Introduction

• The opioid crisis was declared a national emergency in 2017, after 70,000+ overdose-related deaths that year
• Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) has been effective in treating addiction, particularly with buprenorphine
• Substance use is particularly prevalent among homeless populations, who face unique obstacles in MAT
• Practical barriers, such as lack of mailing address/phone number or safe storage locations, can result in missed appointments and theft, leading to treatment failure

Results

• Participants with stable housing had 18% more BUP+ urine tests than those without it ($P < 0.001$)
• Appointment attendance was 6% lower when participants did not have stable housing ($P = 0.003$)
• 8-month retention rates were 13% greater for individuals with stable vs. unstable housing ($P = 0.002$)
• Missing medications were reported 0.46 more times per month for participants without stable housing ($P < 0.001$)

Table 1: Housing Insecurity Scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Permanent housing: house, apartment</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Long-term program or housing: recovery house, with family/friends (stable)</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Temporary relief: shelter, couch-surfing, with family/friends (unstable)</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Street homeless</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

• With housing insecurity broken down on a scale, effects were significant only for street homeless individuals
• This suggests that increasing shelter access or temporary housing support can have major impacts on treatment when immediate access to permanent housing is unavailable

Questions

• What other measures of treatment progress are potentially affected by housing insecurity?
• How does housing insecurity impact the effectiveness of MAT using telemedicine?

Conclusion

Housing insecurity poses a practical barrier to MAT and significantly increases the likelihood of treatment failure.

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