**Nursing Students’ Attitudes Towards the Homeless**

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**Aims**

To examine nursing students’ attitudes towards the homeless  
To determine whether previous exposure to the homeless influences attitudes of nursing students towards the homeless

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**U.S. HOMELESS PATIENTS**

**Social Challenges**
- Lack of financial resources  
- Difficulty adhering to a healthy diet  
- Hygiene issues  
- Lack of storage for personal items

**Health Challenges**
- For serious health conditions (cardiac disease, cancer, and substance abuse disorders), higher risk of mortality  
- Overall higher risk of mortality than general population  
- Higher admission rates and longer lengths of hospital stays

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**METHODS**

**SURVEY**
- Validated survey: Attitudes Towards Homelessness Inventory (ATHI, Kingree and Daves, 1997)  
- Includes 4 sub categories, 1) personal causation, 2) societal causation, 3) affiliation and, 4) solutions  
- Email to 125 US second degree Masters-level nursing students  
- 13 respondents participated in the 11 item survey.

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**RESULTS**

- Overall scores of attitude range 39-46, mean 42.8, out of possible 66—indicating an overall positive attitude  
- Perception homelessness based more on societal causes (mean 2.51) than personal causes (mean 4.12)  
- Eleven of the twelve respondents had previous experience with homeless. Correlated to positive attitude (mean 3.38) and a positive perspective towards solutions for homelessness (mean 5.38)

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**Nursing Training**

- Clinical training rotations with the homeless are not part of the standard U.S. nursing curriculum.  
- Clinical experience in a homeless setting may provide a more accepting attitude of working with this growing population.

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**CONCLUSION**

Understanding a vulnerable population such as the homeless and acknowledging the effects of negative attitudes towards the delivery of care would provide insight to both educators and students.