

# Barriers to Education in Homeless Youth

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# Purpose of the Study

Many homeless youth have not completed high school or post-secondary education, a health risk factor that has not been extensively investigated in the homeless youth population!

(Evenson & Barr, 2009; Rachlis, Wood, Zhang, Montaner, & Kerr, 2009)

To test relationships between multiple ecological factors and their affect on the academic achievement of homeless youth who have a mental health disorder.

Which factor is most predictive of academic achievement?

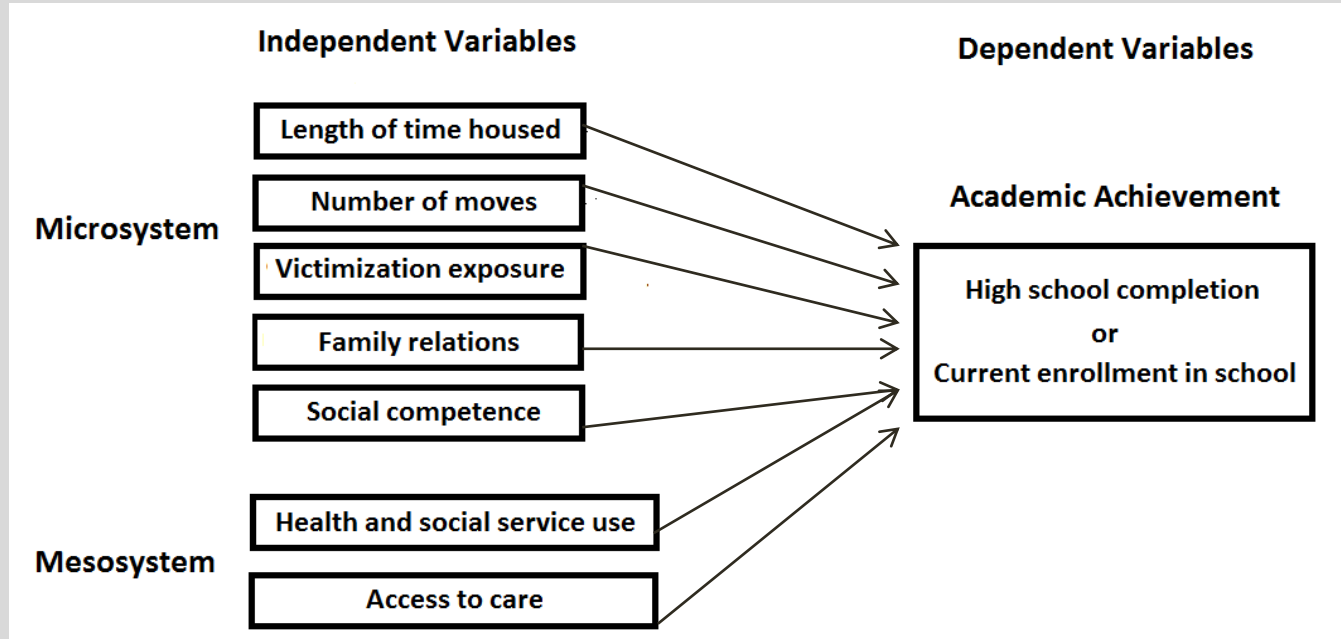
# Methodology

- A quantitative secondary analysis from The Youth Matters in London: Mental Health, Addiction and Homelessness study.
- Data were collected from the first interviews of 187 youth.
- Variable selection guided by Bronfenbrenner's 1979 ecological developmental model, and the literature review

# Background

- **Length of time housed** (Hyman et al., 2011)
- **Mobility** (Davey et al., 2000; Murphy, 2011; Rafferty 1995; Rafferty et al., 2004; Whitman et al., 1990)
- **Victimization exposure** (Kennedy, 2007)
- **Family relations** (Aviles de Bradley 2011, Dupper & Halter, 1994)
- **Social competence** (Davey et al., 2000; Yamaguchi et al., 1998)
- **Health and social service use** (Hyman et al., 2011)
- **Access to care** (Hyman et al., 2011)

# Ecological Model



*Figure 1.* The effects of microsystem and mesosystem variables on academic achievement.

# Data Collection & Measures

Variable	Questionnaire	Measurement
Length of time housed	The Housing History Survey	Summary of time spent not on the streets, in a hostel, or shelter over the past two years
Number of times moved	The Housing History Survey	Count of the number of moves to unique residences lived in over the past two years
Victimization exposure	Health, Social, Justice Service Use	“During the past six months, did anyone: (threaten; attack; attempt to force unwanted sexual activity)?
Satisfaction with family relations	Quality of Life Inventory 20	Family satisfaction subscale
Social competence	Multnomah Community Ability Scale	Social competence subscale
Health and social service use	Health, Social, Justice Service Use	Visits to/by: health provider; crisis team; ambulance; drop in centres; food banks (past six months)
Access to care	Access	Do you have a regular medical doctor? A place you usually go to when sick? Available care?
High school completion	Demographics, Service and Housing History	Level of education completed
Current enrollment in school	Demographics, Service and Housing History	One or more registered hours per week

# Hypotheses

## **Microsystem Predictors of academic achievement**

1. Longer length of time housed
2. Less moves
3. Less victimization
4. Less satisfaction with family relations
5. Social competence (no relationship)

## **Mesosystem Predictors of academic achievement**

6. Health and social service use (no relationship)
7. Access to care (no relationship)

Overall, housing stability will be the strongest predictor of academic achievement

# Sample and Setting

- 187 youth between the ages of 16-25
- Non-probability sampling
- London and surrounding areas, both urban and rural

## **Inclusion Criteria**

1. Absolute homelessness or precariously housed
2. A serious mental disorder with or without a co-existing substance use disorder



# Results

# Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Frequency	Percent	Mean (S.D.)
<b>Age</b>			20.4 (2.5)
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	122	65.2	
Female	62	33.2	
Other	3	1.6	
<b>Level of education</b>			
Attended University—not completed	4	2.1	
Completed High School	27	14.4	
Attended High School—not completed	137	73.3	
Attended business, trade, technical school	7	3.7	
Completed Gr5 to 8	12	6.4	
<b>Years of school completed<sup>a</sup></b>			10.39 (1.6)
7 –11 years	146	78.1	
12 -16 years	41	21.9	
<b>Primary diagnosis</b>			
Substance-related disorder	64	34.2	
Mood disorder	59	31.6	
Disorder of childhood/adolescence	25	13.4	
Anxiety disorder	22	11.8	
Unknown	9	4.8	
Schizophrenia	5	2.7	
Other	2	1.1	
Developmental disorder	1	0.5	

# Study Variable Statistics

<b>Microsystem variables</b>			
Variables	Frequency	Percent	Mean (S.D.)
<b>Length of time housed in 2 years<sup>a</sup></b>			163.47 (234.14)
Up to 2 years	107	57.2	
More than 2 years but less than 4 years	52	27.8	
More than 4 years but less than 6 years	13	7.0	
6 years or more	15	8.0	
<b>Number of times moved in the last 2 years</b>			3.7 (2.2)
<b>Victimization exposure</b>			
Less than 2 exposures	76	40.6	
2 or more exposures	111	59.4	
<b>Satisfaction with family relations</b>			
Unhappy with family relations	88	47.8	
Pleased with family relations	96	52.2	
<b>Social competence</b>			
Less than effective, low	84	44.9	
Effective to extensive, high	103	55.1	

# Study Variable Statistics

<b>Mesosystem variables</b>		
Variables	Frequency	Percent
<b>Health and social service use</b>		
Up to 9 visits	46	25.0
10 to 29 visits	45	24.5
30 to 112 visits	47	25.5
113 to 513 visits	46	25.0
<b>Access to care</b>		
Less than two points of access	69	36.9
Two or more points of access	118	63.1

<b>Academic achievement</b>		
Variables	Frequency	Percent
<b>High school completion</b>		
No	120	80
Yes	30	20
<b>Currently enrolled in school</b>		
No	152	81.3
Yes	35	18.7

# Relationships Between Independent Variables

## Relationship between satisfaction with family relations and access to care

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Less than 2 points Mean (SD)</b>	<b>2 or more points Mean (SD)</b>	<b>Difference in means</b>
Number of times moved	3.93 (2.25)	3.57 (2.19)	0.36
Victimization exposure	2.03 (1.42)	1.77 (1.4)	0.26
Satisfaction with family relations	3.4 (1.3)	4.0 (1.6)	-0.60*
Social competence	3.85 (0.72)	3.9 (0.77)	-0.05

# Relationships Between Independent Variables

<b>Relationship</b>	<b>r</b>
Victimization exposure and number of times moved	0.187
Victimization exposure and satisfaction with family relations	-0.154
Victimization exposure and length of time housed	-0.145

# Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis Variable	Difference between completing high school or not	Difference between enrolled in school or not	Hypothesis supported
1. Length of time housed	Yes*	No	Yes
2. Number of times moved	No	No	No
3. Victimization exposure	No	No	No
4. Satisfaction with family relations	No	No	No
5. Social competence	No	No	Yes
6. Health and social service use	No	No	Yes
7. Access to care	No	No	Yes

# Summary of Hypotheses Testing

## Mann-Whitney Test between Length of Time Housed and Academic Achievement

Variable	No high school	High school	Mann-Whitney U	z	Sig
Length of time housed	71.95	89.68	1374.500*	-2.00	.046

Variable	Not enrolled	Enrolled	Mann-Whitney U	z	Sig
Length of time housed	93.72	95.20	2618.000	-.146	.850



# Predicting High School Completion

Logistic Regression Model: Predicting High School Completion, n=132

Predictor	OR	95% CI	
		LL	UL
<b>Length of time housed</b>			
Up to two years housed		Reference group	
Two to four years housed	1.314	.423	4.082
Four to six years housed	10.569*	1.950	57.290
Six years or more housed	1.436	.219	9.414
<b>Number of times moved</b>	1.045	.835	1.307
<b>Victimization exposure</b>			
No victimization exposures		Reference group	
One victimization exposure	.460	.067	3.174
Two or more victimization exposures	1.035	.295	3.626
<b>Satisfaction with family relations</b>	.791	.555	1.126
<b>Social competence</b>	1.203	.611	2.367
<b>Health and social service use</b>			
Up to 9 visits to health and social services		Reference group	
10 to 29 visits to health and social services	1.334	.274	6.490
30 to 112 visits to health and social services	1.940	.454	8.302
113 to 513 visits to health and social services	2.831	.683	11.735
<b>2 or more points of access to care</b>	.576	.206	1.614

\*p<.05

# Predicting Current Enrollment in School

Logistic Regression Model: Predicting Current Enrollment in School, n=167

Predictor	OR	95% CI	
		LL	UL
<b>Length of time housed</b>			
Up to two years housed		Reference group	
Two to four years housed	.465	.140	1.546
Four to six years housed	3.991	.636	25.055
Six years or more housed	.914	.194	4.317
<b>Number of times moved</b>	.768*	.609	.969
<b>Victimization exposure</b>			
No victimization exposures		Reference group	
One victimization exposure	1.195	.255	5.602
Two or more victimization exposures	1.639	.511	5.256
<b>Satisfaction with family relations</b>	.952	.686	1.321
<b>Social competence</b>	1.398	.717	2.724
<b>Health and social service use</b>			
Up to 9 visits to health and social services		Reference group	
10 to 29 visits to health and social services	1.086	.251	4.699
30 to 112 visits to health and social services	2.559	.692	9.469
113 to 513 visits to health and social services	1.721	.452	6.554
<b>2 or more points of access to care</b>	.984	.358	2.701

\*p<.05

# Strongest Predictors of Academic Achievement

## **Length of time housed**

- Housed between 4 to 6 years were 10 x more likely to complete high school than participants who were housed for <2 years.
- 143 participants (76.5%) housed for <2 years

## **Number of times moved**

- For every move, participants were 23% less likely to be enrolled in school
- 91 participants (48.7%) made 4 or more moves in the past two years
- 4 moves= 65% less likely to be enrolled in school

# Limitations

- Limited to using variables that were in the Youth Matters study
- Self report measures
- Generalizability is limited to homeless youth with a mental health disorder
- Not a random sample
- Recall bias
- Health and social service use, victimization, and access to care variables not tested for psychometric properties

# Implications

- Practice implications: needs assessment for housing stability
- Housing policy: long term funding from Federal government to support affordable housing for youth
- Educational system: consider barriers to enrollment, attending, and participating in school
- Research: Needs assessment of what assists participation in school; participation action research

# Conclusions

- More points of access to care is significantly related to being happy with family relations, although literature presents otherwise
- Increased victimization exposure is significantly related to less time housed, increased mobility, and less satisfaction with family relations
- Overall housing stability is the strongest predictor of academic achievement in homeless youth who have a mental health issue

Thank You

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