

## **Health Challenges of First Time Homeless Older Adults Living in Extended Stay Hotels.**

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Increasing numbers of adults 50 and over are experiencing homelessness for the first time. In the search for affordable housing, many seek shelter in extended stay hotels. Despite meeting basic needs, these living conditions can evoke physical, psychological and social stressors that negatively affect health for this growing subset of homeless. While some participants report health issues that led to unemployment and homelessness, others state their mental and physical health concerns are a result of their homeless experience.

Nine older extended stay hotel residents were recruited from a northeast suburban county in Metro Atlanta, across three qualitative research studies between 2006-2012, using flyers and snowball sampling. In each study, residents participated in one-hour in-depth interviews and were asked to describe experiences of “home” at extended stay hotels after housing displacement. Primary and secondary data analysis using constant comparative methods was used to identify descriptions of first-time housing displacement experiences and reasons for extended hotel tenures. Three categories of loss were identified to explain transitions into hotel homelessness: health loss, companion loss, and income loss. Additionally, health expenses and inadequate access to community resources delayed exits from hotel homelessness. Environment-based health stressors and implications for practice will also be presented.