The health of young marginalised people
A review of medical & nursing notes at Youth Health Services in Western Sydney

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Chamberlain & McKenzie’s (2003) cultural definition of homelessness

Prevalence of Youth Homelessness

• The 2011 Australian census indicated that there were 26,238 homeless people aged 12-24 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011)
• Supported accommodation accounts for 28% of homelessness amongst youth aged 12 to 18 years (ABS, 2011)
• The census is likely to underestimate the prevalence of youth homelessness (ABS, 2012)

Physical and Mental Health in Homeless Youth

• Homelessness is associated with poor physical health (Busen & Engebretson, 2008; Hudson et al., 2010; Solorio et al., 2006)
• Also associated with mental health issues (Cleverley & Kidd, 2011; Kamieniecki, 2001; Alden & Sharpe, 2006; Swahn et al., 2012; Rosenthal et al., 2008)
• Limited research on the physical and mental health of young people in secondary & tertiary forms of homelessness (Aubry et al., 2012; Vacha & Marvin, 1983; Zenger et al., 2008)

Study Aims

• To investigate whether the people using the Youth Health Services are the target group e.g. young people who are marginalised, are homeless or at risk of homelessness
• To describe the presenting issues of these young people
• To profile the health issues of these young people attending Youth Health Services in Western Sydney

Data Collection

• Of the 643 active clients at WS YHS in 2011, 241 saw a saw a medical practitioner or nurse.
• A retrospective case note review was conducted of those 241 clients aged 12-24 who saw a doctor or nurse in 2011.
Sample Composition

- 241 potential records identified
- 643 active clients in 2011
- 35 Ineligible
- 206 Eligible
- 73 Doctor
- 107 Nurse Only
- 26 Outreach Clinic

Data Extraction Points

1. The client’s first face-to-face contact with the service and their next face-to-face contact with the service if within four weeks and concerned with assessment.

2. The client’s first face-to-face contact with a doctor or nurse, and the next face-to-face contact if within four weeks and concerned with assessment.

3. All of the client’s contacts across 2011.

Personal Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligible Clients</th>
<th>n = 206</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (Years)</td>
<td>Mean Age (SD) 16.3 (2.68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female 62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation (Entered)</td>
<td>GLBT 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Australian Born 80%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Refugee/Refugee Like 3%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Preferred Language English 96%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 10%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Personal information for all eligible clients who had seen a doctor or nurse in 2011.

Homelessness

- Domiciled (37%)
- Primary Homeless (1%)
- Secondary Homeless (31%)
- Tertiary Homeless (8%)
- Not Entered (23%)

Accommodation status at first ever presentation to the service. n = 206.

Housing Type

- Living with parents (27%)
- Living with friends/family (18%)
- Accommodation service or foster care (30%)
- Own accommodation (2%)
- No accommodation (1%)
- Not Entered (22%)

Housing type at first ever presentation to the service. n = 206.

Presenting Issues

Total number of presenting issues identified by initial clinicians for clients who had seen a doctor or nurse in 2011. n = 206.
Current School Involvement

Education status for those who had not completed year 10 or were aged 16 or below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment Status (n = 124)</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Entered</td>
<td>26 (21.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in School</td>
<td>82 (66.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Enrolled in School</td>
<td>16 (12.9%)</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance (n = 82)</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Entered</td>
<td>25 (30.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Attender</td>
<td>42 (51.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular Attender</td>
<td>10 (12.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspended</td>
<td>2 (2.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does Not Attend</td>
<td>3 (3.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current Education/Employment Status

Clients who had completed year 10 or were aged 16 and above at first presentation to the service. n = 82

- Not Entered (29%)
- Full time education (34%)
- Full or part time work (10%)
- Disability support pension (2%)
- No work/no education (25%)

Involvement with Justice System

Involvement with justice system at first presentation to the service. n = 206 (Not Entered = 89)

- Any involvement with justice system 20%
- Police warning or caution 15%
- Has an AVO out against them or current charge 5%
- Conviction for an offence 3%
- Time in gaol/juvenile justice custody 2%

Involvement of Community Services

Involvement of DoCS at first ever presentation to the service. n = 206

- Not Entered (44%)
- Not Involved (24%)
- Out of Home Care (17%)
- Current Involvement (8%)
- Past Involvement (7%)

Mental Health Diagnoses

Mental health diagnoses at first presentation to the service. n = 206 (Not Entered = 97)

- Any mental health diagnosis 20%
- ADHD 15%
- Mood disorder 10%
- ODD or conduct disorder 5%
- Anxiety disorder 3%
- Other mental health diagnosis 2%

Mean K10 by housing type at first presentation

- No significant relationship between housing type and score on the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10, Kessler et al., 2002).
Drug and Alcohol Use

Whether client reported any drug or alcohol use at first ever presentation to the service or first medical assessment. n = 206

Immunisations

Whether client reported having had all their childhood immunisations at first medical assessment. n = 206

Health Conditions

Physical Trauma

Physical Trauma Total Sample Male Female
Not Entered (n = 206) (n = 79) (n = 127)
Not Entered 97 (47%) 36 (46%) 60 (47%)
No Physical Trauma 54 (26%) 13 (16%) 42 (33%)
Physical Trauma 55 (27%) 30 (38%) 25 (20%)
Nature of Trauma (n = 55) (n = 30) (n = 25)
Other Inflicted 26 (47%) 12 (60%) 8 (32%)
Perforated/Stab/Puncture 23 (42%) 14 (47%) 9 (36%)
Motor Vehicle Accident 6 (11%) 5 (17%) 1 (4%)
Intentional 22 (40%) 15 (50%) 9 (36%)

Body Mass Index

BMI grouping at first medical assessment. n = 206

Sexual Health

Sexually Active Total Sample Male Female
Not Entered (n = 206) (n = 79) (n = 127)
Not Entered 33 (42%) 34 (27%) 67 (32%)
Not Sexually Active 17 (22%) 22 (17%) 39 (19%)
Sexually Active 29 (38%) 71 (56%) 100 (46%)
Mean Age First Sex 13.69 13.37 13.5
Ever Tested for STI 13 (45%) 33 (46%) 46 (46%)
Always/Usually Use Condoms 17 (59%) 17 (24%) 34 (34%)
Use Other Contraception - - 30 (30%)
Ever Pregnant or Had Children - - 23 (23%)
Unwanted Sexual Experiences 3 (10%) 33 (46%) 36 (36%)
Mean frequency of service use across 2011 for clients who had seen a doctor or nurse. n = 206.

Mean frequency of referrals made across 2011. n = 206.

Change in accommodation status across 2011 for those who attended more than once in 2011. n = 148

Limitations:
• Missing data
• Constraints of a retrospective case review

Strengths:
• Accessed a large sample of difficult-to-reach group of young people
• Investigated different forms of homelessness & the health of those young people

Youth homelessness is an ongoing issue in Western Sydney.
YHSs show good engagement with young secondary & tertiary homeless people.
Clients present with a numerous complex social and health issues
Strength in a one stop shop model of care with integrated services & referrals

Acknowledgements
• Young people
• Support of the WSLHD
• Michael Cummings & staff at High St
• Graeme Pringle, Ivana Hrpka & staff at WAAT
• Dr Melissa Kang
• Summer scholar, Lucinda Sullivan
• This research was funded by the Marie Bashir Clinical Research Fellowship Program in Adolescent Medicine, supported by MHDAO.