Health and Homelessness in Scotland

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Scottish Government
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Definition of Homelessness

• Households who have applied to Scottish Local Authorities
• Have been assessed as homeless under section 28 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987
• ETHOS groups 1 – 6.
The Challenge

• What is the relationship between homelessness and people’s health needs?
• Investigate using national administrative datasets, rather than small scale studies.
• One local authority had done this work. Could it be repeated across Scotland?
The Ever Homeless Cohort (EHC)

• Scottish Government routinely collects data.
• Study required extra info for data linkage.
• **436,000 individuals assessed as homeless**
  – Coverage of 76% of all homeless assessments over 15 years.
  – Of these, 120,000 had been homeless on multiple occasions.
• At least 8% of the Scottish population has been homeless at some point in their lives.
# Summary: The Cohorts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ever Homeless Cohort (EHC)</th>
<th>Most Deprived Cohort (MDC)</th>
<th>Least Deprived Cohort (LDC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ever Homeless</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawn from:</td>
<td>All Geographical Areas</td>
<td>20% Most Deprived areas in Scotland</td>
<td>20% Least Deprived areas in Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of People</td>
<td>436,000</td>
<td>436,000</td>
<td>436,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Each person in the EHC is matched on age and sex to the LDC and MDC. Not constrained to a match within same local authority.
- Cohorts have the same number of people.
- **1.3 million people in total in the study.**
### The Health Datasets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dataset</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Number of Records</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A&amp;E (A&amp;E2)</td>
<td>2011-2016</td>
<td>2.1 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acute Hospital Admissions (SMR01)</td>
<td>2002-2015</td>
<td>2.3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outpatient Appointments (SMR00)</td>
<td>2002-2015</td>
<td>9 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispensed Prescriptions* (PIS)</td>
<td>2009-2015</td>
<td>9.5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions to Mental Health Specialties (SMR04)</td>
<td>2002-2015</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Assessments at Drug Treatment Services (SDMD)</td>
<td>2002-2015</td>
<td>89,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaths</td>
<td>2002-2015</td>
<td>23,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Datasets contain records for people in the cohorts only
- *Selected prescriptions only relating to drugs, alcohol and mental health conditions.
Individual Person-level Analysis of Drug-related, Alcohol-related and Mental Health Issues
People in the EHC are over-represented in all datasets.
Homeless people use health services more, often many years before first becoming homeless.
Potential Lessons

• The extent of homelessness – at least 8% of people in Scotland had experienced homelessness over a 15 year period.

• The potential for health services to play an role in preventing homelessness through early intervention, often many years earlier – this would possibly impact on around a half of all homeless people.
Looking Ahead

• Include health within a public sector-wide duty to prevent homelessness?
• Academic interest in a Randomised Control Trial with Doctors - to see if some form of early intervention is effective at reducing homelessness. e.g. sign-posting to local authority.
Full Report & Executive Summary

• Available at:
  
  http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/06

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The End