

Center for Studying Disability Policy

Racial Disparities in COVID-19 Experiences Among Older Adults with Disabling Conditions

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Motivation

/ **COVID-19 has had unequal impacts**

- Older adults
- Racial/ethnic minorities
- Geography (communities with low incomes)
- Intersectionality

/ **People with disabilities may have more risk factors**

/ **Sparse evidence about the impacts for people with disabilities**



Analysis overview

/ **Explore experiences of older adults with disabling conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic**

- Document negative health, financial, and work experiences related to the pandemic
- Explore intersectionality of race, ethnicity, and disability

/ **Examine the role of contextual factors**

- Use county-level data to understand the contribution of structural/social factors that influence these disparities



Data

/ **Health and Retirement Study (HRS)**

- COVID-19 module fielded May 2020-May 2021
- Linked to previous years

/ **County-level data**

- Contextual factors from publicly available sources



Sample

/ Older adults

- Limit sample to age 50 and older

/ Disability

- Activities of daily living (ADLs) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs)
- Alternative definitions (not presented)
 - o Work limiting conditions
 - o SSI/DI benefit receipt

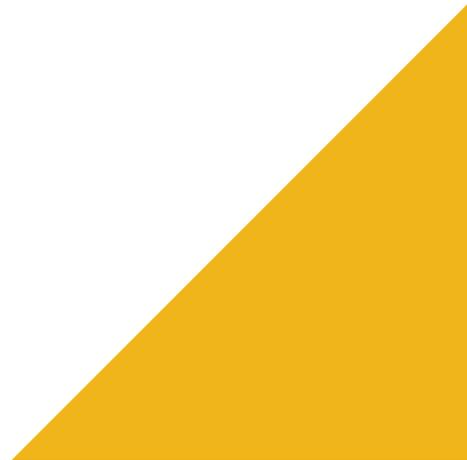
/ Race/ethnicity

- Four subgroups: Non-Hispanic White, Non-Hispanic Black, Non-Hispanic Other, and Hispanic or Latino



Results

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Key findings

Health

Older adults with disabilities were more likely to report delaying care compared to those without disabilities

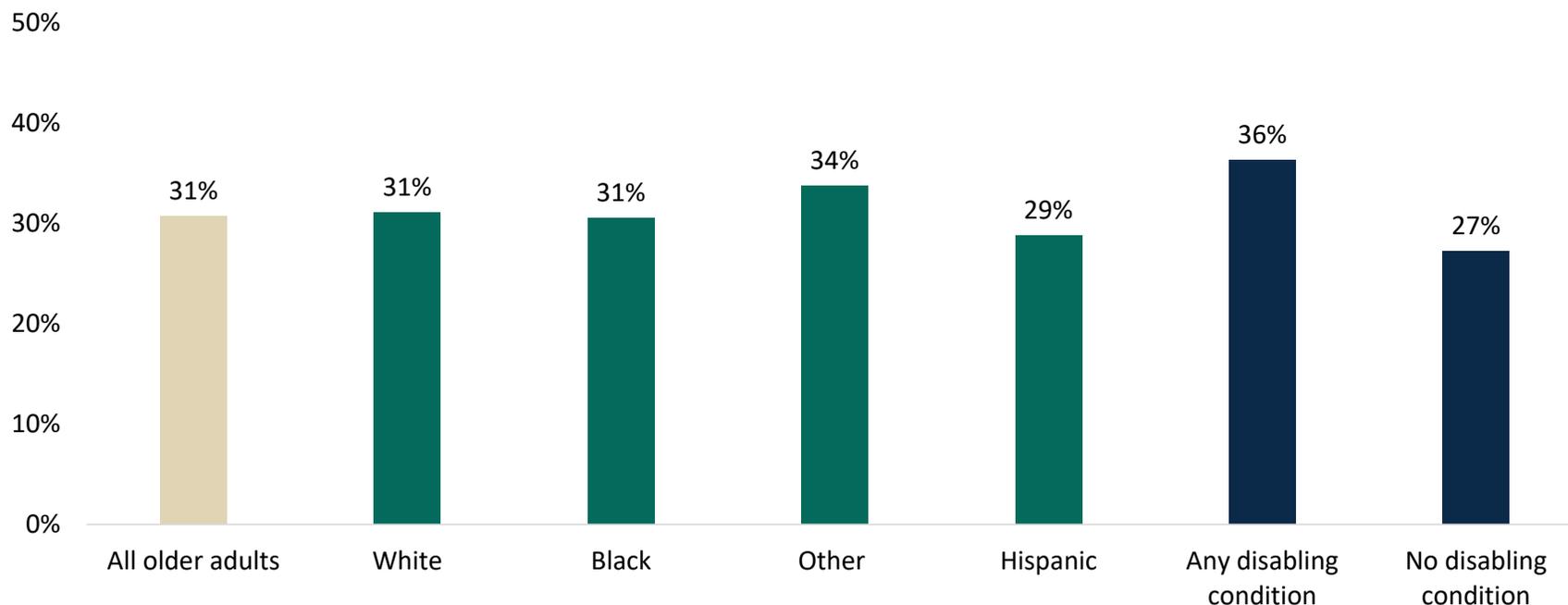
Some differences persisted across race and ethnicity

Finances

Work



Percentage of older adults who delayed health care since March 2020

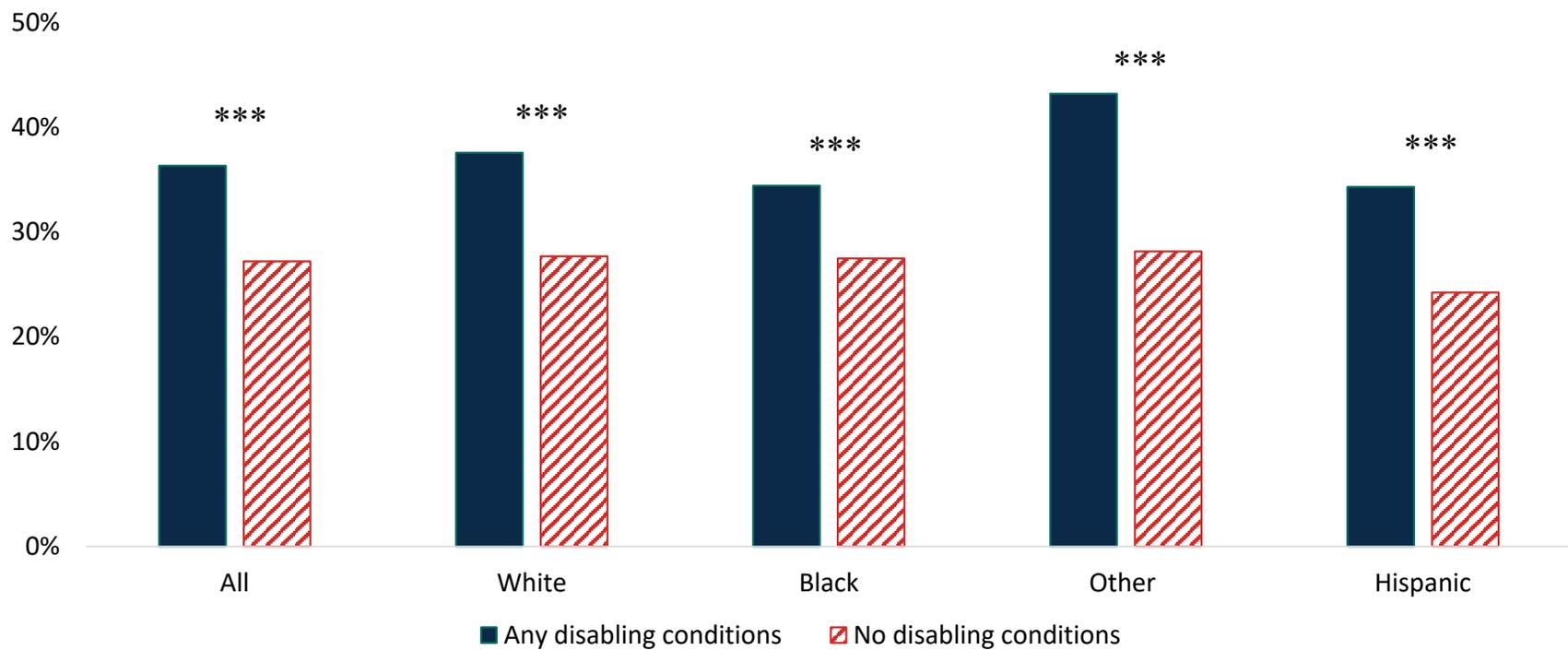


Difference by disabling condition: *** ($p < 0.001$)

Difference in distribution across races: ### ($p < 0.001$)



Percentage of older adults who delayed health care since March 2020, by race and disability



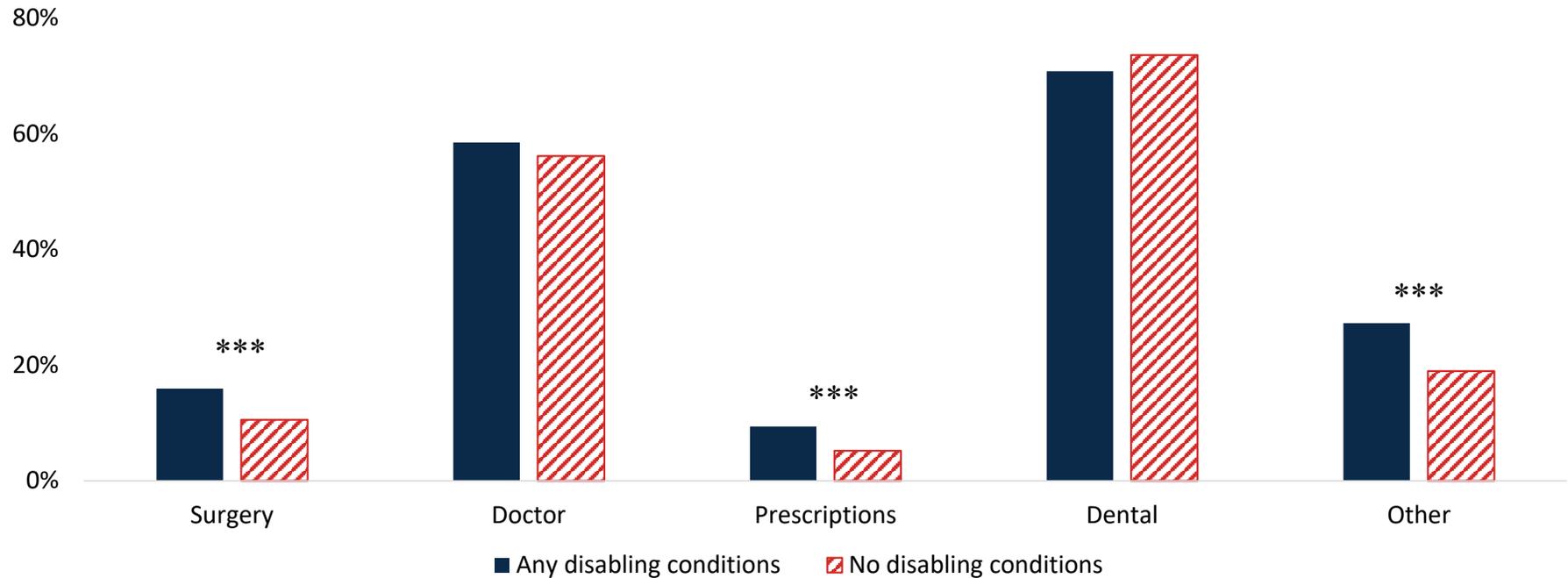
Difference by disabling condition: * p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Difference in distribution across races: ### (p<0.001)

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Percentage of older adults who delayed different types of health care since March 2020, among those with any delays



Difference by disabling condition: * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$



Key findings

Health

- Older adults with disabilities were more likely to report delaying care compared to those without disabilities
- Some differences persisted across race and ethnicity

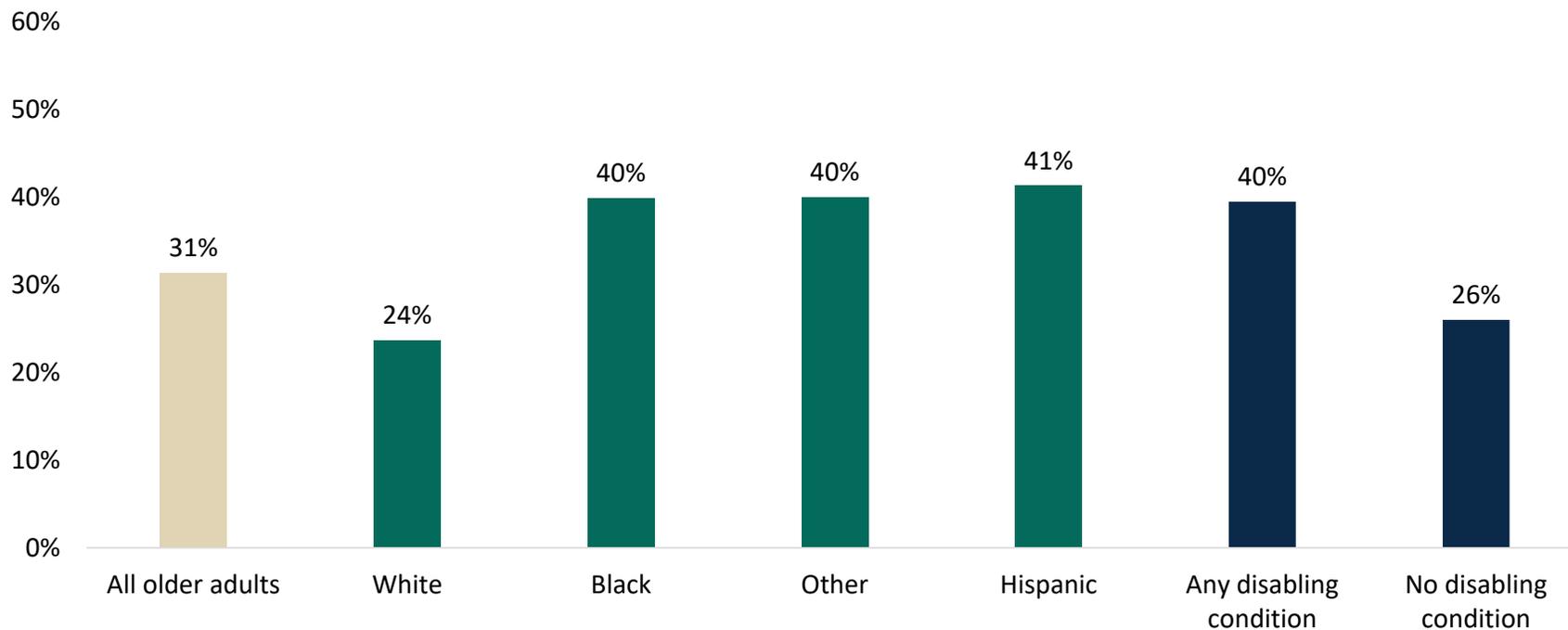
Finances

- More older adults with disabilities reported financial hardships than those without disabilities
- All differences persisted across race and ethnicity
- Difficulty accessing food was the most common financial hardships

Work



Percentage of older adults with any financial hardships



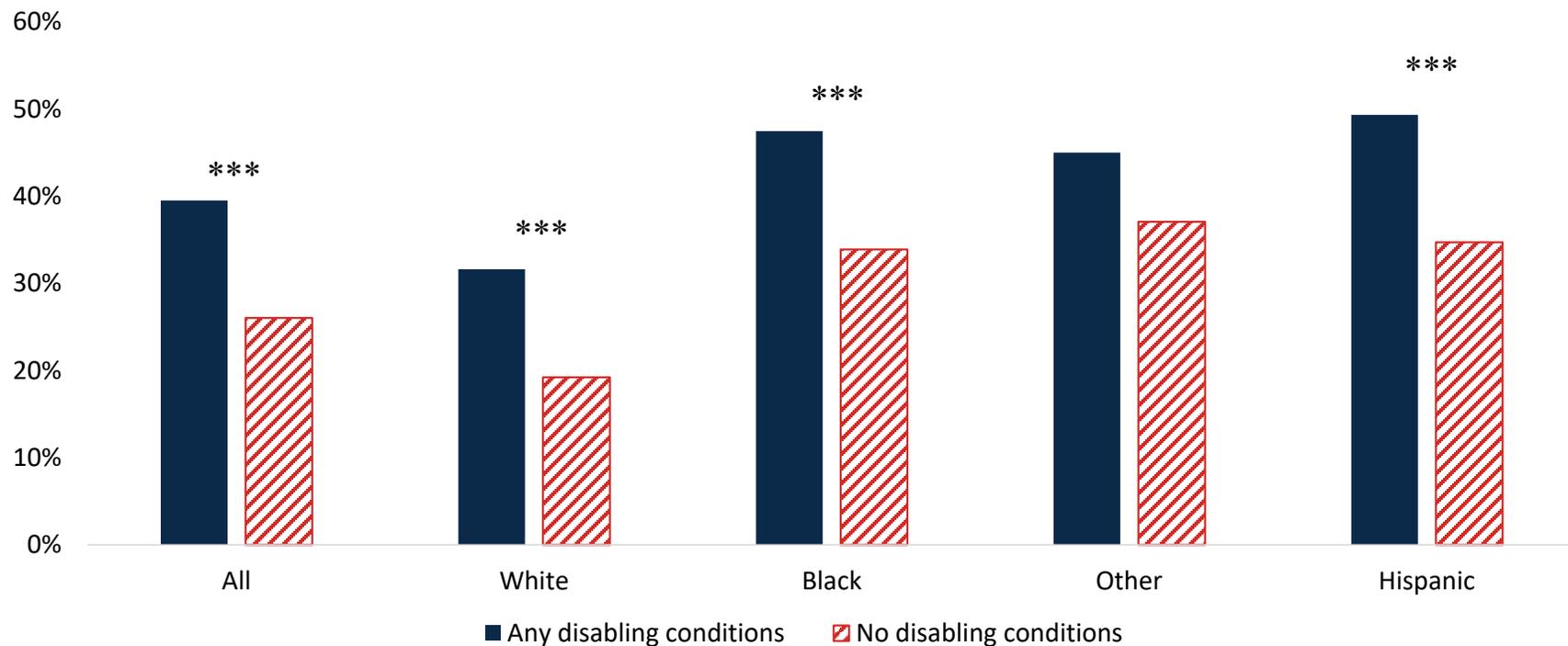
Difference by disabling condition: *** ($p < 0.001$)

Difference in distribution across races: ### ($p < 0.001$)

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Percentage of older adults with any financial hardships, by race and disability

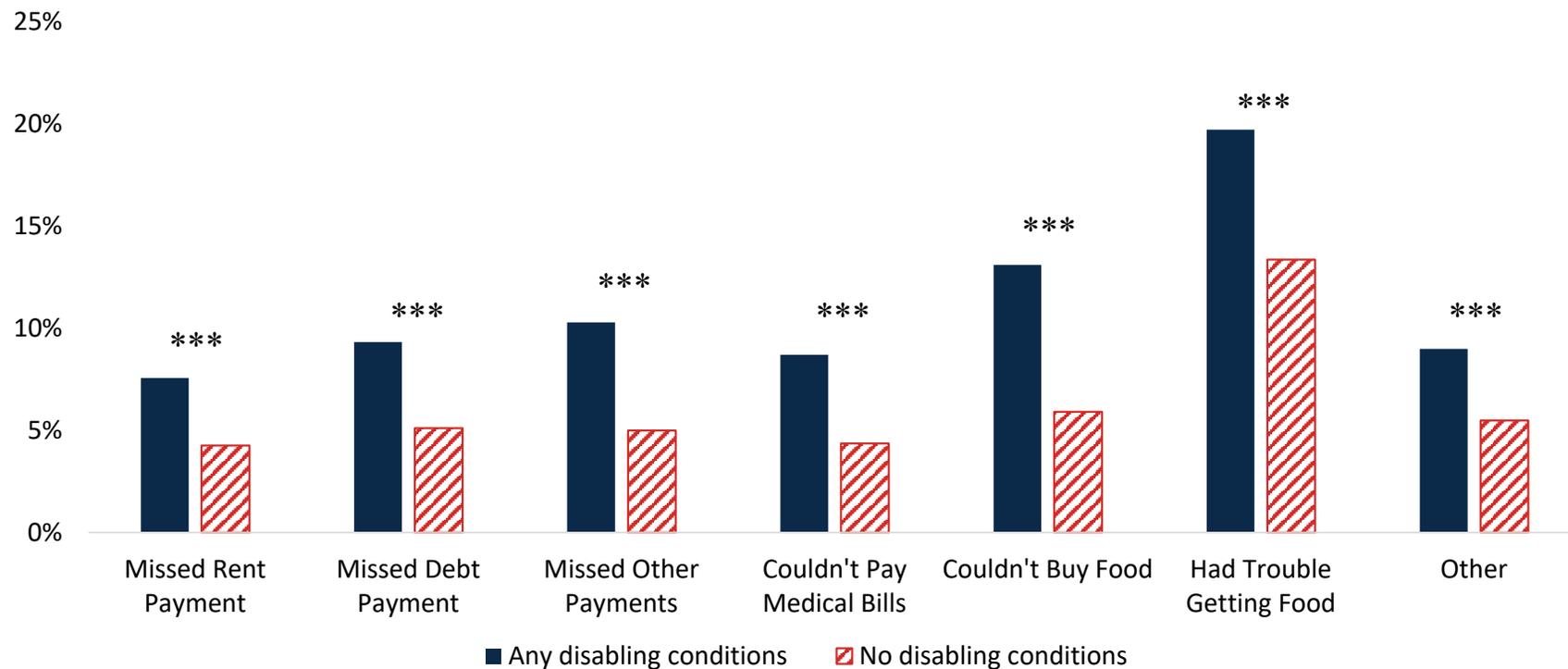


Difference by disabling condition: * p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Difference in distribution across races: ### (p<0.001) Center for Studying Disability Policy



Percentage of older adults who experienced different types of financial hardships, by disability



Difference by disabling condition: * p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001



Key findings

Health

- Older adults with disabilities were more likely to report delaying care compared to those without disabilities
- Some differences persisted across race and ethnicity

Finances

- More older adults with disabilities reported financial hardships than those without disabilities
- All differences persisted across race and ethnicity
- Difficulty accessing food was the most common financial hardships

Work

- Older adults with disabilities were less likely to work prior to pandemic compared to those without disabilities
- Among those with work impacts, more older adults with disabilities reported stopping work because of the pandemic
- There were differences by race, ethnicity, and disability in moving to remote work



Contextual factors

Contextual factor	Source
COVID cases per 100k (average monthly)	COVID Act Now
Pandemic Vulnerability Index score	Pandemic Vulnerability Index
Hospital bed capacity	Pandemic Vulnerability Index sub-score
Social Vulnerability Index score	AHRQ
Racial segregation, White vs. non-White	County Health Rankings
Years of potential life lost (premature mortality)	County Health Rankings
Unemployment rate	American Community Survey
Percent of people receiving government assistance (cash or SNAP)	American Community Survey



Older adults with disabling conditions live in areas with more inequalities

/ **Differences in contextual factors by disability and race**

- Higher COVID case counts per capita and premature mortality
- Higher pandemic and social vulnerability indices
- Higher unemployment rates

/ **Contextual factors had few associations with outcomes**

/ **Individual race and disability remained significant after accounting for contextual factors**



Conclusion

Finding	Policy implication
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• COVID-19 had disparate impacts on older adults with disabilities• Older adults with disabilities were more likely to live in counties with greater pandemic vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disability-inclusive public health response
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Black and Hispanic older adults with disabilities had more negative experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intersectionality lens
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many older adults experienced financial hardships, and disparities were consistent across multiple identities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policies mitigating financial impacts



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