

Epidemiological Description of Patients Visiting a Health Centre for Homeless People in Berlin

Summary:

Poverty and social exclusion severely limit an individual's possibilities for participating in social life and have lasting health effects. They are social phenomena that can affect people from all walks of life and at any time, but the risks are particularly high during periods of economic crisis or when people are undergoing major life changes, such as separation from or loss of a family member.

Homelessness is an extreme form of poverty. The German Federal Association, which provides aid to the homeless, estimates that the approximately 265 000 people in Germany do not have a home; others estimates place this figure as high as 591 000. The largest concentration of homeless people is to be found in Berlin, in which a full 10,000 persons do not have a home. Homeless people are at a particularly high risk of health problems and often have only limited access to medical aid and vital medicines.

Very few studies have focused on the health problems and needs of homeless people in Germany. Indeed, no health-related data for homeless people living in Berlin are currently available. To address this issue, we conducted a systematic study of the social and medical data of people seeking healthcare services at the Jenny De la Torre Foundation Healthcare Centre. With the results of our analysis, we hope to contribute to a deeper understanding of the health needs among this group and to facilitate targeted approaches to addressing the health problems of homeless people.

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