



Period Prevalence vs. Point-in-Time

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Period Prevalence vs. Point-in-Time

- Period prevalence looks at homelessness over a period of time (e.g. number of individuals using a shelter over a one year period)
- By enumerating homelessness over a period of time, more people are counted because:
 - not everyone experiences homelessness at the same moment in time
 - people move in and out of homelessness
- The only feasible way to count over an extended period of time is using administrative data from homeless shelters; however, not everyone who experiences homelessness uses a shelter
- Point-in-Time counts reach both sheltered and unsheltered individuals but miss those who are not homeless at the time of the count




Period prevalence includes many short-term shelter users

- Results from various communities show that period prevalence counts enumerate between 3 and 10 times as many people as point-in-time counts
- Previous studies show over 80% of people included in period prevalence counts are “transitionally” homeless, meaning their acute homelessness is relatively short in duration (e.g. Kuhn and Culhane 1998, Aubry et al. 2013)
- Analysis of HIFIS data shows that relatively few people use shelters year after year

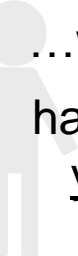


TOTAL NUMBER OF YEARS IN WHICH CLIENTS HAD A SHELTER STAY DURING A FIVE YEAR PERIOD

| | 1 Year (%) | 2 Years (%) | 3 Years (%) | 4 Years (%) | 5 Years (%) |
|---------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Halifax | 72.0 | 19.0 | 5.7 | 2.3 | 1.1 |
| Hamilton | 70.8 | 18.8 | 6.1 | 2.7 | 1.5 |
| Kelowna | 72.7 | 17.1 | 6.4 | 2.8 | 1 |
| Moncton | 73.4 | 17.2 | 5.4 | 2.6 | 1.4 |
| Ottawa | 67.4 | 22.6 | 5.7 | 2.7 | 1.6 |
| Prince George | 64.5 | 18.4 | 8.4 | 4.5 | 4.3 |
| Sudbury | 80.5 | 13.4 | 4.2 | 1.4 | 0.4 |
| St. John's | 76.4 | 16.5 | 5.0 | 1.6 | 0.4 |
| Thompson | 47.2 | 22.1 | 10.9 | 9 | 10.8 |
| Waterloo | 72.1 | 18.5 | 5.9 | 2.3 | 1.2 |
| Winnipeg | 66.3 | 19.6 | 7.8 | 3.7 | 2.6 |



Around **70%** of shelter users had a stay in only one year of the five year period...



...while fewer than **2%** had a stay during every year of the five year period.



Point-in-Time includes many long-term homeless individuals

- Individuals who are chronically or episodically homeless are more likely to be homeless on the day of point-in-time counts
- HIFIS data shows on average about 30% of chronic and episodic shelter users are present in shelter on any given day



Summary

- Period prevalence gives a “big picture” view of the wider homeless population
- Point-in-time zeroes in on the long-term and unsheltered homeless population
- Since period prevalence counts are more likely to include the transitionally homeless and point-in-time counts are more likely to include the chronically/episodically homeless, the percentage of chronic/episodic cannot be compared between the two

