

## Introduction

- Homelessness is often associated with alcohol consumption, feelings of helplessness, and lack of social support.<sup>1</sup>
- In 2023, over 650,000 people experienced homelessness in the United States.<sup>2</sup>
- This study seeks to expand what is known about the role of social support in addressing this problem.”

### Aim

- The purpose of this study is to identify patterns of alcohol use among the homeless community
- Asses the predictive utility of social support for alcohol use

## Method

### Sample

- Surveys collected from 44 individuals affiliated with a local homeless shelter.

### Measures

- Demographics: TCU A-RISKFORM
- Homelessness: Lived Experience of Homelessness Survey
- Alcohol Dependence: Alcohol Dependence Scale
- Social Support: Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support

| Demographics<br>(N = 44) | Total (n) | Percent (%) |
|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| <b>Sex</b>               |           |             |
| Female                   | 12        | 27.3        |
| Male                     | 32        | 72.7        |
| <b>Hispanic</b>          |           |             |
| No                       | 26        | 59.1        |
| Yes                      | 17        | 38.6        |
| <b>Race</b>              |           |             |
| Asian                    | 1         | 2.3         |
| Black                    | 18        | 40.9        |
| White                    | 15        | 34.1        |
| Other or unknown         | 5         | 11.4        |

## Results

### Alcohol:

- Social support from significant others was significant,  $b = -1.81$  ( $SE = 0.89$ ),  $t = 2.05$ ,  $p = .05$ .
- Social support from family, receipt of financial assistance, and arrest history were not significant predictors of alcohol use.

### Homelessness:

- More than half of the participants (55%) reported experiencing homelessness for over six months. Rental assistance emerged as the most challenging form of aid to secure, with 61.4% of respondents encountering difficulties, followed by shelter (36.4%) and food assistance (22.7%).

### What would be most helpful for ending your homelessness?

|                           | Total (n) | Percent (%) |
|---------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| <b>(N = 44)</b>           |           |             |
| Housing                   | 33        | 75.0        |
| Hotel Voucher             | 24        | 54.5        |
| Phone                     | 24        | 54.5        |
| Food                      | 23        | 52.3        |
| Bus Pass                  | 23        | 52.3        |
| Identification            | 21        | 47.7        |
| Showers                   | 20        | 45.5        |
| Workforce Placement (Job) | 20        | 45.5        |
| Medical Care              | 19        | 43.2        |
| Dental Care               | 19        | 43.2        |
| Social Security Card      | 19        | 43.2        |
| Case Management           | 19        | 43.2        |
| Shelter                   | 18        | 40.9        |
| Hygiene kits              | 18        | 40.9        |
| Mental Health Treatment   | 18        | 40.9        |
| Substance Use Treatment   | 12        | 27.3        |
| Tent                      | 6         | 13.6        |

|                      | b     | SE    | t    | Sig. |
|----------------------|-------|-------|------|------|
| Significant Other    | -1.81 | 0.89  | 2.05 | .05  |
| Family               | 0.34  | 0.77  | 0.44 | .66  |
| Friends              | 1.93  | 0.96  | 2.01 | .05  |
| Financial Assistance | 1.66  | 2.425 | 0.69 | .50  |
| Arrest History       | -3.81 | 2.58  | 1.48 | .15  |

## Discussion

### Alcohol and support

- Significant Other Influence: The negative coefficient (-1.81) suggests a significant negative association between social support from a significant other and alcohol usage among homeless individuals. This indicates that higher levels of support from a significant other are associated with lower likelihood of alcohol usage problems within this population.
- Friends and Alcohol Usage: Although non-significant, the positive  $b$  value (1.93) suggests that social support from friends may have a detrimental effect on alcohol use among the homeless population. This may suggest the need to foster more prosocial peer relationships in this community.

### Limitations:

- Sample not diverse or large enough to represent the entire population.

### Future Directions:

- Investigate contextual factors, such as access to housing, employment and community resources that could influence the relationship between social support and alcohol use.

## References

1. Neisler, J., Shree, S., Reitzel, L. R., Chen, T. A., Kendzor, D. E., Obasi, E. M., Wrighting, Q., & Businelle, M. S. (2019). Characterizing Alcohol Use Behaviors among Homeless Men and Women. *American Journal of Health Behavior*, 43(1), 37–49. <https://doi.org/10.5993/AJHB.43.1.4>
2. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2023). *2023 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress*. U.S. Government Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R). [www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2023-AHAR-Part-1.pdf](http://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2023-AHAR-Part-1.pdf)