

Informal Support Networks and Homelessness in Spain: A Quantitative Study on Social, Health, and Economic Determinants

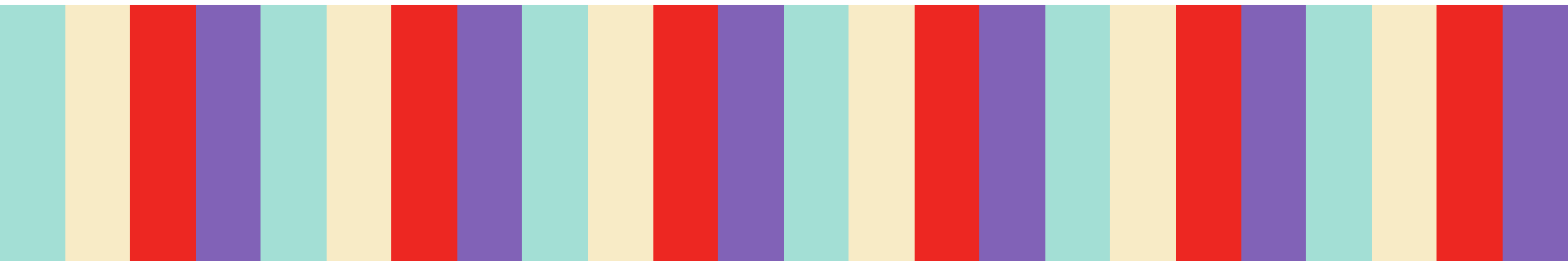
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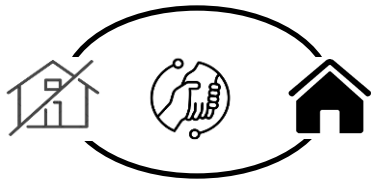
Informal support networks:

Homelessness prevention and protection factor.

- Lack of informal support **increases the risk of homelessness**, especially when combined with other vulnerabilities.

Spanish context:

- Informal networks provide nearly 80% of long-term care due to insufficient state coverage, yet their role in mitigating homelessness remains underexplored.



Aim:

This study analyses the role of informal support networks in shaping trajectories of residential exclusion and homelessness among people who participated in transitional housing programmes in Spain. It examines the interaction between informal support and other vulnerability factors on housing conditions, as well as the persistence of social relationships two years after leaving the programme.

Hypothesis:

Informal support plays a key role in both the persistence of and exit from homelessness. It is hypothesized that it interacts with other risk factors, either reinforcing cycles of exclusion or facilitating social reintegration.

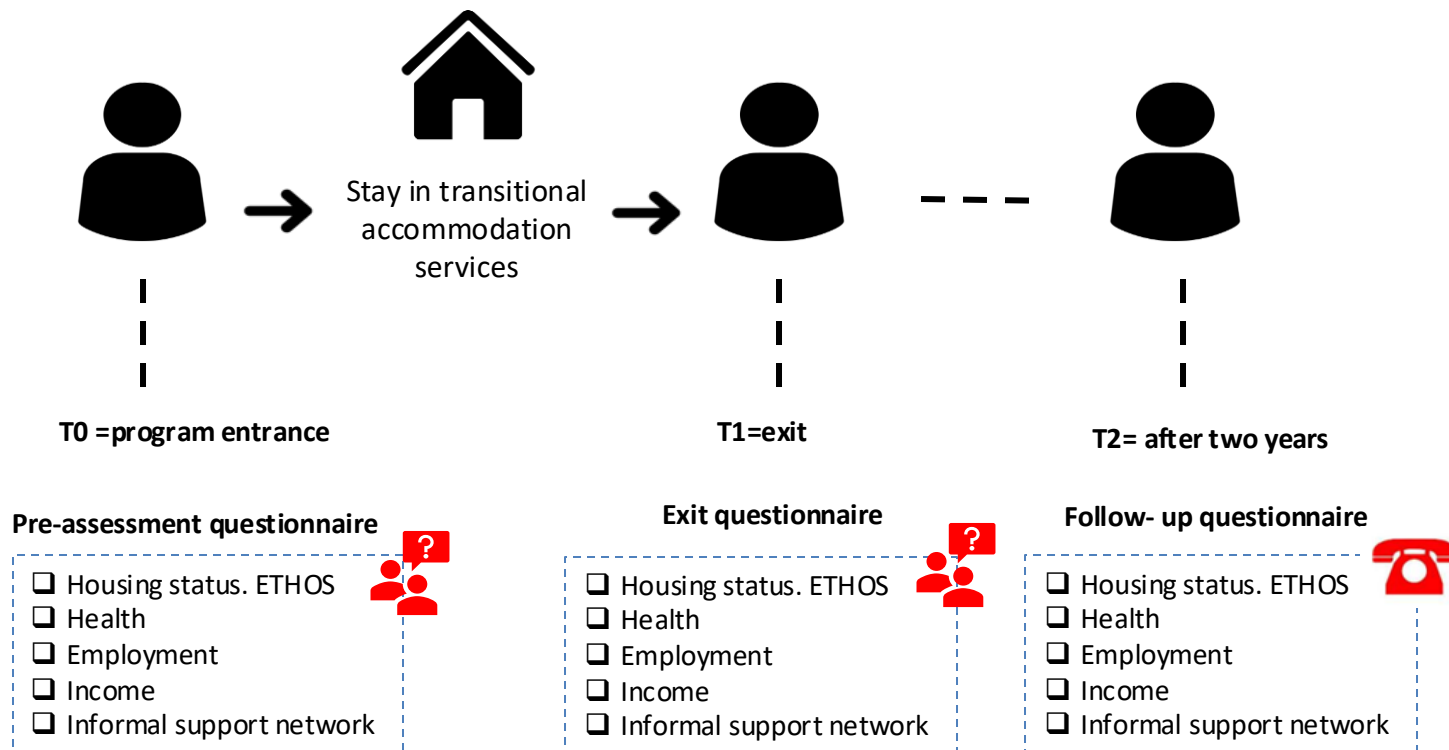
Research questions:

- How does informal support interact with income, physical health, and dual diagnosis in predicting housing outcomes homeless individuals?
- Are there differences in the evolution of relational ties and informal support during the transition of homelessness individuals?

METHOD: Longitudinal study process

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METHOD: Sample 1 – Program entrance

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Sample Description:

T0

- **Total sample size:** n = 691
- **Accommodation type:** transitional center and housing
- **Period of stay:** between 2019 and 2023
- **Average length of stay:** 7.4 months

T2

- **Total sample size:** n = 280
- **Accommodation type:** transitional center and housing
- **Period of stay:** between 2019 and 2023
- **Period of monitoring:** 2021 to 2025
- **Average length of stay:** 9.6 months



Gender

T0

Women 7%
Men 93%

T2

Women 9%
Men 91%



Age Group

21–30 years 11%
31–40 years 16%
41–50 years 21%
51–60 years 30%
61–70 years 20%
71+ years 2%

21–30 years 6%
31–40 years 15%
41–50 years 22%
51–60 years 29%
61–70 years 27%
71+ years 1%



Nationality

National 61%
Foreign 38%

National 65%
Foreign 35%



Marital status

Single 64%
Married/relationship 7%
Divorced 28%
Widowes 1%

Single 61%
Married/relationship 7%
Divorced 31%
Widowes 1%

This study applies a quantitative analytical approach

Linear Regression Analysis

- Explains the **influence of informal support**, income, physical health, and dual diagnosis on:
 - The persistence or resolution of homelessness and residential exclusion
 - Housing status within ETHOS A (critical situations)

Paired-Samples T-Test (Student's t-test)

- Assesses **longitudinal changes** (entry vs. 2 years post-exit) in:
 - Informal support level
 - General social connectedness
 - Specific relational domains: family, partner, friends

Lineal Regression for influence of economic,
healthy and support factors on **homelessness**
& **housing exclusion** condition

| | |
|---------------|------|
| _cons | 0.00 |
| obs | 622 |
| Adj R-squared | 0.24 |

| Homelessness & housing exclusion (T0) | Coeff |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Monetary income | -0.00*** (1) |
| Physical Health conditions | 0.86 (4) |
| Dual Health conditions | 0.10* (2) |
| Informal support networks | -0.58 (3) |

p:

Lineal Regression for influence
of economic, healthy and support factors
on **ETHOS A** condition

| | |
|---------------|------|
| _cons | 0.00 |
| obs | 622 |
| Adj R-squared | 0.19 |

| Ethos A (T0) | Coeff |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Monetary income | -0.00*** |
| Physical Health conditions | -0.27 |
| Dual Health conditions | 0.07* |
| Informal support networks | -0.08* |

| ETHOS | Coeff (informal support) |
|-------|--------------------------|
| A | -0.082 (1) |
| B | 0.326 (4) |
| C | 0.118 (2) |
| D | -0.263 (3) |

Comparison (T student) of the level of **informal support and relationship** at two points in time

| Variable | T0 Program entrance | T2 After 2 years | Diff (T2-0) | t | P-value |
|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|----------------|-------|---------|
| Informal support | 0.33 | 0.32 | -0.01 | -0.29 | 0.77 |
| Relationship level | 0.33 | 0.72 | 0.39 | 11.69 | 0.00 |

Comparison (T student) of the level of **relationship types** at two points in time

| Variable | T0 Program entrance | T2 After 2 years | Diff (T2-0) | t | P-value |
|----------|---------------------------|------------------------|----------------|-------|---------|
| Partner | 0.03 | 0.08 | 0.05 | 3.06 | 0.00 |
| Friends | 0.12 | 0.43 | 0.31 | 11.47 | 0.00 |
| Family | 0.21 | 0.43 | 0.22 | 7.00 | 0.00 |

- The order of influence of key factors on housing outcomes, from greatest to least, is: economic vulnerability, dual diagnosis, informal support, and physical health.
- Informal support has greater predictive power in the ETHOS A group (the most critical situation). Higher levels of informal support are associated with a lower probability of belonging to ETHOS A or D categories.
- The level of social contact—with friends, partners, and family—increases significantly between T0 (entry) and T2 (two years post-exit). However, the quality of support (perceived support) remains unchanged. This suggests that the transitional process facilitates social connection but does not necessarily strengthen emotional bonds.

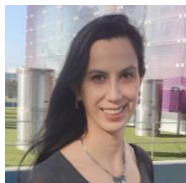
Questions emerging from the data

- How exactly does informal support shape the likelihood of belonging to different ETHOS categories?
- If social contact increases, but support remains static, how can intervention programs foster deeper, trust-based relationships?

1. Informal support networks are a relevant but secondary predictor of housing outcomes, following economic vulnerability and dual diagnosis in explanatory strength. Their impact is more pronounced in critical homelessness situations, particularly among individuals in ETHOS A.
2. The presence of strong informal support is associated with a reduced likelihood of remaining in severe homelessness and housing exclusion profiles (ETHOS A and D), suggesting that support networks act as a protective factor in pathways out of homelessness.
3. While the frequency of social contact with friends, partners, and family members increased significantly two years after exiting transitional housing, the perceived quality and strength of support remained largely unchanged. This reflects a process of social reconnection without a parallel deepening of relational bonds.
4. These findings partially confirm the hypothesis: informal support does interact with other vulnerability factors, and its role is nuanced. It may facilitate social reintegration when it coexists with improvements in income or health, but it is not sufficient on its own to produce stable reintegration.
5. The study raises key questions for intervention strategies: how can social programmes move beyond contact generation to promote sustained, trust-based support relationships? And how can informal networks be activated or reinforced as part of reintegration plans?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!!

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