

Childhood Hardships in the California Maternity Population

Findings from the Maternal and Infant Health Assessment (MIHA) Survey

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Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Program
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Public Health





What Is the MIHA Survey?

- **Annual population-based survey of women with recent live birth**
- **Addresses maternal and infant social and economic conditions, health behaviors, health status and access to care before, during and after a recent pregnancy**
- **Provides information not available from other sources to develop, target and evaluate public health efforts**
- **Modeled after the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 37 other states**
- **Collaborative effort of**
 - Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health (MCAH) Program
 - California Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program
 - The University of California, San Francisco
 - Paula Braveman, MD, MPH – Principal Investigator



MIHA Methods

- **Sample from birth certificates for Feb - May births, excluding:**
 - Non-residents
 - Women < 15 years old
 - Multiple births > 3
- **Designed to represent all women giving birth in calendar year who meet inclusion criteria**
- **Questionnaire mailed in English and Spanish with telephone follow-up to non-respondents**
- **13,663 women participated in 2011-2012**
- **70% response rate**



What are childhood hardships?

Events or conditions that occur during childhood that--

- harm social, cognitive and emotional functioning and upset the nurturing family environments children need to thrive
- result in trauma (physiological and psychological response to adversity) and toxic stress (prolonged elevation of the body's stress response system) experienced by children
- may lead to lifelong problems in learning, behavior, physical and mental health



Adverse Childhood Events (ACE) Study

- Two types of ACEs: child abuse and household dysfunction
- Compared to adult risk behavior, health status, disease
- Results:
 - ACEs are very common.
 - ACEs co-occur, and those with multiple ACEs likely to have multiple adult risk factors.
 - As the number of ACEs increased, so did risk behaviors and disease.



MIHA Questions on Childhood Hardships

....Please tell us if these things ever happened to you from the time you were born through age 13.

- A parent or guardian I lived with got **divorced or separated**.
- We had to move because of **problems paying the rent or mortgage**.
- Someone in my family or I **went hungry** because we could not afford enough food.
- A parent or guardian got in **trouble with the law or went to jail**.
- A parent or guardian I lived with had a **serious drinking or drug problem**.
- I was in **foster care** (removed from home by the court or child welfare agency).

Thinking back to your childhood through age 13, how often was it hard for your family to pay for **basic needs** like food or housing?

-- *Very often, somewhat often, not very often, never*



Childhood adversity measures

MIHA CH Measures

Economic Hardship

- Problems paying rent / mortgage
- Hunger
- Basic needs

Household Dysfunction

- Substance Use
- Parent imprisoned
- Foster Care Placement
- Parental separation / divorce

BRFSS ACE Measures

Childhood Abuse

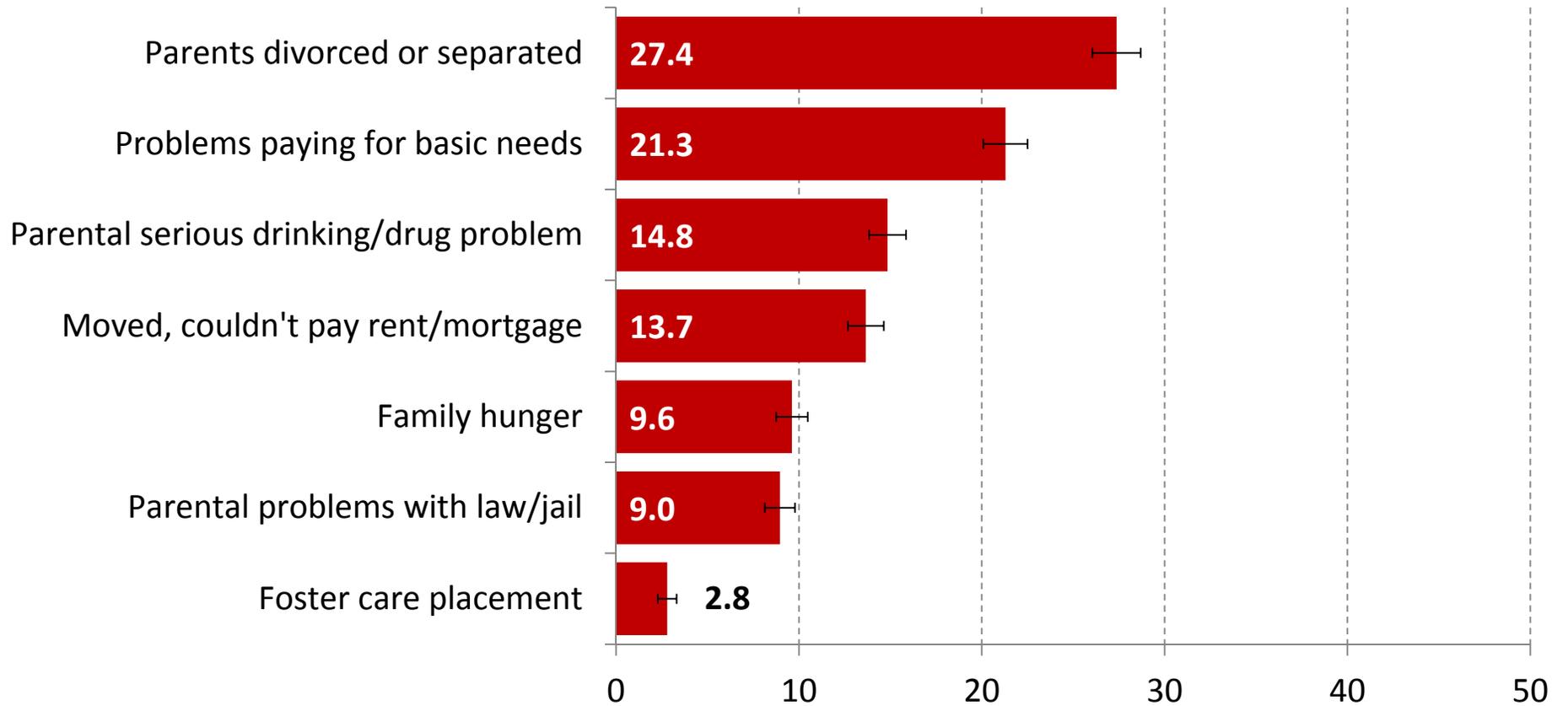
- Physical Abuse
- Psychological abuse
- Sexual abuse

Household Dysfunction

- Substance abuse
- Member imprisoned
- Mental illness
- Adult violence
- Parental separation / divorce



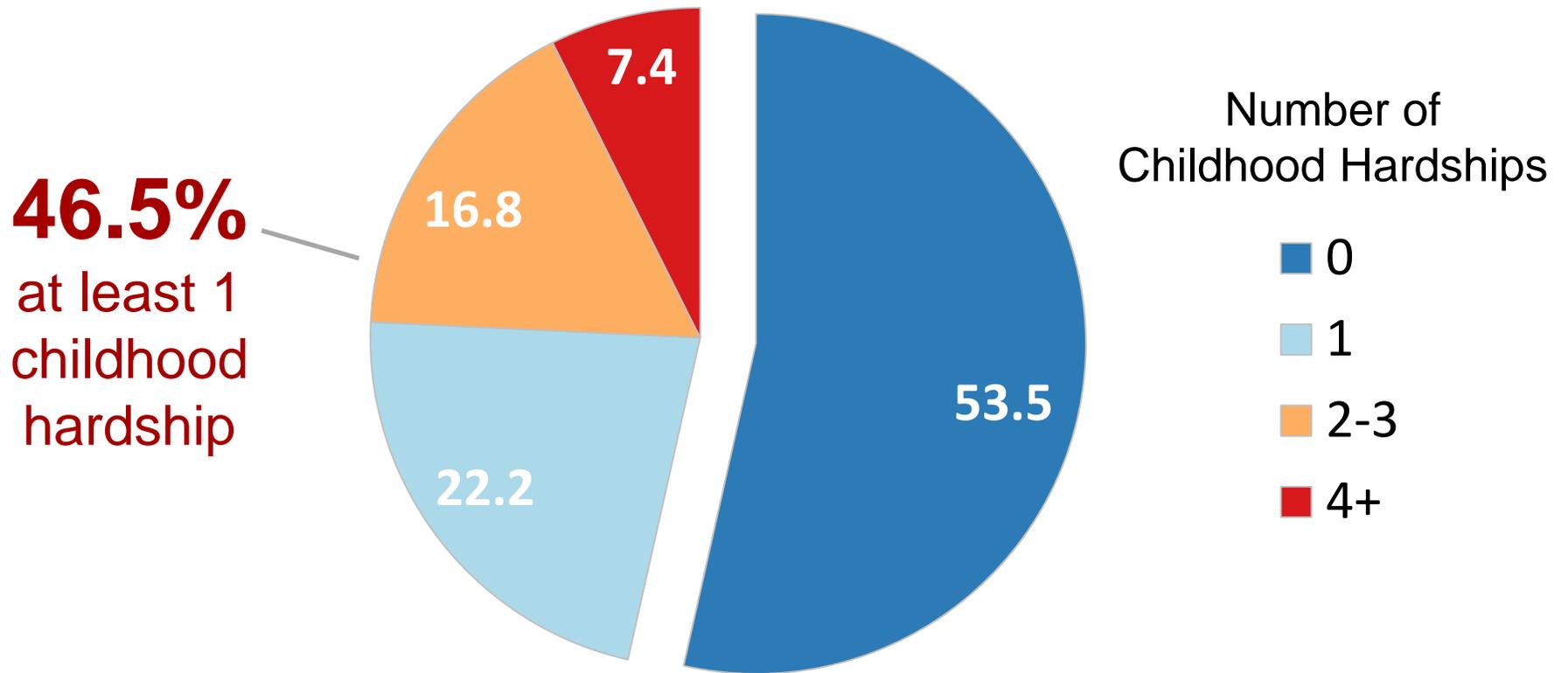
Percent of women with a live birth who experienced individual childhood hardships



The Maternal and Infant Health Assessment (MIHA) is an annual population based survey of women with a recent live birth with a sample size of n= 13,663 in 2011-12. Percentages and 95% confidence intervals are weighted to represent all women with a live birth in 2011 and 2012 in California.



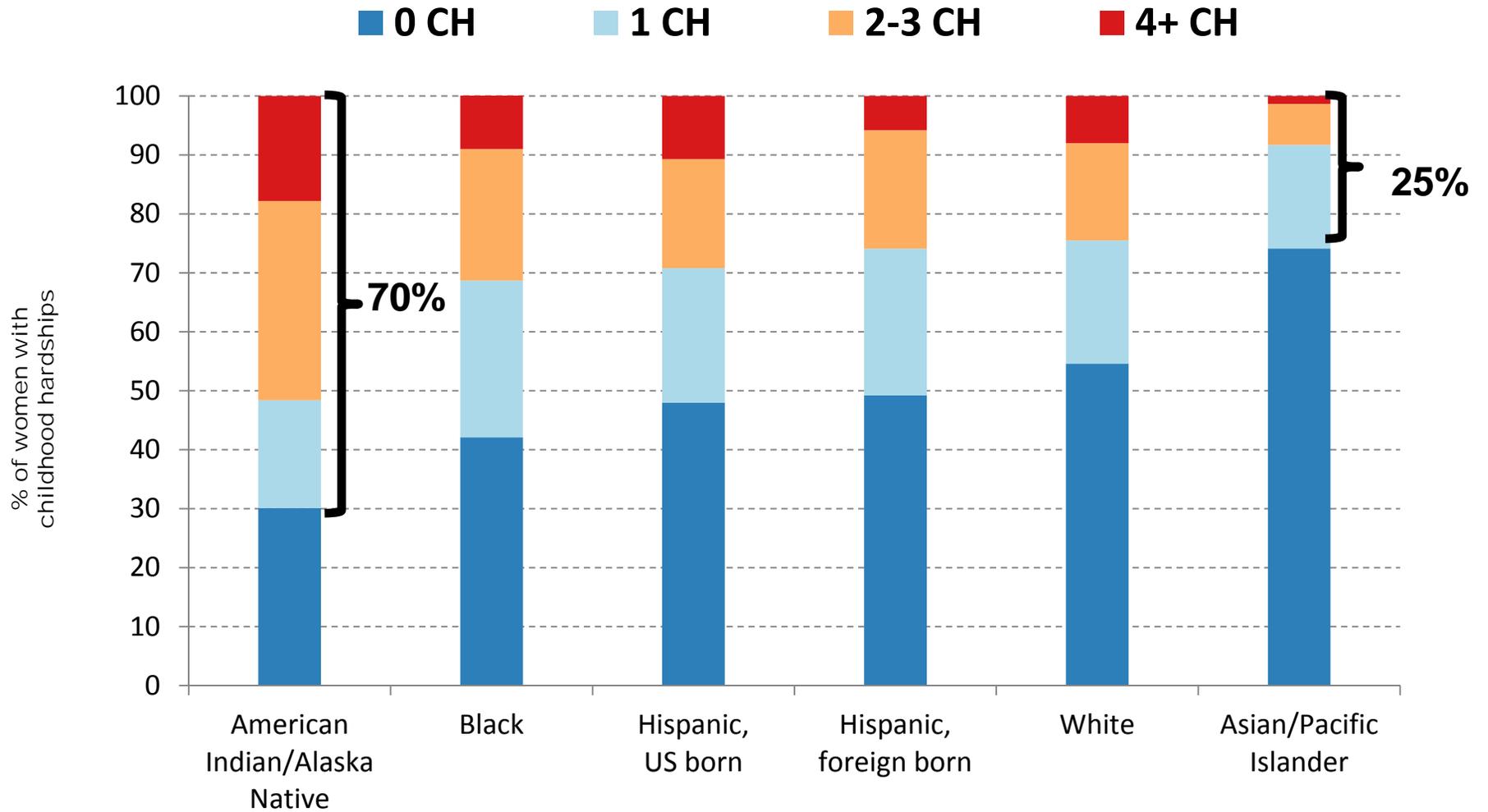
Percent of women with a live birth who experienced 0 - 4+ childhood hardships



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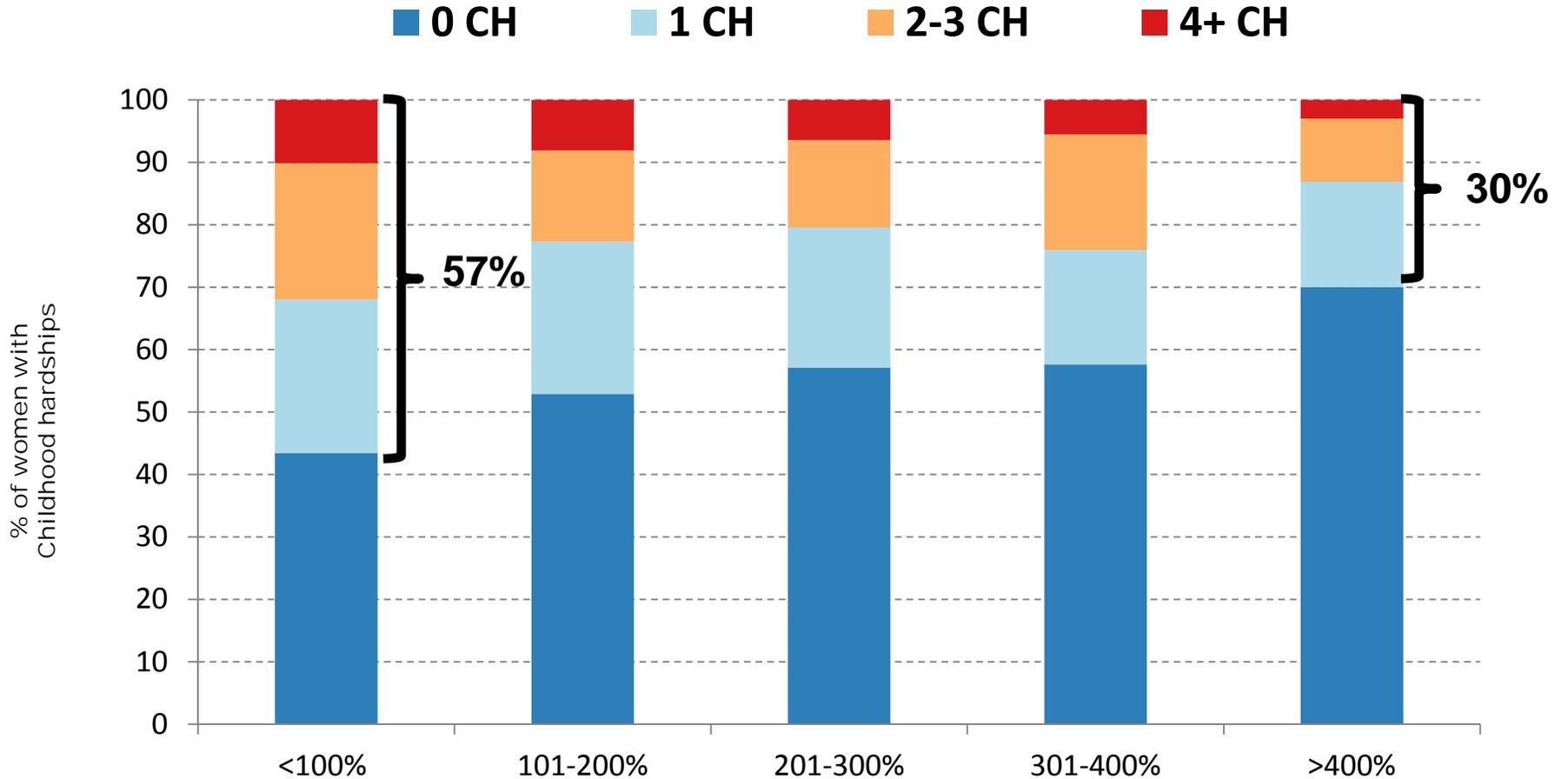
Number of Childhood Hardships Experienced by Race/Ethnicity and Nativity



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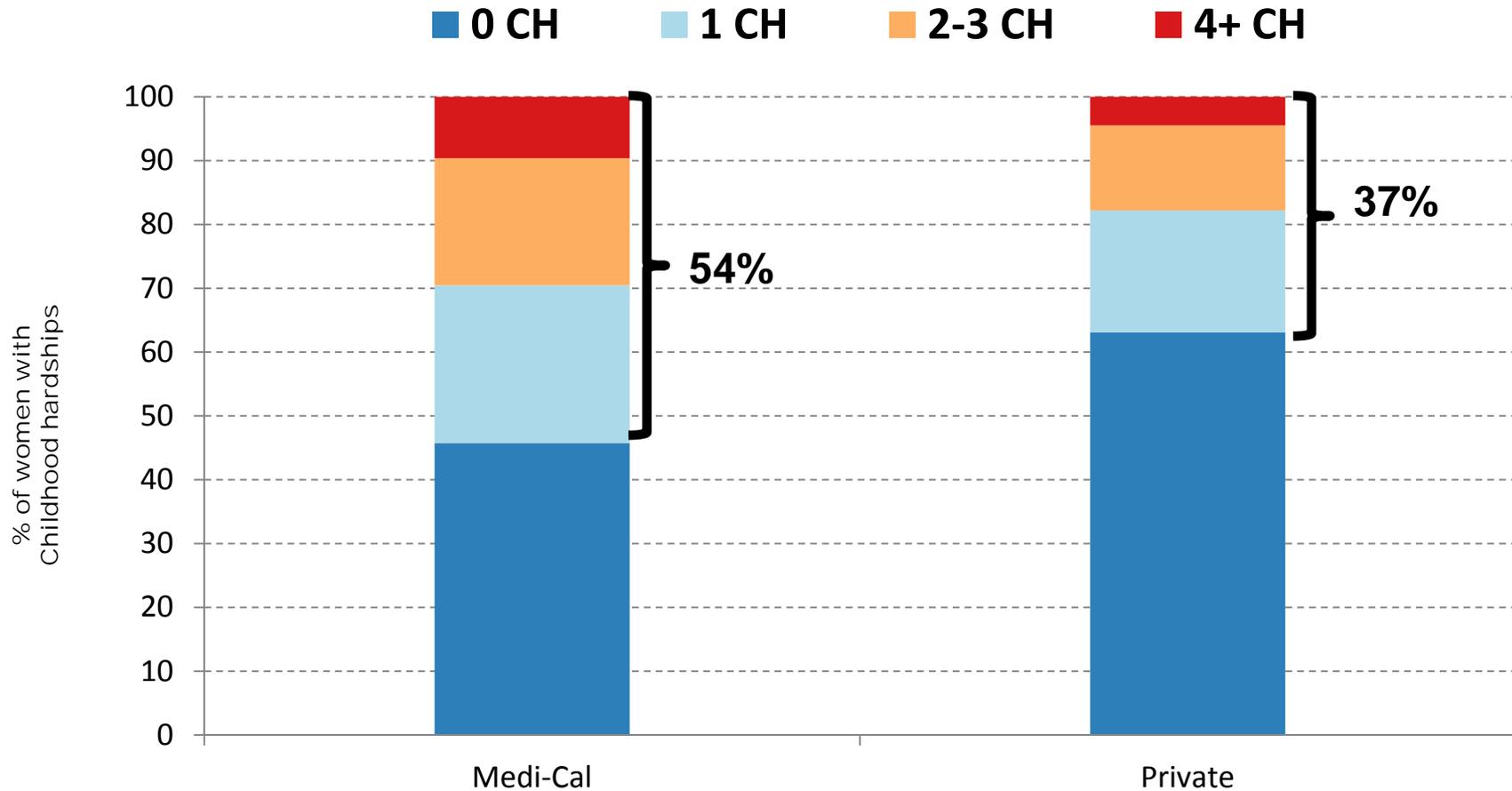
Number of Childhood Hardships Experienced by Past Year Income (% of the federal poverty guideline)



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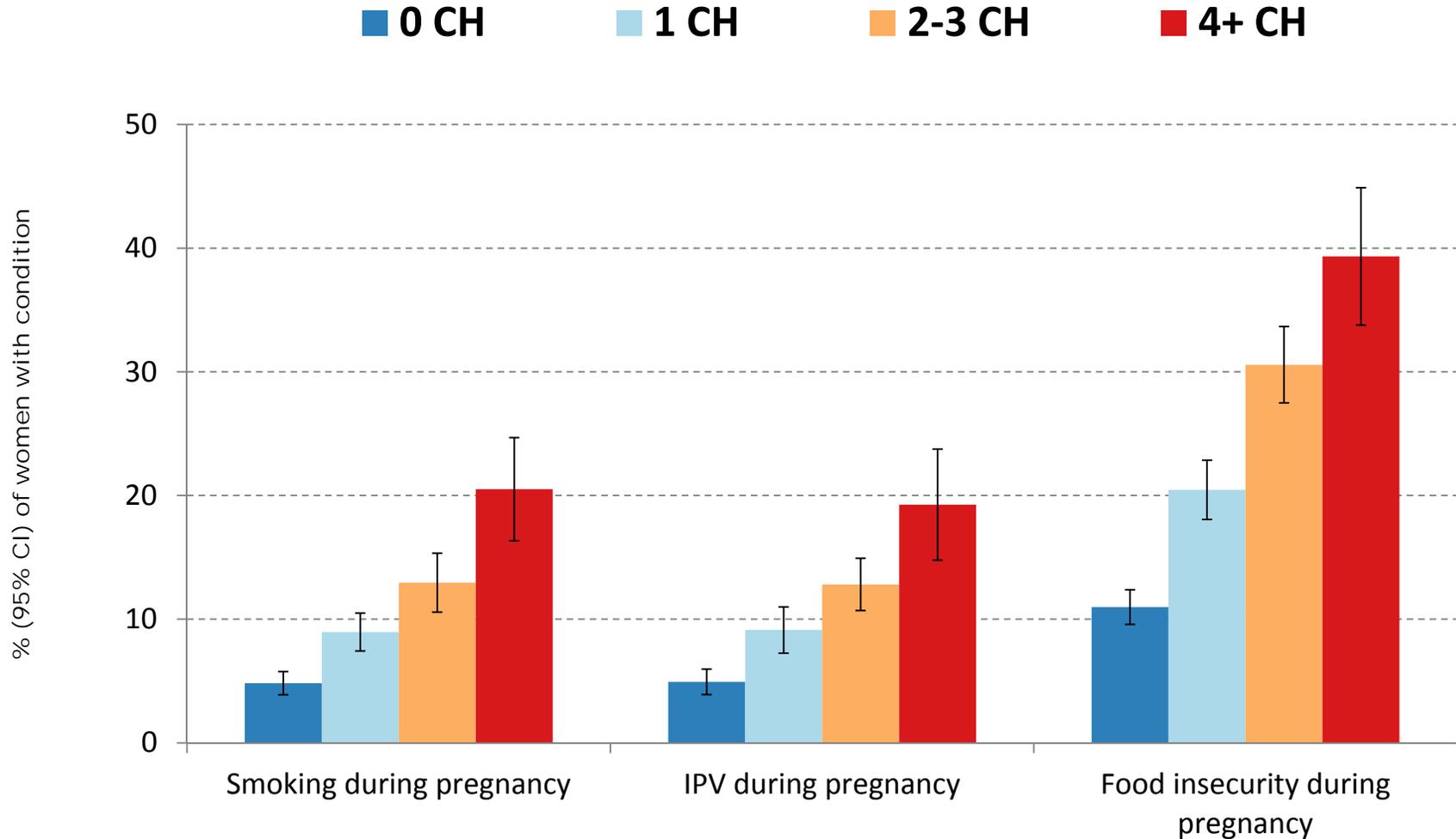
Number of Childhood Hardships Experienced by Prenatal Health Insurance Coverage



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Maternal Health Behaviors and Conditions by Number of Childhood Hardships Experienced



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Summary

- Childhood hardships are common among California's maternity population
- More common among women who:
 - Are American Indian and Black
 - Have lower income
 - Have Medi-Cal during pregnancy
- Cumulative association with negative maternal health status and behaviors



Implications

- **Childhood hardships are unequally distributed across social groups**
- **Many participants in MCAH programs have a history of hardship**
 - Increases women's need for services
 - Complicates women's ability to participate successfully
 - Families carry multi-generational exposure to hardship
- **Early life events have lasting impacts**



Next Steps

- Further exploration of relationship between childhood hardships and health risks
- Explore the role of protective factors in buffering hardships
- Disseminate childhood hardship data across regions and socio-demographic sub-groups through MIHA surveillance products



Questions?

**More information about MIHA and our publications
is available on the website:**

www.cdph.ca.gov/MIHA

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