The Opioid Use Disorder Care Cascade for PWH Experiencing Homelessness in Low-Barrier HIV Care

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BACKGROUND

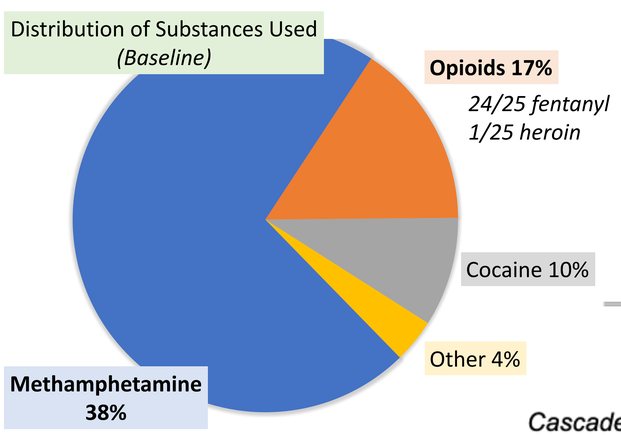
- Among people with HIV (PWH) with co-morbid opioid use disorder (OUD), initiation and retention in OUD treatment (e.g., buprenorphine, methadone) substantially reduces overdose deaths and improves HIV viral suppression.
- Objective: characterize the OUD care cascade for viremic PWH experiencing homelessness enrolled in a low-barrier HIV primary care model with embedded addiction support services.

METHODS

- The POP-UP clinic at Ward 86 provides comprehensive primary care for viremic PWH with housing instability using a drop-in model with interdisciplinary services including counseling, same-day buprenorphine initiation, methadone clinic in an adjacent building, and on-demand Addiction Medicine consultation.
- Retrospective chart review of enrolled patients from February 2019 to July 2023.
- Identified those with opioid use upon enrollment, tracked progression through a previously published care cascade for OUD (Figure).

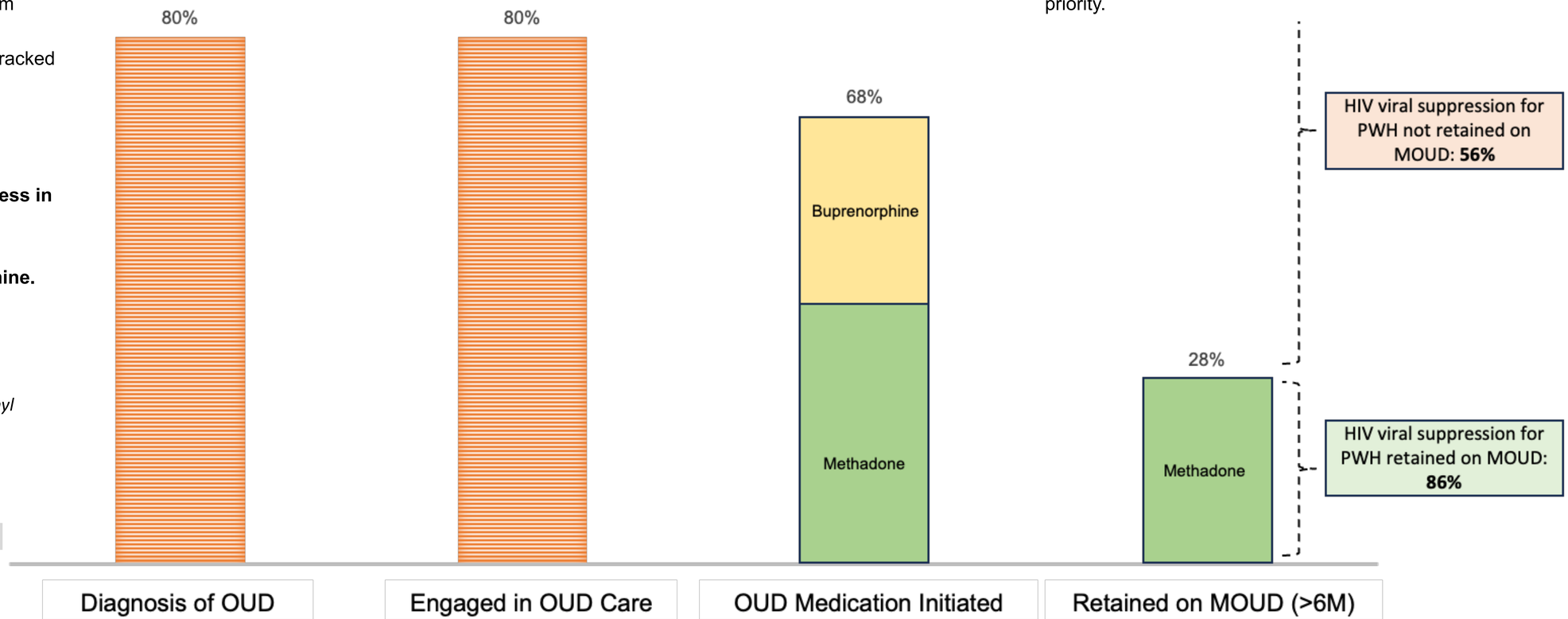
RESULTS

- **94% (138/145) of PWH experiencing homelessness in low-barrier primary care used substances** (see distribution below).
- **PWH using opioids: 100% used methamphetamine.** 84% cis-men, 58% White, 20% Latine, 16% Black.



For **homeless PWH with opioid & stimulant use disorders, 24-week methadone retention was ~30%, buprenorphine retention was 0%,** despite low-barrier addiction services embedded in HIV care.

RESULTS, CONTINUED



Cascade modeled after Williams, et al. J Subst Abuse Treat 2018.

RESULTS, CONTD

- Median follow up time was 28 months (interquartile range 12 - 39).
- At 24-weeks, 86% of PWH retained on methadone had HIV VL <50 vs. 56% of PWH not retained on MOUD ($p < 0.01$).

CONCLUSIONS

- For PWH with a high degree of structural vulnerability, retention in MOUD was low (29%) despite the availability of low-barrier addiction services in a program serving PWH with homelessness.
- As all patients retained on MOUD were on methadone, it is **crucial to investigate barriers to buprenorphine retention and to enhance methadone clinic referrals from primary care**.
- **Addressing the widespread stimulant use** observed in this sample of PWH experiencing homelessness is a top priority.

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