

ABSTRACT

In 2021, California had the greatest increase of individuals experiencing housing insecurity in the country. Moreover, Los Angeles County has the second largest population experiencing housing insecurity. Housing insecurity is a contributing factor to decreased access to care for chronic conditions. Additionally, over half of the Los Angeles County housing insecure population have either a mental illness or a substance use disorder. This especially vulnerable population is less likely to receive the vision care they need which may exacerbate current mental illness if present. Vision care was provided to individuals experiencing housing insecurity in Los Angeles County through the UCLA Mobile Eye Clinic. Individuals received a full vision screening, slit lamp exam, dilated funduscopy and free prescription glasses if needed. Clinic survey intake forms were created to facilitate data collection about patients that included demographics, medical history and current list of prescribed medications. To date, there have been two clinic night totaling to 18 patients. UMEC will continue to partner with the Salvation Army to provide free eye care for people experiencing housing insecurity.

BACKGROUND

Housing Insecurity in Los Angeles County

- The 2021 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress reports that Los Angeles County has the second largest population experiencing housing insecurity in the United States. Background item
- In an analysis of more than 4,000 questionnaires taken as part of the 2019 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count organized by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), 67% of individuals reported having either a mental illness or substance use disorder .

Housing Insecurity, Mental Health and Vision Impairment

- There has been a well-established relationship between vision impairment/blindness and psychiatric conditions, with individuals with visual impairment having greater rates of depression and anxiety; furthermore, these comorbid conditions have been found to occur more frequently among individuals of lower socioeconomic status.

UCLA Mobile Eye Clinic Project

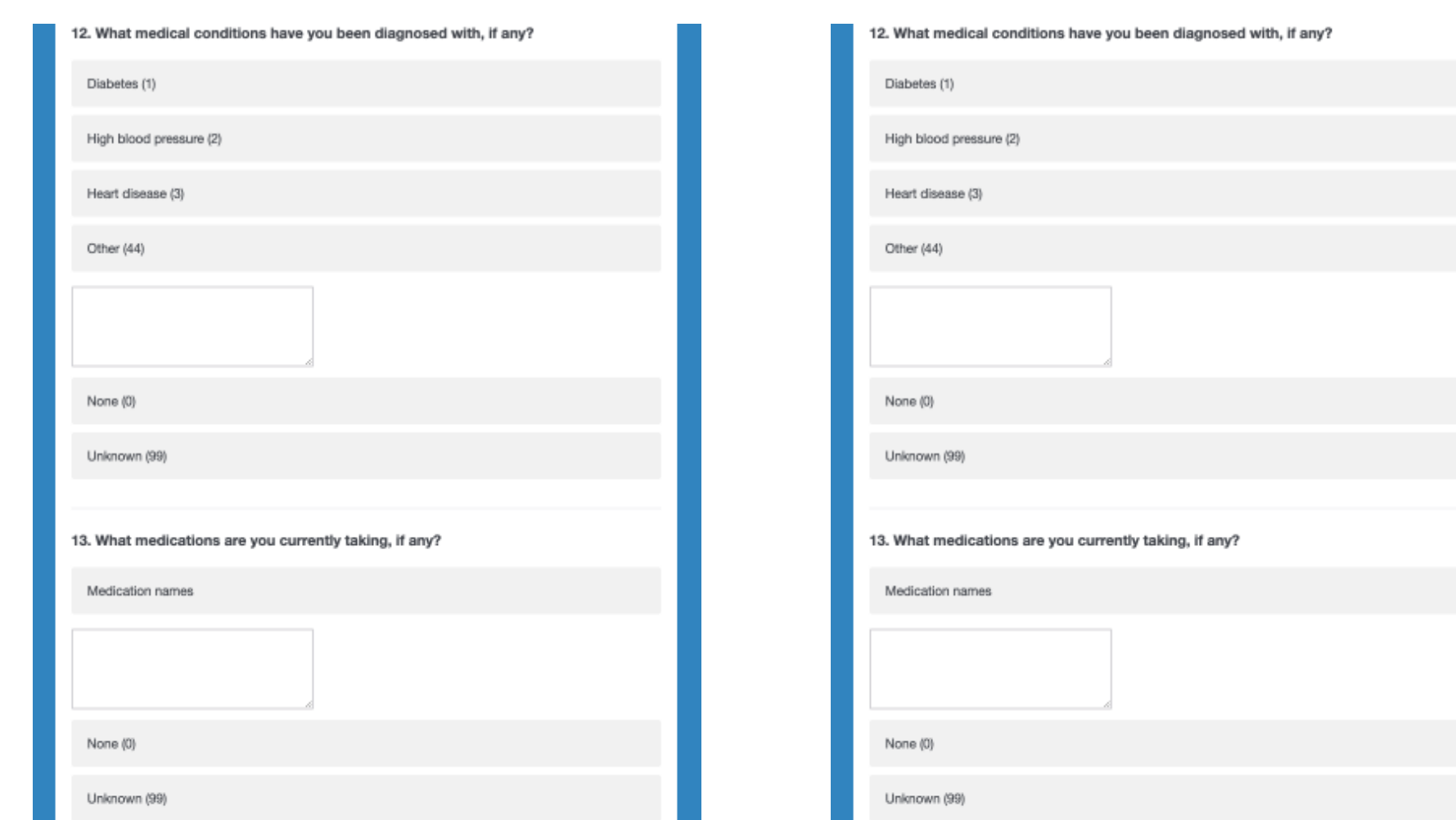
- The UCLA Mobile Eye Clinic Project through the Center for Community Engagement at the UCLA Stein Eye Institute provides free vision screenings and eye examinations to underresourced communities across Los Angeles County.
- The UCLA Mobile Eye Clinic ophthalmic technicians and ophthalmologists determine visual acuity, intraocular pressure, manifest refraction, slit lamp biomicroscopy, dilated funduscopy and free prescription glasses if needed. Overall, it is common for patients to have not received the vision care they needed for several years.

OBJECTIVES

- To examine and describe the relationship between vision impairment/blindness and mental health conditions in individuals experiencing housing insecurity in Los Angeles County.
- To estimate the prevalence of various eye conditions causing vision impairment/blindness in individuals experiencing housing instability in Los Angeles County.
- To assess the need for mental health resources for individuals with vision complaints within those experiencing housing instability in Los Angeles County.
- To develop community outreach strategies to improve access to evaluation and treatment of ophthalmic problems for people experiencing housing insecurity.

METHODS

- Develop new intake survey for the UCLA Mobile Eye Clinic Project
 - Demographics, medical history, current list of prescribed medications
- Increase UCLA Mobile Eye Clinic sites that specifically serve people experiencing housing insecurity in Los Angeles County
- Create electronic survey form on UCLA Health Qualtrics survey for data analysis



12. What medical conditions have you been diagnosed with, if any?

Diabetes (1)

High blood pressure (2)

Heart disease (3)

Other (4)

None (5)

Unknown (99)

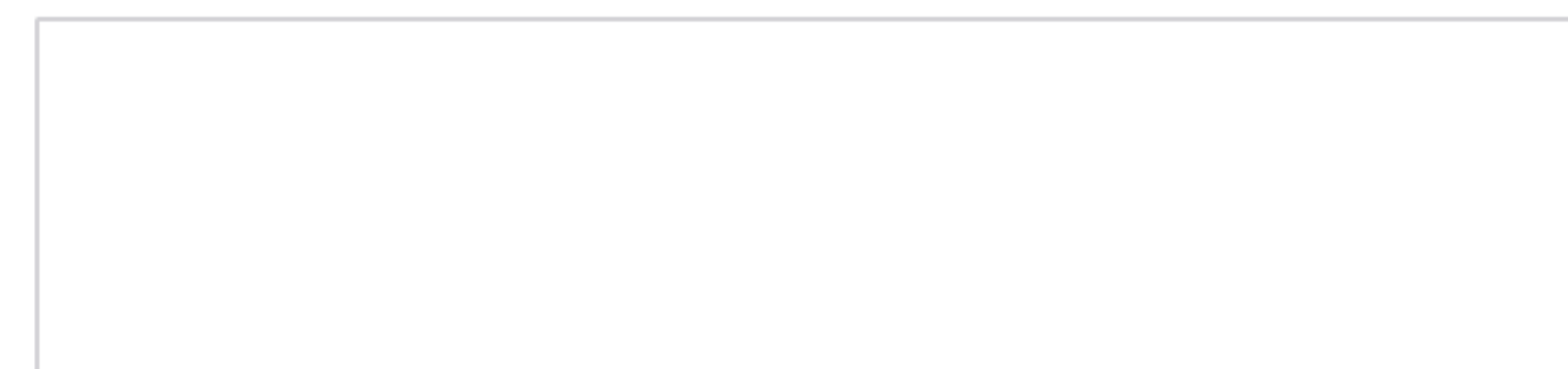
13. What medications are you currently taking, if any?

Medication names

None (5)

Unknown (99)

15. How will having prescription glasses help you in your daily life and/or educational or career aspirations?



UCLA Health Qualtrics survey for UCLA Mobile Eye Clinic Project

RESULTS

- Surveys were collected for UMEC on January 26 and March 30 clinic days
- Total of 18 patients
- 16 out of 18 patients had an abnormal ophthalmic exam
- No patients reported mental health conditions

RESULTS

Table 1a. Characteristics of UCLA Mobile Eye Clinic Salvation Army Patients
All Patients Experiencing Housing Insecurity
N = 18

Age in years (mean, SD)	46	4
Sex (n, %)		
Male	10	55.6
Female	8	44.4
Race/Ethnicity (n, %)		
White	8	44.4
Black	3	16.7
Asian	0	0
More than one race	2	11.1
Other	5	27.8
Ethnicity		
Hispanic/Latino	9	44.4
Not Hispanic/Latino	8	50
Unkown	1	1

Table 1b. Medical History of UCLA Mobile Eye Clinic Salvation Army Patients
All Patients Experiencing Housing Insecurity
N = 18

Smoking Status (n, %)		
Never smoked	7	38.9
Current smoker	9	50
Previously smoked, but not currently	2	11.1
Medical History		
No medical history	10	58.8
Prior diagnosis of medical condition	6	35.3
Unkown	1	5.9
Primary Care Provider		
No	7	38.9
Yes	11	61.1

Table 1c. Ophthalmic Exam of UCLA Mobile Eye Clinic Salvation Army Patients
All Patients Experiencing Housing Insecurity
N = 18

Previously Seen by Eye Doctor (n, %)		
No	6	33.3
Yes	12	66.7
Normal Assessment (n, %)		
No	16	88.9
Yes	2	11.1
Myopia Requiring Glasses (n, %)		
No	4	22.2
Yes	14	77.8
Cataracts (n, %)		
No	14	77.8
Yes	4	22.2
Glaucoma (n, %)		
No	16	88.9
Yes	2	11.1
Glaucoma Suspect (n, %)		
No	16	88.9
Yes	2	11.1

CONCLUSIONS

- Pre-liminary information demonstrates a need for free eye care in the unhoused population.
- UCLA Mobile Eye Clinic will continue to partner with Salvation Army to provide free eye care for people experiencing housing insecurity.
- This will be a multi-year project to better serve and examine the relationship between vision impairment/blindness and mental health conditions in individuals experiencing housing insecurity in Los Angeles County.