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Determinants of Homelessness (SODH) in North West England in 2020

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Background:

Poverty creates social conditions that increase the likelihood of homelessness. These include exposure to traumatic life experiences; social disadvantages such as poor educational experiences; being raised in a broken family, care homes or foster care; physical, emotional, and sexual abuse; and neglect at an early age. These conditions reduce people's ability to negotiate through life challenges.

Methods:

This cross-sectional study documents the clustering and frequency of adverse social conditions among 152 homeless people from four cities in North West England between January and August 2020.

Results:

Two-step cluster analysis showed that having parents with a criminal record, care history, and child neglect/abuse history was predictive of homelessness. The cluster of indicator variables among homeless people included sexual abuse (χ^2 (N = 152) = 220.684, $p < 0.001$, Cramer's V = 0.7), inappropriate sexual behaviour (χ^2 (N = 152) = 207.737, $p < 0.001$, Cramer's V = 0.7), emotional neglect (χ^2 (N = 152) = 181.671, $p < 0.001$, Cramer's V = 0.7), physical abuse by step-parent (χ^2 (N = 152) = 195.882, $p < 0.001$, Cramer's V = 0.8), and physical neglect (χ^2 (N = 152) = 205.632, $p < 0.001$, Cramer's V = 0.8).

Conclusions:

Poverty and homelessness are intertwined because of the high prevalence of poverty among the homeless. Poverty sets up a chain of interactions between social conditions that increase the likelihood of unfavourable outcomes: homelessness is at

the end of the interaction chain. Interventions supporting families to rise out of poverty may also reduce entry into homelessness.

Key messages:

- Being poor is associated with so many childhood adversities that it may be considered an ACE in itself.
- Reducing poverty might be one strategy to reduce both ACEs and homelessness.