

Temporal association between discrimination and substance use among homeless adults in Los Angeles County: findings from the Periodic Assessment of Trajectories of Housing, Homelessness, and Health Study (PATHS)

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BACKGROUND

- People experiencing homelessness (PEH) report higher rates of discrimination and victimization, and these experiences are associated with higher substance use.
- This relationship has not been probed longitudinally, limiting our ability to infer causality. However, attrition and seasonality effects must be properly characterized given the challenges inherent to the surveying of hard-to-reach populations.

OBJECTIVES

- To assess the **temporal associations** between experiences of violence and discrimination and substance use among homeless adults in Los Angeles County.
- To characterize the **effects of attrition and cohort-effects** on the temporal association between violence and discrimination and substance use.

DATA

- PATHS is an ongoing, prospective cohort study of homeless adults in LA County. The study, established in December 2021, investigates health and housing trajectories of the sample using monthly surveys delivered via mobile phones.
- This analysis includes PATHS participants from 2022-2026 who completed a baseline survey and at least two monthly surveys (N=1,432; total observations=16,480).

METHODS

- Descriptive and bivariate association analyses as well as exploratory temporal associations have been completed.
- Random intercept models are being developed to disentangle within- and between-person variance for both substance use and experience of discrimination. Sequence analysis will also be performed to assess longitudinal patterns.
- To further assess the impact of attrition, analyses will be replicated on sub-sample of >1 year from enrollment.

GENERAL ASSOCIATIONS

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of study sample (N=1,432)

Age at enrollment	40.2 (12.1)
Sex/Gender	
Male	763 (53.3%)
Female	633 (44.2%)
Other/PNTA	36 (2.5%)
Race/ethnicity	
Any Hispanic/Latino	552 (38.5%)
White (NH)	379 (26.5%)
Black / African American (NH)	342 (23.9%)
Other/Multiracial	105 (7.3%)
Prefer not to answer	54 (3.7%)
Years homeless	6.0 (7.7)

Figure 2. Victimization and substance use prevalence for all observations (n=16,480)

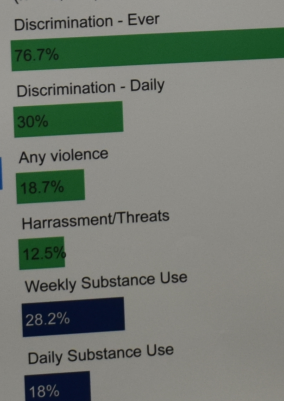


Figure 3. Association between experiences of violence and discrimination and **weekly** substance use (***)

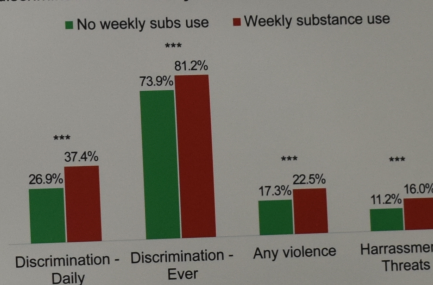
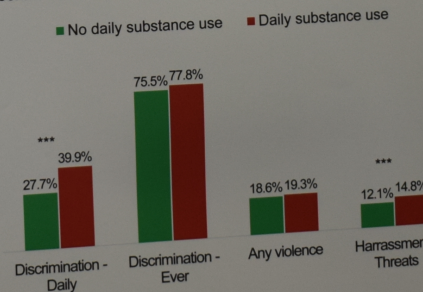


Figure 4. Association between experiences of violence and discrimination and **daily** substance use (***)



TEMPORAL ASSOCIATIONS

Figure 5. Monthly average deviations from grand mean for discrimination and substance use variables

