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| **Housing intervention and Inuit well-being: the benefits of having a place called home in Nunavik and Nunavut** |
| **Background/Objectives**‘Sense of home’ is broadly defined as having a safe place for identity development and family bonding, where people can be themselves and feel they belong. In 2014-2015 investments in social housing permitted the construction of more than 400 new social housing units in Nunavut and Nunavik, two of the four Inuit regions of northern Canada, with the result of reducing overcrowding, and improving sense of home among people who got to move into a new house. In the context of this population health housing intervention, the objectives of the presentation are to examine whether: i) sense of home is a predictor of lower psychological distress, and ii) improvement in sense of home lead to improvement in psychological distress over time.**Methods**A before-and-after study was designed in collaboration with Inuit organizations in twelve communities in Nunavut and Nunavik. Adults aged ≥ 18y ranked at the top of the waitlist for social housing in each community were recruited. Questionnaires were administered 1-6 months before moving, and 15-18 months after. Sense of home was measured according to participants’ perception of their house in relation to: space, identity, control, privacy, satisfaction, relationships, location and safety. Psychological distress was assessed with the Kessler 6-item scale. Associations were tested with multilevel regression models for change, adjusted for age, sex, and region.**Results**102 participants completed both baseline and follow-up questionnaires. At baseline, higher sense of home was associated to lower psychological distress (p=0.001). Several sense of home items were strong predictors of lower psychological distress including “I can do what I want in my house”(p<0.001), “I have enough privacy” (p=0.015), “I feel safe in my house” (p=0.005), “My house is a good reflection of who I am” (p=0.013) and “I get along with people in my house” (p<0.001). Over time, improvement in sense of home score was associated to improvement in psychological distress (p=0.05).**Discussion**Housing has been identified as a promising entry point for health-promoting interventions because of its central place in everyday life patterns. Our results suggest that, over and above the physical integrity of a house, the meaningful aspects attached to ‘having a place called home’ are important contributors to mental well-being among Inuit in Nunavut and Nunavik. **Keywords**Housing intervention, Indigenous health, Inuit health, sense of home, psychological distress |