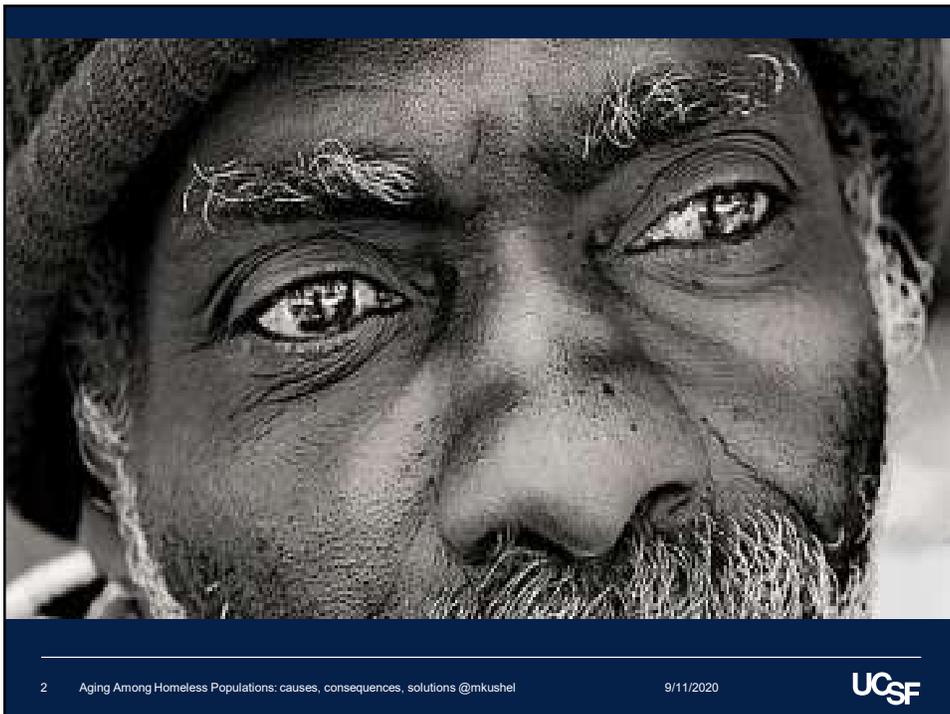


Aging Among Homeless Populations: causes, consequences, solutions

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 @mkushel

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The homeless population is aging

Proportion of single homeless adults ≥50 in San Francisco

- 1990 11%
- 2003 37%
- Today approximately 50%
- Median age increased 0.66 years for every calendar year between 1990-2003



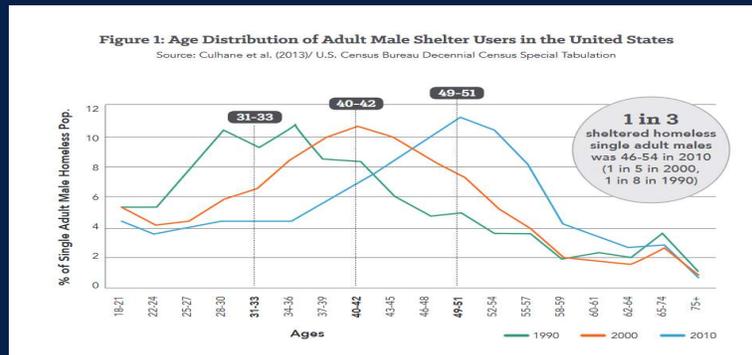
Hahn J et al. The Aging of the Homeless Population JGIM 2006

S.F.'S HOMELESS AGING ON THE STREET / Chronic health problems on the rise as median age nears 50



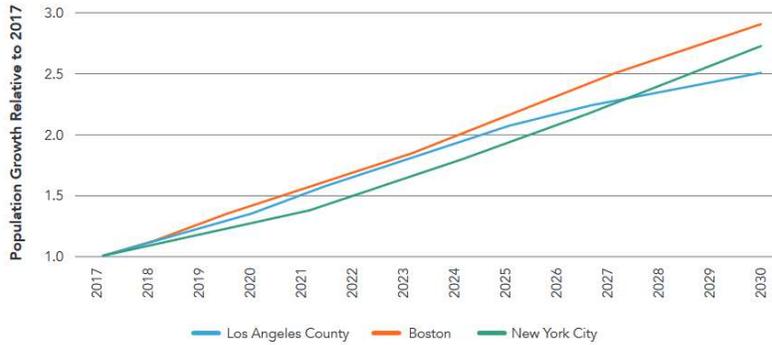
Generational effect

- Americans born in the second half of the baby boom (1955-1965) have had elevated risk of homelessness throughout their lifetime



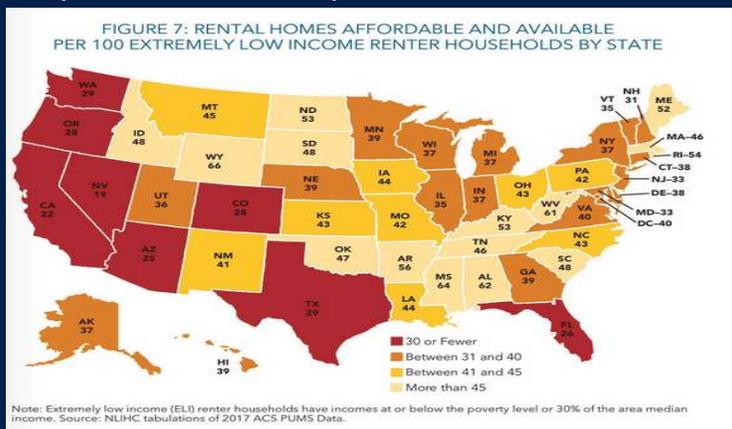
"The Emerging Crisis of Aged Homelessness" Culhane, Treglia, Byrne, Metraux, Kuhn, Doran, Johns, Schretzman
<https://www.aisp.upenn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Emerging-Crisis-of-Aged-Homelessness.pdf>

Figure 2: Forecasted Relative Change in the 65 and Older Homeless Population Compared to 2017



“The Emerging Crisis of Aged Homelessness” Culhane, Treglia, Byrne, Metraux, Kuhn, Doran, Johns, Schretzman <https://www.aisp.upenn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Emerging-Crisis-of-Aged-Homelessness.pdf>

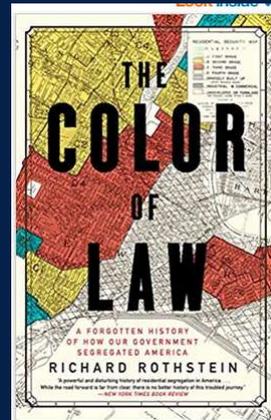
CA has 22 housing affordable/available for every 100 extremely low income households



The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes NLIHC
 March 2019 https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/gap/gap-19_int/mobile/index.html

Homelessness is a racial justice issue

- Housing primary means of wealth-building
- Discrimination in home ownership
 - Segregated neighborhoods
 - Redlining—restricted access to mortgages in segregated neighborhoods
 - Predatory lending
- Discrimination in rental market
- Criminal justice, employment and educational discrimination
- Black Americans at 3-4 fold increased risk of homelessness



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HOPE HOME Study

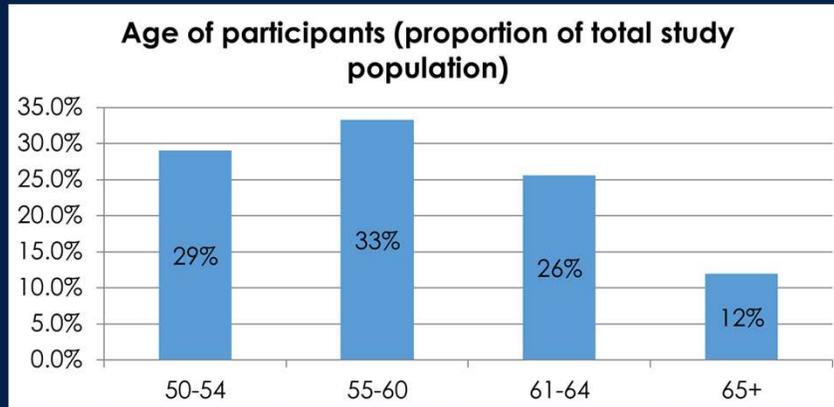
- Health Outcomes of People Experiencing Homelessness in Older Middle agE
 - Funded by National Institute on Aging (NIA)
 - Longitudinal cohort study in Oakland, CA
 - 350 participants enrolled July 2013 to June 2014, following participants every six months
 - Additional 100 participants 2017-2018

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Two thirds are 60 and under, but 12% are older than 65 years at study entry: Median age 57



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Almost a third of the sample lost stable housing* in the past year

Years since last stable housing	Percent
<6 months	18
6 mo to <1 yr	15
1 yr to <5 yrs	39
5 yrs to <10 yrs	14
10+ years	15

*Defined as non-institutional place that you lived for a year or more

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Economic challenges and interpersonal conflict are most common reasons to have left last stable housing

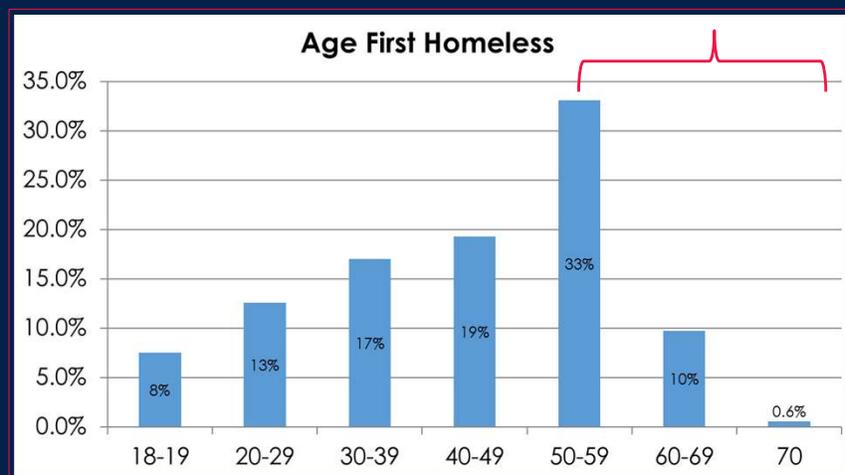
Reason	% of Sample
Couldn't pay rent/mortgage	28
Rent increased	2
Lost job	7
Became sick/disabled	1
Other bills (not medical)	1
Someone else stopped paying rent/mortgage	15
Family abuse/violence	1
Kicked out (not related to money)	41
Didn't get along/asked to leave	11
Drinking/doing drugs	4
Evicted	7
Housemates' substance use/theft	1
Building condemned/destroyed/foreclosed	6
Other reasons	21
Moved to new city/more desirable place	6
Hospital/treatment program	1
Incarcerated	4
Conditions were poor	4

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44% with first episode of homelessness after age 50



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Those with early homelessness (<50)

- More adverse life experiences
- Low income attainment in early adulthood
- No spouse partner
- Mental health problems
- Traumatic brain injury
- Imprisonment
- Alcohol use problem

Brown RT, Goodman L, Guzman D, Tieu L, Ponath C, Kushel MB. Pathways to Homelessness among Older Homeless Adults: Results from the HOPE HOME Study. PLoS One. 2016 May 10;11(5)

(My father said): “Next time you, if you runaway, I’ll beat you with a car chain or I’m going to throw you out the window.”

Okay, so I, I was, I wouldn’t use the word ‘reasonable’ but I put things in perspective real quick and I would say, “Could I survive a car chain? Probably not.”

Then I looked out the window and said, and we lived on the 13th floor, I said, “I ain’t playing with this man.” He went to work, I had whatever I had on me, I was out the door.

Late onset homelessness

- Low wage work throughout life
- Crisis
 - Job loss
 - Marital breakdown
 - Illness (participant, spouse)
 - Death (spouse, parent)

“It was a lot of different things but basically the new owners took over, we were being evicted.

My wife, she had just got out of the hospital, had the stroke and was blind...so, the daughter came up and said, ‘Don’t fight it, y’all can come stay with me for a couple months and save your money.’ So we said, ‘Okay’ ...[and didn’t fight the eviction].

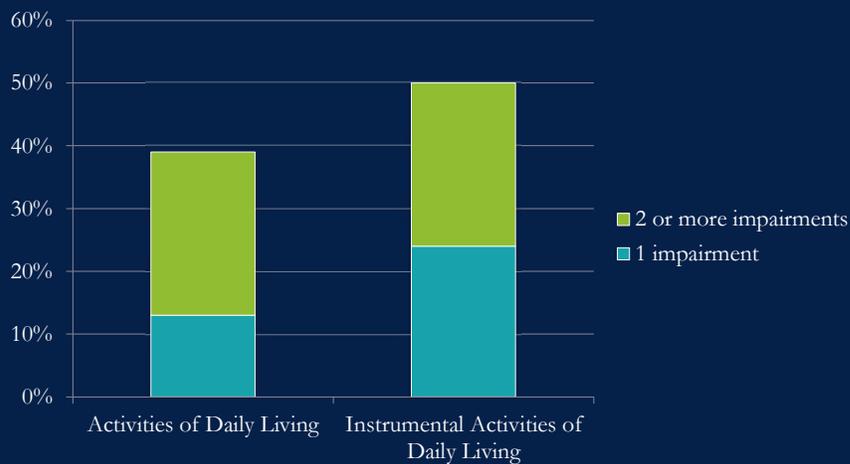
After we moved out of the place, turned in the keys and everything we went over to her house and she said, ‘Y’all can’t stay here.’ And I said, ‘I got \$9 in my pocket,’

I said, ‘At least let your mother spend the night because we don’t have enough money to get a motel room.’ She said, ‘No.’ So that was the beginning.”

Poor health in every measure

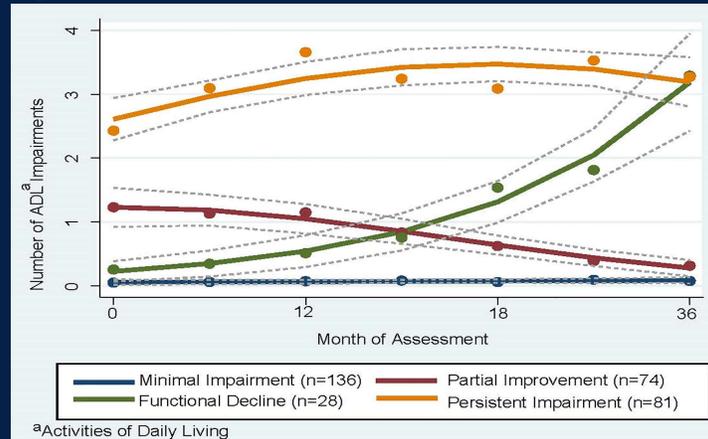
56% report health as fair or poor

High proportion with functional impairments



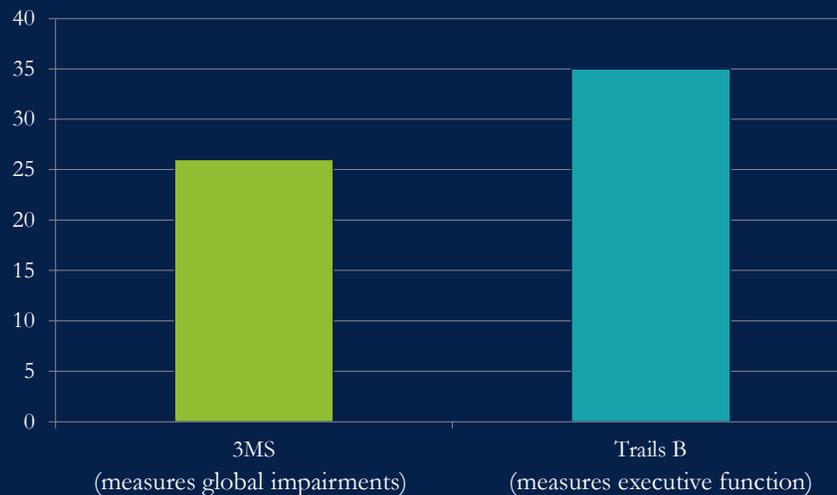
Brown RT, Hemati K, Riley ED, Lee CT, Ponath C, Tieu L, Guzman D, Kushel MB. Geriatric Conditions in a Population-Based Sample of Older Homeless Adults. *Gerontologist*. 2016 Feb 26. pii: gnw011. PubMed PMID: 26920935

Trajectories of recovery similar to those of people in their 70s and 80s



Brown and Kushel PLOS ONE 2019

High prevalence of cognitive impairment



Hurstak E, Johnson JK, Tieu L, Guzman D, Ponath C, Lee CT, Jamora CW, Kushel M. Factors associated with cognitive impairment in a cohort of older homeless adults: Results from the HOPE HOME study. Drug Alcohol Depend. 2017 Sep 1;178:562-570.

High prevalence of all geriatric conditions

- Mobility impairment 27%
- One or more falls (6 months) 34%
- Visual impairment 45%
- Hearing impairment 36%
- Urinary incontinence 48%

Brown RT, Hemati K, Riley ED, Lee CT, Ponath C, Tieu L, Guzman D, Kushel MB. Geriatric Conditions in a Population-Based Sample of Older Homeless Adults. *Gerontologist*. 2016 Feb 26. pii: gnw011. [Epub ahead of print] PubMed PMID: 26920935.

Overall poor functional status:

“50 is the new 75”

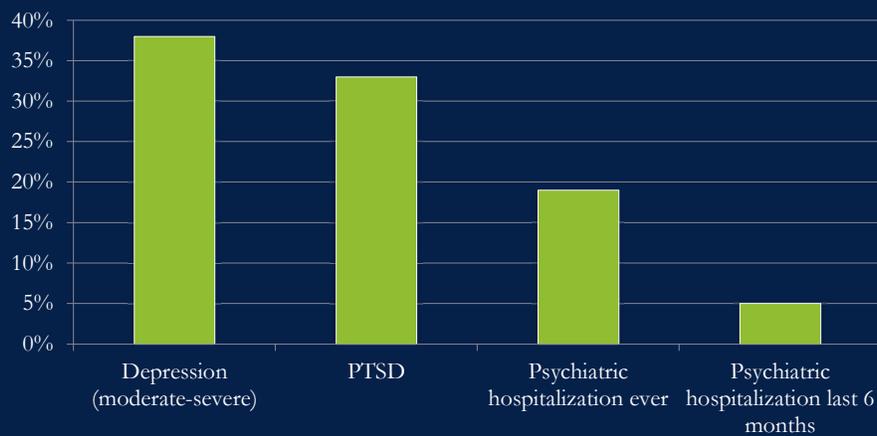
Median age of sample: 57

Prevalence of geriatric conditions worse than those in general population samples in their 70s and 80s

Alcohol and drug use problems common

- 65% with moderate or greater severity of drug use symptoms
 - Cocaine (43%), cannabis (39%), and opioids (13%) moderate or severe use symptoms
- 26% moderate or greater severity alcohol use symptoms
 - 15% severe symptoms

Mental Health Problems are common



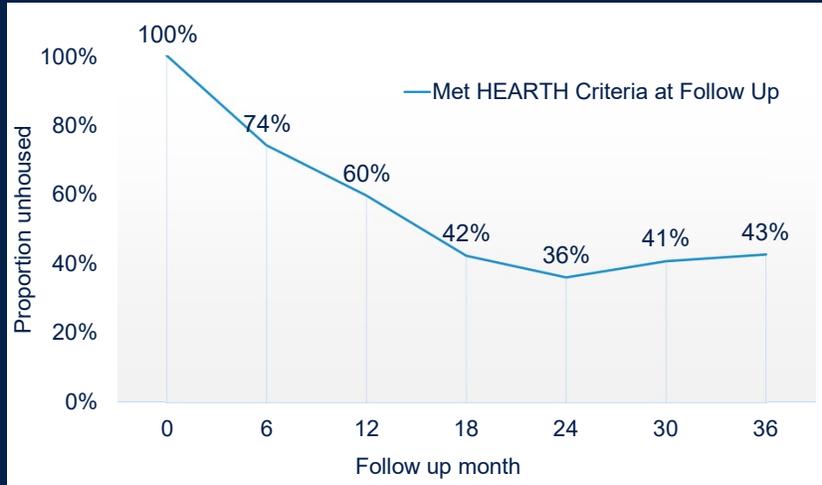
High rates of acute healthcare utilization

- **72%** had a non-ED source for care
- **53%** reported a PCP
- **Half** of all participants had visited an ED (confirmed) in the prior **six months**
- **<7%** of participants accounted for **half** of all ED visits
- **24%** of visits for worsening of chronic illness
- **10%** were hospitalized for physical condition in prior **six months**

High mortality rate and institutional care

- **51** confirmed deaths out of 350 participants in HOPE HOME since cohort began (July 2013-June 2014)
- (**8** additional deaths among 100 recruited last year)
- Those first homeless >50 2x as likely to have died as those with earlier onset homelessness
- **>40** confirmed nursing home stays

Majority obtain housing by 18 month follow-up



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Where were individuals housed? n=150



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Effective Solutions

- HOUSING is the answer
- ELI housing
- ELI Housing + supports (PSH) for those with behavioral disabilities
- HOUSING FIRST
- House people as quickly as possible
- Divert people from imminent homelessness as quickly as possible

PREVENTION

- Not enough effort on preventing homelessness
- Prevention efforts need to be both EFFICIENT and EFFECTIVE
- Some increased action on eviction protection
- Individuals without a lease are at highest risk
 - HOME BASE in NY
- HOME SAFE
 - Targeting prevention funds for APS involved older adults in CA
- Most benefit is to target those at highest risk!

Rapid Re-Housing

- Connects families and individuals to permanent housing via tailored package of assistance. Can serve as bridge to longer-term support (i.e. rental vouchers)
 - Time-limited rental assistance
 - Targeted supportive services
 - Housing identification
 - Rent and move-in assistance (typically 6 months or less)
 - Case management and services

Permanent Supportive Housing

- Permanent supportive housing for those with chronic homelessness/disabling conditions
 - Subsidized housing
 - Linked supportive services that are voluntary
 - **Housing First** model – start with the housing
 - Shown to be highly effective at keeping people housed
 - Need to adapt for needs of older adults

Challenges: Affordable Housing and Prevention

- Enormous shortage of deeply affordable housing
 - Difficult to build for those most at risk
- Need to stop in-flow into homelessness
 - Difficult to target resources

Challenges: Aging population

- Loss of residential care facilities throughout CA
 - “Board and Care”
- PSH faced with providing services for aging population
 - Provision of personal care
 - Homebridge
 - ?PACE programs aligned with PSH
 - Advance Care Planning
 - Dementia Care

Final thoughts

- Homelessness reaching crisis proportions
- Aging population increases urgency
- Suffering is immense
- Use of healthcare system can be chaotic
- While mental health and substance use disorders are common, underlying causes are structural
- Solutions will not be easy, but are doable
- Must match solution to the problem

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