P-1171 - WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS FOR BECOMING AND STAYING HOMELESS? A MIXED-METHODS STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG ADULT PEOPLE

E.C.Sundin

Psychology, Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, UK

Understanding what homeless people believe can lead to homelessness is currently limited by a reliance on surveys and questionnaires. This study uses a mixed-methods design to identify factors perceived related to becoming and staying homeless by adult homeless people.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with male and female homeless people. Events and circumstances perceived to pave the way to becoming and staying homeless were described. Thematic analyses were conducted to extract themes that were present across interviews. The themes were converted into numerical data. Differences across males/females; young/mature adults; White/Non White participants were analysed using Chi-square analysis.

Results: Eight themes summarised factors perceived to be related to becoming homeless: Relationship breakdown, Behavioural rebelliousness, Childhood abuse, Foster care/Frequent childhood relocation, Substance use, Eviction, Job loss, Jail; 5 themes categorised factors that participants thought contributed to continued homeless: Adverse life events, Substance use, Avoidant coping, Criminal offense, Ill-health. Chi square analysis indicated that females and young adults reported that relationship breakdown was a triggering factor for becoming homelessness. Young homeless were likely to see adverse life events as a risk factor for continued homelessness whilst mature adults more often reported alcohol/drug abuse as a triggering factor.

Conclusions: This study found that different subgroups experienced that different risk factors had led to their becoming and staying homeless. There may be a role for psychologically informed services to explore self-reported traumatic/trauma-like experiences to increase the ability to successfully intervene in the vicious cycle of events that prolong homelessness for many.