Multimorbidity and mental health for people who have experienced homelessness: Analysis of the 2007 and 2014 Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Surveys

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Background

A ‘cliff’ of mental and physical health inequities for people who experience homelessness

76.2% prevalence of any current mental health condition (Gutwinski et al., 2021)

Where studies have looked at multimorbidity, this has been with samples of people using specialist homelessness services (Queen et al., 2017; Bowen et al, 2019)

Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey (APMS)

Nationally representative private household survey in England

2007 and 2014 (total n=14,949)

**Aim** of the current study: To describe the presence, prevalence, and nature of mental and physical health multimorbidities in individuals who have previously experienced homelessness.

**Measures:**
- Self-reported previous experience of homelessness
- Structured, validated scales for current Common Mental Disorders (CIS-R, Lewis et al., 1992) and alcohol use (AUDIT, Saunders et al., 1993)
- Self-reported physical health from a list of 21 conditions (eg asthma, diabetes)
- Questions based on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders for substance dependency
Prevalence of homelessness

Out of the total sample of 14,949 participants, 599 people reported a previous experience homelessness.

Survey-weighted prevalence = \textbf{3.7\%}\hspace{1em}(95\%\text{ CI 3.40–4.09})

“When did that [homelessness] happen?”
[If several events, ask about the most recent one]

- In last 6-months: \textbf{16\%}
- Over 6-months ago, after age 16: \textbf{81\%}
- Over 6-months ago, before age 16: \textbf{3\%}
Demographics

Age (Survey Weighted Proportions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Formerly homeless</th>
<th>Never homeless</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 16-34</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 35-44</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 45-54</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 55+</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sex (Survey Weighted Proportions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formerly homeless</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never homeless</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prevalence of Common Mental Disorders (age and sex adjusted)

The CIS-R: validated scale asking after CMD symptoms in the last month and week (score threshold: 12+)

- **Prevalence Estimate (%)**
  - Never homeless: 15%
  - Formerly homeless: 45%

The bar chart illustrates a significantly higher prevalence of CMD symptoms among formerly homeless individuals compared to those who have never been homeless.
Severity of Common Mental Disorder (age and sex adjusted)

A score of 12+ indicates that a level of CMD symptoms is present such that primary care recognition is warranted.

A score of 18+ indicates more severe or pervasive symptoms of a level very likely to warrant intervention such as medication or psychological therapy.
Physical health conditions (stratified by age)

**Asthma**

**Epilepsy/fits**

**Heart attack/angina**

**Stroke**

**Diabetes**

Fromerly homeless

Never homeless

Mental & Physical Multimorbidity

Physical health conditions: self-reported from a list of 21 conditions, in the last 12-months
Common mental disorder (CMD): CIS-R score 12+
Mental & physical multimorbidity: a CMD and at least 1 physical health condition
### Multimorbidity count (age and sex adjusted)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of conditions</th>
<th>Prevalence Estimate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6+</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Notes:
- Physical health conditions: self-reported from a list of 21 conditions, in the last 12-months.
- Common mental disorder: CIS-R score 12+.
Mental Health, Physical Health, Substance Use Problems

Physical health conditions: self-reported from a list of 21 conditions, in the last 12-months
Common mental disorder (CMD): CIS-R score 12+
Substance use problem: AUDIT score 8+ or substance dependency (DSM questions)
**Strengths:**

Nationally representative household survey using structured, validated scales.

**Limitations:**

Cross-sectional secondary data from private households.

**Key takeaway:**

Prior experience of homelessness is associated with severe inequities in mental/physical multimorbidity in a nationally representative sample of private households, highlighting the importance of integrated care for this group.
Thank you to

My PhD supervisors Dr Jayati Das-Munshi & Dr Peter Schofield

Sally McManus

Experts by Experience at Rethink Mental Illness & Pathway

The NatCen APMS team & NHS Digital

Dan Lewer

Rethink Mental Illness

The ESRC London Interdisciplinary Social Science Doctoral Training Partnership
References


