

Affordable Housing Locationing and Economic Disparities: Impacts on

Wellbeing and Mental Health

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Abstract

Affordable housing is a critical component of urban development, providing essential shelter and stability for individuals and families across diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Housing is the intersection of socio-economic policy, urban planning, and community development, and is critical in addressing housing inequalities within cities. As urban areas continue to grapple with growing populations and limited resources, the provision of affordable housing remains a persistent challenge, particularly in the context of widening economic disparities. This study seeks to investigate how the locationing of affordable housing units in neighborhoods of varying socio-economic status influences residents' sense of community, perceived discrimination, stress, anxiety, and overall well-being. We will utilize a cross-sectional survey design to collect data from residents living in affordable housing complexes located in communities representing different socio-economic profiles: affluent, medium-income, and low-income neighborhoods. Participants will complete a structured questionnaire assessing various dimensions of their housing experiences. While the results of the study are not yet conclusive, it contributes to the scholarly discourse on urban planning and housing policy by providing empirical insights into the complex dynamics of affordable housing locationing and mental health outcomes within urban contexts. We aim to inform policy and practice initiatives by creating inclusive, supportive environments that foster the wellbeing and resilience of all residents, regardless of their socio-economic status.

Background

- **Mid-20th century-** studies of living conditions of mentally ill individuals in psychiatric institutions.
- **Deinstitutionalization:** opened the door to community-based housing, and the focus of research expanded to encompass a broader spectrum of housing-related factors.
- **1950s and 1960s:** saw a burgeoning interest in the effects of physical housing conditions, with a particular emphasis on: overcrowding, sanitation, and the quality of housing.
- **"Therapeutic Landscapes":** emphasized the importance of the built environment, green spaces, and community resources in promoting psychological well-being.
- **Late 20th century:** Rise of housing interventions and supportive services in preventing and mitigating mental health challenges among those at risk.

Hypothesis

- **Hypothesis 1:** People who live in affordable housing units in wealthy communities will experience a greater sense of relative deprivation/ lower levels of wellbeing than people who live in affordable housing units in less wealthy communities.
- **Hypothesis 2:** The negative effects of living in affordable housing units in wealthy communities on wellbeing and mental health will be mediated by the following factors: Sense of Relative Deprivation, Perceived discrimination, Lack of Social Connection, Stress, Anxiety, and Depression.

Research Question

What is the Relationship between Affordable Housing Locationing and Economic Disparities impact on Wellbeing and Mental Health.?

Methods

PARTICIPANTS

- Low income housing residents located in (i) affluent, (ii) medium-income, and (iii) low-income neighborhoods.

DATA ANALYSIS

Cross Sectional Survey

Questionnaire Measures:

- Locationing, Sense of Relative Deprivation, Perceived Discrimination, Lack of Social Connection, Stress, Anxiety, Depression, and Wellbeing.

Literature Review

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to Examine:

- Location: Access to green spaces, transportation, and amenities.
- Housing-related stressors such as: eviction, foreclosure, and homelessness.
- Housing interventions and programs such as supportive housing, transitional housing, and housing vouchers.
- Mental health conditions related to and housing outcomes.

Literature Review Framework

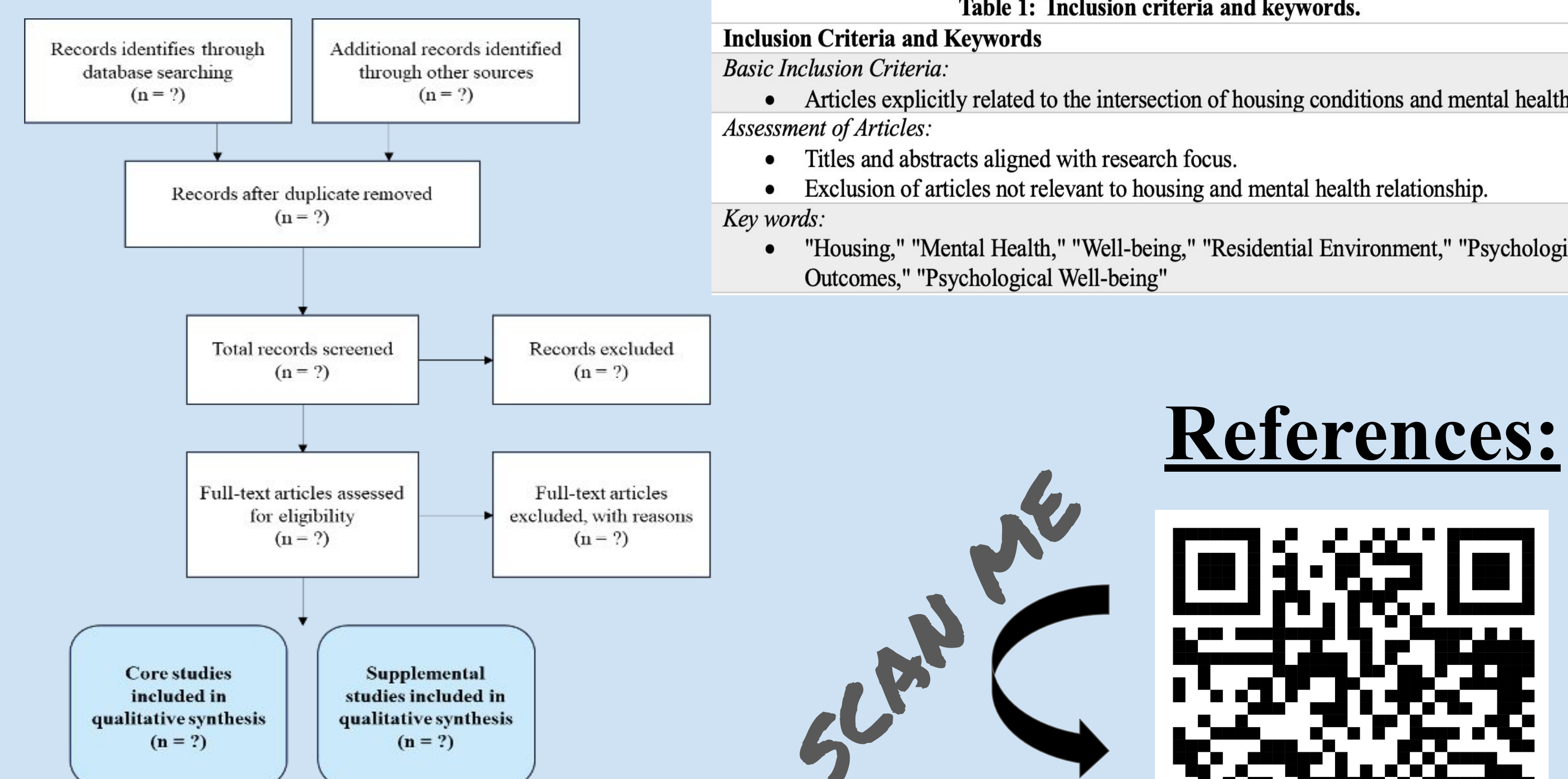


Table 1: Inclusion criteria and keywords.

Inclusion Criteria and Keywords

Basic Inclusion Criteria:

- Articles explicitly related to the intersection of housing conditions and mental health?

Assessment of Articles:

- Titles and abstracts aligned with research focus.
- Exclusion of articles not relevant to housing and mental health relationship.

Key words:

- "Housing," "Mental Health," "Well-being," "Residential Environment," "Psychological Outcomes," "Psychological Well-being"

Social Connection		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I can get what I need in this community.	o	o	o	o	o
2	This apartment complex helps me fulfill my needs.	o	o	o	o	o
3	I feel like a member of this community.	o	o	o	o	o
4	I belong in this community.	o	o	o	o	o
5	I have a say about what goes on in my community.	o	o	o	o	o
6	People in this community are good at influencing each other in a positive manner.	o	o	o	o	o
7	I feel connected to this community.	o	o	o	o	o
8	I have a good bond with others in this community.	o	o	o	o	o

Wellbeing
Assess on a scale of 1-10 how the scenario applies to you. 0 not at all. 10 extremely.

2	In general, how happy, or unhappy do you usually feel?	1-10: _____
3	In general, how would you rate your physical health?	1-10: _____
4	How would you rate your overall mental health?	1-10: _____
5	Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?	

Sense of relative deprivation		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I feel deprived when I think of what others have compared to me in my community.	o	o	o	o	o
2	I feel privileged compared to other people like me.	o	o	o	o	o
3	I feel resentful when I see how well-off people are in my community, compared to me.	o	o	o	o	o
4	When I compare what I have to others in my community, I feel well off.	o	o	o	o	o
5	I feel dissatisfied with what I have compared to those in my community.	o	o	o	o	o

Physical and Social Environment		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I don't feel the urge to move.	o	o	o	o	o
2	The buildings of this community are attractive.	o	o	o	o	o
3	The community is properly maintained.	o	o	o	o	o
4	I am satisfied with the resources/services in my community.	o	o	o	o	o
5	I feel I have things to do in my free time in my community.	o	o	o	o	o
6	I am satisfied with the level of commute it takes to get to resources such as grocery stores, parks, restaurants.	o	o	o	o	o

Affordable Housing Questionnaire

Results

In our research of mental health of individuals in affordable housing, we revealed a major gap in housing literature: the lack of research including low income housing *locationings* implicit impact on mental health. We know that evidence suggests that those who live in affordable housing units located in wealthier communities can experience a range of negative effects compared to those located in non wealthy communities. Through literature analysis we have found that there are several factors related to housing which these consequences are amplified such as discrimination, lack of social connection, and financial hardship. While the results of our Housing Survey is not complete, but we hypothesize those in wealthy communities who reside in low income housing will be subjected to greater feelings of relative deprivation extirpated by mediating factors contributing to lower mental health.

Discussion

The relationship between housing and mental health is one of intricacy and is multi-dimensional. Studies such as this open the door to conversations on how housing policy can improve to take into account the locationing of housing projects and feelings of low income residents to mitigate mental health problems. Our goal is to provide policy initiative and community resources to make low income housing in wealthier communities more integrative for low income residents.

References:

