

Title: *Association of Homeless Adults' Social Networks/Support and Health Behaviors*

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**Introduction:** Research among domiciled samples has shown that greater perceived social support from important others is associated with engagement in positive health behaviors. Less is known about the relationship of social networks/support and health behaviors among homeless individuals, who may experience disconnection from family and friends as a result of situational factors. Homeless adults are known to engage in multiple modifiable risk behaviors associated with poor health, including high rates of cigarette smoking and inadequate daily consumption of fruits and vegetables. This study examined associations of social networks/support and modifiable health behaviors in a sample of homeless adults.

**Methods:** Participants comprised 244 homeless adults (70% male) from Dallas, Texas. The 6-item Lubben Social Network Scale (LSNS) was used to measure social networks/support, and was administered via an audio-assisted computerized administration platform. Items on the LSNS ask about the number of individuals in the respondent's social network (relatives and friends) that he/she regularly sees, could contact for help, and could talk to about private matters. Modifiable health-related behaviors assessed were: at-risk alcohol use; cigarette smoking; obesity status; fruit/vegetable intake; and physical activity. Sociodemographically-adjusted regression models were used to examine relations between social networks/support and multiple health-related behaviors. Sex-stratified regression models were also run.

**Results:** Greater self-reported social networks/support was associated with a greater likelihood of compliance with the recommended amount of weekly physical activity overall (LSNS<sub>mean</sub>=9.17 in  $\geq 150$  min/wk vs 7.49 in  $< 150$  min/wk). Significant results were driven by male participants. Social networks/support were not associated with the other modifiable health behaviors.

**Conclusion:** Understanding the interplay of social networks/support and specific health behaviors can inform targeted interventions that use social networks/support to promote better health in homeless adults. Results suggest that interventions to increase social networks/support, particularly among homeless men, may increase the likelihood of obtaining adequate physical activity.