Homeless Veterans: Family Contact and Family Support

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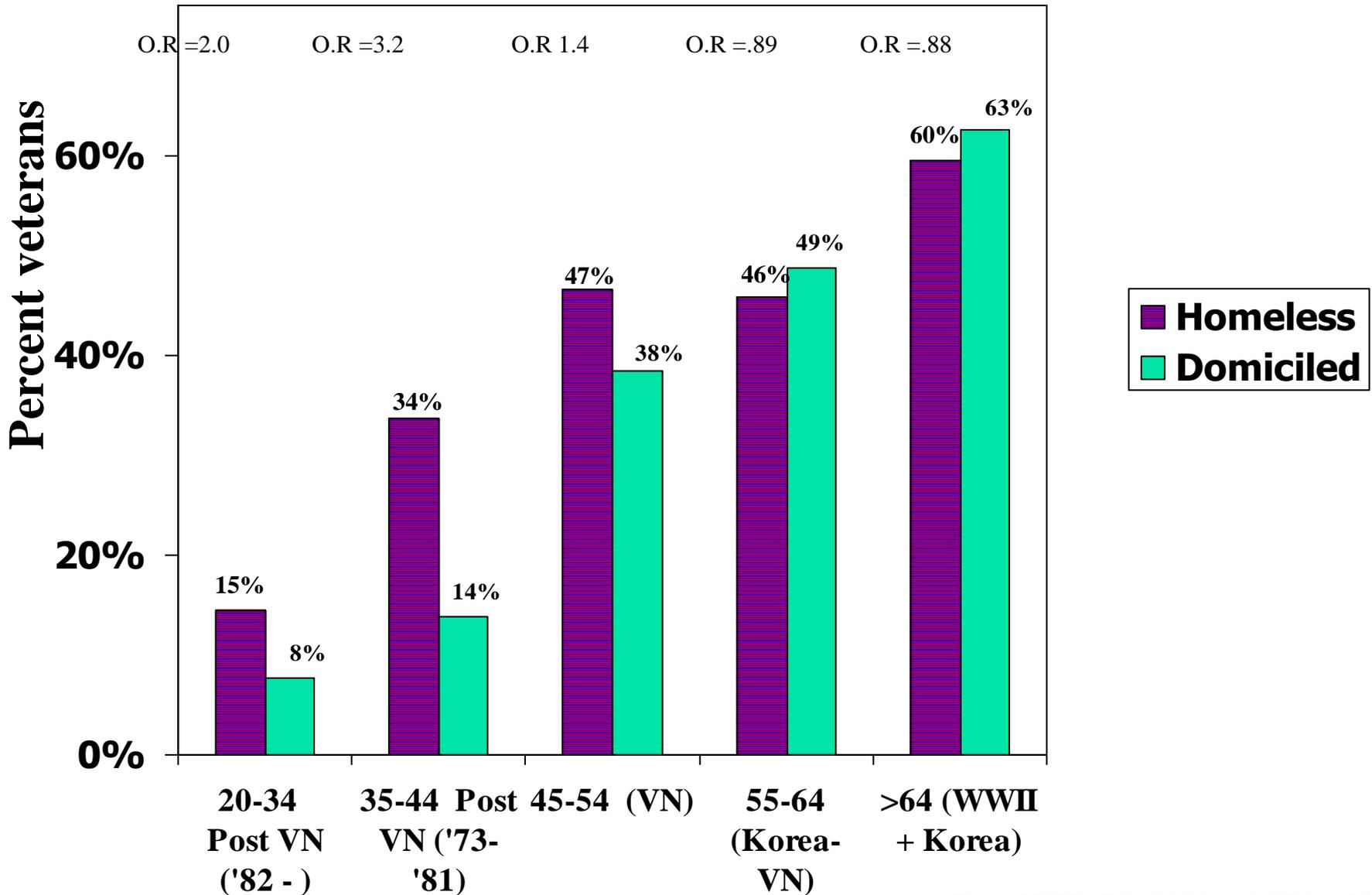
Risk factors for Homelessness Among Veterans: Highlights

- Alcohol and Drug Abuse increase risk 2-5 times
  - stronger risk risk factor than mental illness alone (NCS, NESARCH, Edens et al. 2011)
- VA service connection is strongest measurable protective factor, reducing homelessness risk by 62% (greater than 50% SC) or 47% (less than 50% SC)
- OEF/OIF veterans were 65% less likely to have been homeless than other veterans
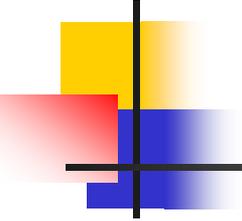- Female veterans 3-4 times greater risk than female non-veterans

Edens E, Kasprow W, Tsai, Rosenheck RA (2011). Association of Substance use and VA service-connected disability benefits with risk of homelessness among veterans. The American Journal on Addictions; 20 (5): 412-419.

FIGURE 1. Structural Equation Model of Homelessness Among Veterans of the Vietnam War Era[a]
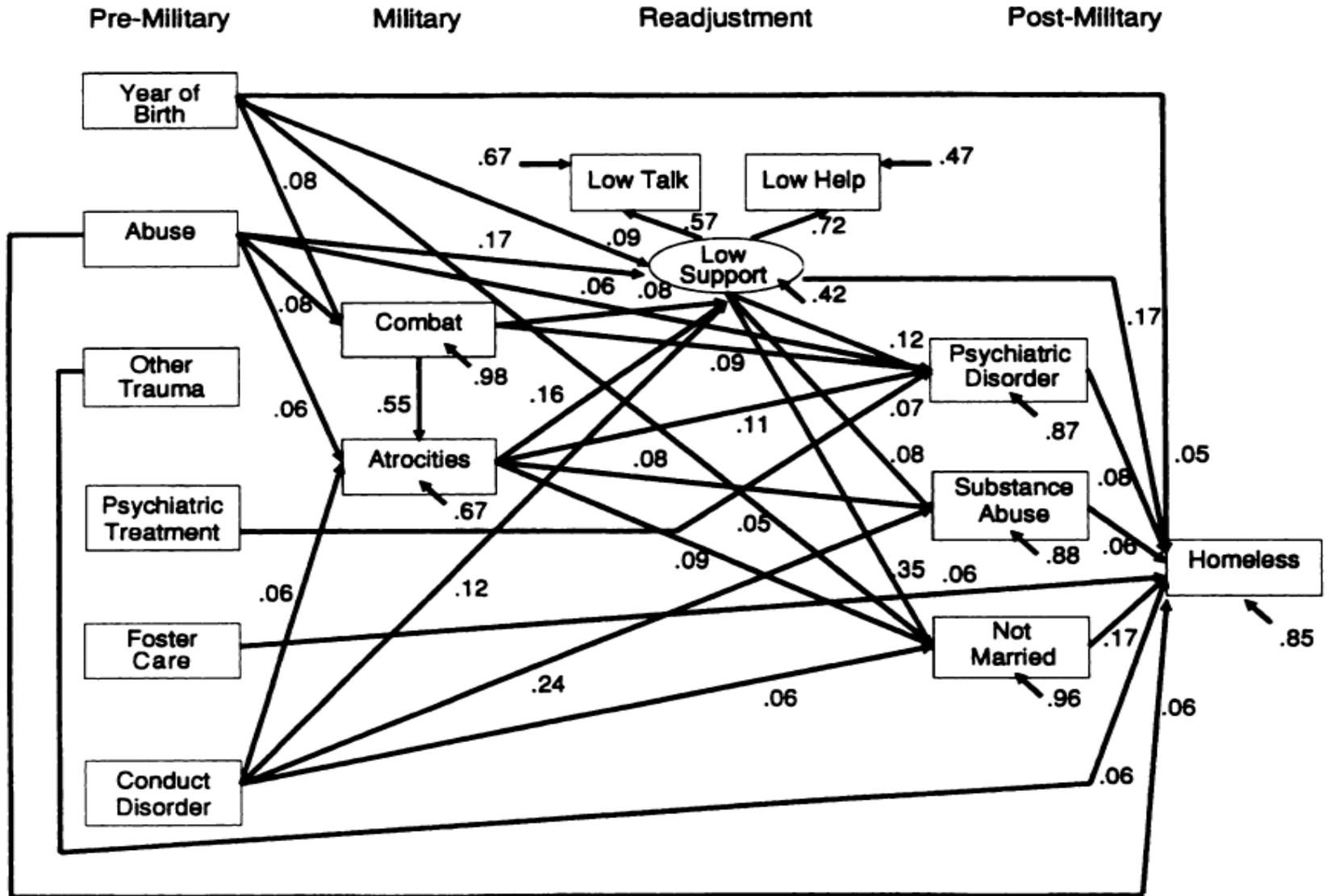
From "Rosenheck RA and Fontana AF (1994) A Model of Homelessness Among Male Veterans of the Vietnam Generation. American Journal of Psychiatry 151:421-427"

Percentage of veterans among homeless and domiciled US males in 1996: by age group


O.R =2.0   O.R =3.2   O.R 1.4   O.R =.89   O.R =.88

Percent veterans

- **Homeless**
- **Domiciled**

Age group	Homeless	Domiciled
20-34 Post VN ('82 -)	15%	8%
35-44 Post VN ('73-'81)	34%	14%
45-54 (VN)	47%	38%
55-64 (Korea-VN)	46%	49%
>64 (WWII + Korea)	60%	63%

From NSHAPC, 2000 and CPS, 1996

Current Family Status Among Homeless Veterans (N=43,853)

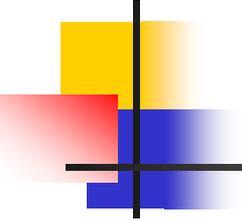|	Male (95%)	Female (5%)
Married	9.6%	8.6%
Were Married	63.0%	63.9%
Never Married	27.4%	27.5%
Children		
Custody	12.8%	33.3%
Living w	8.2%	27.8%

Family Relationships (N=1,493)
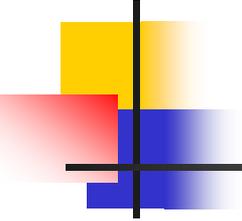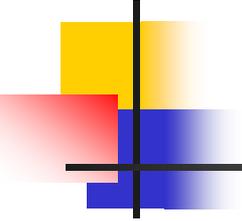
- One close family member   84%
- Number of close family members 6.6
- Family Support
    - Could get a loan of $100   52.7%
    - Could get help with a ride   43.4%
    - Could get emotional support if suicidal   55.7%
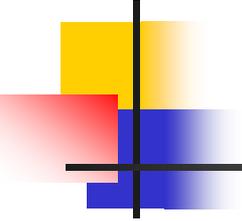
Family Relationships(2) (N=1,493)

| Family of…	Origin	Procreation
One close rel.	76.2%	57.2%
Number of rels.	4.0	1.5
Support		
Loan	45.1%	18.7%
Ride	35.4%	16.4%
Emotional	48.7%	23.5%

Four Group Classification (N=1,439)

- Family and non-kin peer support N=183 (51.9%)
- Family Only   N= 278 (19.3%)
- Non-kin peer Only N= 230 (15.9%)
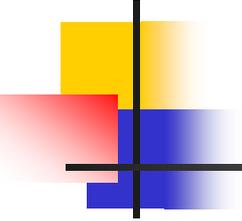- Neither peer nor family N= 183 (12.7%)

Group Comparisons: Social

	Close Inds.	Social Supp Indx
Fam and Peer	14.5	10.8
Family Only	9.8	4.8
Peer Only	8.6	4.5
Neither	6.4	2.4
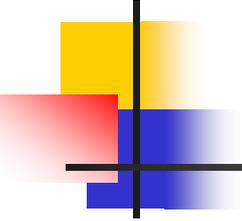
Group Comparisons: Social

	Netwk	Contact index
Fam and Peer	13.4	40.0
Family Only	9.3	22.8
Peer Only	7.6	22.4
Neither	4.3	8.9

Group Comparisons: Social

	Cls Fam	Cls Peers	Cls Prov
Fam and Peer	6.8	4.8	1.8
Family Only	6.3	2.0	1.0
Peer Only	2.6	3.6	1.4
Neither	2.5	1.0	0.7
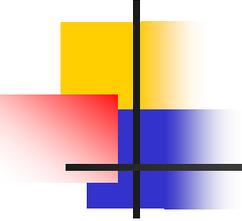
Group Comparisons: Sociodemographics

	Age	Black	Times HIs
Fam and Peer	42	57%	2.4
Family Only	43	57%	2.3
Peer Only	45	43%	2.6
Neither	44	38%	2.7
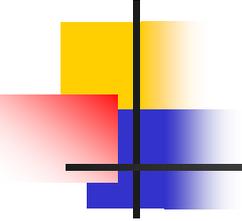
Group Comparisons: Clinical

	Alc	Drug	Schiz.	Sx.
Fam and Peer	<u>70%</u>	<u>61%</u>	4.9%	.21
Family Only	62%	57%	11.7%	.24
Peer Only	<u>73%</u>	45%	5%	.28
Neither	61%	38%	<u>17.9%</u>	<u>.33</u>
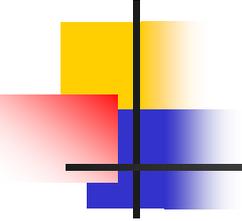
Group Comparisons: Communty Adjustment

	Days Empl	QOL	Abused
Fam and Peer	4.9	4.3	36%
Family Only	3.6	4.0	37%
Peer Only	4.3	3.9	51%
Neither	2.7	3.7	55%

Comparison of Homeless Vets (NM=1,439) and Service Users with Serious Mental Illness (SMI)(N=539)
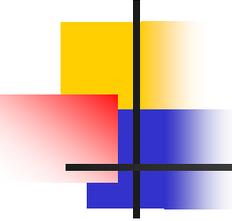
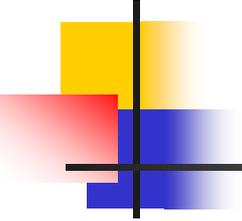|	Homeless	SMI
Support Netwk	10.5	10.0
Close fam of orig	2.5	3.0***
Close fam of proc	1.5	0.8***
Close Extended fam	1.6	1.8 ns
Close peers	3.6	2.8***
Close Providers	1.4	1.6*

*p<.05, *** p<.001
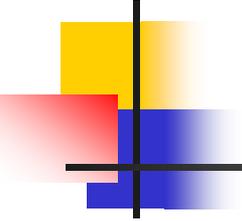
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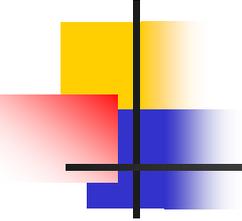|	Homeless	SMI
Netwk Contact Inx	29.9	34.5***
Total Support	6.6	6.2
Loan	1.5	1.8***
Ride	2.1	1.8***
Emotional help	2.9	2.6***

*p<.05, *** p<.001

Conclusions (1)

- Homelessness among adult veterans reflects material marginalization due to multiple factors:income, social ties, SMI.

- No evidence suggests that military service itself, or even combat exposure, is a major risk factor for homelessness among US veterans.
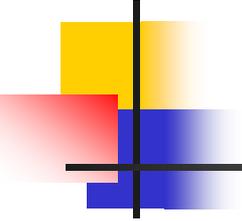
Conclusions (2)

- While few adult veterans are married most have extensive family and other social relationships involving feelings of closeness and receipt of support.

- A relatively small proportion (13%) report no natural supports while 70% receive some family support.

Conclusions (3)

- Family support is associated with
  - being African American,
  - drug abuse,
  - Not having schizophrenia or SMI
  - having fewer psychiatric symptoms,
  - current employment,
  - absence of reported child abuse.
- Comparison with non-homeless people with SMI reveals mixed findings
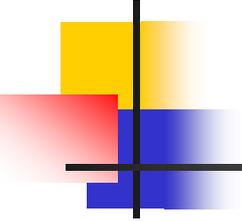
Concluding Question

- Effective services:
  - Subsidized housing
  - Supported employment
  - Benefits facilitation
- What is the a role of family intervention in serving homeless veterans?