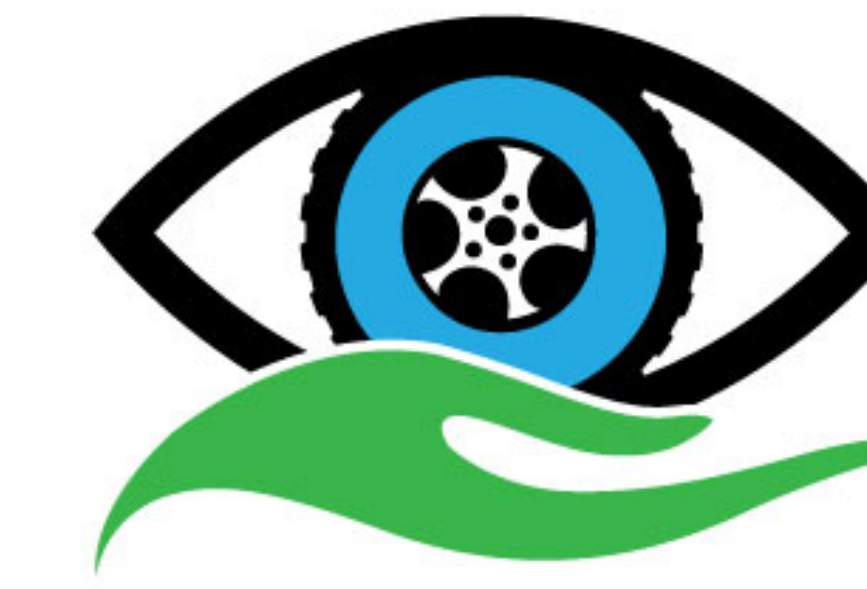


EYE CARE FOR THE HOMELESS: FIRST YEAR OF DATA FROM A MOBILE TEACHING CLINIC

Benoît Tousignant OD, MSc, MPH, FAAO

École d'optométrie, Université de Montréal - Canada

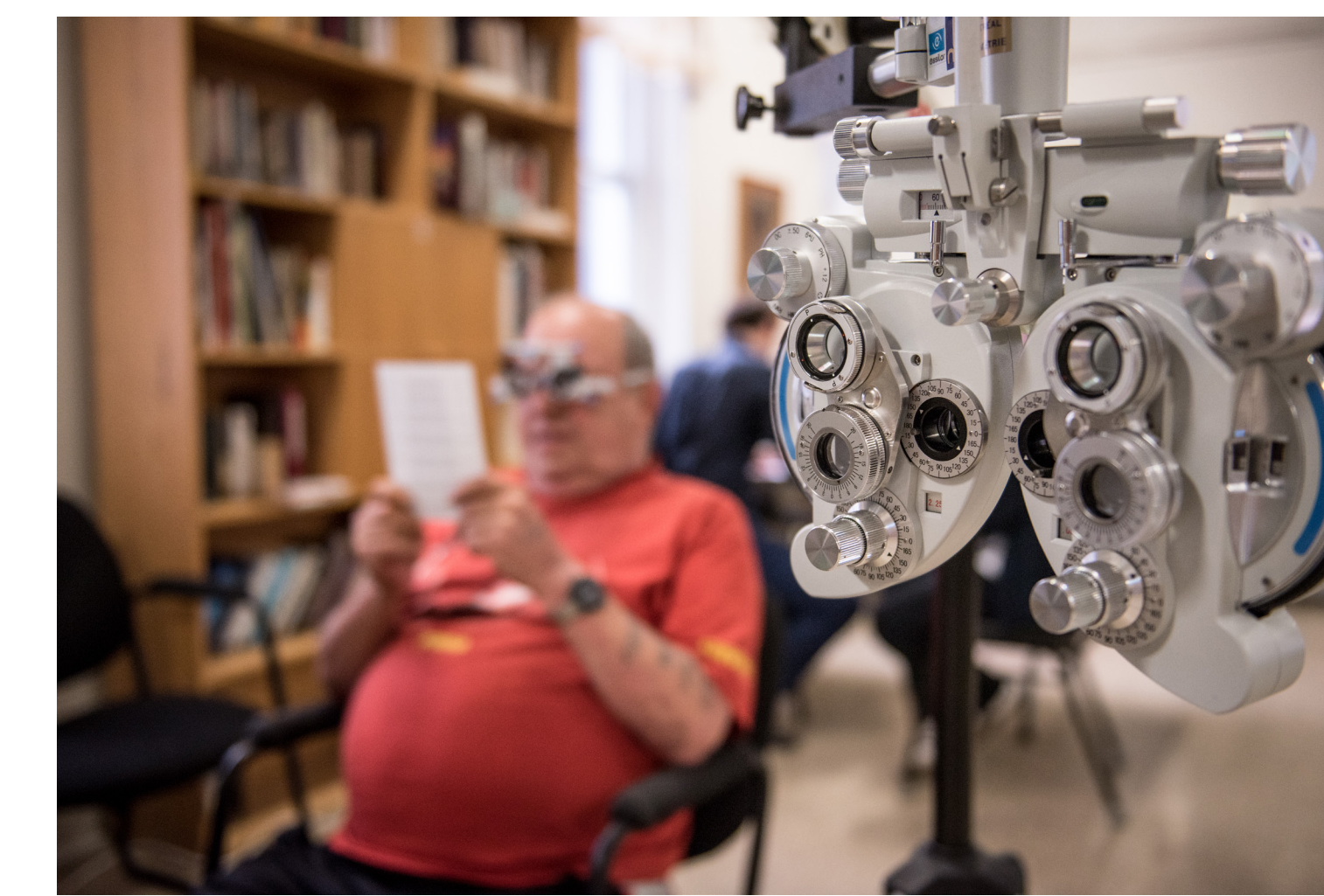


REGARD
COLLECTIF

Clinique mobile - École d'optométrie de l'Université de Montréal

Background

- » Among homeless populations, there are significant prevalence and morbidity of eye disease and an unmet need for refractive services¹⁻³
- » Little is known about this population in Quebec (Canada)
- » In 2017, the University of Montreal (UM) School of optometry implemented a mobile community clinic, *Regard collectif (RC)*
- » Aims of RC clinic
 - provide quality eye care to the homeless
 - fill the gap in ophthalmic epidemiology for this population
 - give optometry students the opportunity to acquire competencies relative to caring for marginalized patients



Methods

Retrospective chart review

- » RC clinical records include
 - elements from epidemiological studies data collection forms
 - data on social determinants of health (literacy, education, Indigenous status, substance abuse, etc.)
- » Patient consent for use of data is systematically collected during RC clinics

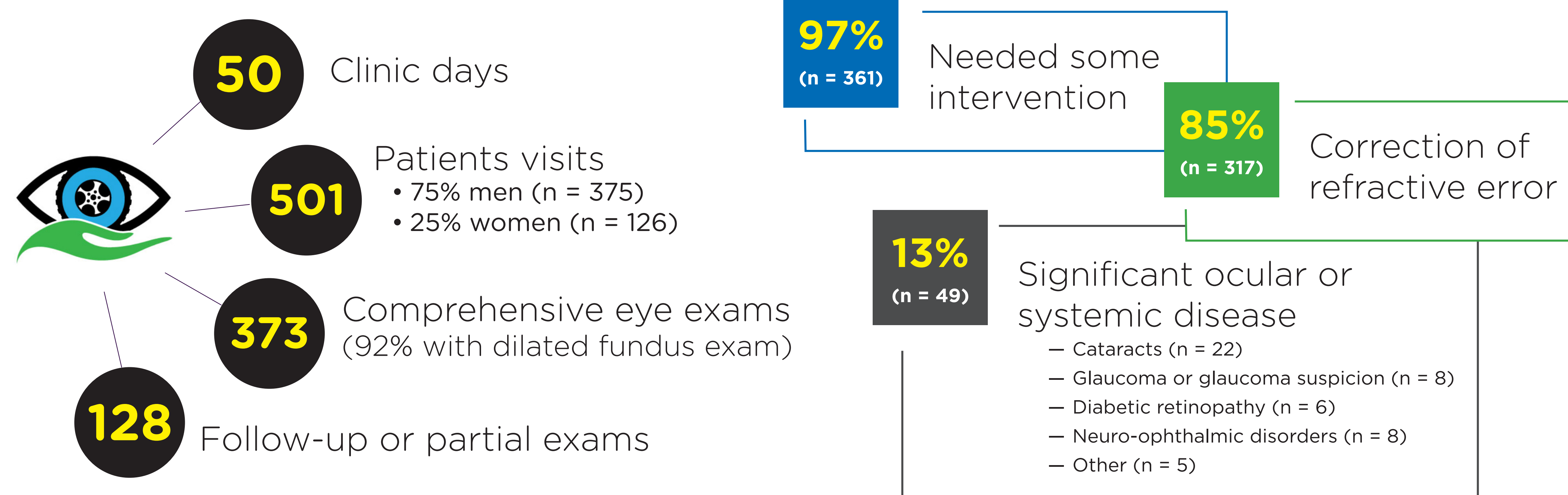
RC clinic is a mandatory clinical rotation for 4th year optometry students

- » 6 – 12 hours of clinical activity
- » Elective 3-hour course on prejudice, ethics and health care for homeless
- » Qualitative student feedback was collected by semi-structured verbal and written questionnaires after the training and the clinical rotations
 - **Before clinic:**
 - What are your expectations/perceptions with regards to working with homeless patients?
 - **After clinic:**
 - How was your experience of working with homeless patients? Did your experience with RC change your perception of homeless patients?
 - What did you change in your approach to these patients?
 - What did you learn about homelessness?

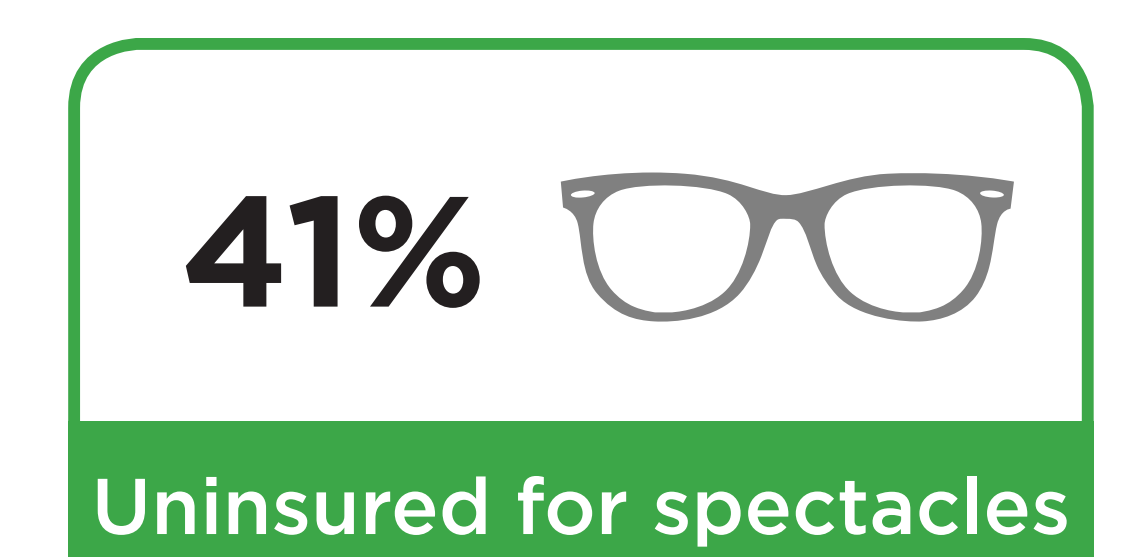
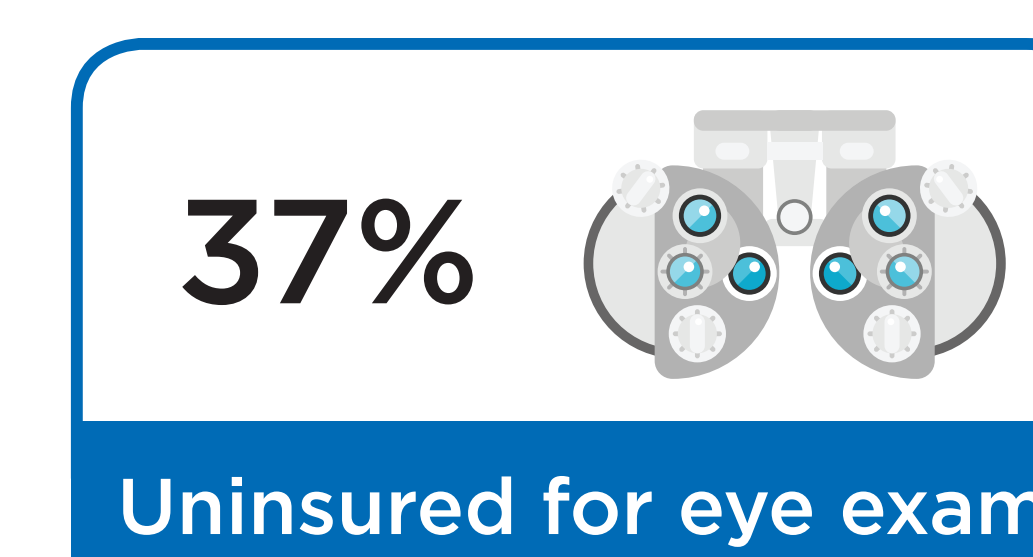


Results

RC achievements, first 18 months of operations



Lack of social medical coverage of patients



Student experience

- » Over **315** direct teaching hours were provided to **76** optometry students
- » Qualitative feedback from the student experience
 - reported lessened prejudices
 - increased awareness of the importance to adapt their approach to suit the realities of marginalized patients

Qualitative student feedback

- » I realized there were several occasions where **I was tempted to label a quick judgment** concerning their education or background or social manners. However, the knowledge and insight I gained from the workshop **encouraged me to stop socially prejudging these individuals** and to take the opportunity to discover their individuality and their social interests
- » I was enlightened to **see the impact our services had on improving their vision and quality of life**; whether it involved reading the newspaper or reading a favorite novel or just playing bingo
- » RC was an incredible experience, which provided me the opportunity to evolve and **improve my social judgment skills from a humanitarian perspective**
- » After my first experience with RC, I found myself quite perplexed. I faced a patient who was my age; in another dimension, our roles could've been reversed. (...) **I realized the line between a homeless person and « everyday » people is quite thin**

Conclusion

- » The newly implemented RC clinic allows the first report of ophthalmic clinical data on the Montreal homeless population
- » Optometry students exposed to RC in its first year of operations seem to enhance their competencies to care for marginalized patients

References

1. Noel, C. W. et al. Visual impairment and unmet eye care needs among homeless adults in a Canadian city. *JAMA Ophthalmol.* 133, 455–460 (2015).
2. Noel, C. W. et al. Unmet eye care needs among a homeless youth population. *Can. J. Ophthalmol. J. Can. Ophtalmol.* 51, 180–184 (2016).
3. D'Ath, P. J., Keywood, L. J., Styles, E. C. & Wilson, C. M. East London's Homeless: a retrospective review of an eye clinic for homeless people. *BMC Health Serv. Res.* 16, 54 (2016).

Scan this to watch a clinic day with *Regard collectif*



(Duration 8:40)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdBMby3mvhY>