Elderly Homeless Population with Mental Health

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# Introduction

When it comes to homeless elders or the senior citizens of any state or nation, the common sense approach would make everyone realize at least for once that such people are extra fragile, helpless or liable and prone to violence victimization than any other homeless subpopulation, whether in shelters or on the streets. The massive trauma of being homeless in itself is good enough to make such people mentally ill or unstable. Now the question arises that what are the root causes of this issue and how can it be solved?

The first and foremost factor to be understood is that becoming homeless is a problem which is the amalgamation of personal problems, deinstitutionalization, financial or employment issues and lack of social support ranking amongst the highest possibilities behind the causes of elderly homelessness. After extensive and in-depth exploration and analysis, results have shown that "Addiction or substance dependency" constitutes to be one of the major vindications along with various other underlying probabilities such as insusceptibility and inattentiveness of the policy makers paving a way for gaps and loopholes in proper planning and its execution to eradicate the issue. In order to get a clearer picture, there is a high need to get the hang of the major problems categorically.

# Causes

## Most Prominent Issues

The obvious causes that are eminently visible and agreed by everyone enlists financial issues such as not having enough income to cater the needs of elder, unemployment due to an accident or because of the age factor, not being able to pay the rent, death of a spouse or a loved one who supported, played bills and used to fulfill the emotional and other need. The spouse or a loved one is the only pillar of strength and happiness with whom all the life had been spent and with whom they grew old (Brown et al., 2016). Their death is too devastating to deal with leaving them hopeless and helpless.

## Prime Mental Trauma

When elders are kicked out to be homeless the immediate effect on them is the shock and insult of being left alone to die and feelings of being unwanted and worthless. These feelings of depression have a direct effect on the brain due to which there are cases when the elders in such critical situations could not cope with the trauma and they committed suicide. Others who could not face the bitter reality became a victim of various different psychological issues which makes them the easiest target to the unfortunate events

## Deinstitutionalization

Another issue that is necessary to mention is the deinstitutionalization and inabilities of the policymakers in planning a full proof and reasonable yet effective that would have the capacity to address the issues as well as could be implemented smoothly (Culhane et al., 2018). Only writing or proposing utopian solutions that have no connection with reality or are impossible is a pity and unfortunate as the population of such elders is increasing in different countries by different rates but nobody id serious enough to do something about it. Inspire of the written information, which is undoubtedly useful to some extent, qualifying the services, talking to both the caregivers and elders who have been through this painful process

## The Psychological Perspectives

This is a vast category with limitless arguments but the prime aspects to highlight would be that considering the perspectives of both, the caregiver and the elder, require attention but unfortunately get ignored like they do not exist, to begin with. In fact, the perspective of both is strong enough to become one of the major justifications of elderly homelessness and making it easier or a little less complicated (Brown et al., 2016). The caretakers of elder people with mental health issues may feel trapped and bounded as they may think that they cannot be in a proper relationship considering that elder as a burden who is somehow a hurdle in the personal or private life of the caregiver because it is an unavoidable reality that elders need loads of care even if they are mentally stable, they have some psychological requirements to be fulfilled, rather than just being fed, given a roof and a bed.

Due to the age factor, elders are more sensitive and vulnerable, if their psychological needs such as spending time with them, showing love and care, being compassionate and humble and respecting them by being considerate. They may get depressed, isolated and aggressive enough to become homeless by indulging themselves in drug usages such as substance dependency, alcoholism, gambling or any other situation which the caregiver may not want to deal with and would want the easy-way-out without thinking about the consequences, The aim neither is to play a blame game by giving a biased opinion or by favoring any one of the two, rather the purpose is to put an effort by brainstorming and coming up with different solutions which are only possible if the intensity and severity has been realized. Awareness and empathy are the key points of the elderly homelessness which is spreading in the communities like a plague.

# Possible Solutions

## Employment

Employment is an amazing solution for homeless elders. They should be given jobs according to their mental capabilities which would be helpful in many ways. Firstly. they would not feel worthless as they would have a reason to believe that they are contributing to the community in some way. Secondly, it would keep them busy and distracted through which they would not get a lot of time to think about the traumas they have through and last but not the least, they must get paid which would solve their problem if homelessness as they would have recourse and money to payments.

## Institutionalization

The NGOs and the government should work on this problem and institutionalize by admitting such homeless elders in institutions in which their welfare and proper treatment must be the topmost priority and under the surveillance of professional and proficient psychiatrists, psychologists and therapists, etc. Addicted or substance dependent elders must have special institutions having a comfortable environment and proper equipment and set up to cure them and bring them back to reality (Bamberger et al., 2015). Temporary relief and escape from reality is not a healthy way to deal with difficult situations. It is a cause of severe mental health deterioration and poses a great threat to their lives.

## Improving Care Centers

By improving the performance of attendants in the shelters, which is only possible, if the related, as well as the concerned departments and authorities, would give some kind of bonus or incentive to the attendants and other workers would definitely increase the standards. This is not nor it, must the shelters be inspected regularly for assurance of the proper plan follow up without any neglection of any sort.

## Rationality

The rational and practical decisions must be taken after carefully formulating it with a mutual collaboration of experts and veterans of the related fields. It would be helpful for some but not at all for the others (Culhane et al., 2018). The aim must be to decrease the population of such people instead of increasing and ignoring. The success would be when there would be a drastic decrease in the number of homeless elders with mental health issues.

## Tolerance

Tolerance in those who take care of elders would be so helpful that it would have unexpected positive results. For this, tolerance and empathy are the two effective feelings that would work as a remedy. Patience and the determination to fulfill the responsibilities of our loved ones without chickening out in the hard times and fulfilling their duties thinking of them as their basic rights which must be given to them would prove to be of immense advantage (Bamberger et al., 2015).

## Self Help

Self-help and the will power are also an essential requirement to start a new life and move on. No one can help a person if that person is not willing to be helped. Losing hope and giving up on life would just make it even more miserable. Determination can make things easier and at least better if not perfect. Though it all sounds cliché and cheesy it is genuinely true. and some kind of incentive, in fact, planned incentives according to the conditions and history of the suffered elder homeless people would help them and it would give them a reason to live (Brown et al., 2016).

# The Un-hidden reality

The 21st century is a real world which is paradise to some and to some it is worse than hell. This issue is an extremely broad and diverse issue that had numerous different and unique aspects. It would be a white lie to say that the recovery and rehabilitation of each and every single homeless elder or senior is possible or that every homeless elder who is suffering from mental health problems of any sort would be cured one day. This sounds like a piece of music to ears but the reality is completely opposite to it,

# Conclusion

There is a high need for humanity to consider it as an important issue that needs proper attention and implementations of useful and helpful solutions. They are also humans and deserve to be treated like one. No matter if they are liable and vulnerable now. Everyone must not forget the services they had been paying all their lives whether personally or socially. And now when they need us the most, deserting them would be the most inhumane decision. The elders deserve respect and it is their right.

Social acceptance and collaboration would help a lot. If one cannot respect them and do not have the courtesy to be nice and kind of them, even then at a minimal, their basic rights must be given to them no matter what. Those basic rights must at least include food, clothing, and shelter. People should be ashamed of themselves when they walk on the streets and ignorantly keep on moving in our own lives harmoniously when some elders who are at the age of probably our fathers and grandfathers, are living on the streets, having a life that is worse than animals.

Even the thought of such traumatic future tends to provide chills. Such homeless elders with or without mental health issues deserve comfort, rest, emotional and mental health and they deserve to have peace of mind and the facilities which includes at least sleeping under a roof where they would feel safe and would not have the fear of being mugged, raped or any other unforeseeable and dangerous incidents which could and it does happen to them when they are homeless. They get raped, mugged, bullied and all kinds of heart-breaking events just because society has marginalized them and left them There is a dire need of policy revision related to this issue specifically.

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