

Literature Review #1

Paper #1

Title: Challenges Faced by the Homeless Population in New York City: An Analysis of Healthcare Delivery and Utilization of Care

Authors: Ahmed U. Otokiti, MD MPH, MBA; Yamin Z. Thein, MD; Olutoyin Alabi, MD, MPH, FWACP (2022)

Summary: This paper addresses different public health challenges faced by homeless populations in NYC, emphasizing the correlation between **homelessness and chronic diseases**. The authors discuss the various programs' effectiveness in helping said populations, specifically within **healthcare delivery and utilization**.

- **Methodologies:**
 1. **Data from various NYC health service databases & reports from city health departments and homeless advocacy groups.**
 - This will allow us to analyze the healthcare challenges homeless individuals face and the impact of current interventions on their health and living conditions.
 2. **Existing Literature (peer-reviewed journal literature, systematic reviews, general policy impacts on homeless populations)**
 3. **Government Reports**
- **Goals**
 1. To assess the **health status of homeless populations in NYC**
 2. To evaluate the effectiveness of policy initiatives and identify the correlation between systemic issues and homelessness.
 3. To compare traditional housing policies with innovative approaches (Housing First, etc.)
- **Results and Discussions**

Healthcare Access & Utilization:

- Despite the city's **extensive network of homeless services, gaps remain in service delivery and integration**. Mental health disorders, **including depression, PTSD, and schizophrenia**, are prevalent, with **homeless individuals in NYC exhibiting higher incidences of these chronic illnesses**.
- **Issues like substance abuse** are ultimately **compounded** by different barriers to healthcare, including lack of insurance and general financial constraints.

- Since they serve as primary care sources for a large percentage of the homeless population, emergency departments often rack **up recurrent visits and higher healthcare costs.**

Causes of Homelessness:

- The primary factors are **economic instability and high living costs in NYC (lack of affordable housing and rising rents).**
- Mental health and substance abuse services are **insufficiently funded and inefficiently coordinated.**
 - **Expiration of New York/New York III supportive housing initiative, exacerbating homelessness for vulnerable individuals.**

Paper #2

Title: Social Conditions of Becoming Homeless: Qualitative Analysis of Life Stories of Homeless People

Authors: Mzwandile A. Mabhala, Asmait Yohannes & Mariska Griffith

Summary: This study seeks to understand the social conditions that lead to homelessness by **examining the personal narratives of homeless individuals and developing a theoretical framework to explain these circumstances.**

- **Methodologies:**
 1. Conducted **qualitative interviews with homeless individuals** to understand the social conditions correlated with homelessness.
 2. Analyzed cross-relational data, **identifying concrete themes related to the causes and consequences of homelessness.**
 - a. This involved open coding and constant comparative analysis/methods, developing theoretical frameworks for homelessness.
- **Goals**
 1. To explore how specific personal experiences and social factors, such as **childhood abuse, domestic violence, and substance abuse**, contribute to **homelessness in NYC.**
 2. To examine the direct and indirect health impacts of these factors, **including chronic illnesses and mental health disorders, on homeless individuals.**
- **Results and Discussions**

Health Challenges

- High prevalence of **chronic illnesses and mental health disorders amongst homeless populations** (depression, PTSD, and anxiety)
- Significant rates of alcohol and drug dependency (**substance abuse issues**)

Systemic Causes of Homelessness

- **Substance misuse, alcoholism, and disruptive behaviors** contribute significantly to homelessness, leading to **further legal troubles and marginalization.**
- **Abusive Environments**
 - This paper found that a majority of their sample population experienced abuse through childhood/domestic violence, impacting their **mental stability and ability to hold relationships.**

Public Health Impacts

- **Stress and instability** associated with homelessness contribute to a range of health issues, including **poor nutrition, exposure to harsh conditions, and increased vulnerability to infectious diseases.**
- **Prevalence of untreated mental health issues and substance abuse disorders** compounds physical health problems, **creating a complex web of health challenges.**

Mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and primary healthcare should be integrated with housing support.

Trauma-informed care practices should be adopted to address the underlying trauma experienced by many homeless individuals, **helping to improve only patient-service engagement but also supporting them in the recovery process.**

Paper #3

Title: Addressing the Homelessness Crisis in New York City: Increasing Accessibility for Persons With Severe and Persistent Mental Illness. Columbia Social Work Review, 14(1), 50-58.

Authors: LeeAnn Shan, Matt Sandler

Summary: This paper collectively examines the **challenges faced by the SPMI homeless population in NYC** and evaluates the **effectiveness of current policy initiatives.** It highlights the need for integrated healthcare and housing services to improve health outcomes for vulnerable populations

Methodology:

1. Analyzed **policy initiatives/their effectiveness** in addressing the health needs of the **severely and persistently mentally ill (SPMI) homeless population.**

2. Conducted a comparative analysis of the **Housing First vs. traditional housing readiness models.**
- **Goals:**
 1. Identify **gaps in funding, coordination, and regulation** that hinder **the effectiveness of these initiatives.**
 2. Provide **specific** recommendations for **improving healthcare access and housing stability for the SPMI homeless population.**
 - **Results & Discussion**

Healthcare Utilization and Outcomes

- **The Housing First (HF) model** has proven effective in improving health outcomes. It provides immediate access to housing, eliminating preconditions.
 - This model has reduced emergency room visits (meaning less costs) and hospitalizations and has the potential for broader room application.
- **Traditional housing readiness models are less effective** *for those with SPMI* since they require individuals to achieve sobriety before receiving housing.
 - These models often delay essential services/care, significantly exacerbating health issues.

Policy and Funding

- Sustainable funding and improved coordination between service providers are crucial. Policies should include **comprehensive care models that account for mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and general healthcare** to address the needs of the SPIM population.
 - **Case management & peer support services** should also be given **priority in addressing the societal and behavioral needs of homeless individuals with SPMI.**