

Understanding the Vulnerabilities of Unsheltered Homeless Individuals

What the VI-SPDAT Can Tell Us





Agenda

- Research Questions
- Overview of the Data
- Demographic and health characteristics of the unsheltered population
- Vulnerabilities by gender, race, and length of housing instability
- With all factors combined, what drives police contacts and emergency service use?



Research Questions

- What are the demographic and health characteristics of the unsheltered homeless population?
- How do the unsheltered compare to sheltered population?
- Are there differences in vulnerability, emergency service usage, and police contacts among the unsheltered across gender, ethnicity, or length of time since last stable housing?
- What explains the differences in police contacts and emergency service use?



Overview of Data

- 64,508 VI-SPAT assessments collected over 3 years (2/2015-4/2018)
- Unsheltered and sheltered adults (25+) in 15 states from across the US
- Entire community or a single service organization within a community represented
- Convenience sample – no expectation that it is nationally representative
- Data provided to NAEH and CPL by Iain DeJong, OrgCode

What are the demographic and health characteristics of the unsheltered homeless population?

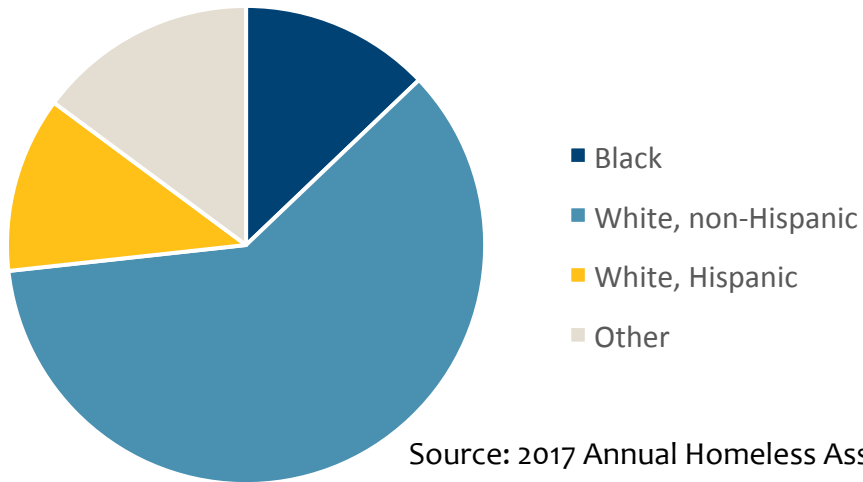
How do they compare to individuals in shelters?



Ethnicity and Race in Homeless Population

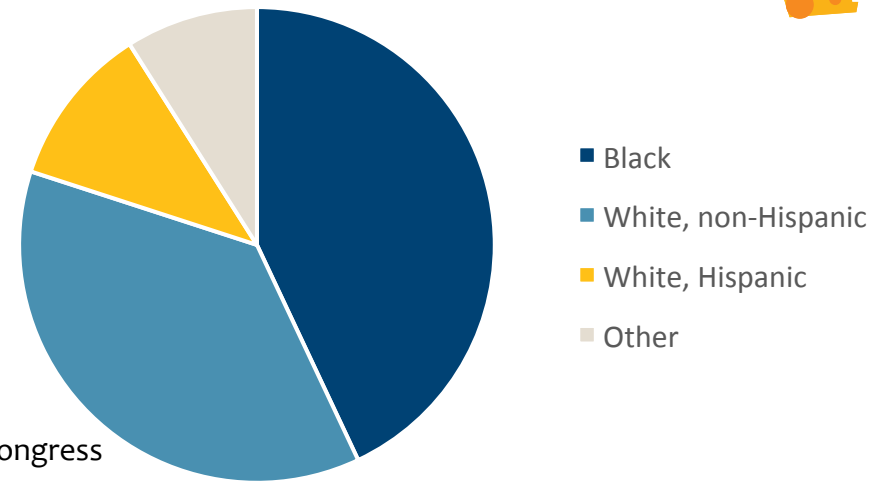


US Population, AHAR 2017

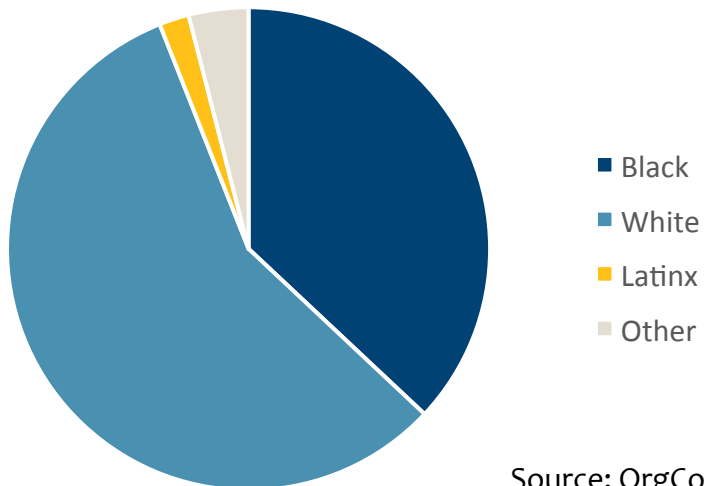


Source: 2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress

Sheltered People, AHAR 2017

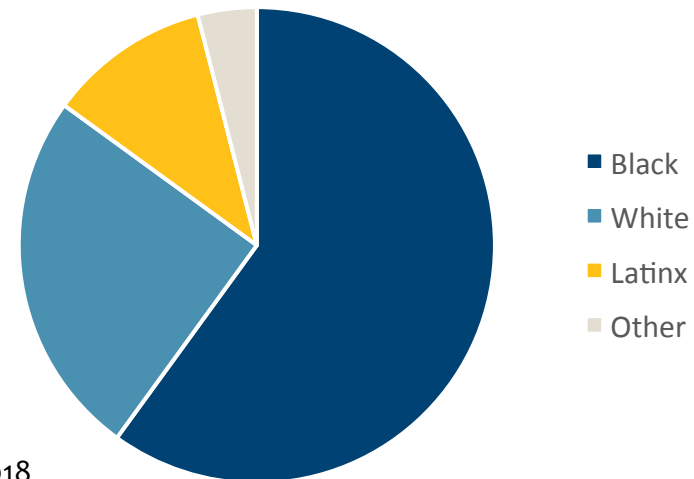


Unsheltered VI-SPDAT sample

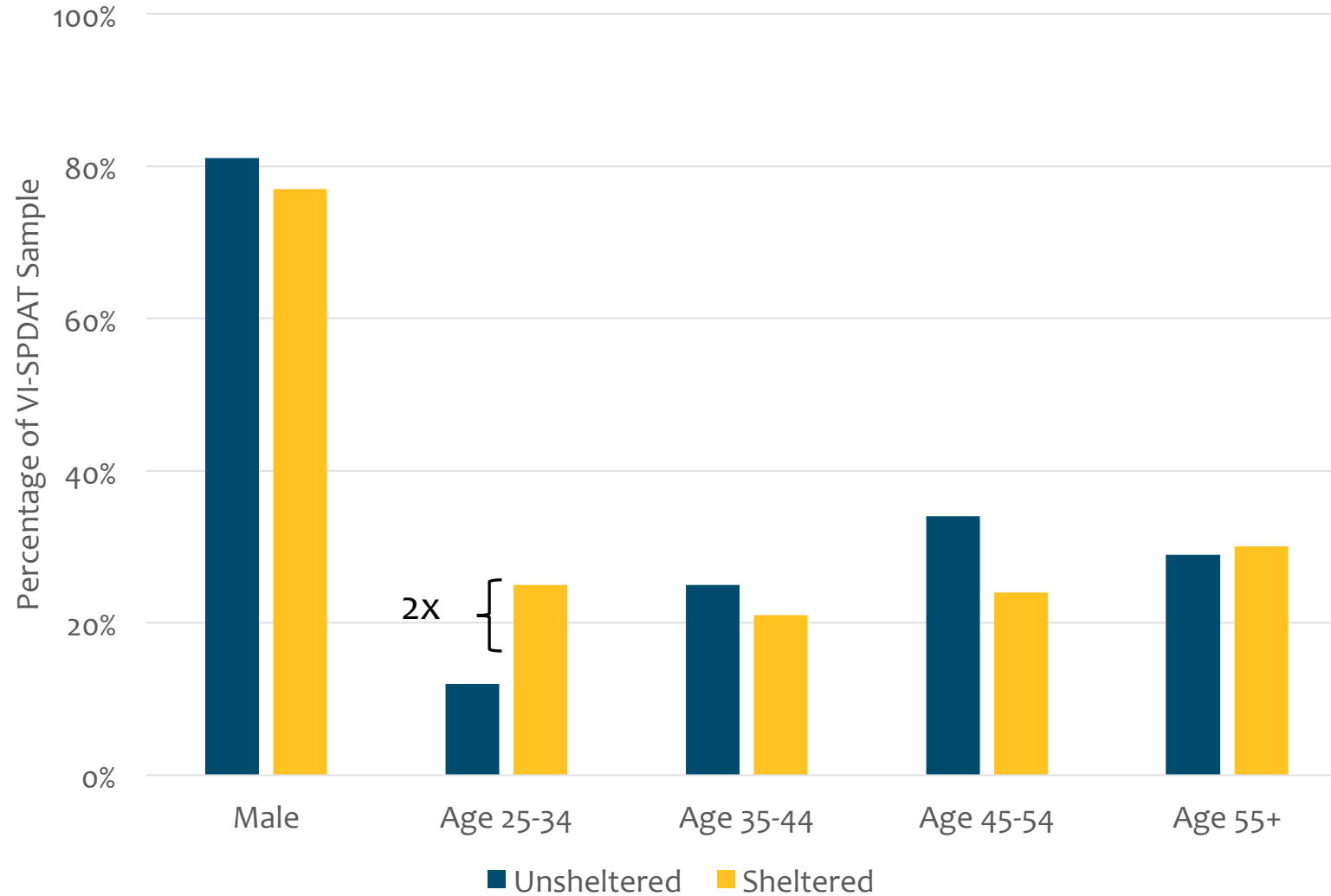


Source: OrgCode VI-SPDAT Assessments, 2015-2018

Sheltered VI-SPDAT sample



Gender and Age among Assessed Individuals

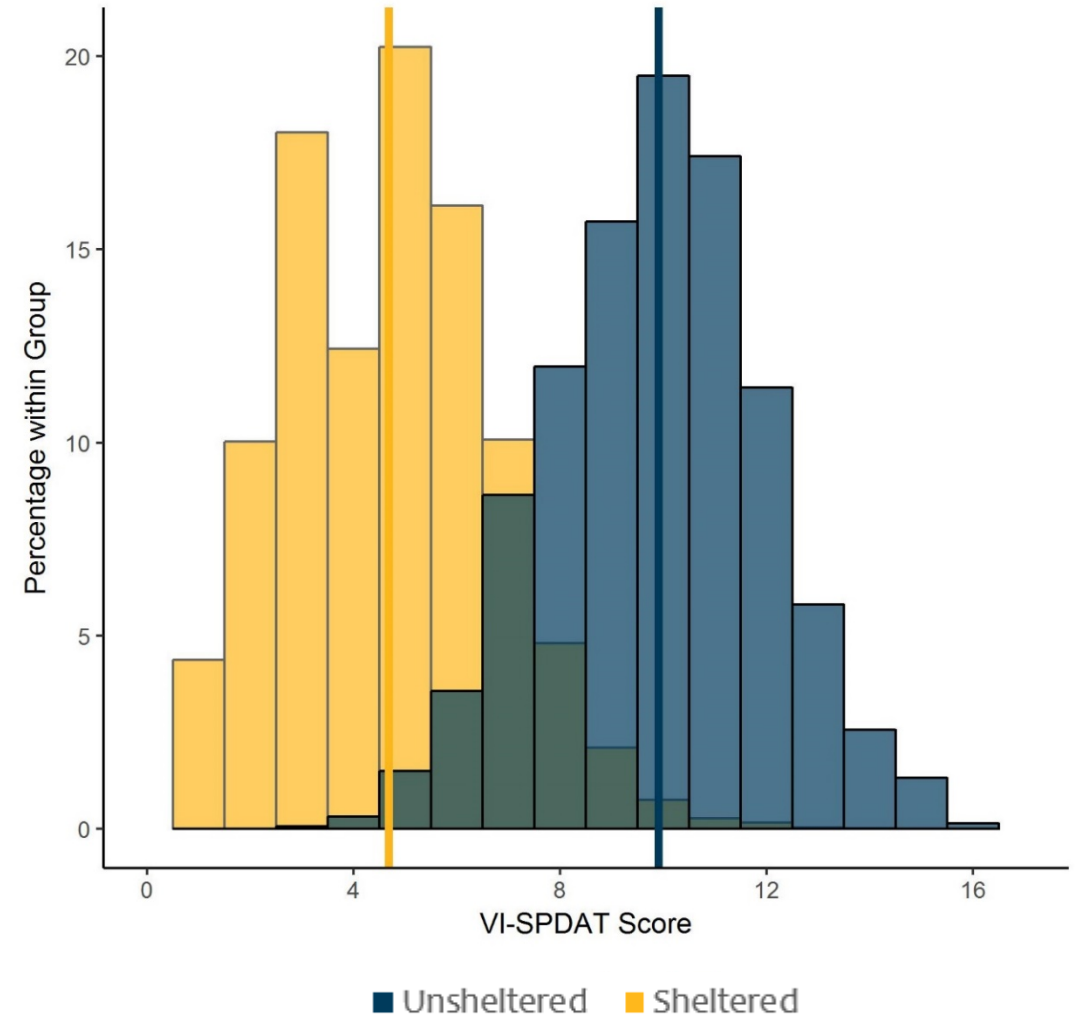




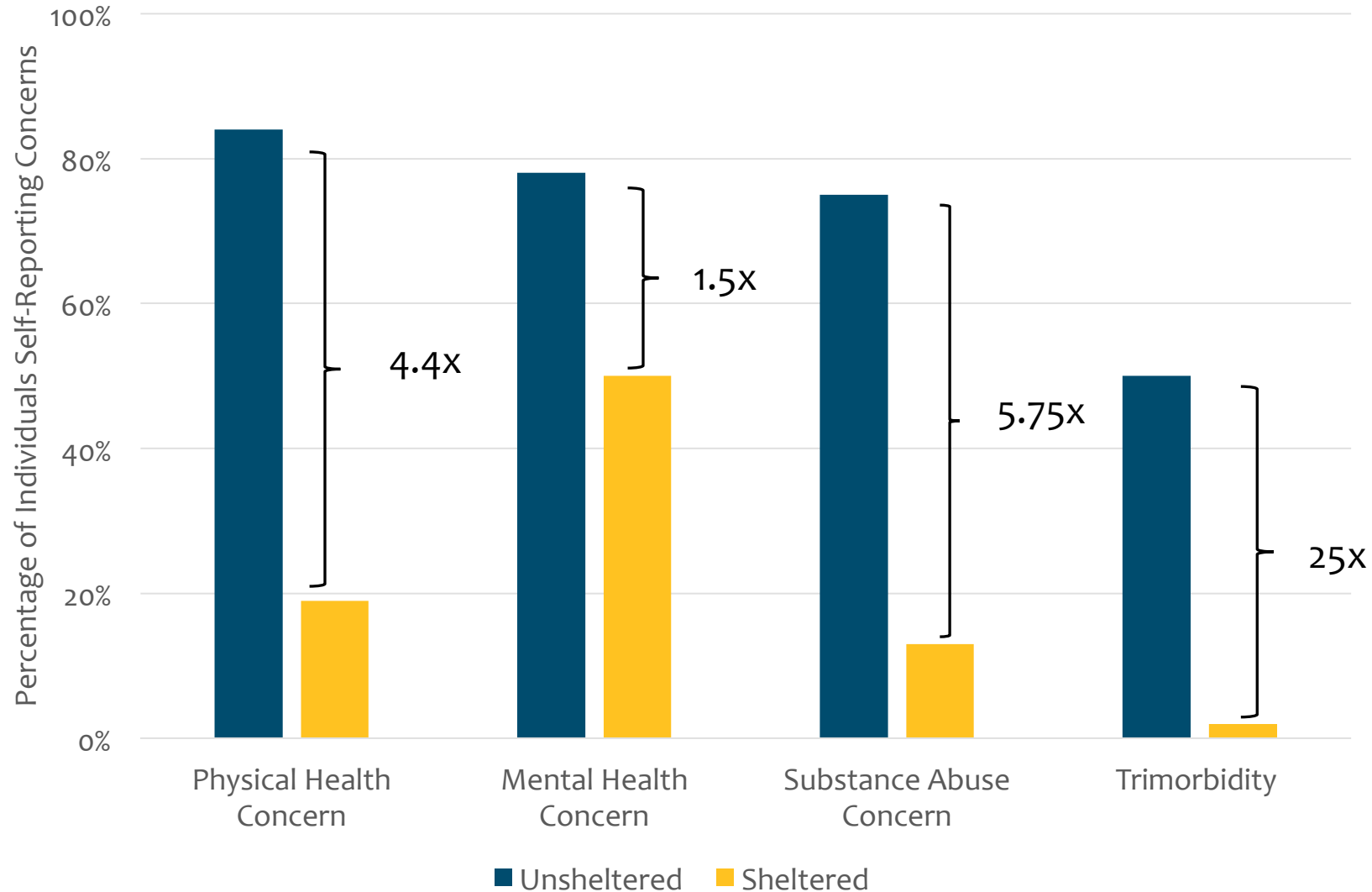
VI-SPDAT Score

On average, unsheltered score twice as high on VI-SPDAT as sheltered individuals.

Nearly entire sheltered sample scores below the average unsheltered individual

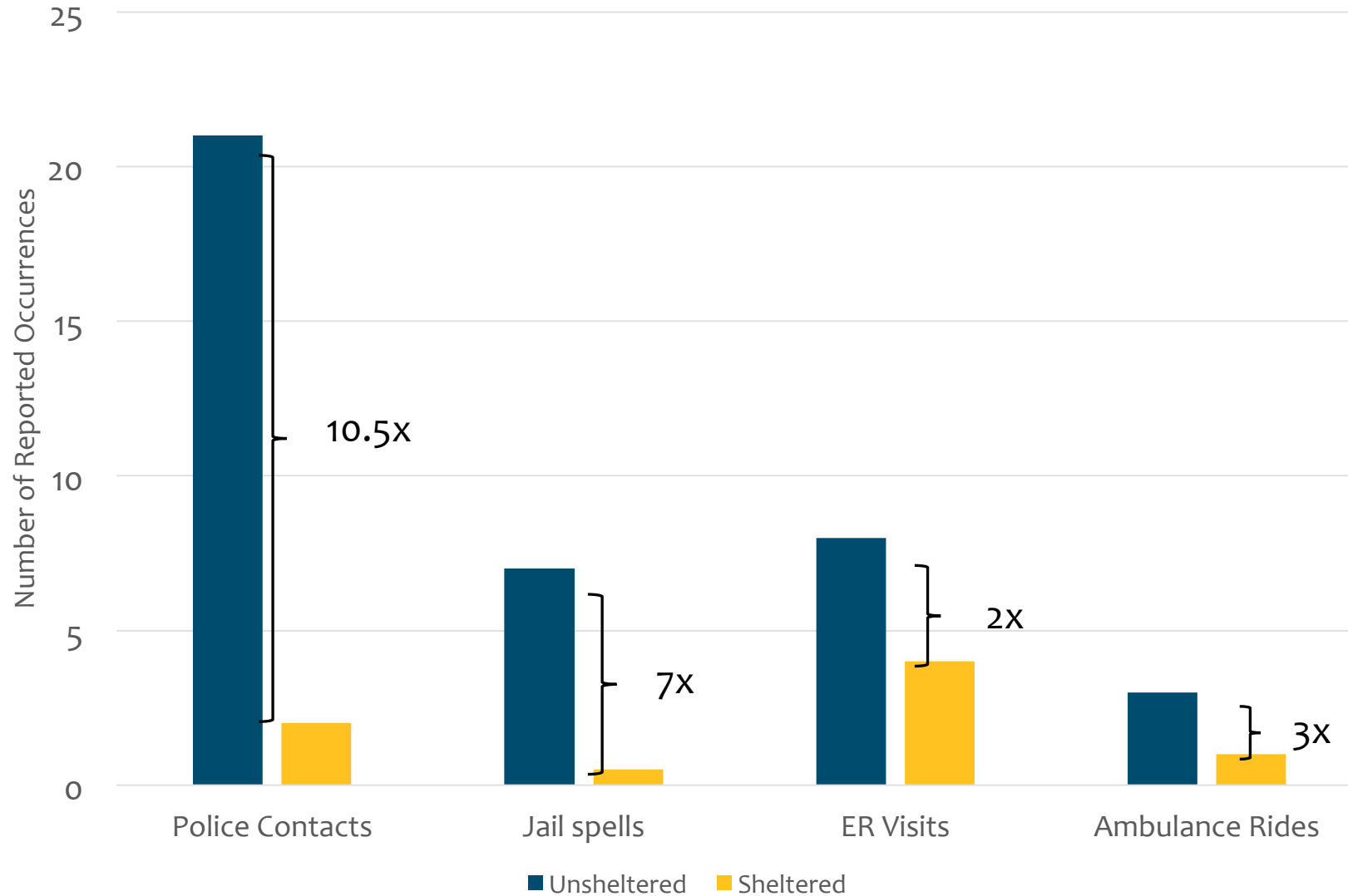


Self-Reported Health Concerns at Assessment



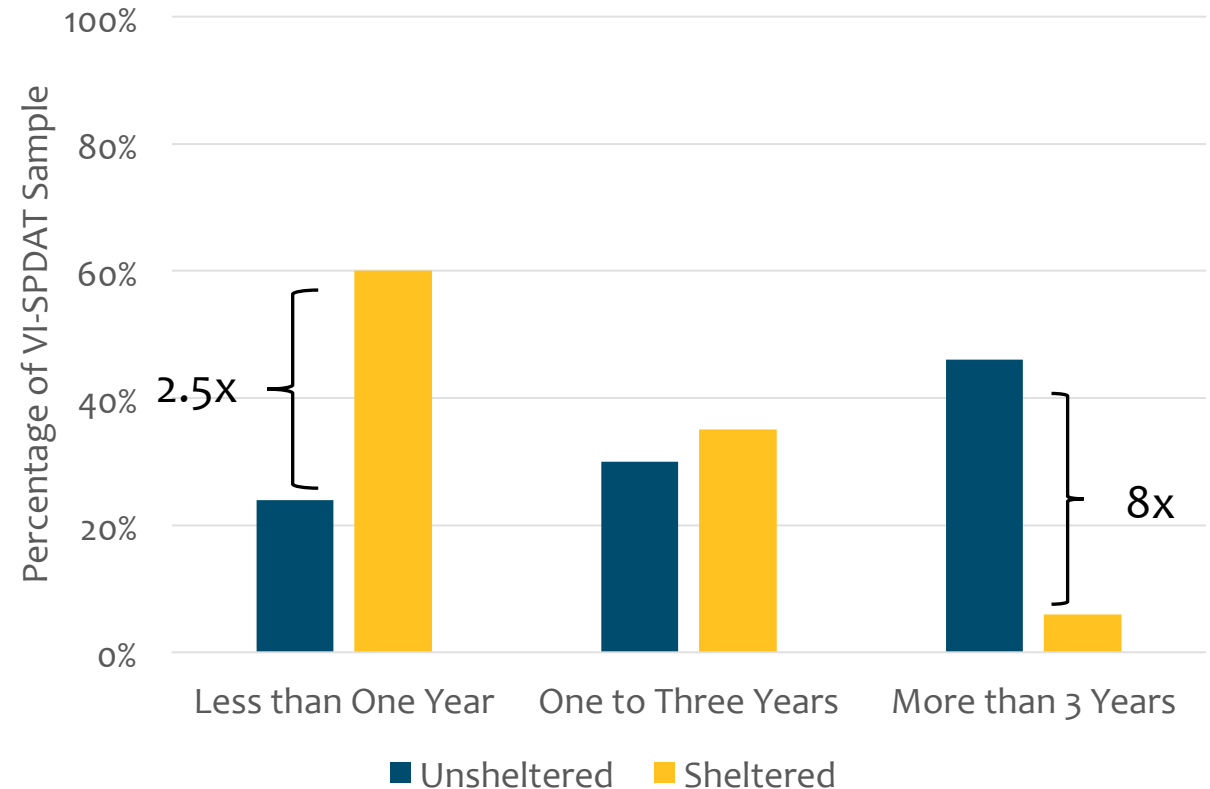
Individuals with trimorbidity have reported having each of the three health concerns

Police Contacts and Emergency Service Usage, Previous 6 Months



Time Since Last Stable Housing

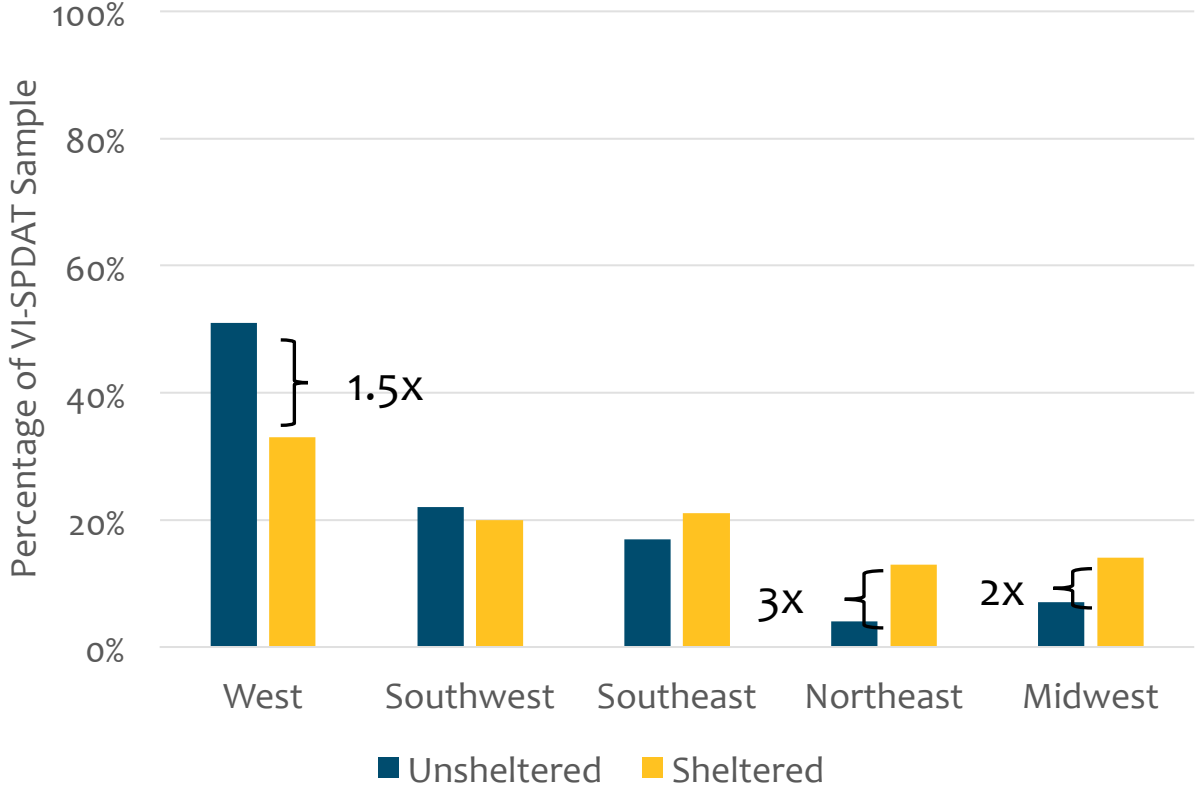
- Over half of all individuals in shelter have been unstably housed less than one year.
- Unsheltered have been unstably housed an average of nearly **6 years** longer than sheltered individuals.





Regional Differences

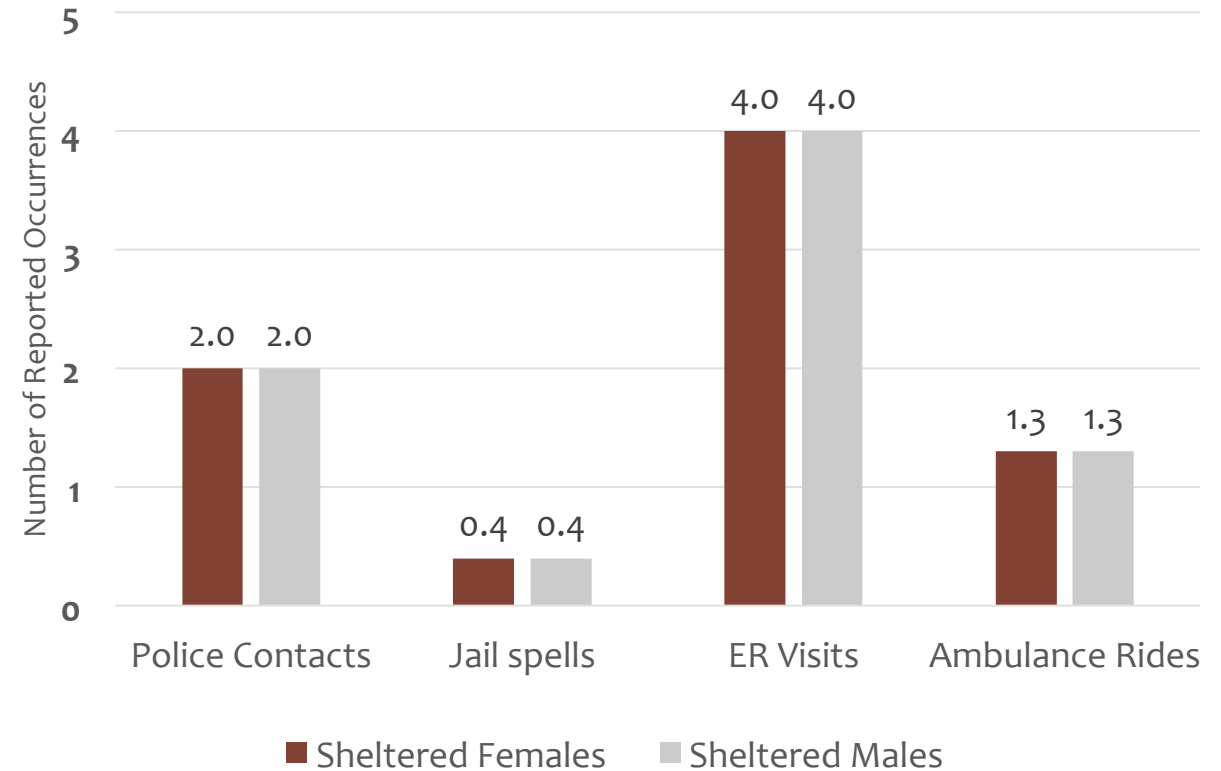
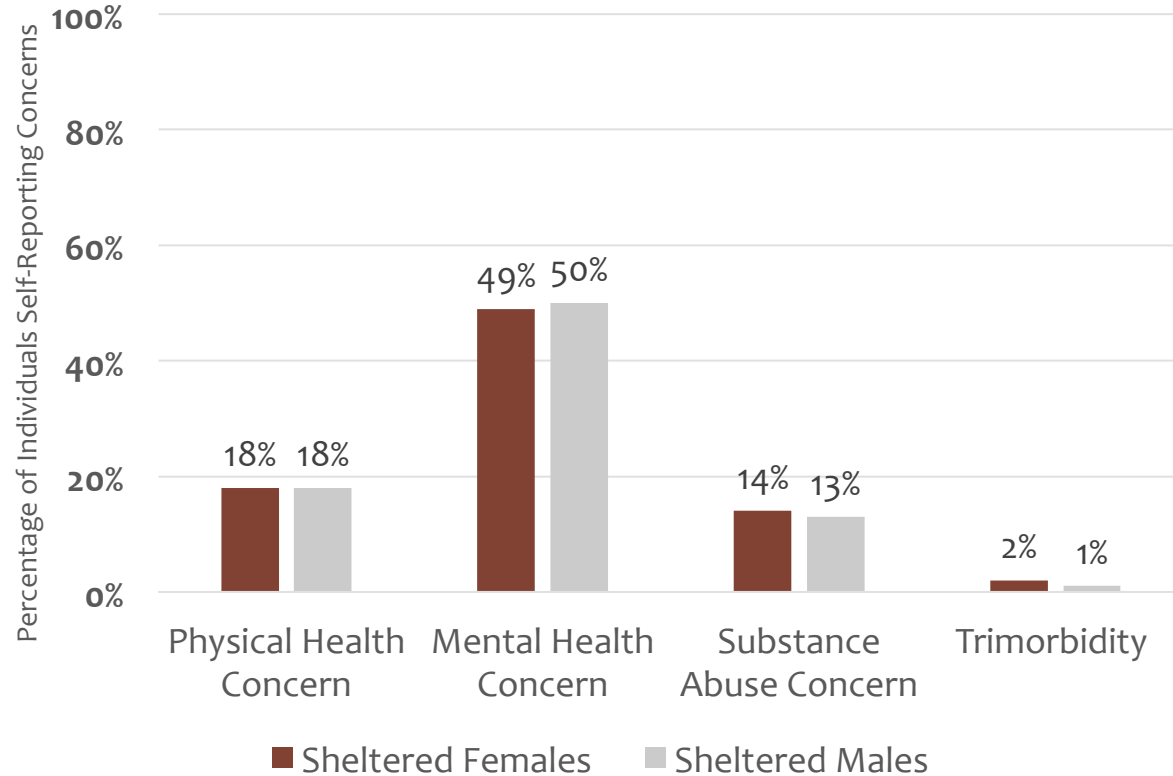
- West and southwest regions have more unsheltered individuals than midwest and eastern regions.



Are there differences among the sheltered or unsheltered by gender?



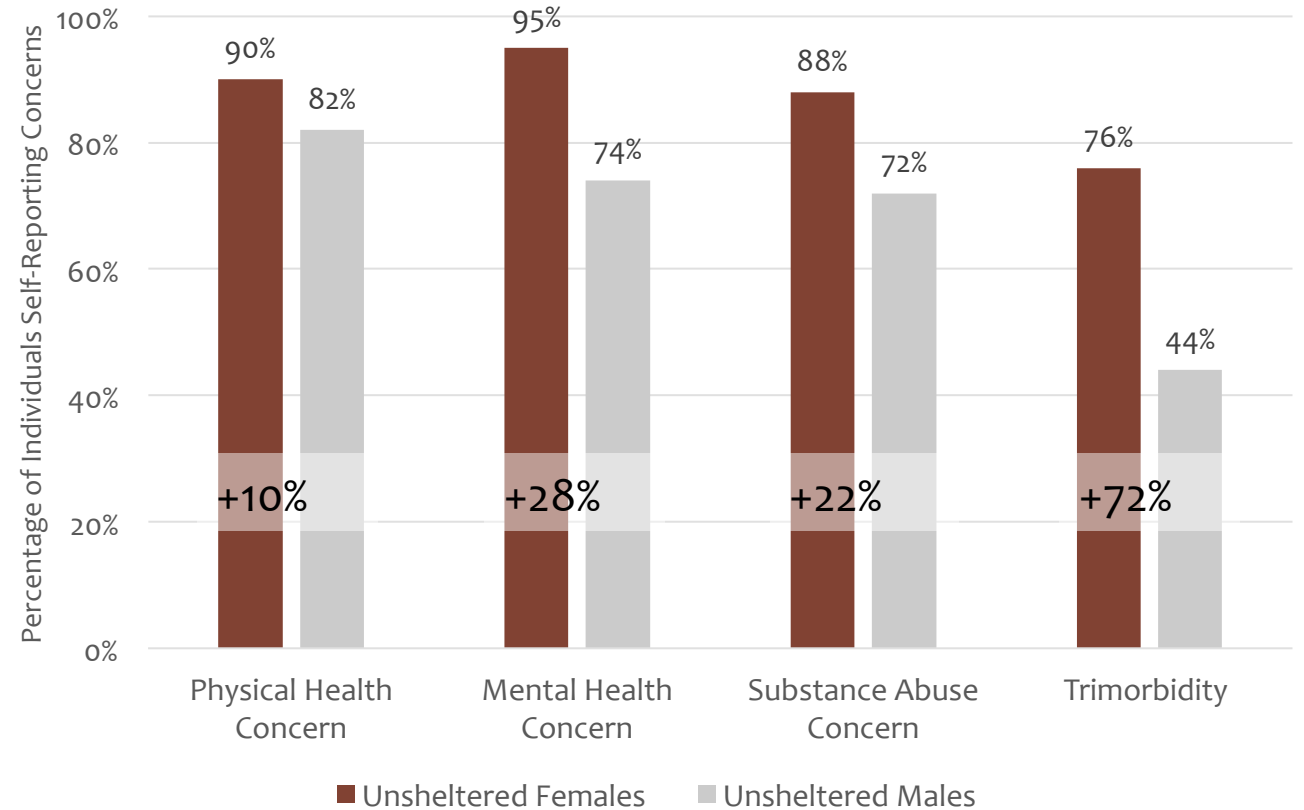
Gender Differences among Sheltered Individuals



Individuals with trimorbidity have reported having each of the three health concerns

Health Differences by Gender, Unsheltered Individuals

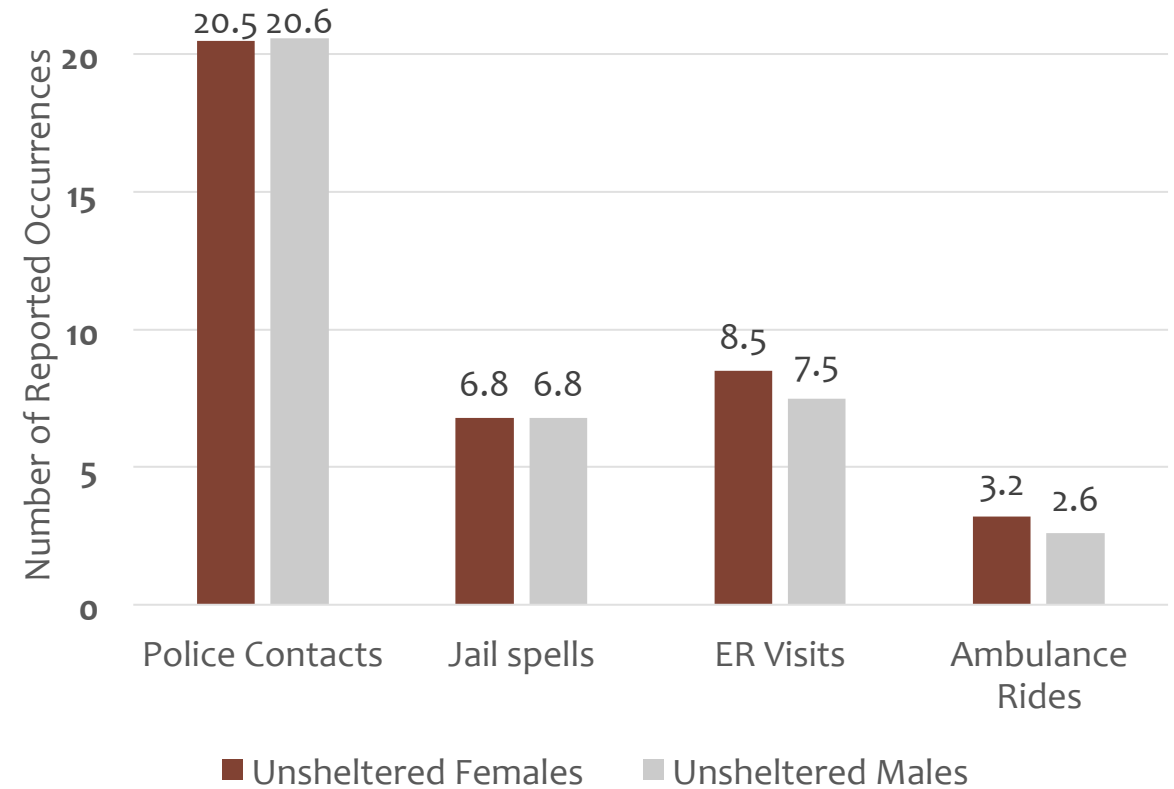
- Unsheltered women report more health concerns than unsheltered men.



Individuals with trimorbidity have reported having each of the three health concerns

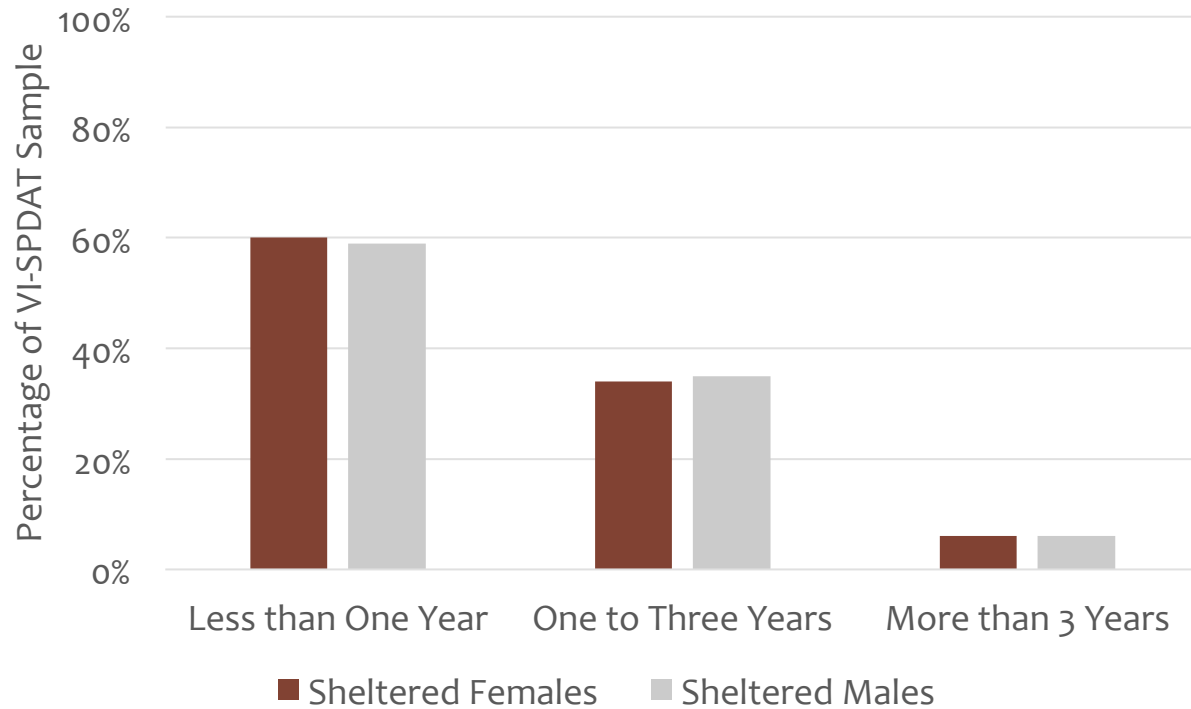
Police Contacts and Emergency Service Use, in Past 6 Months by Gender, **Unsheltered** Individuals

- No difference in police contacts or jail spells for unsheltered men and women.
- Unsheltered women had one additional emergency room visit and ambulance ride over previous 6 months compared to unsheltered men.

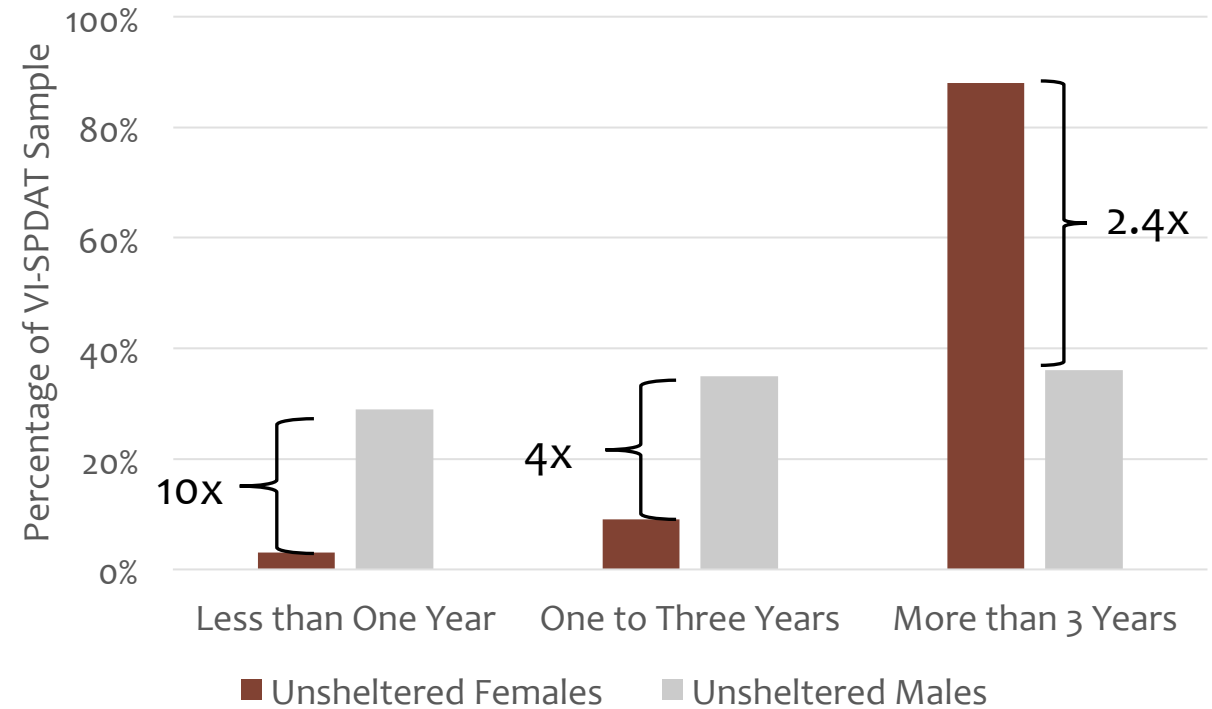


Time Since Last Stable Housing by Gender

Sheltered Individuals



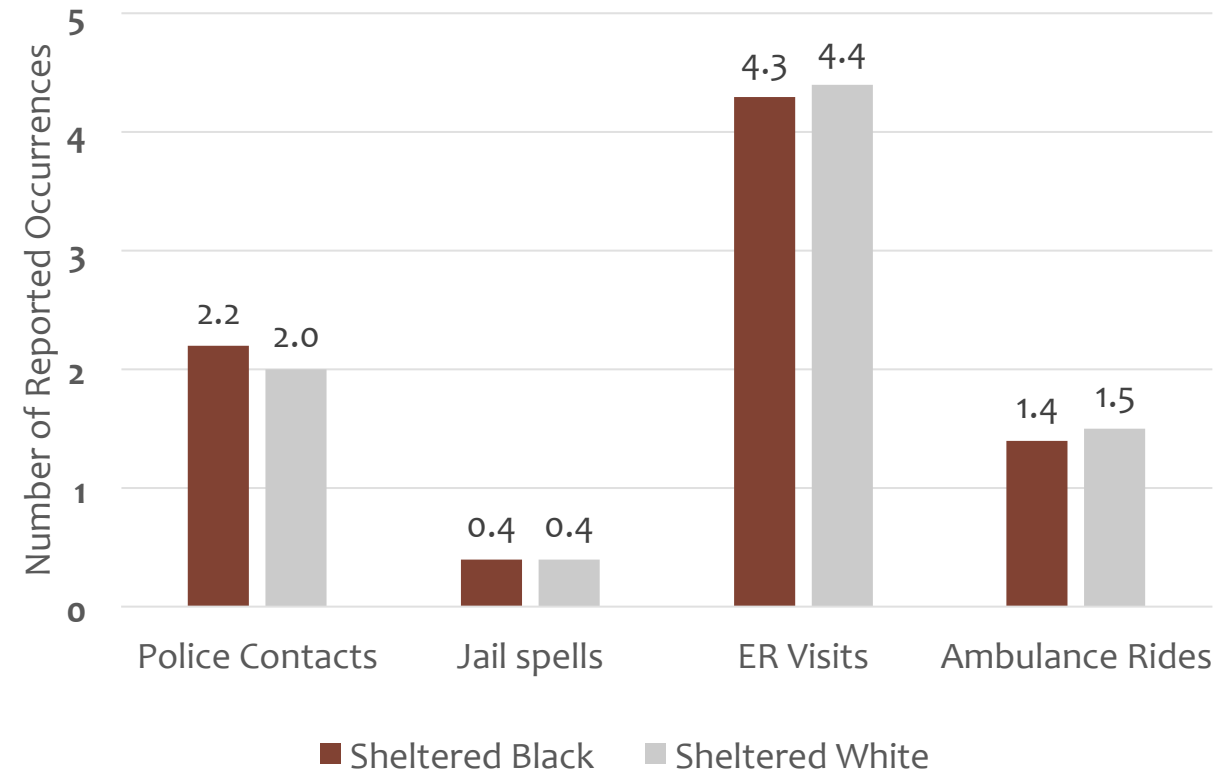
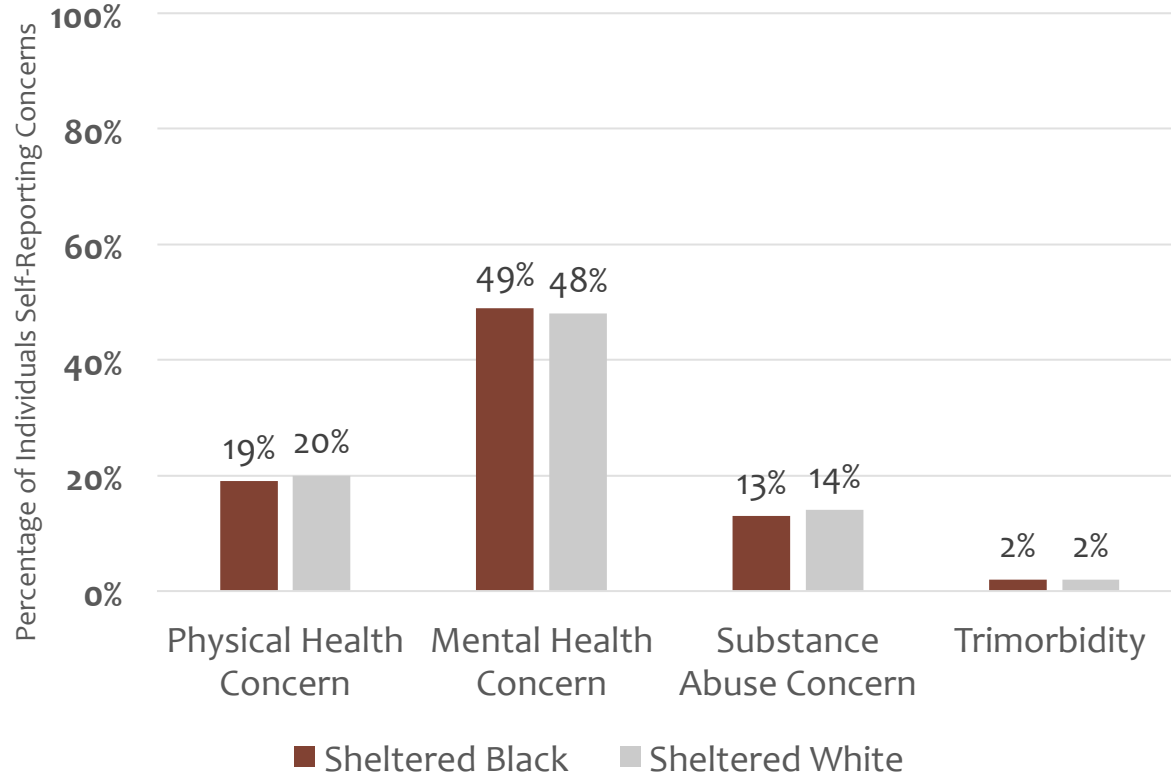
Unsheltered Individuals



Are there differences among the sheltered or unsheltered by race?



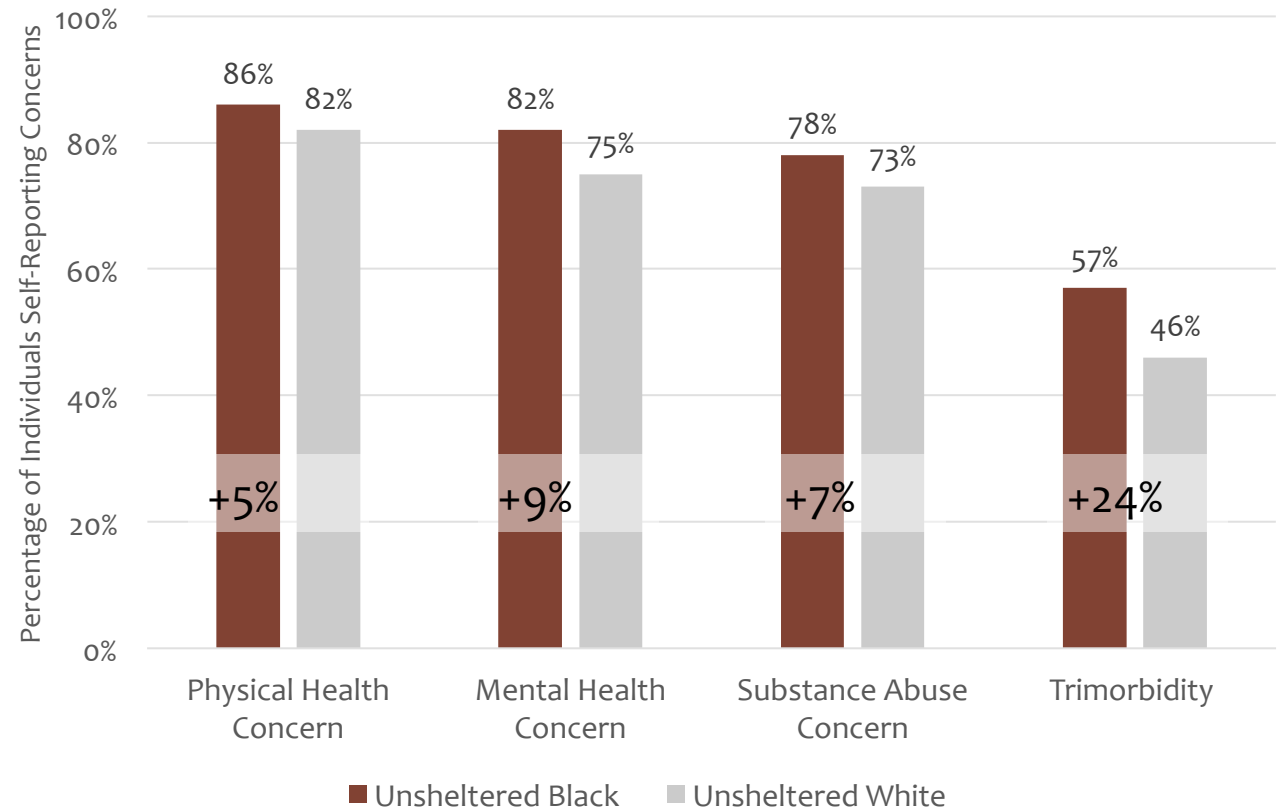
Race Differences among Sheltered Individuals



Individuals with trimorbidity have reported having each of the three health concerns

Health Differences by Race, Unsheltered Individuals

- Statistically significant differences across all three health dimensions; smaller in magnitude than gender.

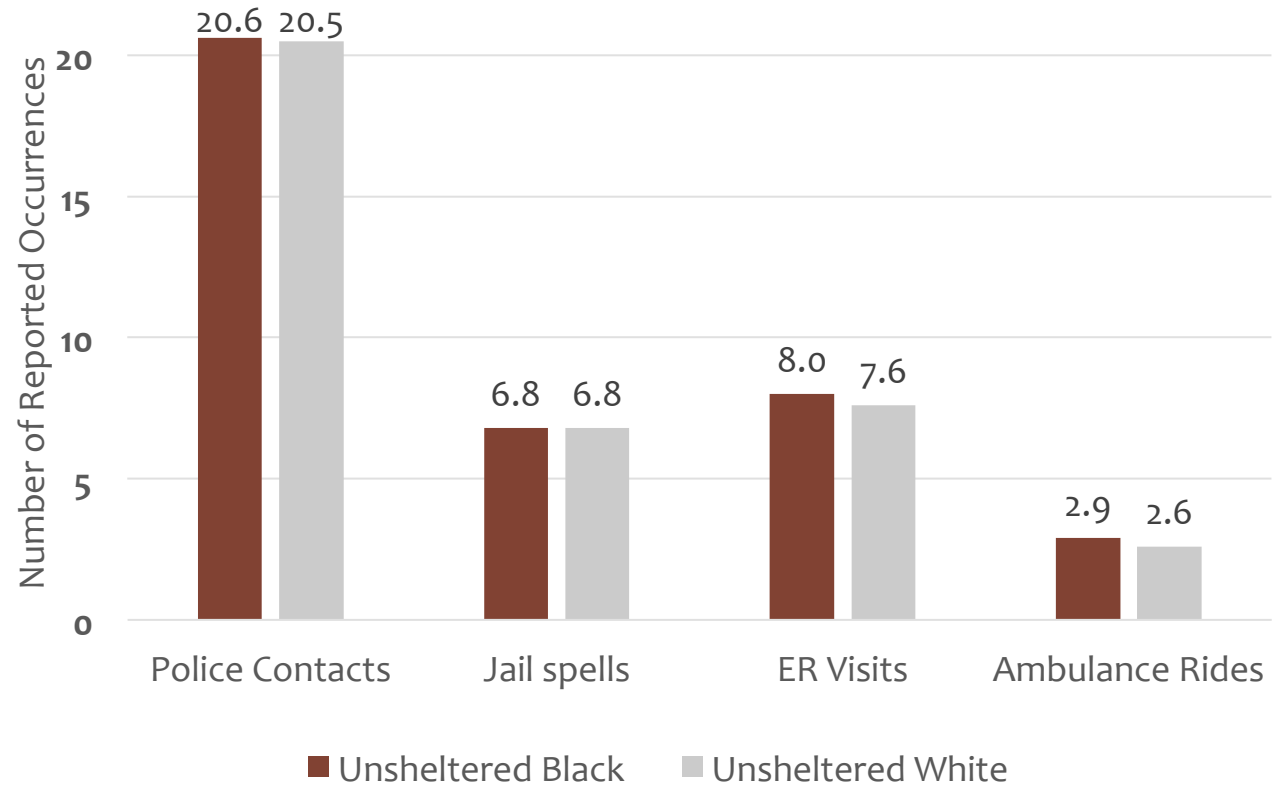


Individuals with trimorbidity have reported having each of the three health concerns

Police Contacts and Jail Spells in Past 6 Months by Race, Unsheltered Individuals



- Small (<1) but statistically significant increase in emergency room visits and ambulance rides for black homeless over previous six months.
- No difference in police contacts or jail spells by race during same period.

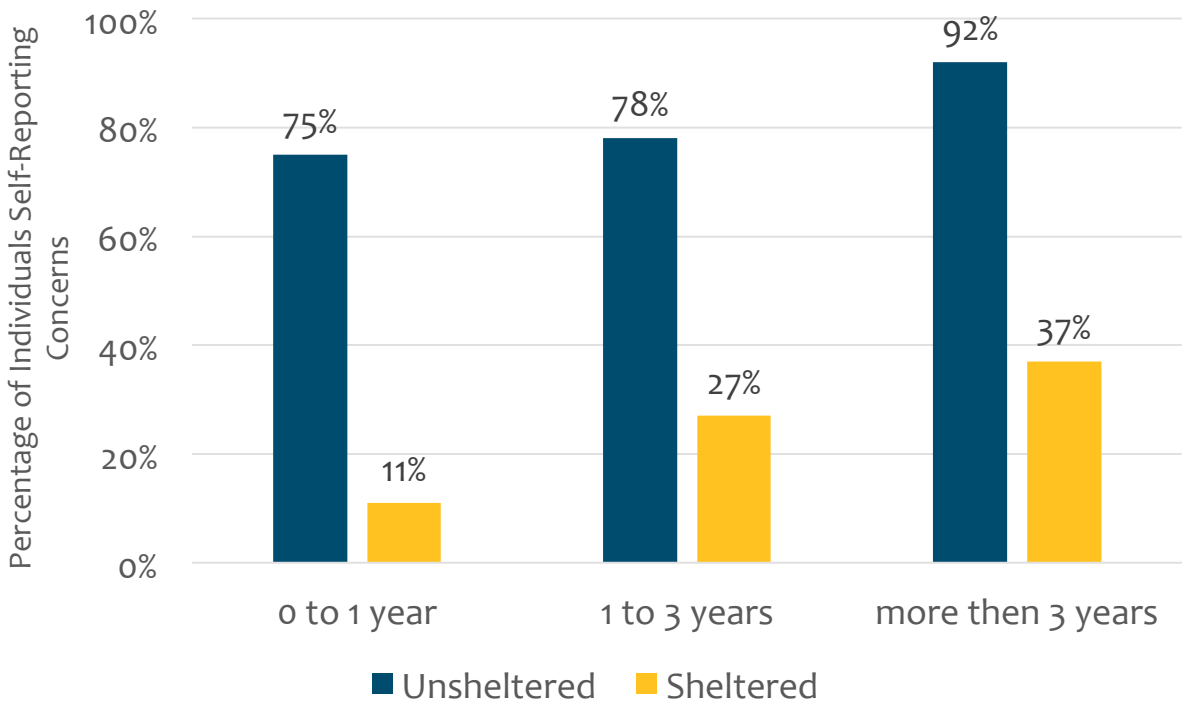


How does length of housing instability affect health concerns, police contacts and emergency room use?

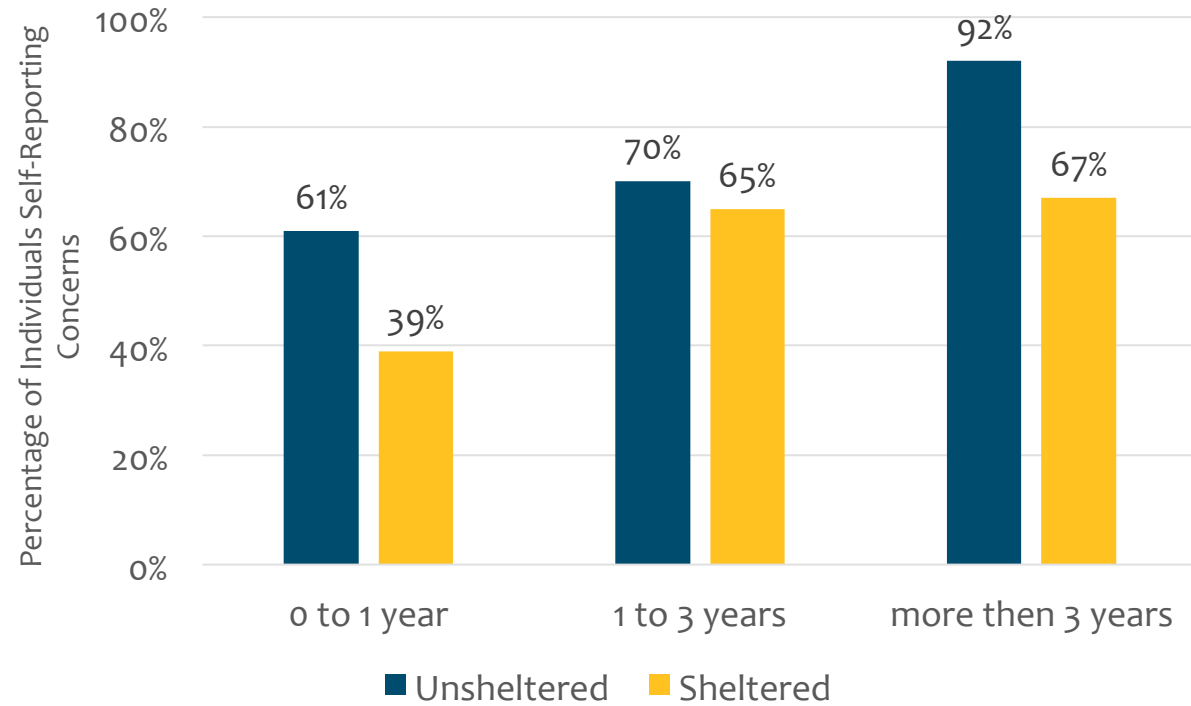


Physical and Mental Health Concerns by Years Since Last Stable Housing

Physical Health Concerns

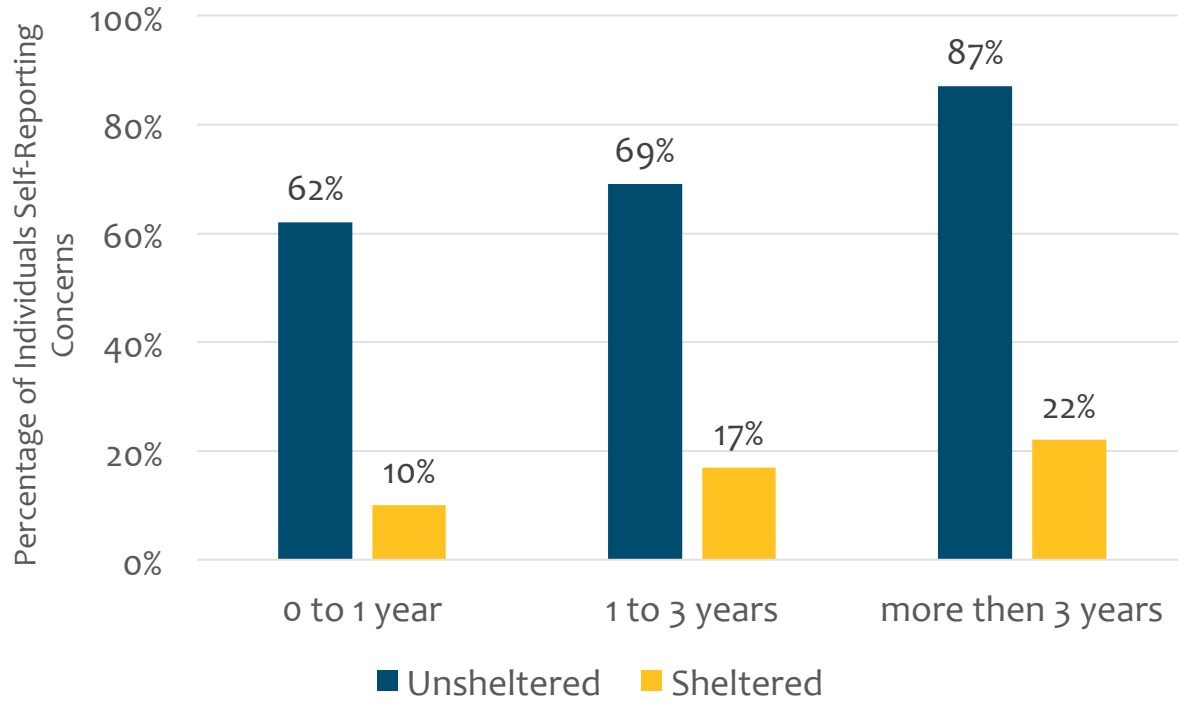


Mental Health Concerns

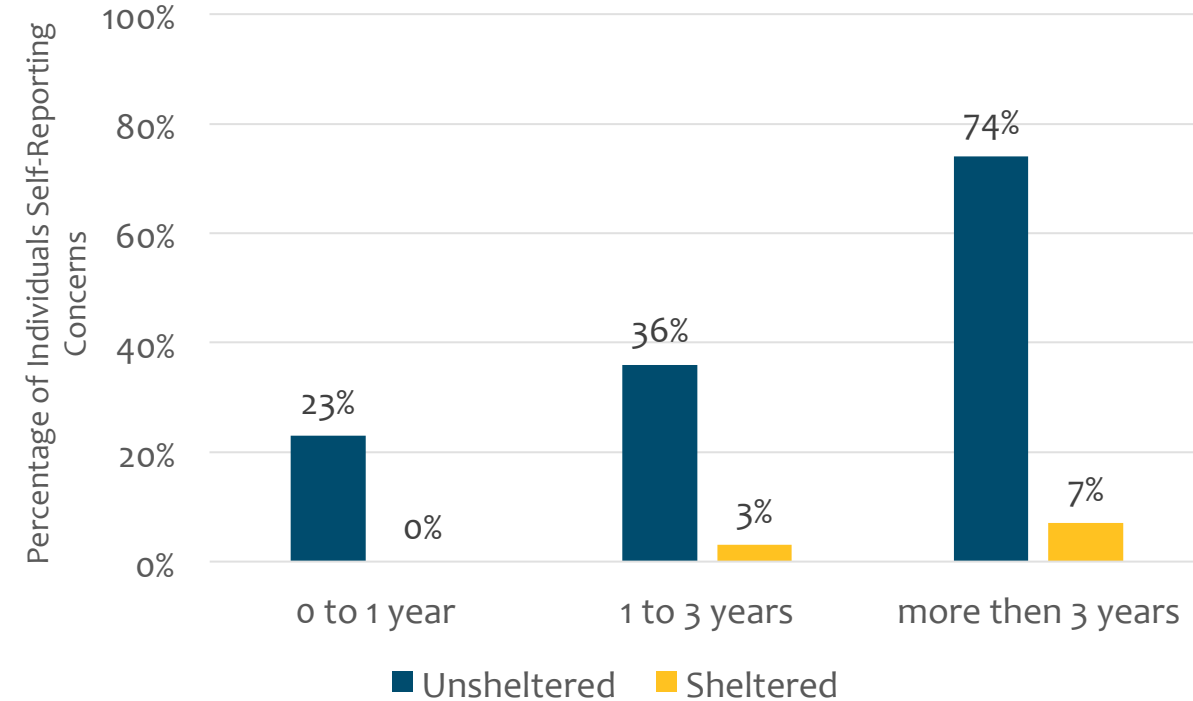


Substance Abuse Concerns and Trimorbidity by Years Since Last Stable Housing

Substance Abuse Concerns



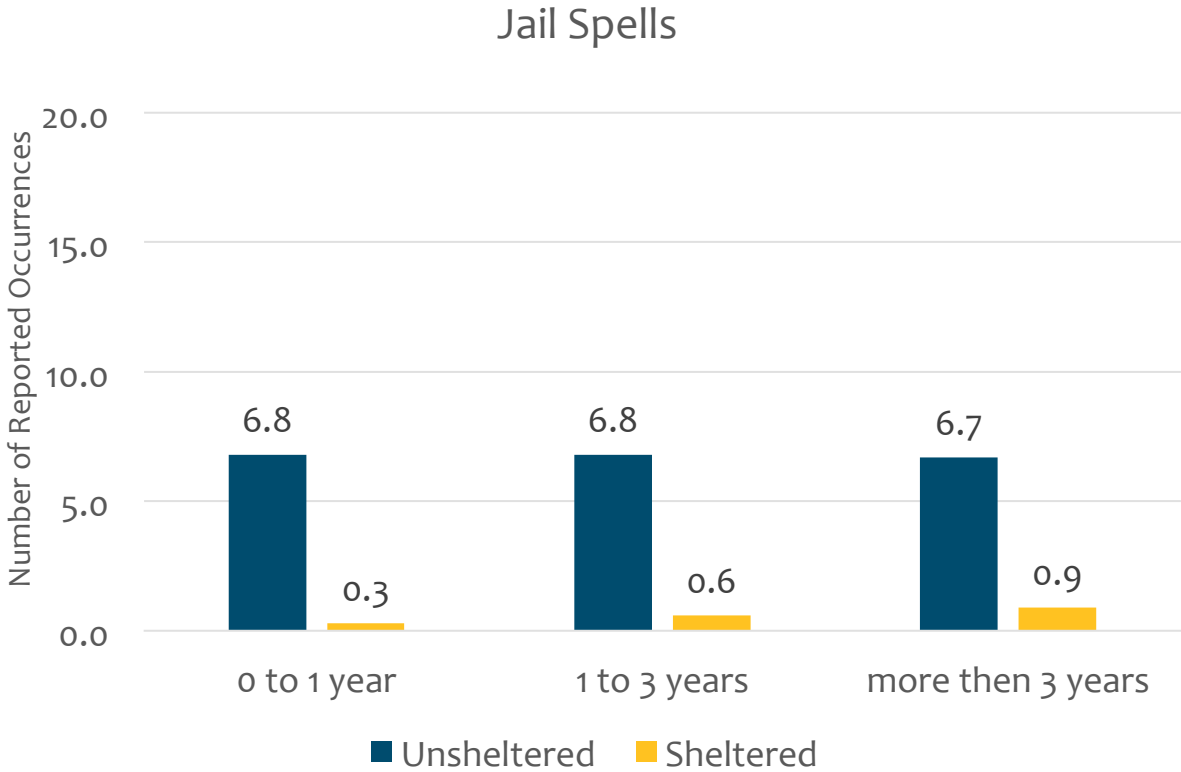
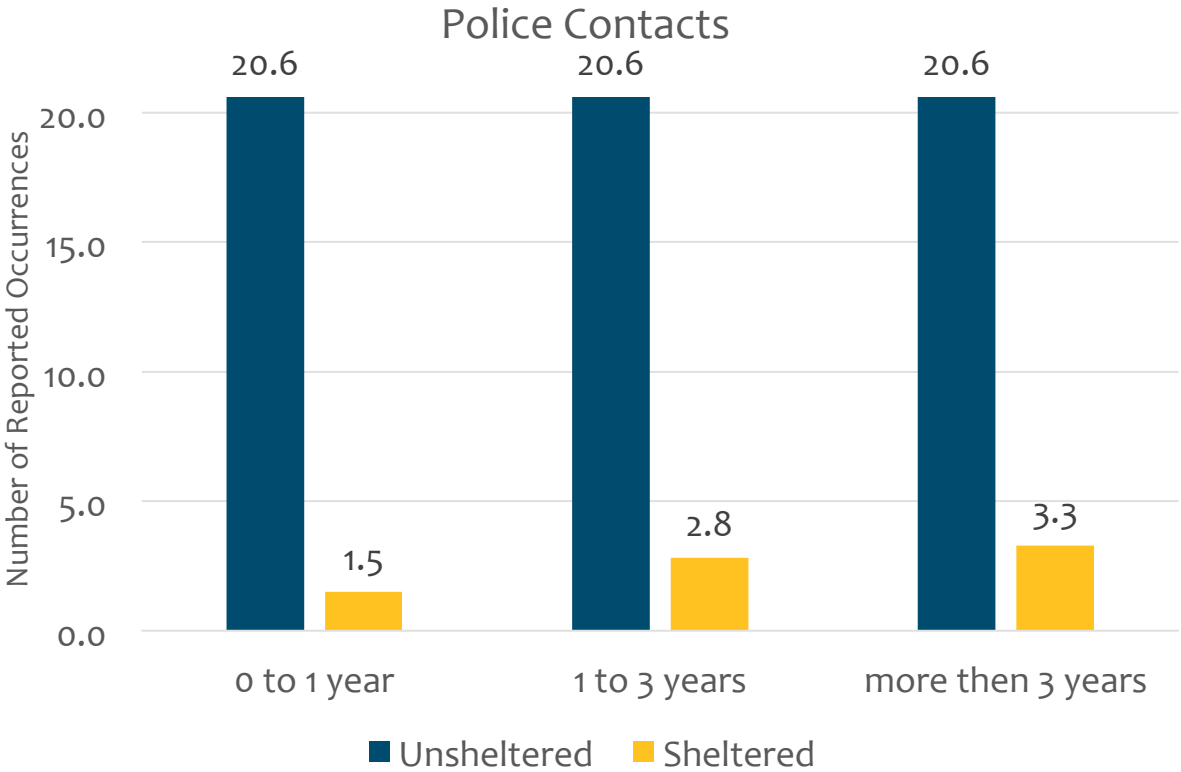
Trimorbidity



Individuals with trimorbidity have reported having each of the three health concerns



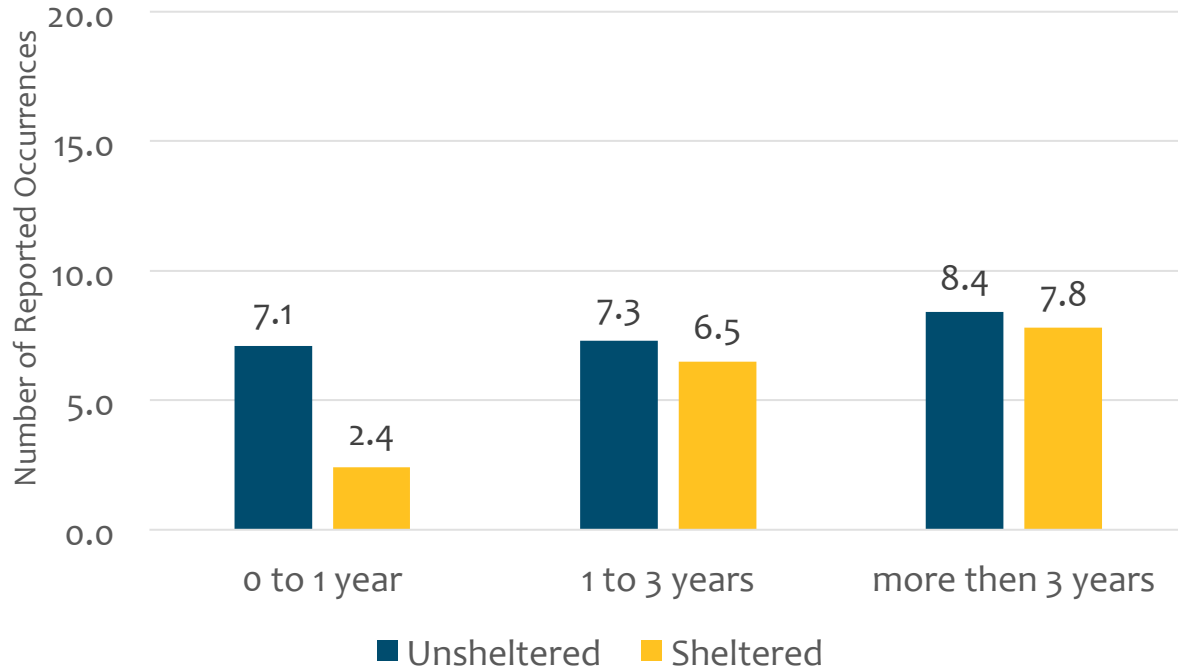
Police Contacts and Jail Spells in Previous 6 Months by Years Since Last Stable Housing



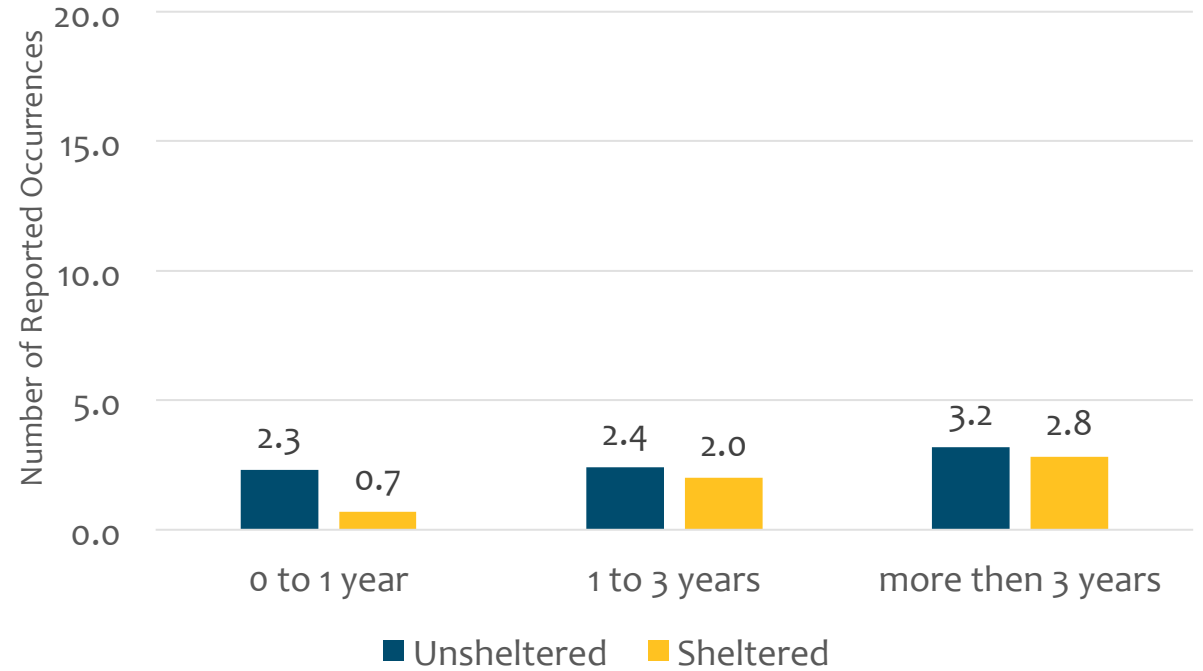
ER Visits and Ambulance Rides in Previous 6 Months by Years Since Last Stable Housing



ER Visits



Ambulance Rides

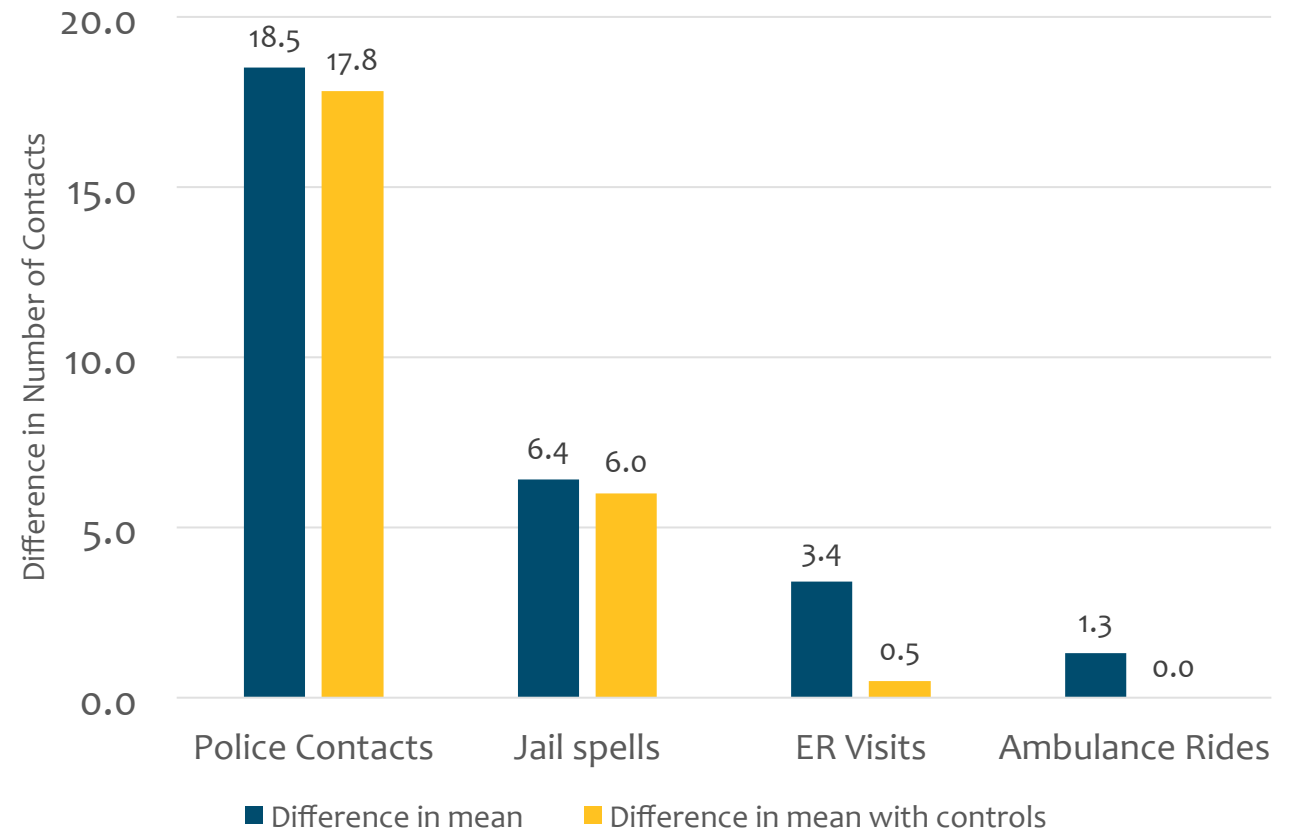


What are the most important factors driving the differences in police contacts, jail spells, emergency medical services?



What is driving police contacts, jail spells, and ER visits?

- **The number of police contacts and jail spells is driven by being unsheltered** and not due to demographics, health concerns, drug use, time since stable housing, or geography. Controlling for these characteristics changes the predicted number of police contacts or jail spells by less than 1
- Conversely, the same set of controls **eliminates the difference in ER visits and ambulance rides between unsheltered and sheltered individuals.** Time since stable housing and health concerns are the largest contributor to differences between the two groups.



Final thoughts



Key findings

- All unsheltered homeless report significantly more health concerns
- Unsheltered women are extremely vulnerable and much more likely to have experienced recent trauma
- Unsheltered have very high rates of police contact, not explained by race, age, gender, health, time since stable housing, or other factors
- Unsheltered have high rates of emergency service utilization, largely explained by health concerns and length of time since stable housing
- For the sheltered population, vulnerability jumps after 1 year of unstable housing



Next questions

- Victimization and trauma
- Issues specific to the Latinx population
- Age and mental health
- Self sufficiency and income
- Housing outcomes

Thank you

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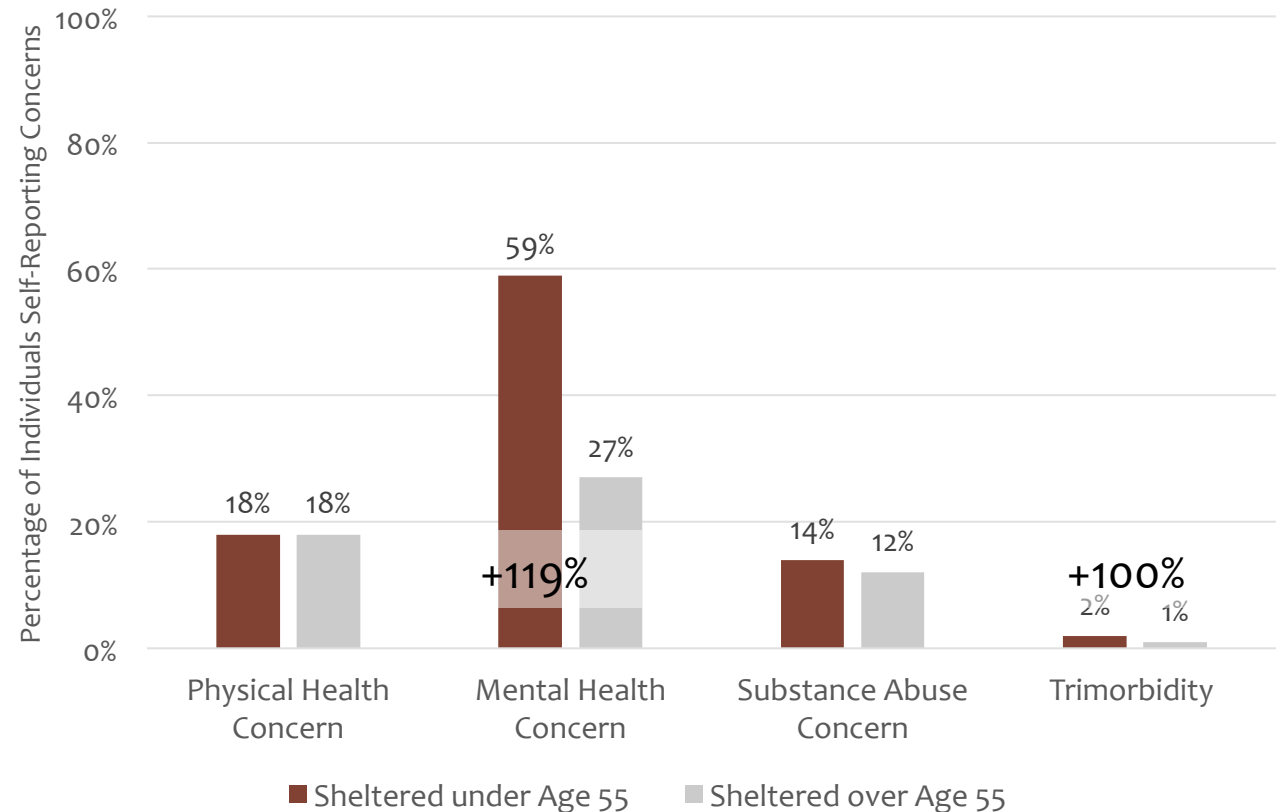
Appendix slides

Are there differences among the
unsheltered by age?



Health differences by Age, Sheltered Individuals

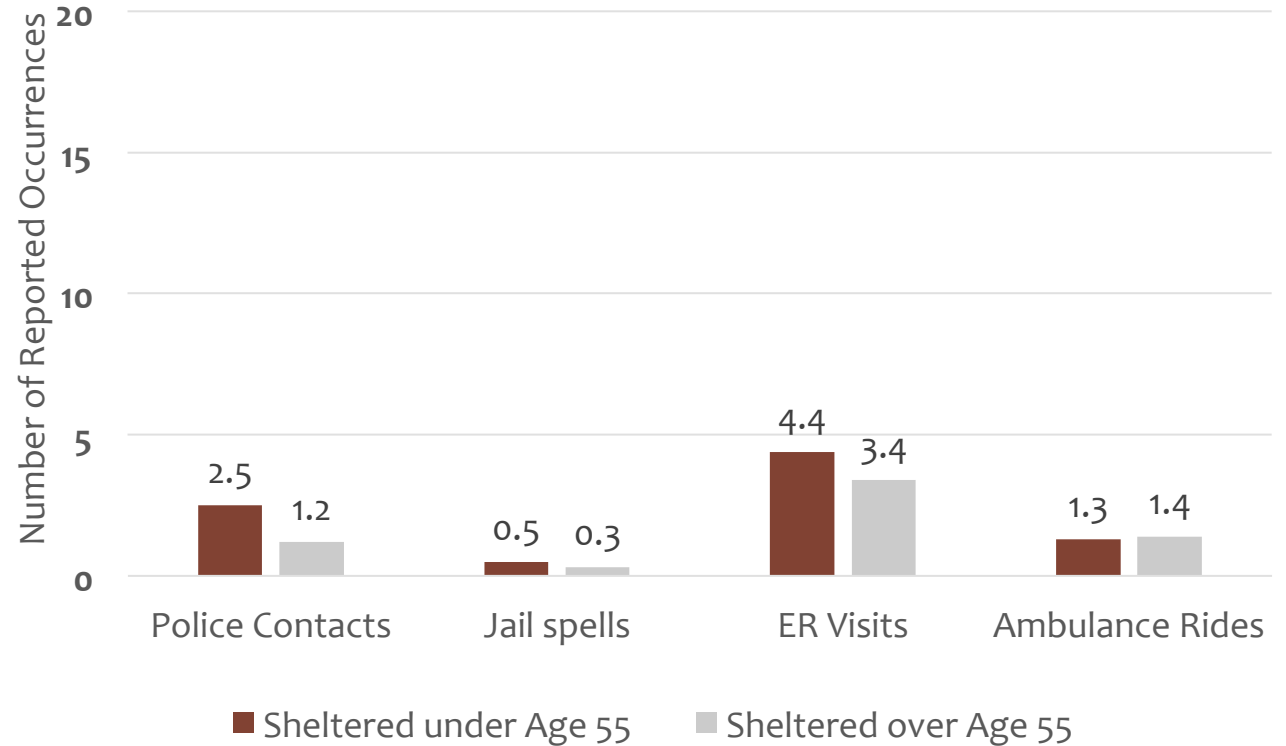
- Mental health concerns dramatically lower among older (55+) sheltered individuals compared to younger individuals in shelters.



Police Contacts and Jail Spells in Past 6 Months by Age, Sheltered Individuals

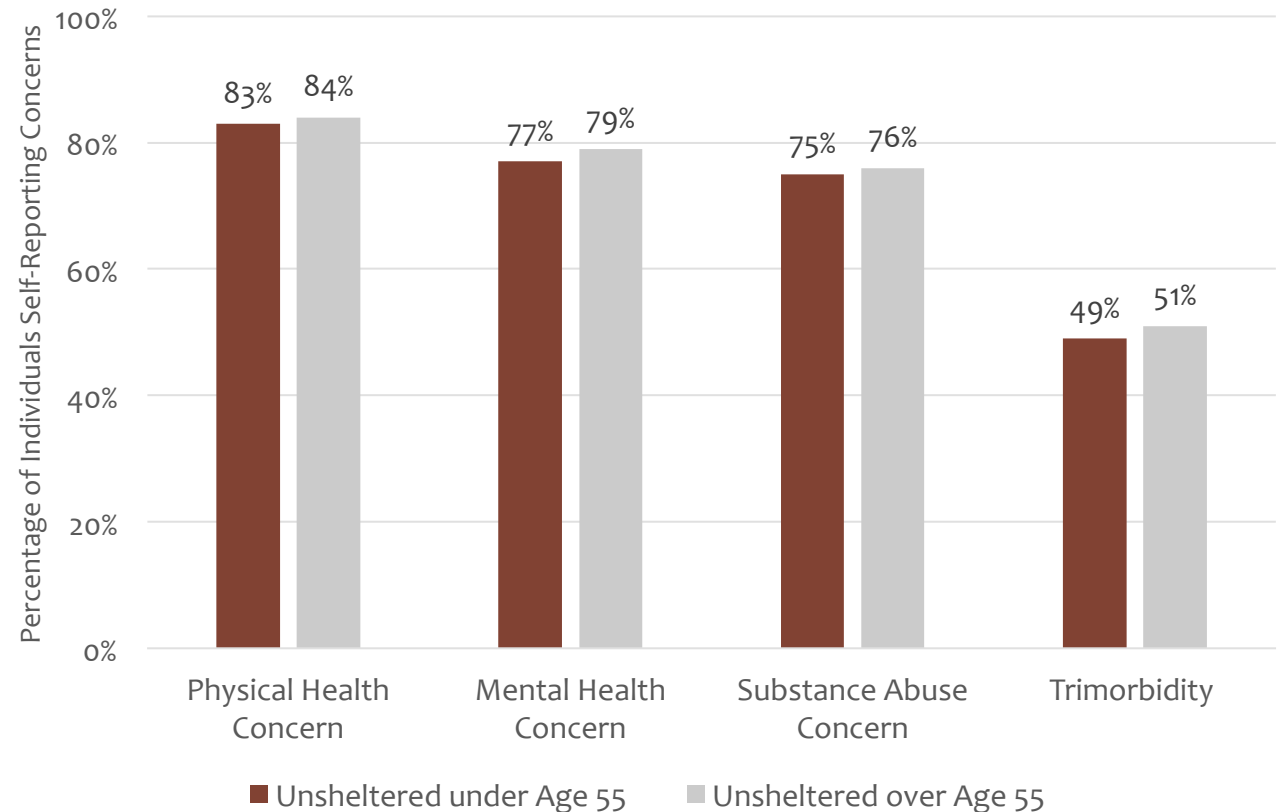


- Sheltered individuals under 55 have on average twice as many police contacts and 66% more jail spells than sheltered individuals over 55.
- Sheltered individuals under 55 also have 30% more ER visits than sheltered individuals over 55.



Health differences by Age, Unsheltered Individuals

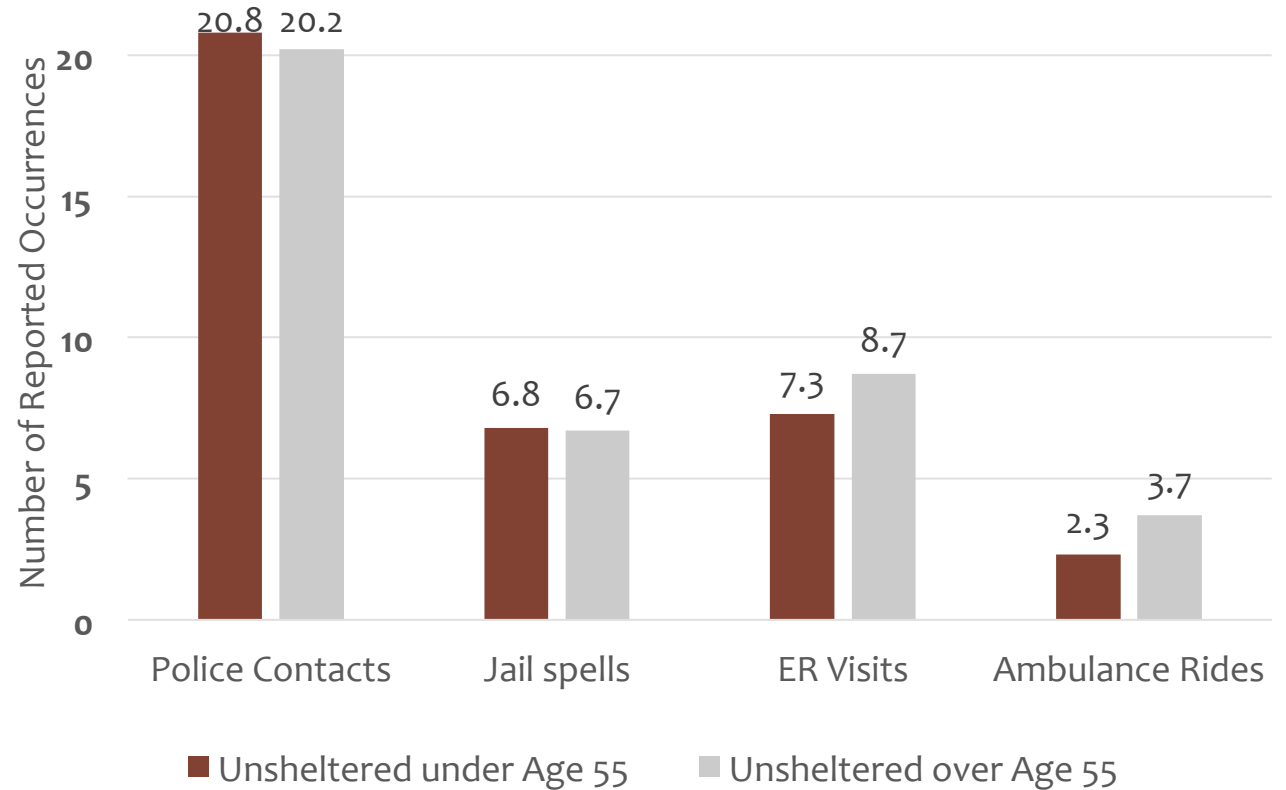
Small and statistically significant increases in mental health concerns and trimorbidity among unsheltered individuals over age 55.



ER Visits and Ambulance Rides in Past 6 Months by Age, Unsheltered Individuals



- Unsheltered individuals over age 55 report an additional 1.4 ER visits and ambulance rides over unsheltered individuals under 55.



Are there differences in housing outcomes between unsheltered and sheltered?



Housing placements

- Housing placement patterns seem to match acuity as measured by the VISPDAT score

