THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOUSING SECURITY AND HEALTH: IMPLICATIONS FOR HEALTH EQUITY

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Pathways between housing security and health

1. Physical quality and condition
2. Residential stability
3. Housing affordability
4. Area context
5. Care and connection

(Swope and Hernández 2019; Taylor 2018; Holtan, Bowen, Maisel and Riva forthcoming)
1. Physical condition and quality

2. Residential stability: Lessons from COVID-19 era housing policy

• Residential stability: foreclosure, frequent moves, houselessness, voluntary and forced migration and displacement
• Residential crowding
  • Accounts for some of the age disparities in low-income countries [4]
  • Drives excess mortality in Chilean municipalities [5]
• Incidence and mortality increase after eviction moratoriums are lifted in the U.S. [6]
2. Residential stability: Lessons from COVID-19 era housing policy


2. Residential stability: Climate change

Golovin, Alaska, November 2022
Source: Alaska Public Media, Josephine Daniels
2. Residential stability: Fairbanks, Alaska Housing First

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>18 months</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drinking daily</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency room visits</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average cost to community per tenant of emergency services</td>
<td>$4,175</td>
<td>$1,749</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average health costs per tenant, per year</td>
<td>$25,763</td>
<td>$14,321</td>
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“My stress level done went down ‘cause I know I got a place to come and be safe, be warm.” – Tenant [7]

3. Housing affordability

High rents and housing costs leave less money for other things that benefit health:
- Food
- Transportation
- Heating
- Health care
- Education
- Hobbies
- Taking care of others

Percent of income spent on rent in the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Under 30%</th>
<th>30 to 34.9%</th>
<th>35% +</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48.10%</td>
<td>9.20%</td>
<td>42.70%</td>
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Considered unaffordable

U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 1-Year Estimates
4. Neighborhood and area context

Medellín, Colombia

Baltimore, Maryland, USA

Anchorage, Alaska, USA

5. Care and connection in housing

- **Design**: Treatment of common areas in multifamily developments [8]
- **Policies**: Age-restricted housing developments not always great for caregiving relationships [9]
- **Programs**: Importance of case management in housing for people exiting homelessness [10]
Historical roots of pathways between housing security and health

Intersections across pathways perpetuate inequities

The cyclical relationship between housing unaffordability, housing insecurity, health consequences, and healthcare costs [13]

Map source:
https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/map/NY/Buffalo/areas#loc=12/42.906/-78.905
Toward the Goal of Health Equity

- **Health equity** is the idea that all people have the opportunity to be as healthy as they can possibly be, and to define what health looks like for them [14]
- This is not possible without access to housing that is safe, stable, and affordable!
- Global policy implications:
  - The right to housing
  - Trauma-informed care and design
  - Co-design

Global Policy Implications: The Right to Housing

- How can we advocate for policy change at local, state, national, and international levels to protect housing as a human right?
  - Acknowledges housing as a human right
  - Requires Canadian federal government to develop and implement a national housing strategy, with emphasis on inclusion of people with living experience of housing challenges
As of 2020, only 44% of the 189 UN member states include a constitutional right to housing


Global Policy Implications: Trauma-Informed Care and Design

- Policy must also recognize the trauma and powerlessness of homelessness and housing insecurity [16]
- A trauma-informed approach in policies, programs, and design is essential: [17]
  - Safety
  - Collaboration
  - Trust and transparency
  - Choice
  - Empowerment
  - Intersectionality

University at Buffalo Institute on Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care
Global Policy Implications: Co-Design

- Example: Sekuwe (My House) collaboration between two Dene First Nations communities and University of Manitoba [18]
- Developed in response to health crisis including elevated TB due to overcrowded, poorly ventilated housing
- **Co-designed housing** incorporating Dene design elements:
  - Use of local materials
  - Public and private spaces for traditional activities
  - Energy independence
  - Traditional food production and storage
  - Long-term maintenance and repair

Conclusion

- Research on the pathways between housing and health is extensive and ever-growing
- Addressing housing inequities is essential to making health equity a reality
- Policy change promoting the right to housing and trauma-informed and co-designed programs and services can be a part of the solution
- Different communities will have different solutions. We have much to learn from each other.
Thank you!

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References


References


