

# Measuring Homelessness in a Northern Ontario City: Comparison of Results for Daily Counts in Sudbury, Ontario

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# Census of homeless people (1)

- ▶ PPC attempts to
  - Census Count
  - Demographic profile
    - Age, sex, marital status, race, culture, language
  - Reasons for homelessness
- ▶ Estimate
  - Conservative our underestimate

# Census of homeless people (2)

- ▶ Poverty, Homelessness and Migration (CRSJP)
  - PPC
  - 2001–2015: 15 PPCs
  - Sudbury : population 165,000—10 PPCs
  - Other centres: population 1,725 (3,500) to 64,000
- ▶ Ontario government is taking steps to establish PPC as an option.

# Census of homeless people (3)

- ▶ Canadian Definition of Homelessness
  - Unsheltered
    - absolute homelessness
  - Emergency sheltered
    - absolute homelessness
  - Provisionally accommodated
  - At risk of homelessness
    - at-risk of homelessness

# Duration of census

## — Differences in methodology

- ▶ **Point-In-Time**
- ▶ Measures homelessness at a single point in time, such as a given night.
- ▶ Limited in time, from 8 to 24 hours.
- ▶ **Period Prevalence Count**
- ▶ Conducted over 7 consecutive days.
- ▶ Captures users who do not access services every day.
- ▶ Neighbourhood door-to-door survey
- ▶ Identify hidden homeless

# Who to count in the PPC

- ▶ All users of services for poor and homeless people are asked to complete the survey.
- ▶ Participants are identified by criteria as
  - Absolutely homeless or
  - At risk of homelessness

# Conduct of the PPC

- ▶ A service-based methodology
- ▶ Focus on users of services by providers to poor and homeless people.
  - Exhaustive list of SPs.
  - Purpose and procedure explained in person.
  - Invited to participate.
  - Research assistants made available.
- ▶ Door-to-door survey in small towns in order to identify hidden homeless.

# Sudbury 2015—PPC

- ▶ Each participant survey questionnaire is identified by date and agency.
- ▶ Elimination of duplicates.
- ▶ PPC data can be used to produce the equivalent PiT count for any given 24 hour period.
- ▶ Results provided by each method can be compared.



# Total absolute and at risk

Day	n	%
Wednesday	720	46
Thursday	355	23
Friday	96	6
Saturday	84	5
Sunday	17	1
Monday	122	8
Tuesday	174	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>1568</b>	<b>100</b>

# Absolutely homeless

Day	n	%
Wednesday	174	46
Thursday	87	23
Friday	26	7
Saturday	17	4
Sunday	5	1
Monday	29	8
Tuesday	44	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>100</b>

# At risk of homelessness

Day	n	%
Wednesday	402	47
Thursday	190	22
Friday	48	6
Saturday	44	5
Sunday	8	1
Monday	68	8
Tuesday	91	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>851</b>	<b>100</b>

# Gender

Day	W %	M %	LGTBQ %
Wednesday	47	46	28
Thursday	23	22	22
Friday	7	5	11
Saturday	6	5	6
Sunday	1	1	
Monday	6	8	28
Tuesday	11	11	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

# Cultural group (%)

Day	Ang	Fr	Indg	VM
Wednesday	43	45	45	51
Thursday	20	19	27	16
Friday	7	8	5	11
Saturday	6	5	5	7
Sunday	1	1	1	—
Monday	9	11	6	10
Tuesday	14	11	11	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

# Age group (%)

Day	to 25	26-40	45-60	65 +	Total
Wednesday	44	45	46	47	46
Thursday	23	24	26	20	23
Friday	8	5	4	7	6
Saturday	5	5	5	8	6
Sunday	1	1	2	1	1
Monday	8	7	8	9	8
Tuesday	12	13	10	7	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

# Comparison with other studies

	Total	% of pop
Vancouver (2012)	1,602	0.27
Kelowna (2007)	279	0.24
Red Deer (2012)	279	0.31
Lethbridge (2012)	99	0.12
Toronto (2009)	5,086	0.19
Timmins (2011)	720	1.70
North Bay (2011)	513	1.00
Sudbury (2015)	1,540	0.96

# Conclusion (1)—Exclusion

- ▶ PiT excludes
  - Hidden homeless such as couch surfers.
    - People at-risk of homelessness.
    - Use the same services (foodbanks, health clinics, clothing stores, soup kitchens) as absolutely homeless people.
- ▶ More than ½ not identified as homeless on first day of PPC.
- ▶ Services dependent on method of counting. Raises a concern.



# Conclusion (2)—Exclusion

- ▶ Many at risk of homelessness also episodically or chronically homeless.
  - Two hundred and fourteen (214) individuals in the at risk population—that is another three quarters over and above those in the absolutely homeless group.

# Conclusion (3)—Definition

- ▶ Definition has an impact on results.
- ▶ Definition reduces the number of homeless.
- ▶ Methodology undercounts the homeless.
- ▶ Problem of identifying hidden homeless resolved by excluding them from the count.
- ▶ Impact on policy and programmes.
- ▶ Impact on measuring success.

# Thank you, merci, miigwetch

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