



The Relationship between Homelessness and Violent Behaviors in Adolescents in Kentucky



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PROBLEM

- According to the Kentucky Department of Education, the 2017-2018 homeless student count was 23,968 (Kentucky Department of Education)
- "Each day, 13 young people are victims of homicide and more than 1,600 are treated in emergency departments for nonfatal injuries" (CDC, 2018)
- "Few studies directly compared rates of physically violent behaviors perpetrated and experienced among homeless youth and those within the general population" (Heerde, et al., 2014, p. 64)

BACKGROUND & SIGNIFICANCE

- The purpose is to investigate the potential relationship between homelessness and violent behavior in adolescents in Kentucky.
- The significance of this study is to identify a possible relationship between homelessness and violent behavior in youth, and to highlight any risk factors that may be associated with these two factors.

METHODS

Instrument

- Secondary data from the 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey
- 10 different questions for were analyzed for this research, three demographic questions, five violence related questions, and two homelessness related questions

Participants

- High school students from public, Catholic, and Non-public schools are surveyed with the Highschool YRBS questionnaire
- 14,765 questionnaires were completed by participants; 1,997 of those questionnaires were from the Kentucky sample

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Of the 1,997 survey respondents, females accounted for 51.08%, males accounted for 48.12% and 0.8% were missing or unreportable. Of the 1,762 valid responses received there were 101 respondents that identified as homeless, and 207 respondents identified not having an adult in their life that they could trust, regardless of their living situation. Students age 12 or younger to 18 or older took the KYRBS in 2017 and those 12 or younger accounted for 0.4% of responses, 13 year old's account for 0.25%, 14 year old's accounted for 11.8%, 15 year old accounted for 25.3%, 16 year old's accounted for 29.4%, 17 accounted for 20.7%, and 18 year old's or older accounted for 11.8%.

Table 1. Comparison of violent behavior among homeless and trusted-adult-lacking adolescents

Homelessness		Interpersonal Relationship (No Trusted Adult)	
Violent Behavior Variables	Pearson Chi Square p-value	Violent Behavior Variables	Pearson Chi Square p-value
Weapon Carrying	<0.001**	Weapon Carrying	<0.001**
Weapon Carrying at School	<0.001**	Weapon Carrying at School	0.060
Gun Carrying	<0.001**	Gun Carrying	<0.001**
Physical Fighting	<0.001**	Physical Fighting	<0.001**
Physical Fighting at School	<0.001**	Physical Fighting at School	0.023*

Note of statistical significance: **<.01, *<.05

Table 2. Comparison of violent behavior, homelessness, and gender

Homelessness			
Females		Males	
Violent Behavior Variables	Pearson Chi Square p-value	Violent Behavior Variables	Pearson Chi Square p-value
Weapon Carrying	<0.001**	Weapon Carrying	<0.001**
Weapon Carrying at School	<0.001**	Weapon Carrying at School	<0.001**
Gun Carrying	<0.001**	Gun Carrying	<0.001**
Physical Fighting	<0.001**	Physical Fighting	<0.001**
Physical Fighting at School	<0.001**	Physical Fighting at School	<0.001**

Note of statistical significance: **<.01, *<.05

IMPLICATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

- Results from this current study expand on existing research concerned with homelessness and violent behavior by analyzing correlations between the two factors.
- The current extends existing literature and further bridges the gap in explaining that there is a relationship between violence and homelessness among adolescents.
- Specifically, there is a statistically significant relationship between homelessness and carrying a weapon in the past 30 days or being in a physical fight if an adolescent is homeless versus being non-homeless.
- A *Coordinated Community Response* that has 4 core outcomes for ending youth homelessness which are stable housing, permanent connections to family/school/community, education/employment, and social-emotional well-being (2019). This could be where the new age of fighting youth homelessness starts, they go on to say, "the varied and unique needs of youth experiencing homelessness require a range of interventions and solutions no single funding stream can provide" (USICH, 2019).
- Concerning gender, there was no difference in statistical significance between males and females, It is important to establish early in this literature that it is not a male or female problem, but at the core it is truly a homelessness issue.
- Many research efforts have only focused on adult homelessness yet have ignored finding interventions for homeless adolescents (Wang et al., 2019). Further research could reveal what upstream issues lead to the outcome of homelessness. As a result, prevention efforts could then be placed on preventing those issues before they result in homelessness. However, efforts should still be made for those youth who are currently struggling with homelessness.

REFERENCES

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors are grateful for the XXXX, thank people here for any financial support. Thank people for participating in the project, such as survey participants or communities for allowing participation. Thank anyone who helped you, maybe a professor, classmates, a family member, etc.