



Lack of Reliable Homelessness Statistics on Aboriginal Peoples in Canada

What you need to know

A high number of Aboriginal Peoples who live in urban centres are experiencing homelessness. There hasn't been enough research into the causes behind this disparity. Those who are experiencing homelessness in urban centres require additional programs that are focused on their specific needs.

What is this research about?

Policy decisions are largely based on a body of evidence that can be drawn on. In the case of policies on Aboriginal Peoples experiencing homelessness, there is a lack of research on the dynamics of homelessness, including credible attempts to capture an adequate count.

A large number of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada live in urban settings. There are populations that also move between the city and reserves, however it is unclear the amount that do this.

Given the history of colonialism and oppressive policies, Aboriginal Peoples facing homelessness are frequently overlooked. Racist stereotypes recreate the idea that Aboriginal Canadians are 'nomadic' or undeserving of services.

The Canadian Homelessness Research Network (CHRN) has partnered with the Knowledge Mobilization (KMB) Unit at York University to produce Research Summaries on the topic of Youth Homelessness in Canada. The CHRN focuses on education, networking and knowledge mobilization in order to move towards effective long-term solutions to homelessness.

VISIT
www.homelesshub.ca
for more information

KEYWORDS

homelessness, Aboriginal Peoples, urban homelessness, service design, racism, stereotypes, colonialism

ARTICLE SOURCE

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What did the researchers do?

The researchers reviewed current data that has been taken from point in time counts and literature on Aboriginal homelessness in Canada. The researcher also investigated research on the efficacy of homelessness policy.

What did the researchers find?

Researchers found that approximately 6.97% of all urban Aboriginal Peoples are homeless on any given night. Typically street counts, measuring those who live on the street or in shelters, account for approximately 20% of those who are experiencing homelessness. There are a large number of Aboriginal Peoples who are living in overcrowded or substandard housing and are at risk of losing their housing.

About 1 in 15 urban Aboriginal Peoples are homeless, compared with the average of 1 in 128 people across Canada. This means that urban aboriginal people are 8 times more likely to be homeless.

A “homes-first styled “ program should be used to take into account the needs of urban Aboriginal Peoples who are experiencing homelessness. Housing programs must be specifically designed to address the legacy of colonialism.

HOW CAN YOU USE THIS RESEARCH?

Housing programs should focus on previously proven methods such as housing first. They must also address differential needs of aboriginal people who are homeless. This includes responding to the legacy of colonialism.

Policy should take into account that homeless people have also been displaced from community and social structures, not just housing. A regular count of homeless people should also look at identity characteristics.

Researchers should work with aboriginal communities and those who are homeless to assess service needs. This would help in the design of culturally relevant programs.

ABOUT THE RESEARCHERS

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