

An audit of new diagnoses of HIV in a deprived local authority – are we detecting HIV too late?

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INTRODUCTION

- People with HIV may live without symptoms for years before progression to late-stage HIV and development of Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)

- Early HIV detection is beneficial

Individual Perspective

- Improves patient survival¹
- Reduced risk of serious illness^{2,3}
- Late diagnosis carries increased risk of short-term mortality (death within 1 year of diagnosis) by as much as 10-fold^{4,5}

Public Health Perspective

- People with HIV are at high risk of transmission until diagnosis
- Unaware of their illness & may not take steps to change risky sexual behaviours
- Will not have started antiretroviral treatment

- Sandwell was ranked the 12th most deprived local authority by the English Indices of Deprivation in 2019⁶

- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough has a higher HIV prevalence compared to regional & national averages⁷

AIM

- To ascertain at what stage of disease health services in Sandwell are diagnosing people with HIV from 2019 to 2022.

METHODS

- Sexual health centre databases were searched for patients whose files were coded for 'New HIV Diagnosis' from 1/1/2019 to 26/1/2022

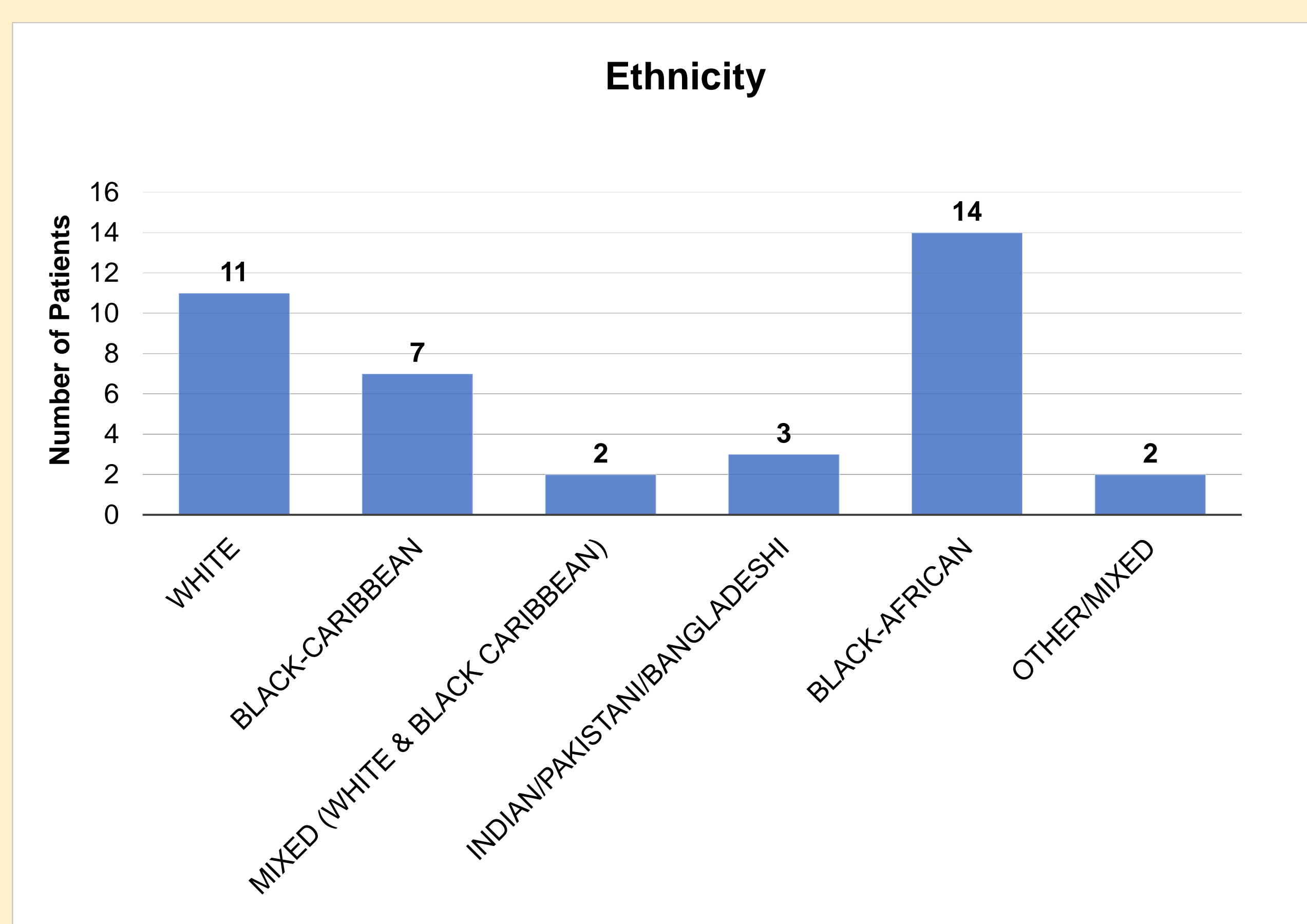
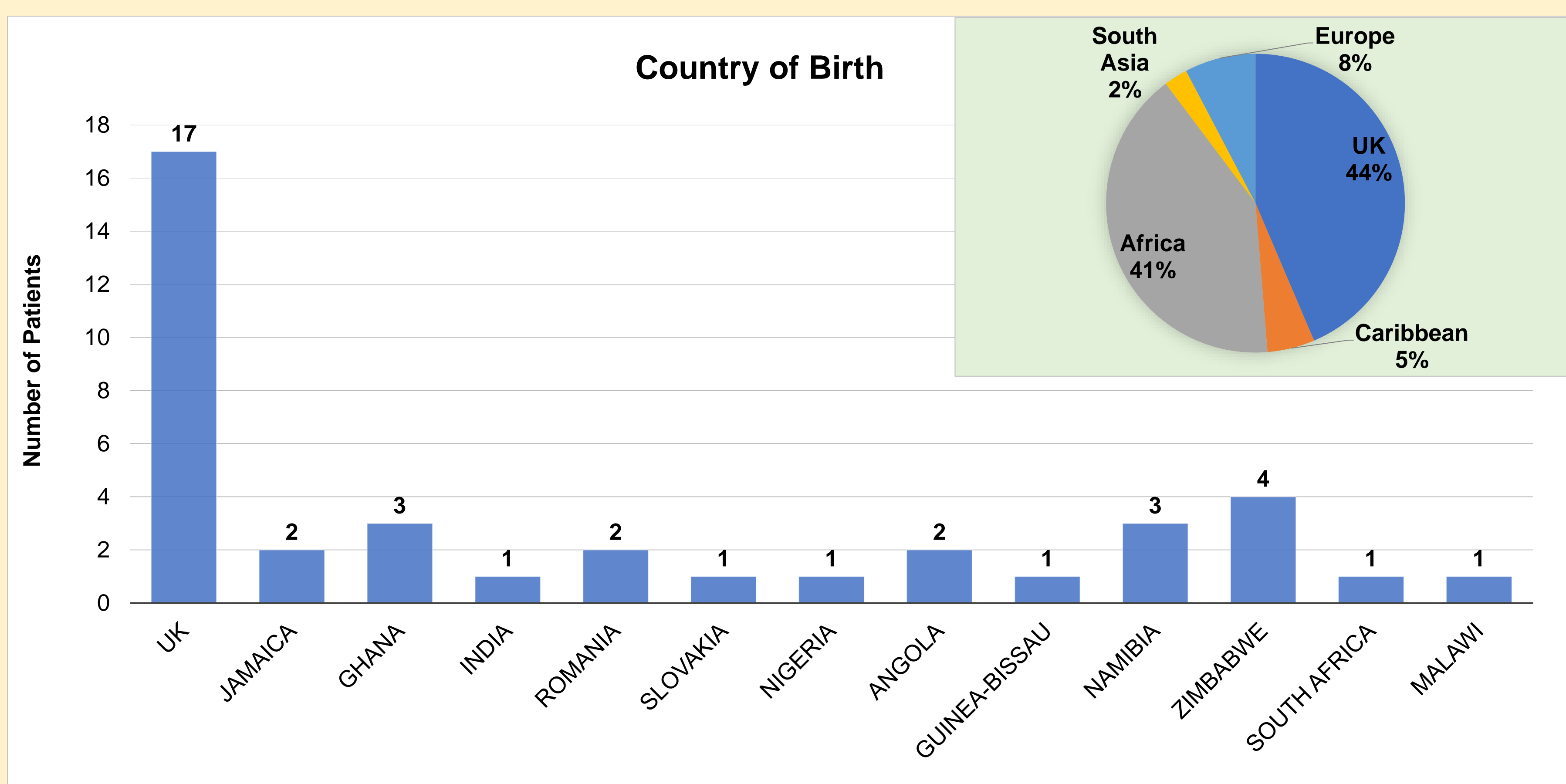
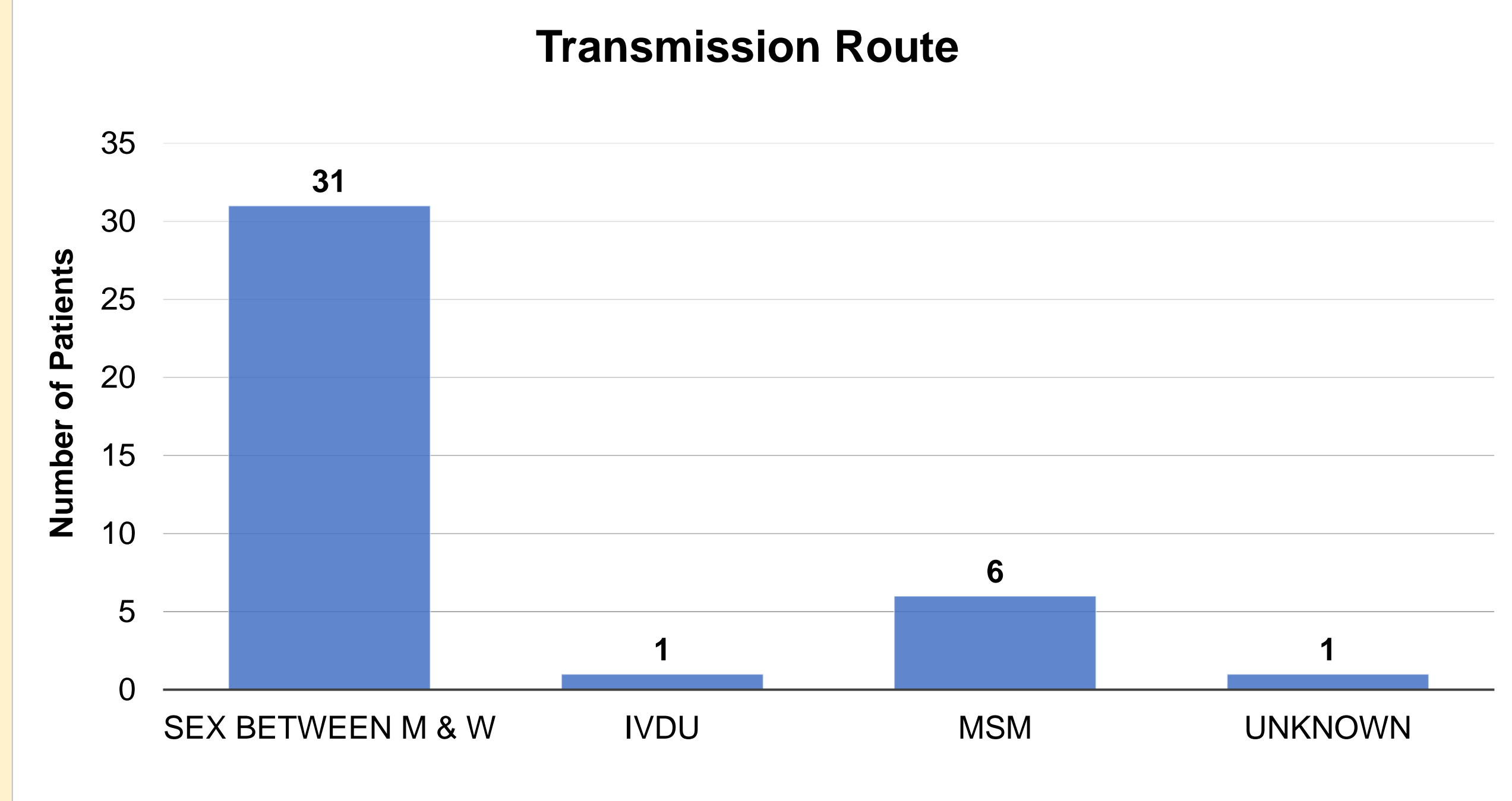
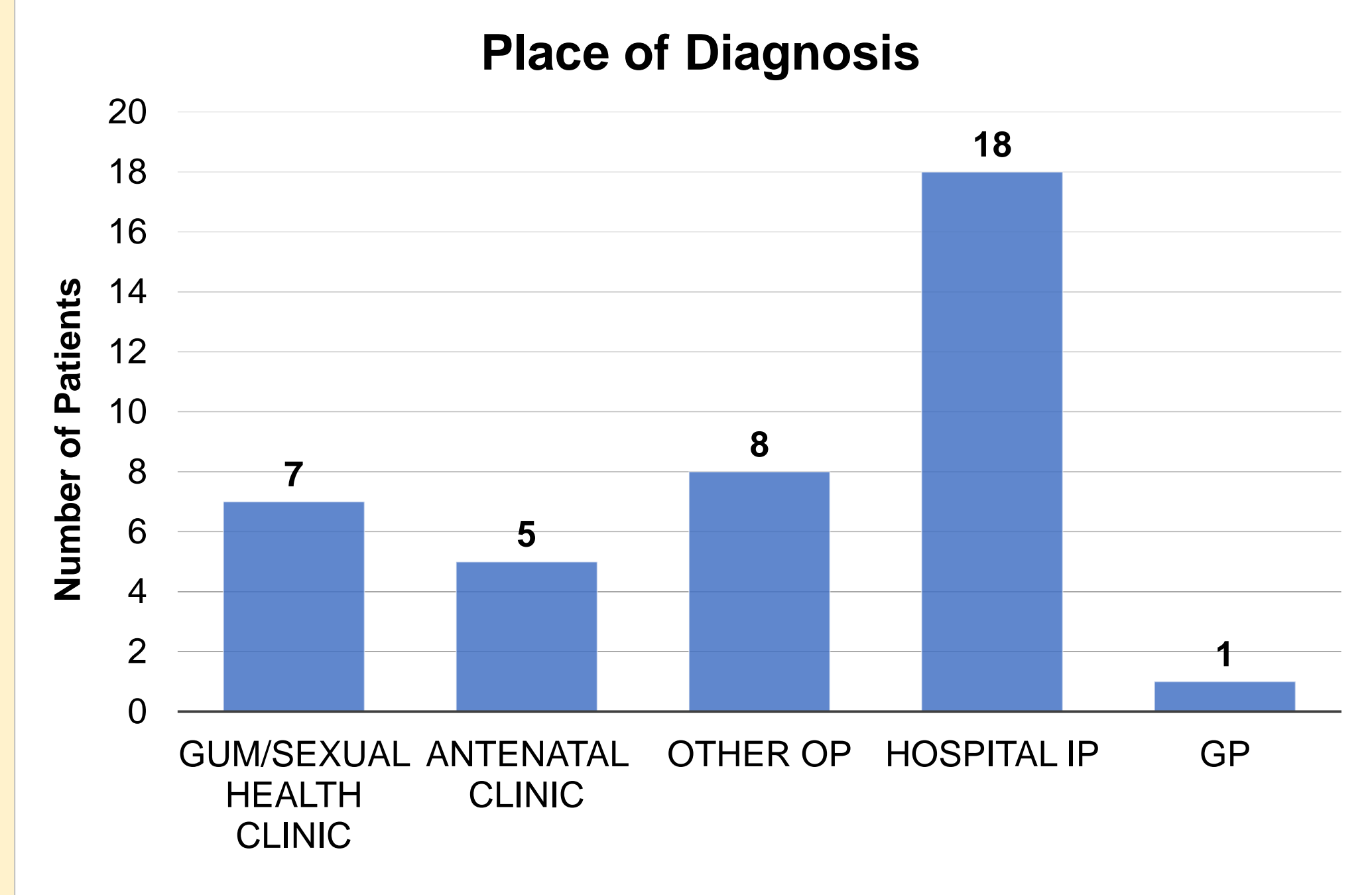
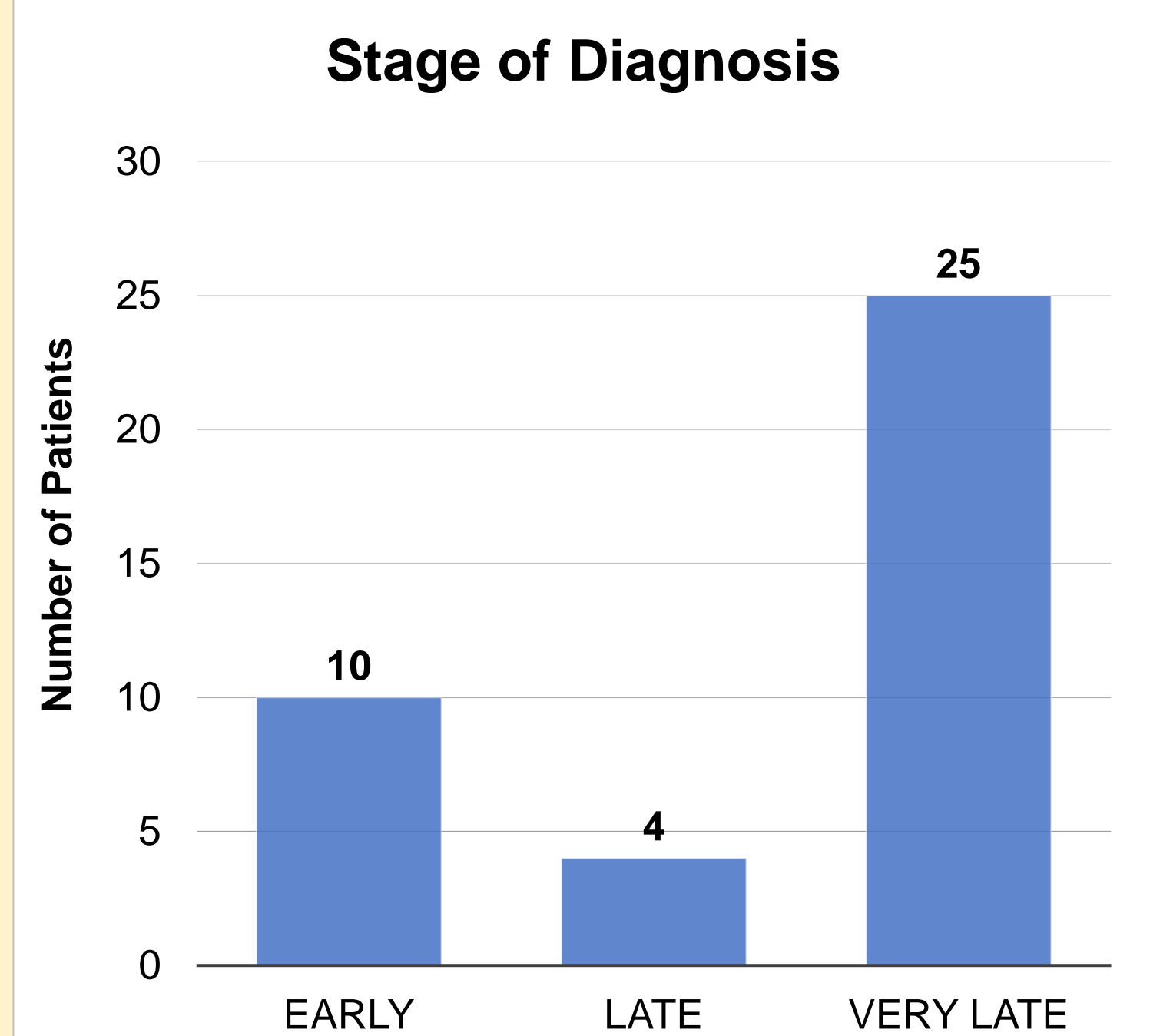
- People with new HIV diagnoses made in Sandwell were identified

- Stage of diagnosis was categorized as follows:

EARLY	CD4 Count ≥ 350
LATE	CD4 Count <350 and ≥ 200
VERY LATE	CD4 Count < 200 or AIDS Defining Illness

RESULTS

- 39 new HIV diagnoses were identified
- 74% of new HIV diagnoses were late or very late
- The most common setting for new diagnosis was hospital inpatient at 46%, compared to 18% in sexual health clinics and 3% in general practice
- 44% of the people with new HIV diagnoses were born in the UK and 41% were born in an African nation
- The most common transmission route (79%) was sex between men and women



CONCLUSIONS

The majority of HIV diagnoses were made at late or very late-stage disease and the most common setting for diagnosis was hospital inpatient
 → Primary care and sexual health services in Sandwell are failing to detect HIV early and patients are not started on treatment until late-stage disease when morbidity and mortality are higher
 → Sandwell is one of the most deprived boroughs in England, and the findings of this study may be generalisable to other deprived areas within the UK

PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS

- HIV testing for all people registering in a general practice and for all general medical hospital admissions in areas with high HIV prevalence
- Public education that accesses but is not targeted specifically toward underserved groups, with the aim to promote widespread testing and reduce stigma

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