

# **The Relationship Between Social Determinants of Health and Substance Abuse at a Federally Qualified Health Center in Rhode Island**

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## **Introduction**

Substance use disorder (SUD) has a large impact on patient health in a multi-faceted way as do social determinants of health (SDoH). However the relationship between substance use and specific SDoH is unclear. The Comprehensive Community Action Program (CCAP) includes federally qualified health centers (FQHC) and has four sites in Rhode Island, serving vulnerable patient populations. This needs assessment aims to assess the correlation between SUD, especially smoking, to SDoH at CCAP, and to determine if any SDoHs impose a greater risk of substance use.

## **Methods**

We conducted a retrospective chart review of FQHC patients across 4 locations, Cranston, Coventry, PCP and Warwick. Data was collected from a convenience sample of patients 18 years or older that completed a 15-item SDoH screening questionnaire between 10/01/2019 and 12/31/2019 (n=215). Chart review data was analyzed for prevalence of SUD, correlation between SDOH and SUD, relative risk of SUD per each SDoH factor, and percentage of patients treated for their SUD.

## **Results**

Prevalence of any substance use was 38.6%, and 33.95% for tobacco use. Correlation between tobacco use and SDoH scores was  $r = -.477$ , however SDoH scores 5 thru 9 were greatly underrepresented (less than 6 patients per category). Excluding SDoH scores 5 thru 9, correlation was  $r = .935$ . Correlation between non-tobacco SUD and all SDoH scores was  $r = .221$ ; excluding scores 5 thru 9  $r = .948$ . Relative risk assessment showed patients with utility insecurity, child care issues, and food insecurity were most at risk for SUD. Lastly, 18.9% of patients successfully quit tobacco while 44.1% quit non-tobacco substances.

## **Discussion**

We found a strong positive correlation between SDoH and SUD and a greater risk of substance use for patients with certain SDoH factors. This analysis may help inform future practice in tackling substance use disorder, including tobacco use.

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