

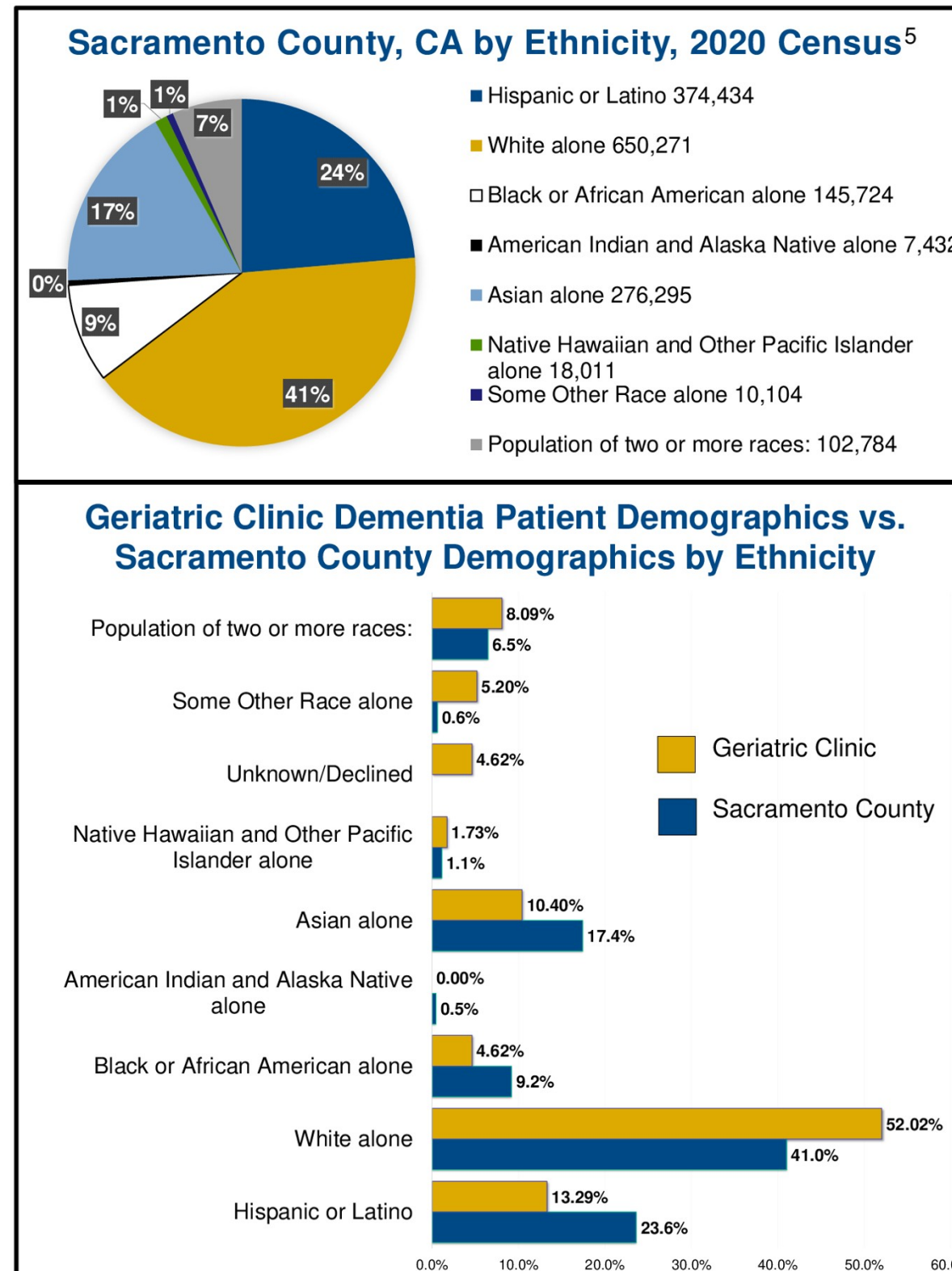
Fading Minds: Why Some Minorities are Left Behind in Dementia Care

Background

- Dementia presents significant public health challenges in the U.S., with varying prevalence and impact across racial and ethnic groups¹.
- Black and Hispanic individuals show a higher prevalence and risk of dementia compared to White individuals but often face delays in diagnosis and are underrepresented in specialized care such as geriatrics^{2,3}.
- In 2023, 943 certified PAs reported geriatrics as their principal specialty, representing only 0.7% of all certified PAs⁴.
- This quality improvement analysis examines the racial and ethnic makeup of adults seeking dementia care at a specialized geriatric clinic in Sacramento, California.
- The aim is to compare the clinic's patient demographics with those of local Sacramento County to identify potential differences in healthcare access and highlight opportunities for PAs to enhance care access for diverse groups in geriatric health.

Methods

- This analysis reviewed six months of de-identified data on the total number of patients with dementia seen at the geriatric clinic by ethnicity.
- This clinic data was compared to publicly available Sacramento County Census data⁵.
- The comparison focused on the representation of White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian populations within the clinic compared to the county.
- Fisher's exact test was used to assess the statistical significance of differences in ethnic distribution between the clinic and county data.



Results

- Clinic Demographics: 13.3% Hispanic, 52% White, 4.6% Black.
- Sacramento County Demographics: 23.6% Hispanic, 41% White, 9.2% Black.
- Fisher's exact test **revealed a statistically significant difference ($P = 0.0032$) between the ethnic distribution in the clinic versus the county.**
- This suggests the clinic's patient population is not representative of the local area's ethnic composition.

Discussion/Conclusions

- Although these findings are not generalizable to the entire United States, they do highlight the need for targeted outreach and a larger PA workforce in geriatrics to improve access to dementia care, especially in underrepresented ethnic minority groups.
- The overrepresentation of White patients compared to Black and Hispanic patients points to barriers like socioeconomic factors, unequal access, and cultural/language issues faced by minority populations.
- A multifaceted approach is needed, including community initiatives, culturally sensitive education, language access, and partnerships with primary care providers for earlier diagnosis and referrals^{6,7}.

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