

**The Panel Study on Homelessness:
Secondary Data Analysis of Responses of Study
Participants
Whose Country of Origin is not Canada**

**A Report Prepared for:
National Secretariat on Homelessness**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context and Objective:

- The Panel Study on Homelessness was developed in response to the City of Ottawa's interest in facilitating research between researchers at the Centre for Research on Community Services and the Institute of Population Health at the University of Ottawa, Carleton University, City of Ottawa's Housing Branch, and the Alliance to End Homelessness in Ottawa.
- The purpose of the Panel Study is to examine the pathways into and out of homelessness by following persons who are homeless over time. The research objective for the first wave of the study was to interview a representative sample of current residents of Ottawa emergency shelters in order to gather descriptive data on demographic characteristics, housing history, health status, and health and social service utilization.
- The purpose of this report is to examine the situations of foreign born respondents to the Panel Study, and to compare their situations overall with those of respondents who were born in Canada.

Methodology:

- The methodology for the project was developed in a collaborative manner based on input from university researchers, community agency personnel, emergency shelter staff, and the City of Ottawa's Housing Branch. The project built on a previous survey of persons who were living in emergency shelters in Ottawa (Farrell, Aubry, Klodawsky, & Pettey, 2000). As well, procedures for locating these individuals were developed to locate and re-interview these individuals one and two years after their interview in order to ascertain their living situation.
- The interview protocol asked respondents about their housing histories, income histories, employment histories, social networking, personal empowerment, living conditions, social services utilization, health status, health care utilization, childhood stressors, substance use, and demographic characteristics.
- The project took place between October 2002 and April 2003. Sampling guidelines for the study were developed for each of five sub-groups: adult men, adult women, female youth, male youth and adults in families. Depending on the subgroup, sampling strategies involved either quota sampling or population sampling. Quota sampling involved selecting participants based on characteristics of the subgroup population provided by shelters. Shelter staff used the sampling guidelines developed for the project to identify appropriate participants. The overall goal was to interview 80 individuals in each of these categories. Trained graduate students and other experienced interviewers conducted individual interviews.

- A total of 416 individuals were interviewed in the study, including 88 adult men, 85 adult women, 79 male youth, 81 female youth, and 83 adults in families.
- There were 99 foreign born respondents, including 24 adult females, 7 adult males, 11 youth females, 5 youth males and 52 adults in families. When their reasons for coming to Canada were examined, we identified 47 as immigrants and 52 as refugees.

Key Findings:

Noteworthy characteristics of the surveyed population were:

- Most foreign born respondents were female and particularly mothers with children. It is conceivable that the sampling approach may have served to accentuate the proportions of women among the foreign born respondents; nonetheless, there certainly appear to be large numbers of women among homeless persons who were not born in Canada.
- The respondents generally are quite isolated: most individuals are single, separated, divorced or widowed.
- Most women in families who are homeless are single mothers.

Housing history of respondents revealed:

- Most respondents had moved several times within the last 3 years, both within the City of Ottawa and between different regions of the country.
- Most respondents had experienced homelessness on multiple occasions.
- Most respondents had experienced a relatively brief period in their most recent episode of homelessness (that is, less than six months).
- Foreign born respondents were more likely than Canadian born respondents to attribute the cause of their current homelessness to financial problems or family conflict but less likely to identify health problems or substance use problems as a cause.

Prominent findings relating to health status of respondents included:

- In comparison to a general population sample, foreign born survey respondents reported a high level of mental and physical health. Their health status was a sharp contrast to those who were born in Canada. These latter respondents had lower physical and especially mental health status.

Results concerning the use of health and social services indicated:

- Foreign born survey respondents had low rates on contact with health care providers in the past twelve months. Contact with general practitioners was the only provider where more of these respondents reported contact, rather than no contact. Foreign born respondents were less likely to visit a health care provider in a variety of areas than were Canadian born respondents.

- Foreign born respondents were less likely to use drop in or outreach social services but they were more likely to use municipal social services than were Canadian born respondents.

Conclusions:

Policy and program implications of the findings include:

- Need for involvement by all levels of government because of the complexity of the problem, the jurisdictions of relevant policies and programs to address the problem, and the mobility of the population
- Need for the development of policies and programs targeting problems related to settlement issues, income, housing, education, and family violence which contribute to homelessness
- Need for the development of safe, affordable permanent housing through a revitalized social housing sector
- Need for a range of health and social services addressing the unique needs of foreign born respondents.

INTRODUCTION

The Panel Study on Homelessness in Ottawa

The Panel Study on Homelessness in Ottawa has the objective of examining pathways into and out of homelessness by following persons who are homeless in Ottawa over time. An ultimate goal is to identify and explain factors that distinguish those who successfully exit homelessness from those who remain homeless or experience multiple episodes of homelessness. The first wave of the study received funding support from the City of Ottawa Homelessness Initiative Team, Housing Branch, drawn from the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative of the National Secretariat on Homelessness. This study took place between October 2002 and April 2003 and provided descriptive data on the demographic characteristics, housing history, health status, health and social service utilization and most pressing needs of the study participants (Aubry, Klodawsky, Hay, Birnie, 2003). The second wave began in the summer of 2004. Currently, work is underway to re-interview as many as possible of the original study participants in order to examine the course of homelessness, the factors that help or hinder the exit from homelessness, and the impacts of a changed housing status on their health and well-being.

The Nature of the Partnership

This report is the outcome of a collaborative effort between the Panel Study on Homelessness in Ottawa and the Catholic Immigration Centre, made possible thanks to a funding contribution from the National Secretariat on Homelessness. Data already collected by the Panel Study have been the basis of a secondary analysis of data on respondents whose country of origin is not Canada. The descriptive tables and supporting explanatory texts have been generated by researchers working with the Panel Study. These data have been the focus of various consultations with local and regional experts in the areas of immigration and homelessness, as identified by the Catholic Immigration Centre in consultation with other members of The Alliance to End Homelessness. The objective has been to engage, in a variety of settings, with experts who have had the opportunity to examine this information and put forward their considered opinions about interpretation and areas for further analyses and future research. This feedback has already helped in developing the Panel Study's second wave interview protocol to be sensitive to issues facing first generation migrants. In addition, it has been an important mechanism for highlighting the Panel Study and disseminating its first phase results.

Rationale for this Research

Thanks to a growing number of studies about causes of homelessness, the variety of elements that might contribute to a person becoming homeless is now more clearly understood. For example, according to Morse, these elements are usefully sorted into several levels, including the cultural, the institutional, the community, the organizational and the individual. The cultural level includes societal attitudes towards mental health,

poverty, 'race' and addictions. The institutional level focuses on the social welfare, housing, health and criminal justice systems. The community level highlights local and neighbourhood politics and the organizational level gives attention to the emergency shelter and child welfare systems and the rules that shape it. Finally, the individual level incorporates characteristics of homeless people themselves and the reactions to their plight (cited in Glasser and Bridgman, 1999, p. 45).

An important question for researchers in this area is the nature of the correspondence (if there is one) between homeless individuals' demographic characteristics and the factors that help explain their loss of housing as well as their ability to ultimately achieve housing stability again. The National Homelessness Secretariat has acknowledged that immigrants and refugees who arrived in Canada within the past 10 years are at greater risk of becoming homeless than most other Canadian residents, because of the preponderance among them of low income, high unemployment and being in core housing need (National Homelessness Initiative 2003). As of late, several Canadian studies have explored the nature of new immigrants' and refugees' experiences with employment and income (Picot 2004). Some information about their housing characteristics also is available. In the area of homelessness, though, research is only beginning to address the relationship with immigrant status. This research gap both reflects and feeds into the Canadian public's lack of knowledge of this problem – a problem that was highlighted in the summer of 2004 on CBC Radio 1. Its series on "City States" included a feature titled "Working but homeless in Mississauga", and was introduced as follows:

"Say "homeless person" and most Canadians picture a scruffy-looking man on a street corner in the downtown core of a big, bustling city...

But the new, and fast-growing profile of homelessness is an immigrant mother with children. People like Joyce Appiah from Ghana, who had to quit her job to look after her children when she lost the place she'd been sharing with relatives. Now, she and her daughters, aged five and two, are crammed into a small room in a former hotel turned emergency shelter... (CBC, 2004).

One reason for this low level of recognition appears to be the fact that the extent of the problem varies widely from municipality to municipality. For example, researchers of preliminary 10 city study of family homelessness¹ noted that "close to three quarters of the families were not a visible minority, but among those who were, most were Aboriginal" (CMHC 2003c). However, the study also reported that, in Toronto, the number of families using emergency shelters declined after September 11, 2001 because of changes in immigrant and refugee policies (ibid). In Ottawa, as in Toronto, the family homeless shelters include many foreign born and visible minority households, as will be seen below.

The Ottawa Context

¹ The ten cities studied were: Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Peel Region, Toronto, Montréal, Québec, Saint John, and Halifax.

Ottawa's population is becoming increasingly diverse. In 2001, over 3% of all new immigrants to Canada settled in this city. Currently, over 20% of persons living in Ottawa were not born in Canada and it is anticipated that this ratio will double by 2020 (United Way Demographics (UW), 2003, p.12). Among newcomers to Ottawa who arrived before 1996, 23% were refugees, well above the national proportion of 14% (Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) 2000, p. ix).

The growing numbers of immigrants in Ottawa has resulted in a population consisting of growing numbers of visible minorities (from 1/10 in 1993 to 1/7 in 2002), younger adults, and those with advanced education (UW, p. 13). In 2001, the most common source countries were The People's Republic of China followed by Somalia and Lebanon (op. cit., p. 12). For those who landed between 1991 and 1996, "six of the top ten countries of birth of immigrants... are in Asia, one in Africa. One quarter of recent immigrants born in Somalia make their home in Ottawa, as do one-eighth of those born in Lebanon and Ethiopia" (CIC, 2000, p. ix). All told, "[t]here are 61 different ethnicities and more than 70 different languages spoken in Ottawa (UW, p. 13).

Despite the broad range of skills that many newcomers possess, "[r]ecent immigrants...aged 25 to 44 with university degrees are four times more likely to be unemployed than residents who have lived in Canada for 10 years or more (17% compared with 4%)" (ibid). Similarly, more than one half of those with a trade certificate or college diploma were working in jobs that did not fully utilize their knowledge and skills. Thus it is unlikely that the poor economic situations reported for immigrants based on 1995 tax returns have changed substantially. At that time, newcomers who had arrived since 1991 had incomes of about half that of Canadian born adults, while those who had arrived during the 1980s had incomes of about 70% of the Canadian born peers (CIC 2000, p. xi). Over the same period, 64% of recent immigrants, 53% of visible minority groups and 19% of other Ottawa residents were categorized as poor by the Canadian Council on Social Development (Lee, 2000).

As a consequence, it is not surprising that many newcomers in Ottawa face housing difficulties. In April 2002, a conference organized by a group of Ottawa-based agencies identified housing as one of the key challenges facing minority communities in Ottawa. While noting that about 70% of social housing residents were, in fact, immigrants or refugees and that newcomers who have been in Canada for less than one year received priority for access to available units, the Housing Workshop participants also pointed out that in 2002, there were over 13,000 households on the waiting list for subsidized housing, with an anticipated average wait time of 7 years (Local Agencies Serving Immigrants (LASI) and the Social Planning Council of Ottawa 2002, pp. 21-2).

This long waiting list reflects a growing mismatch between housing availability and housing need in Ottawa. While the number of dwellings in Ottawa grew more quickly than did the population between 1996 and 2002 (12% versus 7.3% respectively), this greater availability did not address the growing need for affordable housing. In 2003, over 24,000 renters were paying more than 50% of their income on rent alone (Social

Housing Network of Ottawa, 2004) and fully 48% of immigrants who arrived between 1991 and 1996 were in housing need in Ottawa, in contrast to 39% of immigrants throughout Canada (Social Planning Council of Ottawa, 2004). Newcomer households were also much more likely to live in crowded conditions and much less likely to own their own home (CIC 2000, p. xii). All of these factors help to explain why homelessness among newcomers (and more generally) is a growing problem in Ottawa (UW, p. 31-32). Although very little is known about the citizenship status and country of origin of individuals and families using emergency shelters, some discussion about homelessness among newcomer families with children (SPC 2000) and women escaping abuse (LASI & SPC 2002, pp. 21-22) has occurred.

LITERATURE REVIEW: Canadian Newcomers, Housing and Homelessness²

Currently, no peer reviewed academic examinations of homelessness among immigrants or refugees exist in Canada and even in the United States, where there is a vast literature about homelessness per se, information about homeless newcomers remains sparse (Bullard Presentation to Metropolis Interdepartmental Roundtable Oct. 25, 2004; Hannat 2004; Kappel Ramji 2002). Nonetheless, three recent reports that highlight homelessness and/or risk of homelessness among immigrants and refugees in Toronto are Kappel Ramji (2002), Israelite, Herman, Alim, Mohamed, and Khan (1999) and Zine (2002). Kappel Ramji's (2002) focus was on the health status of visible and hidden homeless women. Researchers recruited potential interview subjects with the help of diverse agencies that provided help to women at risk. One hundred and twenty-two women agreed to be interviewed in the language of their choice; of these women, 52% were not born in Canada and 47% self-identified as being women of colour. Close to 66% reported adverse health impacts that they attributed to their living circumstances. They also noted that many women were grappling with problems of family violence and/or wife abuse (Kappel Ramji 2002). Indeed, the relationship between violence and immigrant women's housing vulnerability is an area that clearly requires further investigation, given extant Canadian findings about the high prevalence among immigrant women from developing countries (Brownridge et. al., 2002; Smith n.d.) and consistent observations in the literature about links between violence and homelessness or risk of homelessness (Assanand 2004; Lenon 2002; Neil 2004; Sev'er 2003; Smith 2004).

² Research databases including Web of Science, SocioFile, MEDLINE and psycINFO were used to find Canadian literature with the following keywords: refugees/immigrants and homelessness, housing, education, children, health, income, SF-36, discrimination, family violence, gender, social housing, employment, education, abuse, kinship networks and labour market integration. For related material, government web sites were also searched including: Statistics Canada, CMHC, HRDC, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and the Ontario Human Rights Commission. The web sites of the Canadian Council on Social Development, Housing New Canadians Project (a SSHRC- funded, Toronto-based research group) and The Metropolis project were also referred to.

Israelite et. al. (1999) reported on the settlement experiences of Somali refugee women in Toronto, based on three focus groups discussions, conducted in the Somali language, with 21 women recruited through two community organizations. Nineteen of the women were undocumented refugees and the remaining two had recently become permanent residents. The researchers identified many problems that were exacerbated by the women's lack of documentation and the resulting restrictions that extended for a five year period. Four problems were particularly emphasized: restrictions on family reunification and mobility, access to postsecondary education, access to employment and feelings of shame generated by the restrictive regulations that they faced (p. 9). Housing problems were also noted, especially having to do with the difficulty in finding and maintaining affordable housing, and the challenges of adapting preferred extended family living arrangements to high-rise apartments (pp. 15-17).

Zine (2002) examined the housing situations of 300 members of Toronto's Latin American and Muslim communities in Toronto. Individuals were recruited through a convenience sample drawn from a variety of community organizations that serve these two communities and the surveys were available in multiple languages. Further information was collected through a series of interviews and focus group discussions. Key findings from this research indicate that many of these individuals felt that they were at risk of homelessness and this was especially the case for the high proportion of refugee claimants among their sample. Ballay and Bulthuis (2003), in a survey of existing Canadian discussions about immigration and homelessness, echo this finding:

...existing research... shows that the majority of newcomers who become homeless are those entering Canada outside of the legal selection process or those who enter and do not have family living in the country. Immigrants unable to work in their profession... are more likely to experience poverty and may find themselves homeless. However, the newcomers most likely to become homeless are refugees... Refugee claimants, though a small proportion of all newcomers, receive little support from governments until they have been granted refugee status and must live with the funds they have brought with them into Canada...

It is during this period of indeterminate status – sometimes lasting more than one year – that refugee claimants are most likely to find themselves homeless. To a lesser extent, privately sponsored refugees whose sponsorship breaks down can also find themselves without support. These newcomers are the most vulnerable and the most likely to become homeless (p. 120).

These authors also discussed the particular difficulties faced by refugees in the existing homeless infrastructure, in part due to their prior experiences of trauma in their countries of origin and in part due to the adaptation challenges they face (ibid).

Some peer reviewed literature is beginning to emerge about recent immigrants' housing experiences in this country, with the vast majority having been published since 1995 and based on 1991 and 1996 census data. Ray and Moore (1991) is an early exception with a focus on immigrants' access to homeownership, based on 1986 census data. They concluded that despite considerable diversity among immigrants - by region,

country of origin and year of arrival in Canada - more recent immigrants, especially those from the developing world, had substantially lower rates of homeownership. These findings have been substantiated by more recent studies on the income, employment status and careers of recent immigrants to Canada (Picot 2004)

The most ambitious research initiative to date is the *Housing New Canadians' Study* in Toronto, led by principal investigators Robert Murdie and David Hulchanski (Hulchanski 1994, 1997; Hulchanski et.al., 1996; Murdie et.al, 1995, 1999; Murdie 2002; Murdie and Teixeira 2003). The overall goal of this initiative is to examine the housing trajectories of newcomers to Canada over time and to identify barriers to their successful settlement that focus particularly on housing. They also seek to identify policy responses to these barriers. Numerous articles and reports examining and comparing the housing experiences of three specific immigrant groups – Jamaicans, Poles and Somalis -- and particularly their experiences and perceived encounters with discriminatory rental housing practices, have been published as a result of this initiative. Dion (2001) reported that Jamaican and Somali immigrants perceived greater personal and group discrimination and also showed a greater discrepancy between personal and group discrimination than did Polish immigrants. Murdie's (2002) comparative examination of Polish and Somali newcomers' housing careers confirmed that Poles have been more successful than have Somali born migrants in establishing "progressive housing careers" and he attributed this result in part to discriminatory rental practices in Toronto's tight rental housing market.

Other notable Canadian research on immigrants' and refugees' housing careers include: Rose et. al.'s (2001) examination of the housing situations of recent refugees in Montreal, based on a survey of 400 "regularized refugee claimants"; Danso's (2000) examination of the relationship between African immigrants' housing situations in Calgary and their adaptive strategies; Miraftab's (2000) study of recent Somali and Kurdish refugees' housing search in Vancouver; and, Zine (2002) mentioned above. The initial settlement challenges of refugee claimants, discriminatory practices in housing, and the struggle for low income renters to pay for housing and other expenses are noted as prominent factors that contribute to housing difficulties in several of these studies.

Other important sources of information about immigrant and refugee housing are Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), and Statistics Canada (SC). CMHC (2004a) drawing upon 2001 Census data, reported that recent immigrants (those who arrived in Canada in or after 1991) were overwhelmingly (+90%) resident in Canada's larger cities, particularly Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal (74%). They were much less likely than non-Aboriginal, non-immigrants living in Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA) to own their own homes, at 31.2% and 62.9% respectively. Aboriginal CMA residents had profiles more similar to recent immigrants than to other residents, with ownership rates of 41.9%. A retrospective analysis based on the 1996 census revealed a different picture for longer term immigrants (CMHC 2003b). Those who had arrived prior to 1976, and especially immigrants from Europe, were more likely to own their own homes than were non-immigrants.

Dempsey and Yu (2004) have provided important insights into the socio-demographic characteristics of refugees in Canada, especially with regard to their differences with other newcomers. Landed-in-Canada Refugees (LCRs), that is, those who have made successful refugee claims from within Canada, constituted the largest proportion of refugees between 1992 and 2002, at about 50%. Second were Government Assisted refugees (GARs) at about 34%, with Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs) comprising the remainder. Over the last decade, there have been more successful male than female refugee claimants in Canada, at 56% and 44% respectively. This imbalance was especially true among LCRs, at 59% and 41%. With regard to age, almost 50% of refugees were between the ages of 25 and 44. Also noteworthy was the high concentration of PSRs and GARs under 25, and the growing proportion over 45 years of age.

In contrast to immigrant newcomers, the educational attainment of refugees has been declining. Since 1999, when 65% of refugees reported having twelve years or less of education, this proportion has been growing (p. 6). The geographic distribution of refugees is another point of difference, with refugees being more evenly settled throughout the country than is true for immigrants. The proportion of refugees settling in Ontario has declined from 59% to 48% in 2002. However, differences between the two groups were not found of linguistic ability: refugees report a capacity in English or French that is comparable with immigrant newcomers. With regard to labour force attainment, Dempsey and Yu (2004) noted that refugees' use of social assistance is higher than that of other newcomers but that it diminishes with length of time since landing, while their share of income from employment increases over time. Ten years after landing, refugees' employment earnings averaged about \$25,000 and constituted 78% of total earnings (pp. 8-9).

Statistics Canada (2003) also has contributed important insights about the range, distribution and characteristics of newcomers' housing situations, as well as the factors that help explain why some foreign born residents experience insecure housing and homelessness. The *Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada: Process, progress and prospects* (LSIC) reported the results of a first wave of interviews with 12,000 newcomers who arrived up to six months prior to contact. It is noteworthy, though, that Landed in Canada Refugees were excluded as participants of this survey (p. 9).

About 19% of immigrants who arrived in Canada between October 2000 and September 2001 did not have any housing arranged before their arrival. Newcomers with relatives or friends already in Canada were most likely to have made arrangements in advance of arrival but even where housing had been arranged, some of these accommodations were only temporary. At the time of interview, 74% of the newcomers were renting their accommodation, 8% were using some form of temporary shelter and 18% were living in their own home. Fifty-eight percent of renters had plans to buy their own home. The LSIC newcomers were more likely than Canadian residents in general to live in multiple family households, at 12% and 2% respectively. In contrast, 12% of the respondents were living alone or with unrelated individuals. Thirty-eight percent reported having difficulty finding accommodation and among this group, the most serious

problems were the high cost of housing (31%), the lack of guarantors or cosigners (23%) and lack of suitable housing (11%). The extent to which the respondents faced these difficulties varied from province to province, with Ontario residents having the greatest difficulty and Quebec residents the least (Statistics Canada 2003, pp. 17-18).

CMHC has also sponsored a series of in-depth examinations of the housing related circumstances of newcomers. One such report (CMHC 2004b) described the housing information needs of refugees in the Region of Niagara, noting that Port Erie is the highest-volume entry point to Canada from the United States for refugees seeking asylum (an average of 5,000/year since 2000). CMHC (2004c) evaluated methodologies for tracking homeless persons over time, providing insights for researchers wishing to conduct longitudinal research with this highly diverse and difficult to locate group (Aubry et.al. 2004).

Finally, foreign born residents' housing challenges are eliciting the response of a wide variety of non-governmental organizations and their reports too are beginning to provide an additional source of information. One such report produced by Halifax's Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association describes an effort to respond to the urgent housing needs of single male refugees (Ball 2004).

METHODOLOGY/APPROACH

Panel Study Methodology

The Panel Study methodology was developed collaboratively by researchers located at the Centre for Research on Community Services at the University of Ottawa and Carleton University, with input from academics, community agency personnel, emergency shelter staff, currently and previously homeless individuals and the City of Ottawa's Housing Branch. The project built on a previous survey of persons who were living in emergency shelters in Ottawa (Farrell, Aubry, Klodawsky & Pettey 2000). As well, procedures have been developed to locate and re-interview these individuals one to two years after the initial interview in order to ascertain their living situations, with funding support from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (Aubry, Klodawsky, Hay, Nemiroff, Hyman, 2004).

The Sample and Sampling Framework

A key goal of the Panel Study was to maximize the diversity of homeless persons to be interviewed. As a result, the decision was made to interview equal numbers of homeless individuals within five subgroups, distinguished on the basis of age, sex and family status. The goal was set to interview 80 homeless individuals within each of the following subgroups: adult women alone, adult men alone, female youth, aged 16 to 19, male youth, aged 16 to 19, and adults in families with at least one child under 16. Sampling frames were developed to maximize the degree to which representative individuals from within each sub-group would be interviewed. As a result, sampling

strategies involved either quota sampling or population sampling. Quota sampling involved selecting participants based on the characteristics of the sub-group population provided by emergency shelters. Shelter staff used the sampling guidelines developed for the project to identify appropriate participants. Quota sampling was used for adult women, adult men and adults in families. The adult men sample was drawn from the shelter population on the basis of length of stay, while the adult women sample was drawn on the basis of length of stay and citizenship. The adults in families sample was drawn on the basis of citizenship. The youth samples were based equally on the population of youth using emergency shelters and those using services for homeless youth.

The methodology was approved by the Social Sciences Research Ethics Board at the University of Ottawa. Eleven interviewers were hired and trained to conduct individual interviews. Interviewers were either graduate students in Clinical Psychology or Social Work or individuals who had extensive interviewing experience or experience working with persons who are homeless. As a result of these efforts, four hundred and sixteen persons who were homeless, selected from 18 shelters and drop-ins in Ottawa, took part in the study. These individuals included 85 adult women, 88 adult men, 79 male youth, 81 female youth and 83 adults in families.

Front line workers contacted during the preliminary planning for the Panel Study identified large immigrant populations within the shelters for homeless adults in families and for adult women. It was on this basis, together with available data about the proportions of Canadian and non-Canadian citizens using these shelters, that the researchers identified a stratification of 40% non-Canadians among the adults in families and 25% non-Canadians among adult women alone.

Difficulties similar to those identified by Eberle and Zizys (cited in National Homelessness Initiative 2003) were encountered during the course of recruitment for the study. There was hesitancy on the part of some recent immigrants to participate. This hesitancy was interpreted as suspicion of the motives of researchers, reluctance to relive past trauma, and preoccupation with attempts to become established in a new country. Because the targeted number of foreign-born respondents was not met during the course of the study, a side study was initiated with funding support from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, which allowed interviews to continue until the targeted quotas regarding foreign-born populations were met within the single female adult and adults in families subgroups.

Panel Study interviewers conducted interviews in English (358), French (31), and Somali (15). The services of cultural interpreters, available through two local agencies – the Cultural Interpretation Centre and Immigrant Women Services – were used for 15 other interviews (Somali – 4, Arabic – 3, Russian – 1, Ukrainian – 1, Lingala – 1, Cantonese – 1 and Spanish – 4)³. Interviews were conducted in a private area in emergency shelters or drop-in centers.

³ The total number of interviews mentioned here is 419 because 3 interviews were conducted with formerly homeless non-Canadian adult women as part of the 'side study' to enhance the numbers of adult female non-Canadians to more

During early discussions about analyzing the relationship between an experience of immigration and homelessness, the need to broaden the relevant population to all of those who were not born in Canada was identified. As indicated in Table 1, 99 study participants were not born in Canada. The majority of these respondents were adult women alone or adults in families.

Table 1: Canadian Born and Foreign-Born Respondents by Sub-group

Were you born in Canada?	YES		NO		Total
	CAN	%	FBR	%	
Adult Female	61	19%	24	24%	85
Adult Male	81	26%	7	7%	88
Youth Female	70	22%	11	11%	81
Youth Male	74	23%	5	5%	79
Family	31	10%	52	53%	83
Total	317	100%	99	100%	416

Research Questions

The interview protocol was organized to address the following research questions:

- What is the housing history of the respondents?
- What do they perceive to be the causes of their homelessness?
- What is their health status?
- What are their health and social service utilization patterns (i.e. type and intensity)?
- What are their most pressing health needs?

A combination of quantitative and qualitative interview methods was used to collect information about the respondents in interviews that took between 50 and 150 minutes with the average being about 75 minutes. Quantitative measures were chosen based on their relevance, previous use and ease of administration with the studied population as well as their well-established psychometric properties. They included questions from the National Population Health Survey (NPHS) (Statistics Canada, 1999) (to allow comparison of responses to those of housed Canadians collected from Statistics Canada) and health indices that measure different facets of health status, health service utilization and health-related quality of life. In addition, social support, physical health, and mental health status were assessed using validated measures. Also, a Housing, Income, and Employment Timeline was used to examine a participant's history in the areas of housing, homelessness, employment, and income. In cases where no measures existed for a variable, they were created and psychometric properties will be determined. A list of measures and their source are presented in Appendix D.

closely match our original stratification goals. The data from these three interviews will not be part of the analysis reported here but will aid in ensuring sufficient representation of non-Canadian women in the Phase 2 interviews.

Qualitative measures were created and integrated into the interview protocol in order to provide more in-depth information as well as provide participants with an opportunity to share their experiences and perceptions. A narrative approach focussed on participants' experience while homeless, particularly their perceptions of determinants of their homelessness.

The interview protocol (see Appendix E) was organized as follows:

Section A - Housing History
Section B - Social Support
Section C - Personal Empowerment
Section D - Life Satisfaction
Section E - Living Conditions
Section F - Health Status
Section G - Social Services Utilization
Section H - Health Care Utilization
Section I - Childhood Stressors
Section J - Substance Use and Abuse
Section K - Demographic Information
Section L - Wrap-Up

Categorizing the Sample as Refugees or Immigrants

A research team was established to advise the principal investigator and co-investigators on how best to examine and interpret the interviews of the 99 foreign born respondents to the Panel Study. Early on in this process, members with expertise in settlement issues highlighted specific problems that were tied to the Panel Study questions about citizenship. While these questions revealed current *legal* status, there was no information about respondents' reasons for coming to Canada or the circumstances under which they received their status upon arrival. As a result, this categorization was revised to reflect information provided by respondents about *both* legal status and reasons for arrival. Thus, in this study, 'refugee' (REF) includes all foreign-born individuals who identified themselves as having the legal status of 'refugee claimant' or whose response indicated a refugee experience. 'Immigrants' (IMM) included all foreign-born individuals who identified themselves as having a status other than refugee (landed immigrant or Canadian citizen) and whose responses indicated a non-refugee experience (Table 2).

Table 2: Foreign-Born Respondents by Reported Sub-group

Immigration status	Landed Immigrant, Canadian Citizen		Refugee Claimant	
	Subgroup	Immigrant	Refugee	Refugee
Panel Study Definition	Adult Female	11	8	5
	Adult Male	5	2	0
	Youth Female	8	2	1
	Youth Male	5	0	0
	Adult Female (Family)	16	16	11
	Adult Males (Family)	2	3	4
	Total	47	31	21

Profiles and Matched Comparisons

In the discussion of results reported below, two different approaches to examining information about foreign-born respondents have been incorporated. The first involves the reporting of frequency data for foreign-born respondents overall. A second approach was added after examination of the sex/age distributions of foreign and Canadian born respondents revealed very significant differences (see Table 3). As a result, the decision was made to examine comparisons between Canadian and foreign born respondents, as well as between immigrants and refugees on the basis of matched groups of respondents, in order to avoid confusing differences due to sex or age with those properly attributable to immigration status and reasons for coming to Canada.

For these matched analyses, participants from the Canadian-born group of participants were randomly selected to match on a pairwise basis, the foreign-born group in terms of the sampling subgroup. A similar type of matching was used in comparing immigrants and refugees.

Table 3: Panel Study Subgroups by Immigrant, Refugee or Canadian Born Status

Subgroup	IMM	%	REF	%	CDN	%
Adult Female	11	23%	13	25%	61	19%
Adult Male	5	11%	2	4%	81	26%
Youth Female	8	17%	3	6%	70	22%
Youth Male	5	11%	0	0%	74	24%
Adults in Families, Female	16	34%	27	52%	26	8%
Adults in Families, Males	2	4%	7	13%	5	2%
Total	47	100%	52	100%	317	100%

Limitations of the Research Findings

Our study has a number of limitations that need to be taken into account in the interpretation of the results:

1. The representativeness of the study sample relative to the homeless population in Ottawa cannot be determined because of the limited data presently available on adult and youth shelter users and the lack of any data on youth who are homeless but not using shelters.
2. Stratified sampling based on population data on the criteria of length of homelessness and citizenship was used to recruit participants among single adults and families living in emergency shelters. This type of sampling was used to produce samples of subgroups that were representative estimates of the homeless population. However, there were refusals by selected individuals among these sub-groups which may serve to bias the sample in ways that are not readily evident. As well, it was not possible to recruit the targeted number of participants in the longest length of stay category among the single adult women subgroup.
3. The research design was a one-time survey that produced a profile of the characteristics of persons who are homeless. This type of cross-sectional design precludes being able to draw any conclusions about cause and effect relationships between these characteristics.
4. The study was conducted over a 13 month period (October, 2002 – October, 2003) producing a snapshot of people who were homeless in Ottawa during that particular period. It is possible that the make-up of the homeless population may change over time in response to changing social and economic conditions in the city.
5. Information collected in the study was of a self-report nature which, depending on the subject areas being queried, may be prone to some inaccuracy as a result of less than accurate recall, lack of information, or discomfort with self-disclosure.

RESULTS

The presentation of the results is organized in sections beginning with a demographic profile of respondents followed by the presentation of data that respond to the research questions guiding the first phase of the Panel Study.

Profiles of Respondents

The respondents were asked questions about a wide range of demographic characteristics including region and country of origin, date of arrival in Canada, citizenship, age, sex, marital status, educational attainment, languages spoken and understood, employment status, perceived social support and experiences of discrimination. With regard to country and region of origin, citizenship, age, sex, and marital status, the tables are drawn from data about all of the Panel Study respondents. The remainder of the tables are organized so that information about the foreign born respondents (n=99) is presented first, followed by two sets of matched comparisons – first, those of foreign-born respondents and Canadian born respondents (n=78), and second, those of immigrants and refugees (n=33).

Region and Country of Origin. As shown in Table 4, 55% of foreign born respondents were born in Africa, 16% in Asia or the Middle East, 11% in Central or South America and 9% each in Europe or North America. More specifically, as seen in Table 5, the largest single country of origin by far was Somalia, followed by the United States, Haiti and Rwanda. Refugees were far more likely to identify an African country of origin than were immigrants.

Table 4: Region of Origin of Foreign Born Respondents

Region of Origin based on Country of Origin	Panel %
<i>Africa</i>	55
<i>Central/South America</i>	11
<i>Europe</i>	9
<i>Asia/Middle East</i>	16
<i>North America</i>	9

Table 5: Country of Origin of Foreign Born Respondents

	FBR N=99	IMM N=47	REF N=52
<i>Somalia</i>	22	6	16
<i>United States</i>	8	8	
<i>Haiti</i>	6	5	1
<i>Unknown/Missing</i>	7	4	3
<i>Rwanda</i>	5		5
<i>Djibouti</i>	4		4
<i>Zaire</i>	3	2	1
<i>Ethiopia</i>	3	1	2
<i>Colombia</i>	3		3
<i>Democratic Republic of Congo</i>	3		3
<i>Italy</i>	2	2	
<i>Philippines</i>	2	2	
<i>Ukraine</i>	2	2	
<i>Burundi</i>	2		2
<i>Kenya</i>	2		2
<i>Palestine</i>	2		2
<i>Africa (Unspecified)</i>	1	1	
<i>Armenia</i>	1	1	
<i>China</i>	1	1	
<i>England</i>	1	1	
<i>India</i>	1	1	
<i>Kuwait</i>	1	1	
<i>Lebanon</i>	1	1	
<i>Poland</i>	1	1	
<i>Scotland</i>	1	1	
<i>Singapore</i>	1	1	
<i>South Korea</i>	1	1	
<i>Sudan</i>	1	1	
<i>Trinidad</i>	1	1	
<i>Vietnam</i>	1	1	
<i>Yemen</i>	1	1	
<i>Angola</i>	1		1
<i>Burkina Faso</i>	1		1
<i>Congo, Republic of the</i>	1		1
<i>Costa Rica</i>	1		1
<i>Eritrea</i>	1		1
<i>Guatemala</i>	1		1
<i>Lebanon</i>	1		1
<i>Saudi Arabia</i>	1		1

Arrival in Canada. According to Table 6, about one third (32%) of the foreign born respondents arrived in Canada after 2001 and an additional 51% arrived between 1990 and 2000. About half (48%) of all refugees but only 17% of immigrants arrived between 2001 and 2003. Conversely, almost equal proportions of immigrants (48%) and

refugees (52%) were among those who arrived between 1990 and 2000. Finally, fully 35% of immigrants arrived in Canada before 1990.

Table 6: Date of Arrival in Canada, Foreign Born, Immigrant and Refugee Respondents

	FBR N=96 %	IMM N=47 %	REF N=52 %
2001-2003	32	17	48
1996-2000	23	22	23
1990-1995	28	26	29
Pre 1990	16	35	0

Citizenship. As Table 7 illustrates, at the time of the interview, 41 foreign-born respondents were Canadian citizens, including 28 who came to Canada as immigrants and 13 who arrived as refugees. Slightly more than half of all of the foreign born respondents to the Panel Study (n=52) arrived in Canada as a result of a refugee experience, while the rest (n=47) arrived as immigrants.

Table 7: Citizenship

	FBR N=99		IMM N=47		REF N=52	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>no</i>	58	59	19	40	39	75
<i>yes</i>	41	41	28	60	13	25
Total	100		100		100	

Sex. As seen in Table 8, 79% of foreign-born respondents were female and this was in contrast to the much more equal distribution among Canadian born respondents. The preponderance of women, particularly women in families, was especially pronounced among refugees (see Table 3). While only 19% of the Canadian born sample consisted of female adults alone, this was true for 23% of immigrants and 25% of refugees. Among women in families, the contrast was even greater: only 8% of the Canadian born respondents fit this category but this was true for 34% of immigrants and 52% of refugees.

In part, these differences reflect the sampling strategy that specified citizenship as a level of stratification only for adults in families and single women, as discussed in the methodology section.

Table 8: Sex

	FBR N=99 %	CDN N=317 %	IMM N=47 %	REF N=52 %
Male	21	51	26	17
Female	79	48	74	83
Total	100	100	100	100

Age. Seventy-three percent of newcomers were between 20 and 49 years of age, and the largest proportion (36%) was between 30 and 39 years of age, as is shown in Table 9. The Canadian born respondents were much more likely to be young – 59% were less than 30 years of age. Among foreign-born respondents, 28% of immigrants but only 6% of refugees were under 20. Conversely, 14% of refugees were over 50 years of age – a greater proportion than was the case for either Canadian born (7%) or immigrant respondents (6%).

Table 9: Age of Respondents

	FBR N=99 %	CDN N=312 %	IMM N=47 %	REF N=52 %
<20	16	33	28	6
20-29	20	26	15	25
30-39	36	17	32	40
40-49	17	16	19	15
50-59	8	7	6	10
>59	2			4
Total		100	100	100

Marital Status. Within the Panel Study overall, the vast majority of respondents (85%) reported being alone, either because they were single or separated, widowed or divorced. As Table 10 illustrates, foreign born respondents, at 83%, were only slightly less likely to be alone. Comparisons of the matched samples of foreign born and Canadian born respondents suggest that there were some differences: newcomers were more likely to be separated (27% v. 12%) or widowed (8% v. 1%) while there were many more singles among Canadian born respondents (36% v. 58%). Among those born elsewhere, the matched samples of immigrants and refugees revealed that immigrants were more likely to be separated (39% v. 18%) or divorced (24% v. 12%) and less likely to be married (3% v. 18%) or widowed (3% v. 15%).

Table 10: Marital Status

	FBR N=99 %	FBR N=78 %	CDN N=78 %	IMM N=33 %	REF N=33 %
<i>Single</i>	34	36	58	27	36
<i>Living w. romantic partner</i>	-	-	5	-	-
<i>Married</i>	16	17	4	3	18
<i>Common law</i>	3	1	10	3	-
<i>Separated</i>	24	27	12	39	18
<i>Divorced</i>	16	12	10	24	12
<i>Widowed</i>	6	8	1	3	15
Total		100	100	100	100

Educational Attainment. The foreign born respondents displayed a wide range of educational achievements, as can be seen in Table 11. Thirty-four percent had less than a Grade 12 education. However, 25% had completed high school, 9% had some post-secondary education, 20% had a college certificate or diploma and 10% had a university degree. Based on a comparison of matched samples, they had more education than their Canadian born counterparts who were less likely to have completed high school or have some post-secondary education. There also were some differences within the foreign born population. Refugees were somewhat more likely to have less than a Grade 12 education, or to have achieved some post-secondary education than the matched sample of immigrants.

Table 11: Level of Education Attained

	FBR N=99 %	FBR N=77 %	CDN N=78 %	IMM N=33 %	REF N=32 %
<i>Grade 11 or less</i>	34	35	55	27	34
<i>High school with or without diploma</i>	25	38	36	33	40
<i>Some trade, vocational, college or university but no diploma</i>	9	5	3	9	3
<i>Some Post-Secondary</i>	20	13	5	21	12
<i>University Degree</i>	10	9	1	9	9
Total		100	100	100	100

Current Participation. As Table 12 indicates, twenty-three percent of the foreign born respondents reported that they were still in school. Among the matched samples, differences were apparent in the substantially higher proportions of refugee respondents who are still in school (38%), in comparison to immigrants (15%) and Canadian born respondents (12%).

Table 12: Are you still in school

Subgroup	FBR N=98 %	FBR N=76 %	CDN N=78 %	IMM N=33 %	REF N=32 %
No	77	75	88	85	62
Yes	23	25	12	15	38
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Languages Spoken and Understood. According to Tables 13 and 14, among foreign born respondents, 84% and 77% respectively, reported that they were able to read and write English. An additional 11% reported being able to read and write in French. Five percent of respondents were not able to read English and 11% were unable to write in this language. Among the matched samples, refugees were much more likely (18%) than immigrants (6%) to read and write in French but not in English.

Table 13: Ability to Read English/French

	FBR N=99 %	FBR N=77 %	CDN N=78 %	IMM N=33 %	REF N=33 %
Can Read English	84	85	97	91	73
Can Read French	11	12	1	6	18
Unable to Read English	5	4	1	3	9
Unable to Read French	-	-	-	-	-
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Table 14: Ability to Write English/French

	FBR N=97 %	FBR N=77 %	CDN N=78 %	IMM N=32 %	REF N=33 %
Can Write English	77	79	97	88	64
Can Write French	11	12	-	6	18
Unable to Write English	11	9	1	6	18
Unable to Write French	-	-	1	-	-
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Employment. Most foreign born respondents (89%) were not currently working for pay, but more than a third (36%) were looking for a job, as can be seen in Tables 15 and 16. Among the matched samples, substantial proportions of both foreign born and Canadian born respondents were looking for a job (37% v. 31%) but only a minority in

both groups were working for pay (13% v. 5%). Refugees were somewhat more likely to be looking for work than were immigrants (39% v. 30%).

Table 15: Are you currently working for pay?

	FBR N=99 %		FBR N=77 %	CDN N=78 %		IMM N=33 %	REF N=33 %
No	89		87	95		91	91
Yes	11		13	5		9	9
Total	100		100	100		100	100

Table 16: Are you currently looking for a job?

	FBR N=89 %		FBR N=68 %	CDN N=74 %		IMM N=30 %	REF N=31 %
No	64		63	69		70	61
Yes	36		37	31		30	39
Total	100		100	100		100	100

Children. Thirty-one percent of foreign born respondents reported that they did not have any children, as can be seen in Table 17. Equal numbers, at about 16% each, reported having one, two or three children. An additional 20% reported having four or more children. Among the matched samples, immigrants were slightly less likely (25%) not to have any children than were refugees or Canadian born respondents (30% each). However, 39% of refugees reported having four or more children, in contrast to 6% of immigrants and 9% of the Canadian born respondents.

Table 17: How many children do you have?

	FBR N=98 %	FBR N=76 %	CDN N=76 %	IMM N=32 %	REF N=33 %
<i>No Children</i>	31	37	30	25	30
<i>One Child</i>	16	13	22	25	9
<i>Two Children</i>	17	13	24	25	9
<i>Three Children</i>	15	17	16	19	12
<i>Four Children</i>	9	8	3	-	21
<i>Five Children</i>	3	3	3	-	-
<i>More than Five Children</i>	8	9	3	6	18
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Social Support. The Satisfaction with Support Subscale of the Social Support Questionnaire was used to measure perceived support available to study participants (Saranson et. al., 1983). A five-item version was used in which participants assess the extent that they are satisfied with different aspects of social support that they receive from members of their network. The total score on the Subscale ranges from 5 to 30, with higher scores representing higher levels of perceived support. As shown, in Table 18, t-test comparisons between foreign-born participants and Canadian-born showed no difference in mean levels of satisfaction with social support. As well, there were no differences in mean levels of satisfaction with social support between foreign-born participants who were immigrants and those who were refugees.

Table 18: Social Support

	FBR X (SD) (N = 67)	CDN X (SD) (N = 73)	t	IMM X(SD) (N=28)	REF X(SD) (N=30)	t
<i>Satisfaction with social support</i>	23.8 (6.8)	23.9 (6.1)	- 0.07	23.1 (7.6)	23.6 (8.2)	0.24

Discrimination. Just over 30% of foreign born respondents indicated that they had experienced discrimination, as can be seen in Table 19. Interestingly, among the matched samples, the foreign born respondents were less likely than were the Canadian born respondents to indicate this experience (32% and 41%). There was very little differentiation between immigrants and refugees.

Table 19: Have you ever experienced discrimination?

	FBR N=97 %	FBR N=75 %	CDN N=78	IMM N=33 %	REF N=31 %
<i>Yes</i>	32	32	41	27	32
<i>No</i>	68	68	59	73	68
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Housing History

Respondents were asked to provide a detailed accounting of their housing histories over the previous three years, as well as their lifetime experiences of homelessness. In this section, nine elements of respondents' housing histories are described:

- the length of their residency in Ottawa;
- the number of times they have experienced homelessness over their lifetimes;
- the number of times they have moved over the past three years;
- the length of the current episode of homelessness
- the main reason for current episode of homelessness
- their knowledge of and experience with social housing

Length of Residency in Ottawa. As indicated in Table 20, foreign born respondents were almost equally divided between those who had lived in Ottawa for less than one year and those who had been in the city for a longer period, just prior to the current episode of homelessness (46% and 54% respectively). Fully 34% had lived in Ottawa for less than six months. Not surprisingly, the matched samples indicate that foreign born residents were much more likely than the Canadian born respondents to be recent residents, with 44% and 24% respectively having lived in Ottawa for less than one year. Similarly, refugees were much more likely than immigrants to be recent residents – 54% compared to 30% had lived in Ottawa for one year or less.

Table 20: Length of Residency in Ottawa

	FBR N= 99 %	FBR N=77 %	CDN N=78 %	IMM N=33 %	REF N=33 %
<6 months	34	32	21	21	42
6 months - 1 year	12	12	3	9	12
>1 year - 5 years	24	27	14	27	21
>5 years - 10 years	19	20	15	30	15
>10 years	11	9	47	12	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Number of Times Homeless. Disturbingly, as Table 21 indicates, the majority (58%) of foreign born respondents had been homeless more than once. Seventeen percent reported being homeless on four or more occasions. Based on the matched samples, though, they were less likely than the Canadian born respondents to have experienced multiple episodes of homelessness. Seventy percent of foreign-born respondents and 54% of the Canadian born respondents reported having been homeless on one or two occasions. In contrast, 20% of foreign born respondents and 33% of Canadian born respondents experienced being homeless four or more times. Despite the substantial

differences in their length of time in Canada, refugees were almost as likely to have experienced multiple (four or more) episodes of homelessness, at 13%, as immigrants, at 19%.

Table 21: Number of Times Homeless

	FBR N=99 %	FBR N=78 %	CDN N=78 %	IMM N=33 %	REF N=33 %
One time	42	39	31	42	54
Two times	29	31	23	33	24
Three times	11	10	13	6	9
Four times	5	5	14	3	6
Five times	3	3	6	3	3
More than five	10	12	13	13	4

Number of Moves, Last Three Years. Half of the foreign born respondents had moved two times or less in the last three years, while 20% reported moving five or more times (Table 22). Foreign-born respondents were more likely than their matched Canadian born peers to have moved two times or less in the last three years, at 46% and 33% respectively. At the same time though, disturbingly large proportions of both foreign born (24%) and Canadian born respondents (40%) had moved 5 or more times in the last three years.

Table 22: Number of moves, last three years

	FBR N=94 %	FBR N=72 %	CDN N=75 %	IMM N=32 %	REF N=30 %
Haven't moved	5	7	4	6	3
Once	26	22	9	19	33
Twice	19	17	20	22	23
Three times	19	19	12	25	20
Four times	11	11	15	16	10
Five times	5	7	9	-	3
Six Times	2	3	8	3	-
Seven Times	2	1	3	-	3
Eight Times	-	-	3	-	-
Ten or more	11	13	17	9	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Length of Current Episode of Homelessness. As can be seen in Table 23, more than three-quarters of foreign born respondents had been homeless for six months or less at the time of the interview. At the same time though, 14% had been homeless for between one and five years. Among the matched samples, foreign born respondents were only slightly more likely than Canadian born respondents to have been homeless for six months or less (74% and 71% respectively), and only slightly less likely to have been homeless between one and five years (17% and 19% respectively). No foreign born respondents reported being homeless for more than 5 years, in contrast to 5% of

Canadian born respondents. More refugees than immigrants (88% and 70% respectively) reported being homeless for six months or less.

Table 23: Length of Current Episode of Homelessness

	FBR N=99 %	FBR N=77 %	CDN N=78	IMM N=33 %	REF N=33 %
<6 months	76	74	71	70	88
6 months - 1 year	10	9	5	12	6
>1 year - 5 years	14	17	19	18	6
>5 years - 10 years	-	-	4	-	-
>10 years	-	-	1	-	-
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Main Reason for Current Episode of Homelessness. Table 24 summarizes the main reason that respondents gave to explain their current episode of homelessness. Among foreign born respondents, reasons that directly related to housing cost were by far the most frequent, at 26% of the total. Other housing related matters, such as being given an eviction notice, unsuitable premises or conflict with landlord were quite common as well, at 17%. Family conflict at 20% and fleeing abuse at 18% also were very significant. A significant proportion (10%) attributed their homelessness directly to their refugee status. Among the matched samples, foreign born respondents were more likely than Canadian born respondents to give reasons related to housing cost, but somewhat less likely to attribute their homelessness to other housing related matters, including eviction. Both groups were equally likely to attribute the cause to fleeing abuse. Family conflict was more common problem for foreign born respondents than it was for those born in Canada (24% versus 13%), but substance abuse and exit from a medical or correctional facility were more frequently given reasons among Canadian born respondents (15% versus 4% for foreign born respondents).

Table 24: Main Reason for Current Episode of Homelessness

	FBR		FBR		CAN		IMM		REF	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Refugee Experience										
<i>Refugee Claimant</i>	10	10	7	9	-	-	-	-	7	21
Financial/Housing										
<i>Unable to pay rent/financial difficulty</i>	26	26	19	25	11	14	10	30	8	24
<i>Eviction-Landlord</i>	4	4	3	4	7	9	3	9	-	-
<i>Eviction-Other</i>	3	3	2	3	2	3	1	3	-	-
<i>Conflict with landlord</i>	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	3
<i>Unsuitable premises-general</i>	3	3	3	4	4	5	-	6	1	3
<i>Temporary accommodation</i>	1	1	1	1	-	-	2	3	-	-
<i>Moved into apt/house/shelter</i>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	3
<i>Moving to city</i>	4	4	2	3	6	8	1	3	-	-
<i>Conflict with roommates/residence</i>	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
Fleeing Abuse										
<i>Spousal abuse-physical</i>	14	14	9	12	9	12	6	18	6	18
<i>Spousal abuse-psychological</i>	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
<i>Parental abuse-physical</i>	2	2	2	3	3	4	-	-	1	3
<i>Fleeing partner</i>	2	2	2	3	1	1	1	3	1	3
Family Conflict										
<i>Conflict with partner</i>	5	5	4	5	-	-	3	9	1	3
<i>Relationship break-up</i>	1	1	-	-	2	3	-	-	1	3
<i>Conflict with family</i>	6	6	6	8	1	1	1	3	2	6
<i>Parental conflict</i>	3	3	3	4	3	4	2	6	1	3
<i>Teenage pregnancy</i>	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Eviction-parent/guardian</i>	2	2	2	3	4	5	-	-	-	-
<i>Family breakdown-general</i>	2	2	2	3	1	1	-	-	2	6
Other										
<i>Left by choice</i>	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Fleeing police</i>	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
<i>Transient lifestyle</i>	-	-	-	-	2	3	-	-	-	-
<i>Moved in with friend(s)</i>	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
<i>Other</i>	4	4	4	5	5	6	1	3	1	3
Substance Abuse										
<i>Substance abuse-alcohol</i>	2	2	2	3	1	1	1	3	-	-
<i>Substance abuse-drug related</i>	1	1	1	1	7	9	-	-	-	-
Left Facility (Medical, Correctional)										
<i>From treatment (medical)</i>	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
<i>From corrections (jail)</i>	-	-	-	-	3	4	-	-	-	-
Total	99	100	78	100	78	100	33	100	33	100

Knowledge of Social Housing. Respondents were asked whether they had ever lived in social housing, in Ottawa or elsewhere (No definition for “social housing” was provided, so it is likely that any rent-geared-to-income unit might have been identified as social housing). About one-fourth of foreign-born respondents (25%) said ‘yes’ to this question. Eighty-four percent responded that they were aware of the waiting list for social housing. Of those aware of social housing, 81% were on the waiting list and 33% were on the priority list. The large majority of respondents indicated that they found it easy to apply for social housing (80%).

Health Status

Canadian researchers have begun to investigate newcomers' health characteristics and influences, by looking at particular sub-populations (Anderson et.al.1993; Beiser & Hou 2001; Kappel Ramji 2002) or by examining specific type of stressors (Beiser & Hou 2001). However, there have been very few opportunities for the health status of similarly situated immigrants, refugees and Canadian born individuals to be compared with one another (but see Dunn & Dyck 2000).

The Panel Study utilized the 36-item short form (SF-36), a well-known screening instrument that provides a self-report measure of physical health and mental health relative to a general population that can be matched by age and sex (Ware, Kosinski, & Gandek, 2002). In addition, our survey included a series of questions about chronic conditions and injuries that are part of the NPHS, a longitudinal survey of over 17,000 households across Canada about the current state of health and health care needs. In addition to the NPHS questions on chronic conditions, we added some of our own questions that asked about other physical health and mental health chronic conditions. In order to screen for alcohol and drug use among our respondents, we used the CAGE , a 4-item scale identifying the presence of alcohol use problems (Chan, Pristach, & Welte, 1994; Mayfield, McLeod, & Hall, 1974), and the Drug Assessment Screening Test (DAST), a 20-item scale identifying for the presence of drug use problems (Skinner, 1982).

Physical Health. In order to determine the level of physical health of our survey respondents in relation to the general population, we calculated the physical health summary score on the SF-36 for the overall sample and for the distinct subgroups in our study. The physical health summary score is a composite of items on the SF-36 asking about physical functioning (e.g., ability to walk different distances, ability to climb stairs, ability to engage in vigorous activities), bodily pain, perceived general health, and physical role functioning (e.g., accomplished less than liked in daily activities, relative amount of time on regular daily activities) (Ware, Kosinski, & Gandek, 2002). Lower scores on the scale reflect limitations in self care, physical, social, and role activities, the presence of tiredness, the presence of pain, and the perception that one's health is "poor". Higher scores represent no physical limitations or disabilities being present, the presence of high energy, and the perception that one's health is "excellent".

Mental Health. In order to determine the level of mental health of our survey respondents in relation to the general population, we calculated the mental health summary score on the SF-36 for the overall sample and for the immigrant and refugee subsamples. The mental health summary score is a composite of items on the SF-36 asking about the presence of depression and anxiety symptoms, social functioning, vitality (e.g., energy, fatigue), and emotional role functioning (e.g., amount of time on regular activities, amount accomplished in regular activities) (Ware, Kosinski, & Gandek, 2002). Lower scores on the scale reflect the presence of psychological distress, and social/role limitations because of emotional problems. Higher scores represent the

presence of positive affect, and the absence of psychological distress and limitations in social/role activities due to emotional problems.

As illustrated in Table 25, the SF-36 scores for the matched samples of foreign born respondents are substantially different than they are for Canadian born respondents. With regard to both mental and physical health, the scores for foreign born respondents are closer to those of the US Normative Sample than they are to those of the Canadian born respondents. Even more to the point, the physical health status of foreign born respondents appears to be even more favorable than the US norm, while their mental health status is somewhat lower. In contrast, the mental health scores especially of the Canadian born respondents are substantially lower than those of the US norm or of the foreign born respondents.

Table 25: Norm-based Mental Health and Physical Health Component Scores (US Normative Sample [USN], Foreign Born and Canadian Matched Samples)

	USN	CDN	FBR	IMM	REF
<i>Mental Health</i>	49.3	41.2	46.9	47.4	46.5
<i>Physical Health</i>	51.3	49.7	53.7	52.7	54.5

Diagnosis or Hospitalization for Mental Health Problems. Variations in the extent to which respondents had been diagnosed and/or were hospitalized for mental health problems, as indicated in Tables 26 and 27, lend support to the differences reported in the analysis of the SF-36 scale. Twelve percent of foreign born respondents and 37% of Canadian born respondents reported that they had been diagnosed with a mental health problem. Similarly, only 5% of the foreign born respondents but 21% of the Canadian born respondents reported being hospitalized because of mental health problems.

Table 26: Diagnosed with Mental Health Problems

	FBR N=99 %	FBR N=77 %	CDN N=78 %	IMM N=33 %	REF N=33 %
<i>Yes</i>	10	12	37	12	3
<i>No</i>	90	88	63	88	97
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Table 27: Hospitalized for Mental Health Problems

	FBR N=99 %	FBR N=77 %	CDN N=78 %	IMM N=5 %	REF N=0 %
					-
<i>Yes</i>	5	5	21	12	-
<i>No</i>	95	95	79	88	-
Total	100	100	100	100	--

Substance Abuse. Based on responses to the CAGE, only 6% of foreign born respondents were identified as abusing alcohol⁴. As shown in Table 28, the comparison of matched samples indicated a significant difference -- 8% and 24% respectively -- between foreign born and Canadian born respondents' experiences with alcohol abuse. All told, only 6 of the 99 foreign born respondents' CAGE score results indicated alcohol abuse. The results of the DAST⁵, in Table 29, are somewhat similar. The responses of only 10% of the foreign born respondents, but 33% of Canadian born respondents, indicated a problem with drug use. Canadian born respondents were also twice as likely to smoke cigarettes as their matched foreign born peers, as shown in Table 30. In turn, immigrants smoked almost twice as much as refugees.

Table 28: CAGE Score Results Indicative of Alcohol Abuse (Unmatched Foreign-Born Sample)

	FBR N=98 %	FBR N=76 %	CDN N=78 %	IMM N=33 %	REF N=32 %
<i>Yes</i>	6	8	24	12	3
<i>No</i>	94	92	76	88	97
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Table 29: DAST Score Results Indicative of Drug Use Problems

	FBR N=99 %	FBR N=77 %	CDN N=78 %	IMM N=33 %	REF N=33 %
<i>Yes</i>	9	10	33	6	3
<i>No</i>	91	90	67	94	97
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Table 30: Cigarette Consumption

	FBR N= 99 %	FBR N=77 %	CDN N=78 %	IMM N=33 %	REF N=33 %
<i>Yes</i>	40	39	80	49	27
<i>No</i>	60	61	20	51	73

rheumatism (8% and 23%); back problems (16% and 33%). Again, there is a correspondence between these differences and those indicated by the SF-36 physical health results.

Table 31: Frequencies of Selected Chronic Conditions

Chronic Conditions	FBR N=99 %	FBR N= %	CDN N=	IMM N=33 %	REF N=33 %
Asthma, Chronic Bronchitis or Emphysema	6	8	41	3	6
Arthritis or Rheumatism	7	8	23	6	9
Back Problems, excluding Arthritis	14	16	33	18	12
High Blood Pressure	9	10	9	15	9
Migraine Headaches	20	23	23	21	30
Diabetes	2	1	5	-	6
Epilepsy	-	-	4	-	-
Heart Disease	3	4	3	3	3
Cancer	-	-	5	-	-
Stomach or intestinal ulcers	3	4	6	3	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Health and Social Service Utilization

Contact with Service Providers in the Last Twelve Months. Foreign-born respondents generally reported very little contact with health and social service providers in the previous 12 months (see Table 32). General practitioners were the only category of health provider where the majority of foreign-born respondents reported some contact. In the case of the matched samples, foreign-born respondents reported a lower likelihood of contact than did Canadian born respondents in every category except psychologists (where contact levels were low overall – 13% v. 12%). Among the foreign-born matched samples, immigrants were substantially more likely than refugees to have contacted general practitioners, specialist physicians, social workers or shelter workers in the previous twelve months.

Table 32: One or More Contacts with Service Providers in the Last Twelve Months

	FBR N=99 %	FBR N=78 %	CDN N=78 %	IMM N=33 %	REF N=33 %
General Practitioner	62	59	72	76	61
Physician (Specialist)	22.2	25	36	30	21
Nurse	27	31	36	24	27
Spiritual Healer	3	4	8	6	0
Physiotherapist	2	3	4	0	3
Social Worker	33	39	51	39	30
Psychologist	10	13	12	12	12
Shelter Worker	31	34	53	39	24
Dentist	17	14	28	18	15

Overnight Patient in a Health Care Facility. According to Table 33, only 18% of the foreign-born respondents had been overnight patients within the previous 12 months. Among the matched samples, the Canadian born respondents were almost twice as likely as the foreign-born respondents to have stayed overnight in a hospital, nursing home or convalescent home during the previous year (27% and 14% respectively). Somewhat more refugees than immigrants reported this experience (18% and 12% respectively).

Table 33: In the past 12 months, have you been a patient overnight in a hospital, nursing home or convalescent home?

	FBR N=99 %	FBR N=77 %	CDN N=78 %	IMM N=33 %	REF N=33 %
Yes	18	14	27	12	18
No	82	86	73	88	82
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Unmet Care Needs. Only 16% of the foreign born respondents reported situations where they needed health care or advice but did not receive it (Table 34). Based on the matched samples, Canadian born respondents were somewhat more likely than the foreign born respondents to report this situation. There were no differences between the immigrant and refugee matched samples.

Table 34: During the past 12 months, was there ever a time when you needed health care or advice but did not receive it?

	FBR N=98 %	FBR N=76 %	CDN N=78 %	IMM N=33 %	REF N=32 %
Yes	16	20	27	18	19
No	84	80	73	82	81
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Health Card. Seventy-seven percent of the foreign born respondents did possess a health card, as seen in Table 35. Only 4% reported difficulties in accessing a health card. Based on the matched comparisons, they were somewhat less likely to have a health card than were the Canadian born respondents (75% and 88% respectively). Refugees were slightly less likely to have a health card (79%) than did immigrants (82%).

Table 35: Do you have a health card from any province?

	FBR N=99 %	FBR N=77 %	CDN N=78 %	IMM N=33 %	REF N=33 %
<i>Yes</i>	77	75	88	82	79
<i>No</i>	23	25	12	18	21
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Social Service Utilization. As Table 36 indicates, foreign born respondents were most likely by far (66%) to use City of Ottawa social services in areas of employment, health or housing. Also quite popular (29%) were housing search services. Just over one fifth (22%) of the foreign born respondents used drop-in services. Based on the matched samples, foreign born respondents were much less likely than were Canadian born respondents to use drop in services (27% versus 42%) and outreach workers (31% versus 22%). Foreign born respondents were also less likely to use employment services but overall, this was not a popular option (9% and 5% respectively).

Table 36: Respondents Using Different Social Services

	FBR N=98 %	FBR N=77 %	CDN N=77 %	IMM N=33 %	REF N=33 %
<i>Drop-In Centres:</i>					
<i>Centre 454, The Well, St. Joe's Women's Centre</i>	22	27	42	18	18
<i>City of Ottawa Social Services:</i>					
<i>Employment/Financial Assistance, Public Health & Long-Term Care, Housing</i>	66	60	58	67	67
<i>Housing Services:</i>					
<i>Housing Help, Action Logement</i>	29	30	28	33	36
<i>Employment Services:</i>					
<i>Causeway, The Salvation Army</i>	9	9	5	12	9
<i>Outreach Workers:</i>					
<i>Catholic Immigration Services</i>	19	22	31	27	12

MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

I do not speak English. I cannot afford renting a market rent unit. I do not have a job, and I cannot find a job because I do not speak English. (Translated). Adult Female in Family, Age 30-39

I don't like my life because I am alone in Canada. My whole family lives in Rwanda. It's very hard to find a job because I can't speak English. It's very expensive to rent an apartment. Social assistance is nothing. I need more money. (Translated). Youth Female, Age <20

The reason that I am here is I couldn't find an affordable place to rent. Also, I am new to this country and that makes things more difficult. I did try to find an affordable private place, but I couldn't find one.- Adult Male in Family, Age 30-39

Before I had my first child in September 2002, I was having a very difficult time finding an affordable house. I was sharing 3 bedrooms with a family of three, and it was not easy to live in that apartment. There were not enough rooms for everybody. - Adult Female in Family, aged 30-39

It is scary not having anybody to help you out. Strange city, strange country. They should allow people to work under special circumstances. Adult Male, Age 30-39

In Sept 2001, I went to visit my family and husband in Djibouti. After visiting, my husband told me to stay with him in Djibouti. First, I was reluctant, but decided to live with him. After three months he became abusive and I left and came back to Canada.- Adult Female in Family, Age 20-29

It's] hard to get back on your feet in a city where you don't know anyone and you're broke - bad situation. Shelters are helpful - certain rules and policies are unfair but [I] can understand because some people abuse the services.- Youth Male, Age 20-29.⁶

This final section includes a summary of the main findings, conclusions, future directions for research and recommendations.

Summary of Main Findings

Characteristics of the Population
Education, Language Employment
Family Difficulties
Physical and Mental Health Status
Health and Social Service Utilization
Most Pressing Needs

Characteristics of the Population. Generally, the foreign born population was less diverse than Canadian born respondents. Seventy-nine percent of all foreign born respondents were women, including 83% of refugees and 74% of immigrants. In both groups, the majority were female heads of families with children. Indeed, fully 53% of the Panel Study's 'adults in families' subgroup was not born in Canada. Of that group, 87% were women. The foreign born respondents were also much more likely to be working age adults than was the rest of the sample. However, there were two noteworthy exceptions – about one quarter of the immigrants was less than 20 years of age, and the refugee sample included proportionally more respondents over 50 years of age than any other group.

⁶ Selected responses from question asked at the beginning of the Phase 1 interview: "Before beginning to ask you questions, we thought that you should have the opportunity to first tell your ideas about the problem of homelessness and what might help people who are homeless. Is there one specific thing about your homeless situation that you would like to tell us? Don't worry if you can't think of something right now. I will be asking this question again at the end of the interview" (Panel Study on Homelessness, Phase 1 Questionnaire, October 2, 2002).

Refugees constituted just over half of the foreign born respondents and of this group, over half were women with children. While most of the foreign born mothers had three or less children living with them, 39% of refugees had four or more children. This greater preponderance of adults in families helps to explain why more foreign-born respondents were married, separated, divorced or widowed than was the case for the rest of the Panel Study respondents. These differences also help to explain why the Phase I report noted that the characteristics of adults in families often diverged from those of the other subgroups (Aubry et. al. 2003). Foreign-born respondents were more likely to be homeless because of financial reasons than was true for those born in Canada. While many of them had been homeless for only once or twice for a short period of time, others reported experiencing multiple episodes of homelessness.

Diversity did manifest itself in country of origin, date of arrival, and citizenship status. Foreign-born respondents identified about 40 countries of origin, with African countries being particularly prominent for those who came to Canada as refugees. Roughly equal numbers had arrived in Canada throughout the 1990s and into the 21st century; however, fully one-third of immigrants (but no refugees) arrived earlier than 1990. More than one third of the respondents were Canadian citizens, including 60% of immigrants and 25% of refugees. Forty percent of refugees still had the status of refugee claimant.

Education, Language and Employment. The foreign born respondents had more education than those born in Canada, with substantial proportions having completed some sort of post-secondary program. Refugees were somewhat more likely to have a low level of education and/or to have interrupted their studies; however, they also were more likely than any other group to be in school at the time of the Phase 1 interviews. Most immigrants and refugees reported written and spoken proficiency in English. Among some refugees, proficiency in French but not English was reported and finally, a minority of foreign born respondents lacked proficiency in either official language.

The majority of newcomers were not working for pay, although they were somewhat more likely to be working than their matched Canadian-born counterparts. Among the matched samples, about one-third of foreign born and Canadian born respondents reported that they were looking for work; this was slightly less true for refugees than were immigrants.

Family Difficulties. More foreign born respondents explained their homelessness as having been caused by family conflict than was the case for Canadian born respondents. Fleeing abuse also was a significant factor for some households.

Physical and Mental Health Status. As noted above, based on an analysis of the SF-36 scale, the physical and mental health status of newcomers appears to be substantially more favourable than it is for Canadian born respondents. Other health status results are consistent with these findings: for example, the only chronic conditions

reported equally for both groups are high blood pressure and migraine headaches, likely caused by the stress of being homelessness.

Health and Social Service Utilization. Overall, newcomers were less likely than were Canadian-born respondents to use health and outreach social services, or to indicate that they had unmet health needs. Although their higher physical and mental health status may be part of the reason for this difference, given the integration challenges they face, newcomers' relatively low use of certain social services certainly requires further investigation.

Most Pressing Needs. Foreign born respondents appear to be quite distinct from the other individuals who were interviewed for the Panel Study. Their reasons for being homeless appear to be more readily attributable to a series of external barriers, such as insufficient affordable housing, or restrictions on their ability to compete for employment, or inadequate child care supports, than is the case for many of the respondents who were born in Canada. This latter group, on the whole, appears more vulnerable in terms of health status, educational attainment and problems with substance abuse.

Conclusions and Future Research Directions

It is well to begin this section of the report by recalling that the main goal of the Panel Study on Homelessness was to explore the characteristics of diverse individuals who were homeless in Ottawa at the time of the study. In order to achieve this goal, the Panel Study's sampling strategy was designed to recruit a representative sample from *within* each of five subgroups of homeless individuals (adult men, adult women, youth males, youth females and adults in families). Consequently, different criteria were used for each subgroup, based on extant population data and advice from key informants. Citizenship was used as a stratification criterion in only two of the five subgroups – single women and adults in families. The reason this criterion was not used with the three other subgroups (i.e., single men, male youth, female youth) is that information on citizenship was not available from the shelters serving these populations. It is important to acknowledge that this approach likely influenced the preponderance of female foreign-born respondents among these two groups, while also recognizing that extant data and key informants certainly gave credence to this strategy. An important question for future research is to determine the breakdown of foreign-born individuals across all of the subgroups of the homeless population. Data produced by the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System being used in many shelters now including those in Ottawa may help answer this question.

Regardless, it certainly appears to be the case that a large number of foreign-born homeless individuals in Ottawa are women and especially women refugees with children. These distributions certainly are out of line with the overall profile of newcomers by sex and by citizenship – in 1996, 52% of Ottawa newcomers were women and 23% were refugees (CIC 2000, p. x)

Given their distinctiveness, three issues stand out in considering the policy and program implications of our findings. The first has to do with supports for refugee settlement. As noted in a Refugee Homelessness Prevention seminar in 2001, “refugee claimants are at most serious risk of homelessness” (Murdie 2001). Clearly, in Ottawa, there is a cluster of homeless refugee women with children who confront a complex set of challenges, having to do with the speed at which they are able to settle their refugee claims, their disadvantaged education and language profiles, and their responsibilities for large numbers of children. An urgent need exists to address their specific settlement issues in a holistic and comprehensive manner. Israelite et. al.’s Toronto based observations about undocumented Somali women refugees are likely relevant in Ottawa too:

Difficulties with English and problems with intercultural communication disadvantaged the women in their dealings with government officials, teachers and landlords. Problems such as unemployment and constant worries about the well being of their families were other significant factors. More than half the women were functioning as single parents and responsibilities for family finances and decision-making rested on their shoulders for perhaps the first time in their lives. One women said many Somali women felt worthless primarily because they could not adequately provide for their families. Yet poor English proficiency, the restrictions on postsecondary education and limited employment opportunities [lack of documentation resulted in severe restrictions on education and employment for up to five years] made it hard for the women to get jobs and integrate into the economic sphere (1999, pp. 19-20).

Nonetheless , questions of settlement also need to address other newcomer groups, especially given the significant proportion of homeless immigrants who arrived in Canada before 1990, and the much greater concentration of women among homeless newcomers than among their housed peers.

A second issue is financial. Given that so many newcomers are homeless primarily because they are unable to afford the rent, it is clear that a combination of first, enhancing the availability of secure, suitable, affordable housing, and second, reducing the barriers to securing decent employment, would go a considerable way in reducing the risk of homelessness. With regard to housing, more attention also needs to be paid to design criteria that meet the needs of extended and multi-generation families. Many newcomers find such living arrangements more attractive and familiar than the typical Canadian nuclear family living arrangement. Unfortunately, very few opportunities exist to find units suitable for multiple family living in the affordable rental housing market. Further research is required to assess the extent to which family conflict caused by a mismatch between living arrangements and house design leads to homelessness on the part of newcomer households.

The third issue that needs attention has to do with the accessibility and suitability of available health and social services for newcomers. The much more favorable physical and mental health status of newcomers suggests that their needs are quite different than those of the Canadian born respondents. However, it is likely that most services to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are developed based upon the needs of the more numerous Canadian born homeless populations. While the much lower health service utilization rates among newcomers may be a reflection of their higher health status, it may also have something to do with the way in which these services are promoted or offered.

At one level, newcomers' higher physical and mental health status is unsurprising, given the stringent criteria that Canada specifies before accepting newcomers as landed residents. However, similar results for refugees suggest that something else is also in play, highlighting an area for further investigation. Given the significant challenges associated with re-locating to a new country, we can speculate that the ability for individuals and families to make their way to Canada is a reflection of the presence of significant personal resources. As well, it is quite possible that some newcomers to Canada view homelessness in a different light than Canadian-born individuals and families, given the circumstances, risks, and living conditions they may have faced in their home countries. In light of having their different backgrounds, they also may find themselves more optimistic about the future than Canadian-born individuals and families. The significance of "resilience" in the newcomer population, relative to the Canadian born respondents, will be a significant point of departure in examining the Phase 2 results, relating to the extent to which various subgroups have been successful in achieving housing stability, two years after the initial interviews. Other questions that further research should address include the following: to what extent do economic factors alone explain immigrant and refugee homelessness in comparison to the Canadian born subgroups? How significant is the experience of lone parenthood for newcomers relative to Canadian born women with children? Does visible minority status have a particular adverse impact on newcomers? Finally, it is important to recognize the somewhat distinct but definitely overlapping roles of municipal, provincial and federal government departments in developing policies and programs that are relevant to the needs of homeless newcomers and those at risk of homelessness.

Recommendations

Very briefly, we highlight policy and program implications in four domains. First, there is a pressing need for involvement by all levels of government because: a) the causes of homelessness are complex, involving numerous pathways, b) some homeless people are very mobile and move from place to place with very little consideration of provincial and municipal boundaries, and c) there are governmental programs and policies in all jurisdictions that might, inadvertently, contribute to some persons' homelessness but might also be an effective conduit for redress. For example, it is clear that the role of the federal government is pre-eminent with regard to immigration policy. Yet, despite its national scope, it is also apparent that the impacts of immigration policy occur very unevenly across the country, with a tremendous concentration occurring especially in Canada's major metropolitan areas (Bourne 2003). Explicit recognition of this unevenness needs to be incorporated into settlement initiatives that are negotiated with provincial and municipal partners.

Second, there is a need to develop policies and programs that target problems in a manner that is focused, yet also recognizes that various specific problems each overlap with one another and, through complex interactions, raise the risk of homelessness. For example, family conflict, family violence, poverty and the stress caused by inadequate housing, have often been associated with one another (Lenon 2002). While the resources to enhance the availability of affordable housing (through income and infrastructure related activities) are clearly the joint responsibility of federal and provincial governments, their *effects* are often left to municipalities and non-profit organizations to address.

A third issue is the pressing need to develop safe, affordable permanent housing through a revitalized social housing sector. In their recent report on housing and social policy, Carter and Polevychok (2004) asserted that:

First and foremost, it can be argued that there is not enough social housing. The portfolio is too small to be effective in accommodating the many people who are inadequately housed and too small to be an effective support for other social policy initiatives. ...proportionally Canada has one of the smallest social housing portfolios among the developed countries. ...the size of the portfolio provides no "horizontal equity" for the many people facing housing problems. Those able to access social housing units (generally after a long wait) are in a much more advantageous position than those who have to find housing on the private market (2004, p. 35).

Finally, the support of federal and provincial governments to enhance the range of health and social services that address the unique needs of newcomers is urgently required. It has been a considerable challenge for mainstream services that are themselves caught between declining provincial and municipal budgets and growing case loads, to also

address the changing needs of their clientele. Further attention on the part of senior governments in this arena is certainly required.

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APPENDIX A – Research Team

Four meetings (March 21st, May 24th, June 21, December 12th, 2003) of the *Research Team* were held to review the work plan, discuss the content of the interview protocol, develop a sampling strategy, discuss the challenges of data collection and develop a publication policy.

The members of the research team are:

University of Ottawa:

Tim Aubry, Co-Principal Investigator, Susan Farrell, Robert Flynn, Betsy Kristjansson, Daniel Coulombe, Elizabeth Hay (School of Psychology)

Tiina Podymow, Jeff Turnbull (Faculty of Medicine)

Peter Tugwell (Institute of Population Health)

Caroline Andrew (Department of Political Science)

Doug Angus (Faculty of Administration)

Carleton University:

Fran Klodawsky, Co-Principal Investigator, Department of Geography

Benham Behnia, Karen Schwartz (School of Social Work)

Saint Paul University:

Manal Guirguis-Younger (Department of Pastoral Studies)

University of Saskatchewan:

Evelyn Peters. Dr. Peters is a Canada Research Chair with expertise in urban aboriginal issues - an area of research expertise we have not been able to involve locally.

Human Resources Development Canada:

Shannon Nix. A representative from HRDC was invited to join the Research team because we thought it was important to keep open a line of communication between the Secretariat and the study – as a result the Secretariat has been aware of this research initiative and also has been able to inform others about our activities.

APPENDIX B – Community Advisory Committee

Three meetings of the *Community Advisory Committee* (May 21st, June 27th, December 12th) were held to introduce the study, to discuss the interview protocol and to discuss the challenges of data collection.

The members of the committee are:

Tim Aubry ,Co-PI, University of Ottawa
Joanne Lowe, Canadian Mental Health Association, Ottawa Branch
Fran Klodawsky, Co-Principal Investigator, Carleton University
Diane Morrison, The Mission
Mary Ann Glazer, Shepherds of Good Hope
Tom Sidney, Operation Go Home
Denise Valley, Youth Services Bureau
Perry Rowe, The Salvation Army
Martine Dore, Cornerstone
Anne Hodge, Maison D’Amitié
Manal Guirguis-Younger, Saint Paul University
Brian Tardif, Citizen Advocacy
Vivien Runnels, Saint Paul University
Lisa Addario, Legal Consultant
Roland de Montigny, Options Bytown
Lyallen Hayes, Interval House
Carl Nicholson, Catholic Immigration Centre
Houda Dirieh, Community Representative
Andrea McCoy-Naperstkow, Carling Family Shelter
Lyn Atterbury, Rideauwood Addiction and Family Services
Amy J. Nahwegahbow, Aboriginal Friendship Centre
Hindia Mohamoud, Social Planning Council of Ottawa
Elizabeth Hay, Project Coordinator, University of Ottawa

A meeting was held with the *City of Ottawa’s Housing Branch* on May 16th to introduce the study to them and to ask for their advice and suggestions regarding the development of the interview protocol. When the study’s interim report was presented, further discussions were held with the City concerning options for data analysis and presentation of results.

APPENDIX C – Consultation with Shelter Representatives

Meetings and/or telephone conversations were held with the following *shelter representatives* to explain the study, to ask for input regarding the interview protocol, and to solicit their support. All the shelters agreed to participate in the study:

- Laird Eddy, Chaplain, The Mission
- Mary Ann Glazer, Executive Director, Shepherds of Good Hope
- Major Stan Folkins, Executive Director, Perry Rowe, Director of Client Services, and Michael Cairns, Director of Men’s Shelter, The Salvation Army Booth Centre
- Rob Boyd, Manager, Housing and Support Services, Ottawa YMCA-YWCA
- Lyallen Hayes, Executive Director, Interval House
- Denise Vallely, Director, Young Women’s Emergency Shelter, Youth Services Bureau
- Anne Hodge, Executive Director, and staff of Maison d’Amitié
- Connie Woloschuk, City of Ottawa’s Residential Services, Andrea McCoy Naperstkov and Robert Currie, City of Ottawa’s Family Shelter
- Sue Garvey, Executive Director, Cornerstone
- Sister Michèle, La Présence
- Jane Beauchamp, Executive Director, Nelson House
- Tom Sidney, Operation Go Home
- Heng Chau, Catholic Immigration Centre - Reception House
- Mary Martha Hale, Centre 454
- Shining Water Diablo, Oshki Kizis Lodge

Consultation was also undertaken with the *Research and Evaluation Group of the Alliance to End Homelessness* (June 21st) and the *Youth Housing Development Team* (June 26th).

Ongoing collaboration with these key stakeholders and members of the research team guided the methodology of the study, helped shape the research questions, ensured the continued cooperation of city shelters and drop-in centres and informed the data analysis.

