

Study warns of enormous impact of evictions on mental health

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Psychologists from the University of Granada, together with researchers from the Andalusian School of Public Health (Escuela Andaluza de Salud Pública - EASP) have conducted an in-depth study on the effects of evictions on mental health. Their research, which was recently published in the *Spanish Journal of Psychology*, demonstrates that those who have been evicted from their homes suffer from very high levels of anxiety and depression. Specifically, 88 percent of participants in the study suffered from anxiety and 91 percent from depression.

Gender differences were found in both instances, with women displaying more acute symptoms of anxiety and depression than men. Scores in perceived stress were also high, although no [gender differences](#) were found. 205 research volunteer participants from the Stop Evictions Platform (Plataforma Stop Desahucios), which operates in Granada and its metropolitan area, were interviewed on an individual basis in order to conduct the study.

Psychopathological symptoms

Dr. Humbelina Robles Ortega, a senior lecturer at the University of Granada and one of the researchers behind this significant research project, says, "Without a doubt, one of the most striking pieces of data that we have obtained is the high incidence rate of [posttraumatic stress disorder](#) (PTSD) symptoms among individuals going through a dramatic event such as an eviction. Years can elapse between the very beginning

of the process, when it becomes difficult to pay the mortgage every month, and the moment when a family is evicted from their home."

This entails a prolonged period of stress. "These people must deal with a threatening situation and deep uncertainty when they wake up every morning and when they go to bed every night, which affects their physical and psychological well-being." PTSD can develop when a person undergoes a traumatic experience in a state of fear, helplessness, and dread.

"We have established that a very high proportion of the participants (72.50 percent of those interviewed) experience the threat of losing their home in a state of fear, helplessness, and dread," Dr. Robles Ortega says. Gender differences were also observed in the appearance of [post-traumatic stress disorder](#) (PTSD) symptoms, with women also scoring higher than men in this area.

These findings have important clinical, social and political implications which, according to Dr. Robles Ortega, "call for urgent measures to be introduced in order to adequately protect the [mental health](#) of those affected." Moreover, effective policies are required to develop alternative solutions to the final stages of the eviction process in its current form.

More information: Humbelina Robles-Ortega et al, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Symptomatology in People affected by Home Eviction in Spain, *The Spanish Journal of Psychology* (2017). [DOI: 10.1017/sjp.2017.56](#)

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