

Yakima Unveiled: Poverty and Opioid Overdose Relations

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ABSTRACT

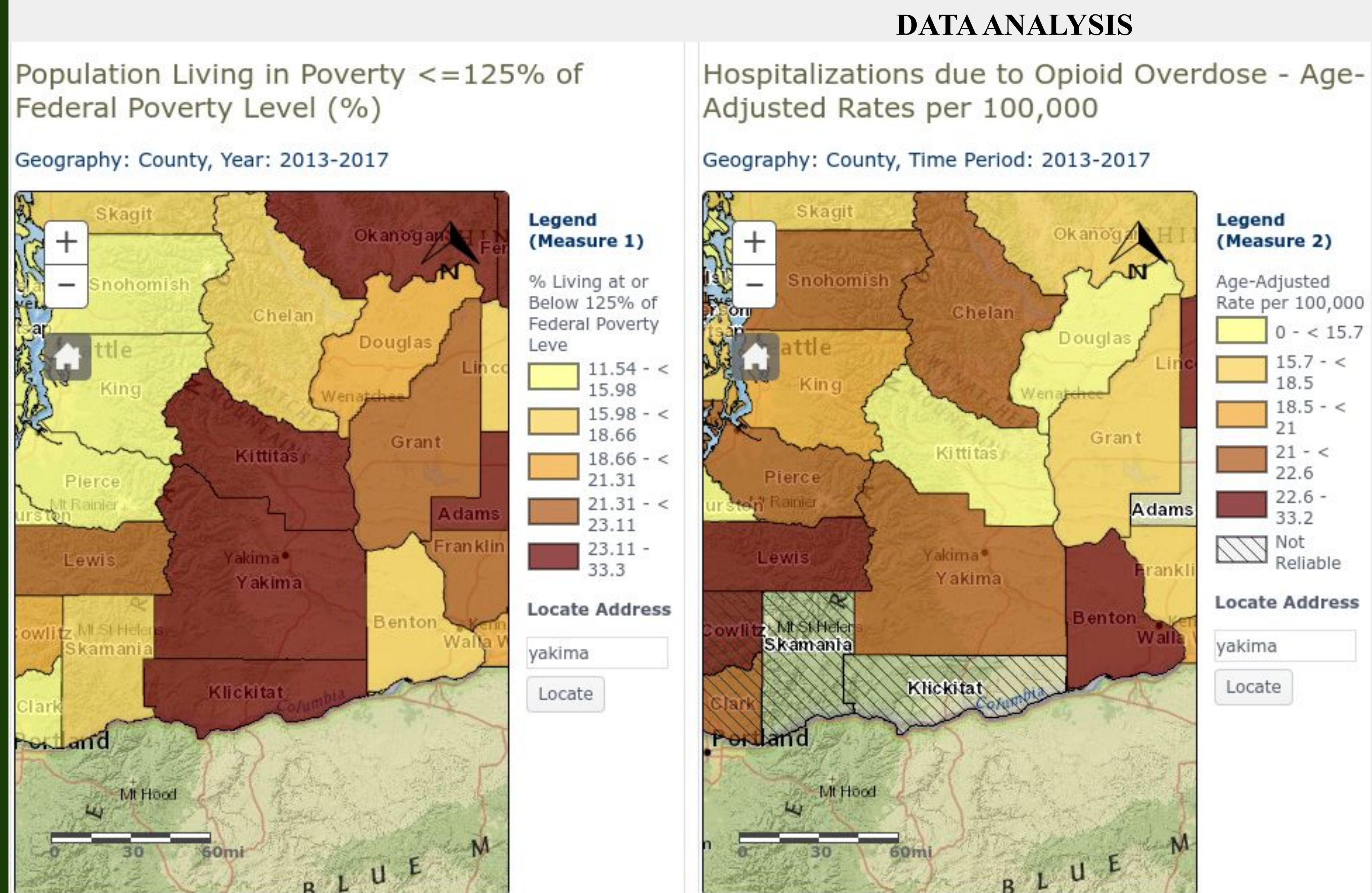
Rising opioid overdoses have become a critical public health concern, with various factors influencing this alarming trend. This study explores the relationship between the poverty population and the incidence of opioid overdoses using a comprehensive analysis of available data. Using statistical evidence, our research aims to shed light on the link between poverty and the heightened risk of opioid overdoses in a select area. The Washington Tracking Network Department of Health is our resource for this investigation, providing data to understand the link between poverty and opioid overdoses. By delving into this connection, we seek to contribute to the broader understanding of the social determinants impacting opioid-related overdoses and address this pressing issue.

BACKGROUND

Utilizing The Washington Department of Health's Tracking Network we can explore how the economic hardships that come with poverty can have an effect on the use of opioids. Studies have shown that areas with higher poverty levels are more likely to have higher rates of opioid overdoses. Although there are many reasons for opioid overdoses the challenges of poverty is one of the greatest.

HEALTH DISPARITIES

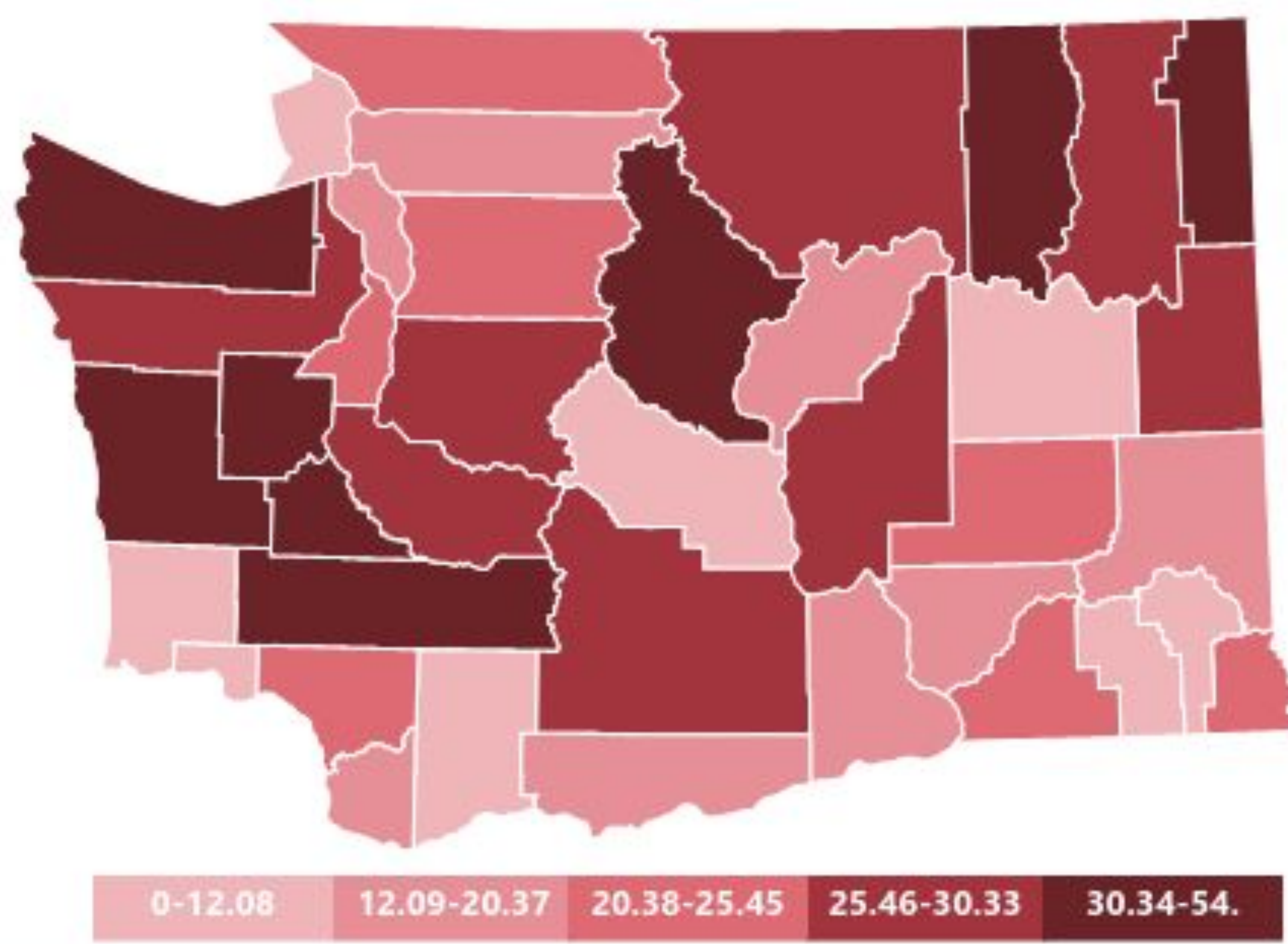
Health disparities relating to opioid overdose and poverty can have many complex relationships and ties. For example poverty and opioid addiction tend to be looked down upon especially in healthcare which can make reaching out for assistance more difficult to those in need. A second example is that when someone is in an opioid addiction it may take money to reach out and find help or go to rehab, which when you add in the factor of poverty makes it even more difficult.



RESULTS

In our research we have found that there are many links connecting poverty and opioid overdose. For example in the chart to the left from Washington Tracking Network it shows that areas that have a higher poverty rate, for example, Yakima County has a higher poverty rate 23.11-33.3% living at or below 125% of federal poverty level and also has an alarming opioid overdose rate 21-22.6 age adjusted rate per 100,000 of hospitalizations due to opioid overdose. This can show how opioids and poverty have a connection and are related. However for some counties our statement is untrue. Okanogan has high poverty rates yet lower opioid overdose rates as compared to Yakima County (compared at 15.7-18.5 age adjusted rate per 100,000 hospitalizations due to opioid overdose). Even with this there are still many examples to make our statement true, and shows the common factor between opioid overdoses and poverty.

Age-Adjusted Rate of Opioid Overdose Deaths per 100,000 Population, 2022

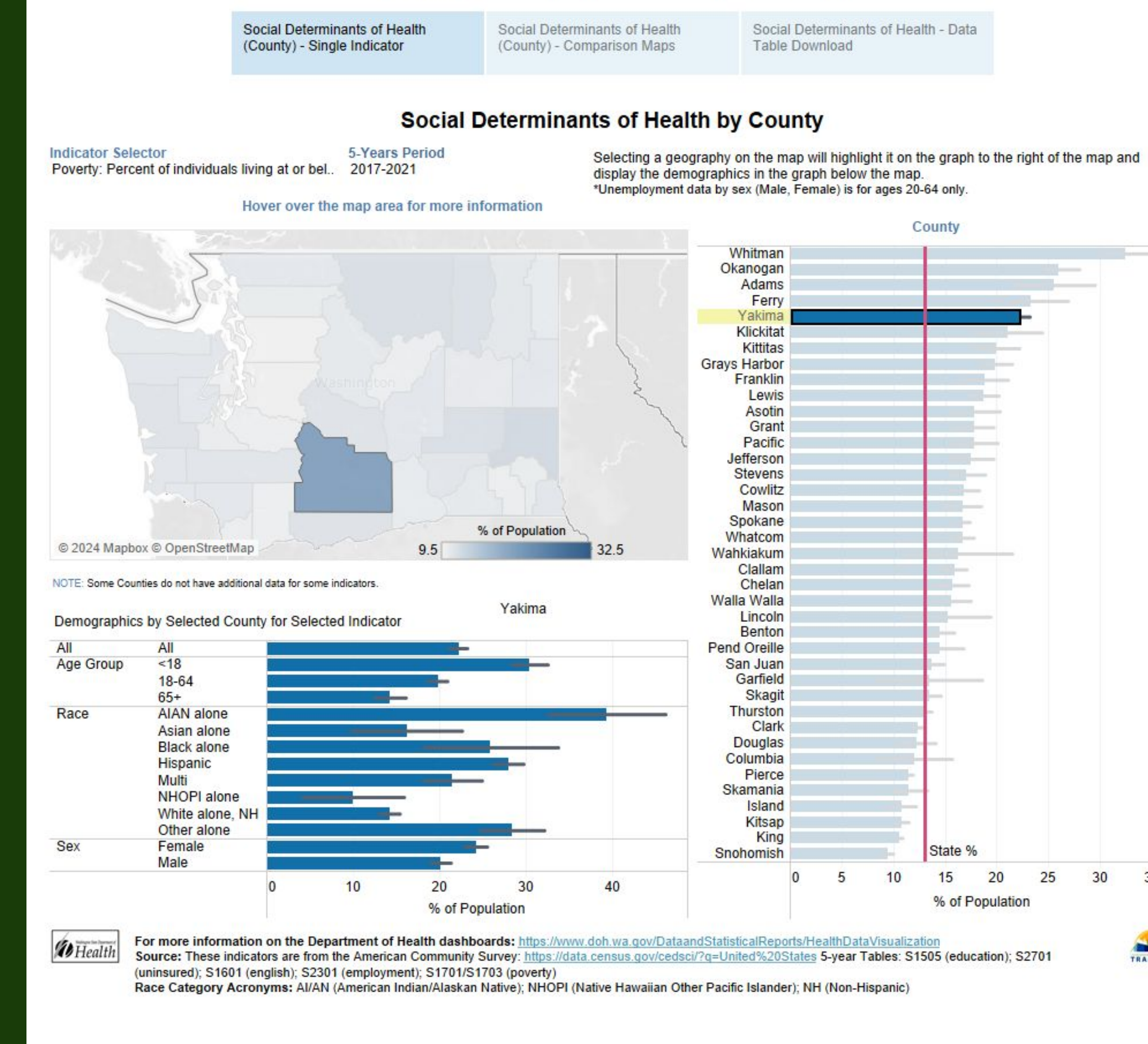


The map above shows the rate of opioid overdose deaths per 100,000 people and as you can see Yakima is in the 25.46-30.33 range which shows that yakima has a high overdose mortality rate.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Prevention is the first step to any solution. The use of opioids could be prevented by more accessible healthcare. More accessible healthcare has the potential to reduce the spread of prescribed opioids. Another way to prevent opioid use is by making information about opioids more accessible. Only some people have access to the internet, physical posters placed around town or billboards would be helpful for those who can't afford a device with access to the internet. The second step would be to show empathy to those suffering from addiction. Instead of punishing people with addiction, send them to a rehab facility so they can improve their health and well-being. Recognizing signs of overdoses is also important, that is how you know when you should call 911. Poverty can be a lot harder to solve however, there are ways to help. Fair wages, and access to food, water, and shelter are just some of the ways to help. Having a healthy home is important for having a healthy body which is why preventing poverty can prevent the cause of opioid overdoses.

Social Determinants of Health (County)



In the chart above it shows a map of Washington and the percentage of poverty, showing Yakima as the 5th highest in poverty rates. Social determinants of health are very high in Yakima County considering the population density of the county.

Map from Network--EPH-WTN--4300, W. T. (n.d.). County social determinants of health dashboard. Washington State Department of Health. <https://doh.wa.gov/data-and-statistical-reports/washington-tracking-network-wtn/social-determinants-health/county-dashboard>

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Reflection:

Reflection: A separate document or section of your project that provides a discussion of the process of your project, including:

- A brief description summarizing your process

We found our data through Washington tracking network and based our analysis and research based off of our findings. Then based off our findings we found graphs related.

- Barriers and challenges you experienced over the course of the project.

Some challenges we faced were finding specific data related to our cause and how to translate said data into a reliable and informational format.

- Influences on your work and thinking (i.e., people, media, readings, etc.).

A big influence that we used in our project is the environment and influence around us, because many people are experiencing both poverty and opioid addiction in the Yakima valley.

- Support you received throughout the project.

We received so much support from our teacher Mrs. Gamache and without her helping us and believing us we couldn't have done it.

- A lesson you learned that can be used in future lived-experiences

A lesson we learned that can be used in future experiences is to be open minded towards those we don't know because based off information a good portion of people are suffering from poverty and opioid problems and we wouldn't even know.