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Housing Quality in Philadelphia, PA: An Urban Health Equity Indicators Approach

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Housing Quality in Philadelphia, PA: An Urban Health Equity Indicators Approach

Philadelphia is also the poorest large city in the country, and many residents live in substandard housing. Poor housing quality is associated with poor physical health outcomes as well as mental health issues (Schilling et al., 2022). Many homes in Philadelphia are of poor quality partially due to the median house age being 93 years, and the fact that 75% of homes are more than 50 years old (Jay, 2017). It has also been found that Black households are disproportionately impacted by housing quality issues. The Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia's Home Repair programs are invaluable, and work with homeowners to maintain safety and security in their homes (Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia, 2023). However, Philadelphia does not have a program in place that regularly inspects rental properties, and instead conducts examinations only in response to formal complaints (The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2023). An urban health equity and adaptive governance approach could be used to address housing quality inequities in Philadelphia through the use of urban health equity indicators (Corburn & Cohen, 2012). To effectively track housing quality in Philadelphia using this approach, I would propose to measure the indicators of Vacant/Abandoned Properties, Lead Exposure, and Physical Property Conditions. Using the urban health equity approach would hopefully promote change at the local or state level in the form of program or policy implementation to improve the health, well-being, and quality of life of people from all racial/ethnic and socioeconomic groups.

Key Words: indicators, housing quality, urban health, adaptive governance, substandard