



THE STREET HEALTH REPORT 2007

Laura Hanson

Homelessness in Toronto

- 32,000 different people use a homeless shelter in Toronto each year.
- 6,500 people stay in a shelter on any given night. This has tripled since 1990.

Street Health Nursing Program

- Need for appropriate health services identified in 1986 by homeless people in Toronto's southeast, downtown area.
- Street Health founded by a group of volunteer nurses working at a daytime drop-in centre.
- Street Health has evolved to become an organization with 4 full-time nurses funded by the Ministry of Health and a total of 25 staff members

Street Health Programs

- Mental Health Outreach Workers
- Harm Reduction Team
- Identification Replacement and Storage
- Community Activist/Health Promoter
- Research Team

Study Background

- 1992 Street Health Report: first to document health status and health care access of homeless people
- 2007 Street Health survey: conducted to provide current information on health and homelessness in Toronto

Methods

- Representative sample of 368 homeless men and women at shelters & meal programs
- Survey topics: demographics, health, health determinants, access and barriers to services
- Qualitative interviews with sub-sample of 28 survey participants

Community Involvement

- Peer researchers: data collection, analysis and dissemination
- Community Advisory Committee
- Key study partners: Wellesley Institute, Centre for Research on Inner City Health, National Film Board

Daily living conditions

- 50% have incomes < \$400/month
- 52% not getting welfare, disability or any substantial government support
- 55% of shelter users had not been able to get a bed at least once in the past year
- 69% reported being hungry at least one day/week
- 35% physically assaulted in past year
- 12% assaulted by police in past year
- 21% of women raped or sexually assaulted in past year

Mental health status

- 56% experienced serious depression in past year
- 40% had seriously considered suicide in their lifetime; compared to 7% of people in Toronto
- 25% had tried to commit suicide sometime in their lifetime
- 10% in the past year
- 37% said they had no one to help them in an emotional crisis

Self-rated health

Self-rated health	Street Health Survey	General Population
Very good or excellent	29%	61%
Good	29%	30%
Fair or poor	40%	9%

Health Condition	Street Health Survey	General Population
Arthritis	43%	14%
Hepatitis C	23%	0.8%
Asthma	21%	6%
Heart disease	20%	4%
COPD	17%	1%
Ulcers	15%	2%
Diabetes	9%	4%
Epilepsy	6%	0.3%
Cancer	4%	1%
HIV+	2%	.006%

Primary Health Care

- 34% do not have a usual source of health care or use hospital emergency departments as their usual source of care
- 59% do not have a family doctor; compared to 9% of the general population of Toronto
- Fewer report having a family doctor (20% less) than in 1992

Report Recommendations

- Series of recommendations based on our findings focused on 4 key areas:
 - Addressing poverty
 - Improving access to housing
 - Improving living conditions of people who are homeless
 - Improving access to health care

Dissemination & Advocacy

- Broad dissemination and advocacy is a key goal of the project
- Report release event
- Distributing the report
- Media coverage
- Meetings with politicians and policy makers
- Presentations



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STREET HEALTH STORIES

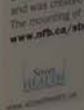
[a photo + sound installation]

How do you take care of your health when you don't have a home?
This was asked of 28 homeless men and women, as part of a larger project and radio series called *The Street Health Report*.
Four photographers, Adrienne, Jesse, Keesha and Melissa, and radio host and street press reporter with homeless people, document through audio interviews and photographs the people and their stories, giving a human face and voice to the statistics. The National Film Board of Canada Film Series in Selection featuring large lightbox prints, and headphones, present nights of the Street Health Stories.

photos + sound documented by:



STREET HEALTH STORIES is a project of the National Film Board of Canada's filmmaker education program, and was created in collaboration with STREET HEALTH and the STREET HEALTH REPORT.
The recording of this audio + sound installation was sponsored by the J. Van Dine Knowledge Institute of St. Michael's Hospital.
www.nfb.ca/streethhealthstories





Next Steps

- Creating a series of “Research Bulletins” focusing on specific topics and population groups
- Broad dissemination and advocacy on the issues covered in the bulletins
- Ongoing peer involvement through:
 - Peer Researcher Advisory Committee
 - Individual work on specific bulletins, and related dissemination and advocacy activities

Acknowledgements

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The Street Health Report 2007

Available at: www.streethealth.ca

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Street Health Stories

Available at: www.youtube.com