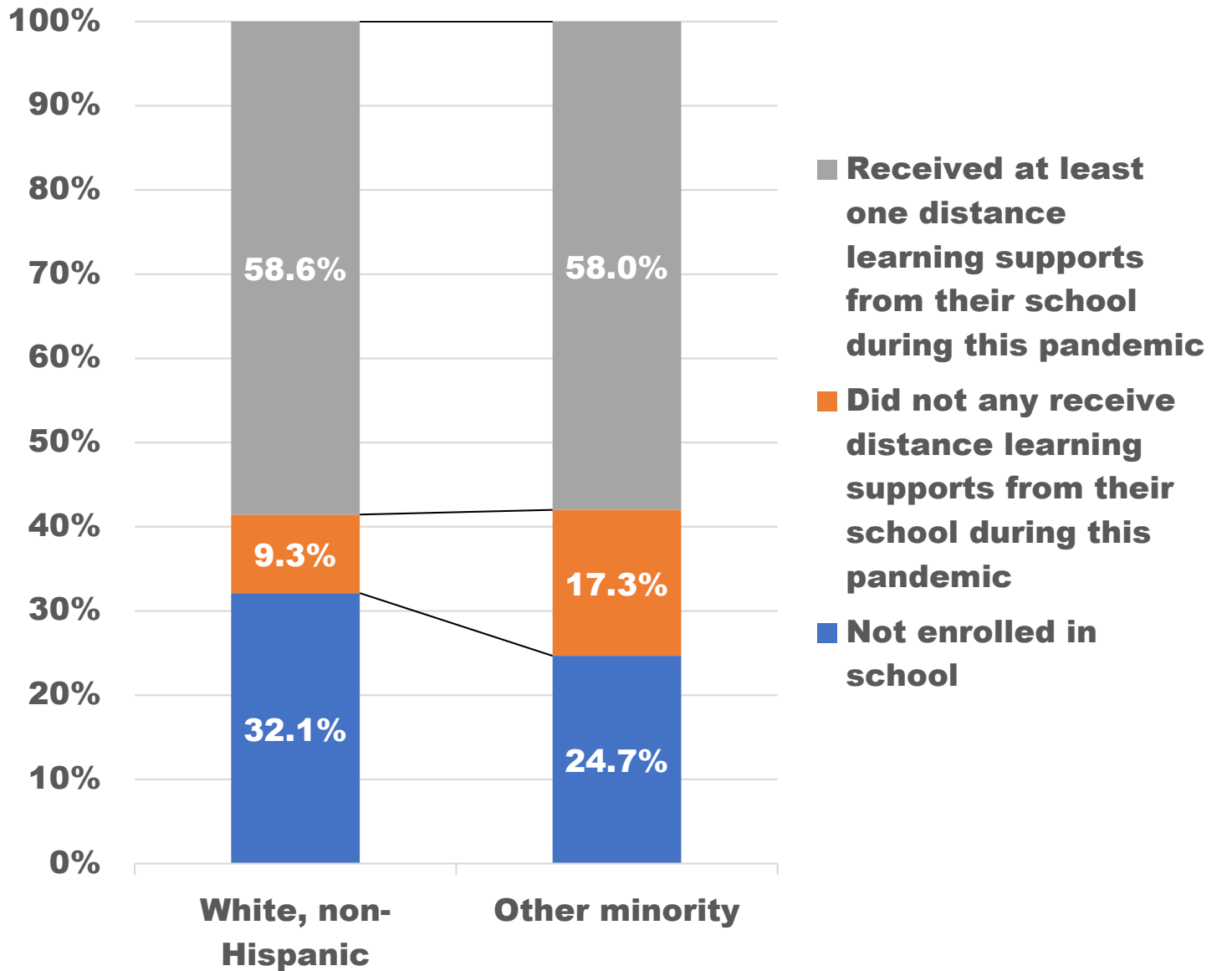
During the COVID-19 pandemic

- **Minority respondents were ...**
 - **About 1.5x more likely to worry that their child with ASD would get coronavirus**
 - **Approximately 1.5x more likely to express difficulty in teaching their child with ASD to maintain social distance standard and/or wear a mask**

How much have you/your family been affected by COVID-19 or coronavirus?

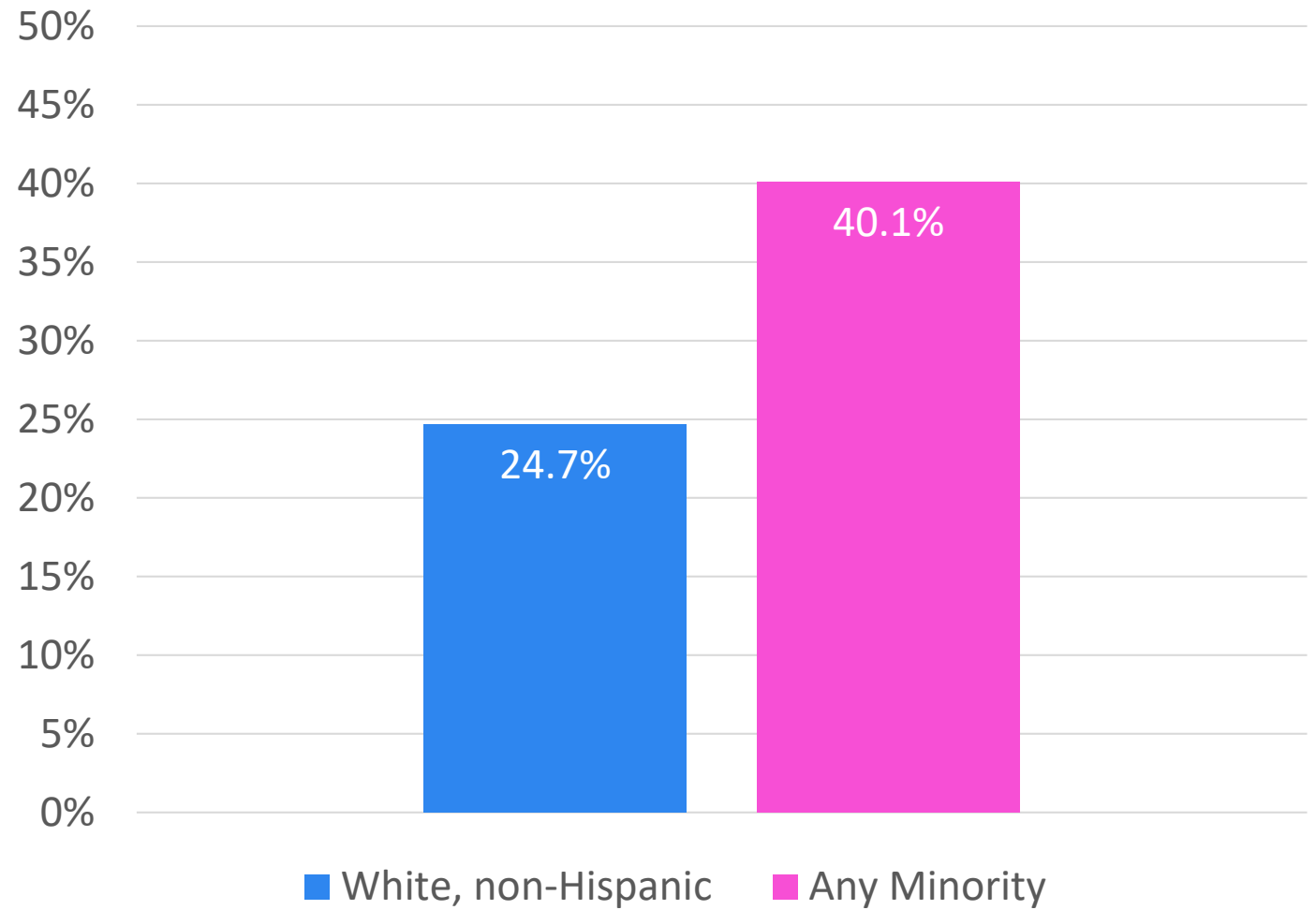


During the Covid-19 pandemic

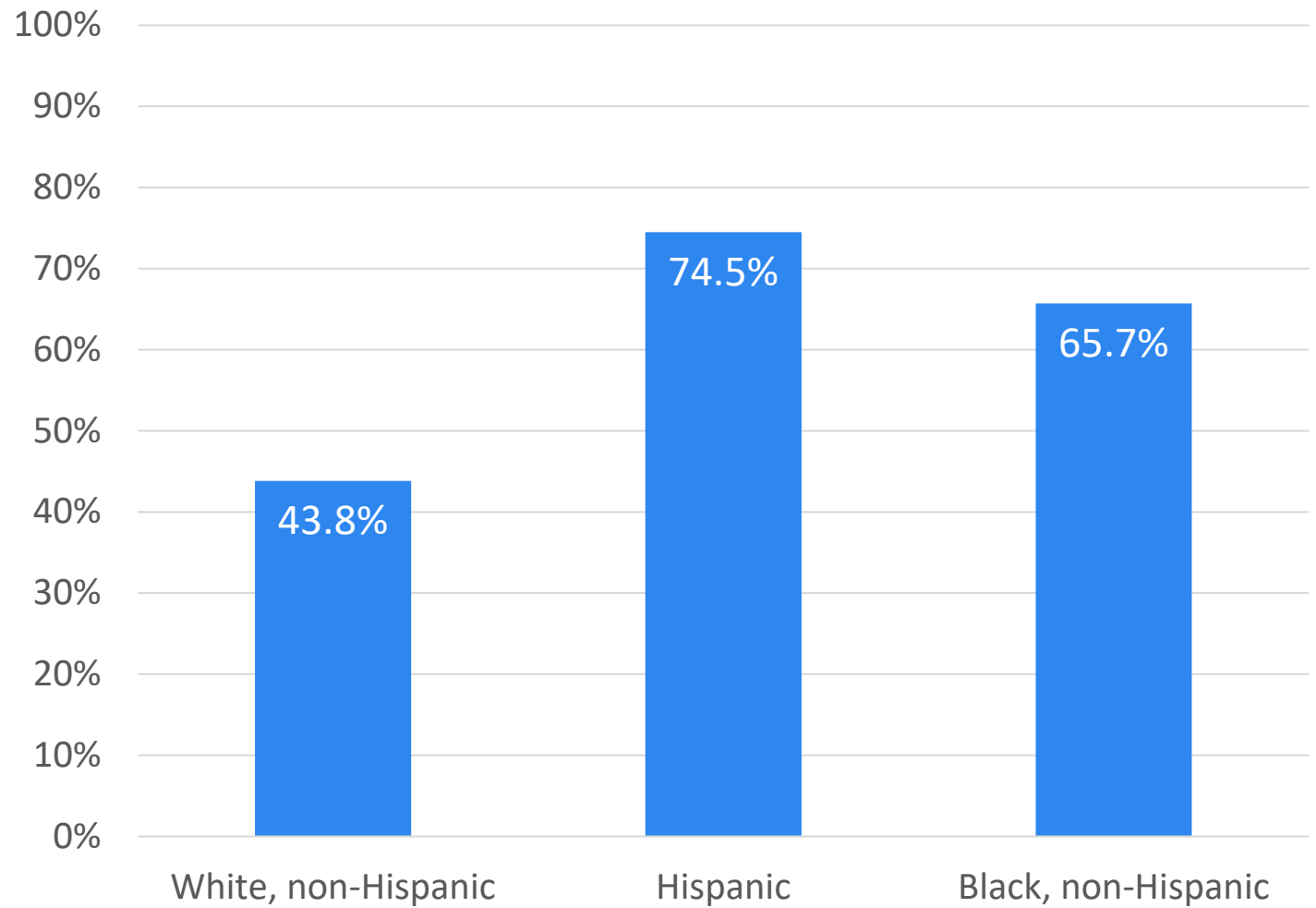


During the
COVID-19
pandemic
(First Survey)

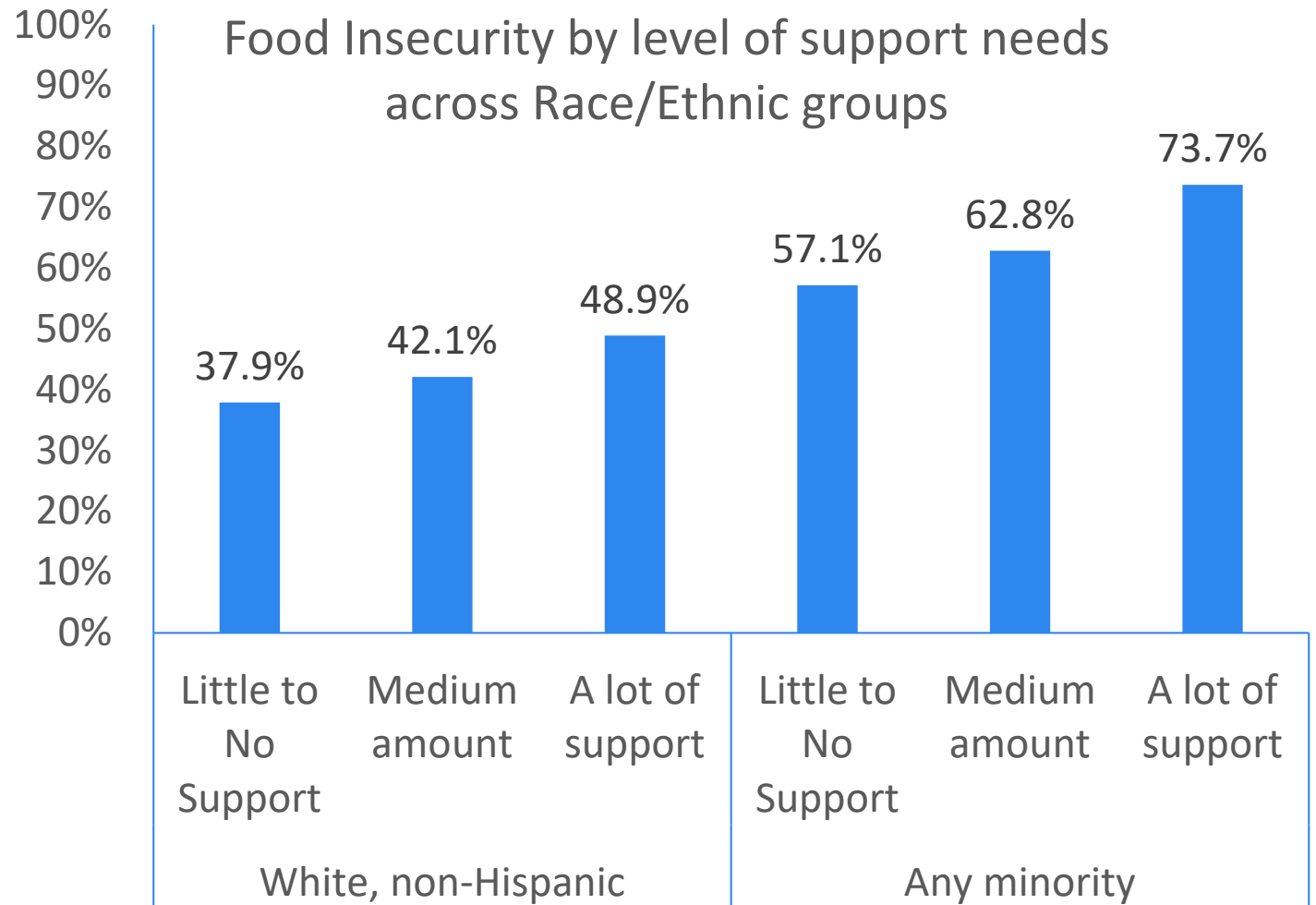
Worried food would run out before [respondent]
got money to buy more**



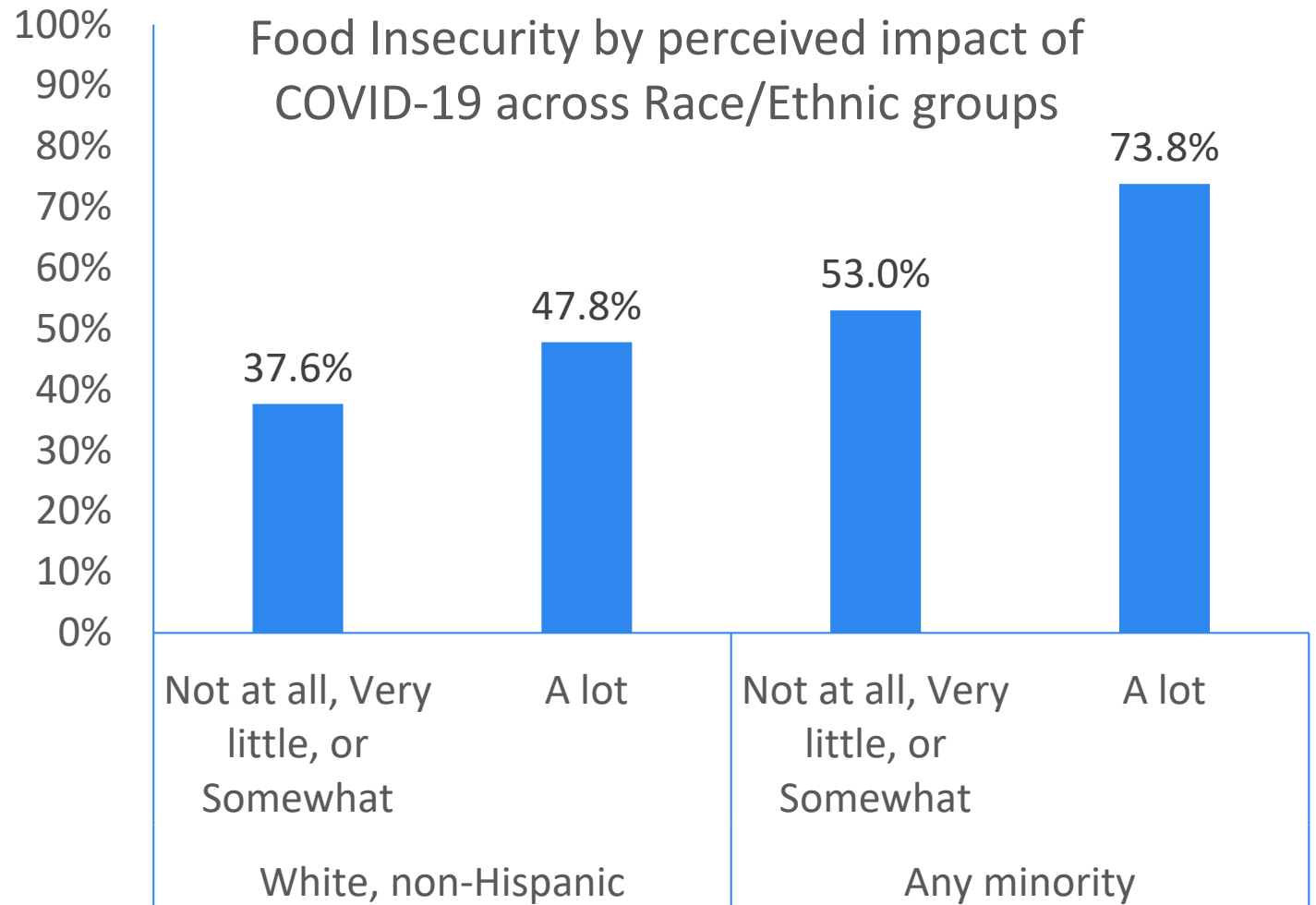
During the COVID-19 pandemic (Second Survey)



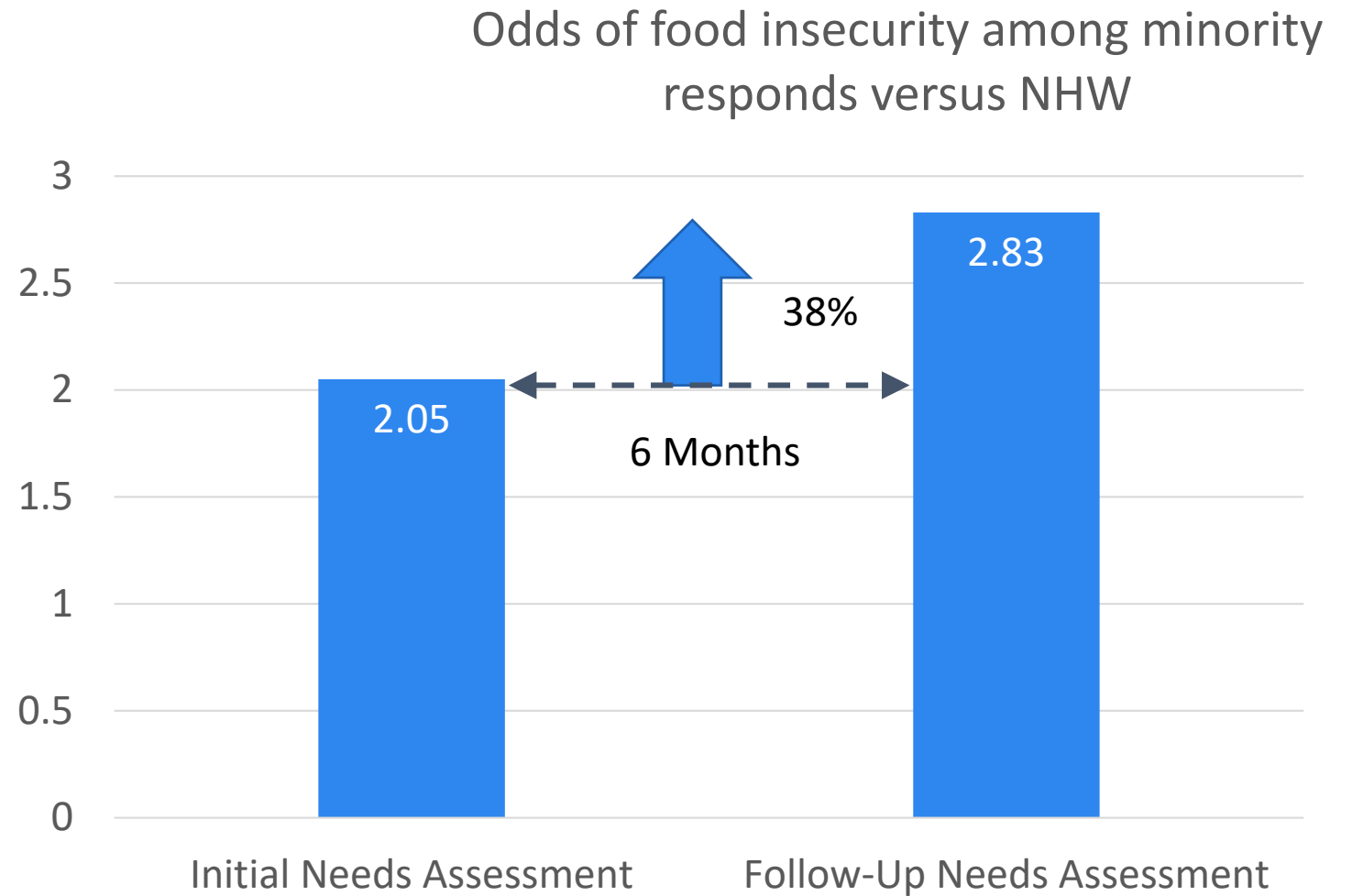
During the
COVID-19
pandemic



During the
COVID-19
pandemic



During the
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pandemic



During the COVID-19 pandemic

- Individuals with ASD + ID and other associated conditions had low prevalence of COVID-19 infections and mortality compared individuals with other chronic health conditions or intellectual disabilities only;
- Individuals with ASD + ID were 9 times more likely to be hospitalized from COVID-19 infection compared to individuals without any chronic conditions;
- Individuals with ASD + ID were nearly 6 times more likely to have higher than median length of stay in hospital for COVID-19 infection compared to individuals without any chronic conditions; and
- Individuals with ASD + ID had the third highest median charges among hospitalized patients with COVID-19.

Discussion

- Difficulty in consistent use of masks, hand washing and social distancing
- Both adults with ASD nor caregivers/parents are less likely to be prioritized to receive COVID-19 vaccine
- Social and economic burden are likely to have long lasting impact
- Stimulus package may offer some timely support and protection
- Practitioners should screen for food insecurity, exacerbation of mental illnesses or challenging behaviors, and track any adverse childhood experiences
- More research is needed to study impact of COVID-19 across the lifespan of individuals with ASD
- Policies and practices should aim to productively and safely re-engage individuals with ASD in community-based activities

References

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