

The Cost of High-Rise Living – Answer 1

All around town we can see the construction of high rise towers. The suburbs and semi-rural areas of yesteryear have been replaced by increasing numbers of apartment blocks with increasingly smaller accommodation spaces inside. Zoning laws have recently allowed the construction of blocks of microapartments of less than 40 square metres. These changes have been touted as a solution to increasing housing costs, but such assertions hide the numerous negative downsides of living in such small blocks.

Apartment blocks have been known to have negative effects on physical health. The larger numbers of people living in smaller spaces allow for bacteria and diseases to spread more quickly. Living in apartment blocks can also make exercise more difficult, with less space for people to engage in healthy activities, and as a result obesity increases.

Small apartments can cause psychological stress too. The physical crowding can lead to a claustrophobia, which then spills over into domestic violence and substance abuse. No doubt such stresses will eventually lead to suicide. A quick survey of residents of the Haverton Shores microapartment complex showed that a significant number of residents had at some point in their residency there had suicidal thoughts. Such suicidal thoughts will surely increase with the increasing amounts of people in high-rise living.

Small apartments may suit young people in their twenties, but are manifestly incapable of meeting the demands of family groups. Indeed, there are negative effects on children to living in overcrowded spaces. Children's homework may be negatively affected due to a lack of adequate spaces for such study. There have also been reports of small living spaces leading to sleep disruptions as well, which can also affect children's physical, mental and social wellbeing. By building so many apartment blocks we may be creating an epidemic of physical and emotional stress in the younger generation.

The quest for smaller and smaller apartments may also have economic effects. As zoning laws are reduced and apartments become smaller, there is the danger that rents will simply stay the same, and rents might in fact rise for larger apartments. There are also increased infrastructure costs associated with having large amounts of high-rise apartment blocks in one area.

While some might see these problems alleviated by the inclusion of more communal spaces and social events for people living in such housing, the problems are simply too great to be ignored. Government must immediately cease construction of high-rise apartments for the physical and emotional wellbeing of its populations

Comment [A1]: Here the writer's claim – that there are growing numbers of apartments, particularly smaller apartments – is well supported with evidence. The argument draws on arguments from the personal sphere – 'you can see them around town' – and technical – 'Zoning laws have been changed'

Comment [A2]: The conclusion here does not necessarily follow from the premises. Just because people live in apartment blocks doesn't mean they can't exercise. In fact, apartment blocks may contain within them gyms and other exercise facilities which make it easier rather than harder for residents to exercise.

Comment [A3]: The writer conflates apartment blocks with small apartments. Not all apartments need to be small however.

Comment [A4]: While the previous claim is supported with evidence, further evidence would be useful here eg references to research or academic literature

Comment [A5]: Here the writer attempts an argument by generalisation, saying that what is true for the residents of Haverton Shores apartment complex is true for all apartment dwellers. There are several problems with this argument though. Firstly, this doesn't pass the test of quality, as the residents of one apartment block are not representative of all people who do. It is also doubtful whether this generalisation would pass the test of quantity, as unless the apartment block is of a large size

Comment [A6]: The language used here is overly certain, with its use of 'surely'.

Comment [A7]: Once again the writer conflates small apartments with apartment living in general. They also use overly certain language here – 'manifestly'

Comment [A8]: The conclusion again doesn't really follow from the premises here. In fact this is a kind of slippery slope argument, as the claim that there will be a 'epidemic of physical and emotional stress' is an overreaction

Comment [A9]: This claim needs evidence to support it.