A response to
The Potential of Linked Administrative Data for Advancing Homeless Research Policy
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The Irish Experience

• PASS – national “data capture system”
  – Live database used by all homeless services funded by the state
  – Every person has a single identifier
  – At a regional level, the research office has oversight of all activity, regardless of which service used.
  – Accommodation; support planning; street outreach (housing first intake team)
Defined population

• Ethos: roofless and most houseless
• Have a PASS id = engaging with homeless services
  – If no activity after two years, details purged, no longer homeless
• Denominator enable calculation of:
  – Prevalence Rates
  – Standardised Mortality Ratios
Predictive analysis & intervention testing

- **Patterns of service use** *(Kuhn & Culhane, 1998)*
  - 3 years (2012 - 2014)
  - Emergency accommodation AND engaged in rough sleeping
  - Additional 2 years (2015 - 2016)
  - ‘new homeless’ families vs singles *(Herault and Johnson, 2017)*

- **Intervention testing**
  - Rough sleeper level of access to new beds introduced
  - Impact on Free-phone activity of ‘roll-over beds’ and the ‘assertive engagement’ initiative
Linking homeless data with other datasets

• Can be simple:
  – Local within the Local Authority has facilitated an alignments of PASS data with housing waiting list data
    • Added a field for the PASS id
  – Reconciliation of two data sets possible
    • Methodology developing over past four years
    • Access additional verified data relating to demography; income; employment; social welfare; housing requirements
    • Data ready for large scale investigation
      – PhD students
  – Alignment with external data
    • National Drug Related Death Index (NDRDI)
Impact on policy or practice?

• PASS data used to:
  – Track national goals (ending long-term homelessness & eliminate need to sleep rough)
  – Monitor national indicators (additional focus on movement through services)
  – New targets in ‘Rebuilding Ireland’ action plan (Housing First targets; emptying commercial hotels; Housing Assistance Payment tenancy targets)

• Detailed quarterly report submitted and published along with all financial details on spend by the state
Barriers

• Increase demands on the data
  – Need to develop reporting functionality
  – Develop processes and procedures for data sharing
• Limited datasets to link the data to!
  – Unique Health Identified
  – Health Research Board recommend:
    • SASSL model
    • Governance board “strikes a balance between individual privacy and public benefit” (2016)
    • Key task: building trust so that participation was “motivated by positive outcomes for citizens not blame” (Culhane 2017, p. 120)
‘Context Matters’

• DRHE – unusual positioning
  – Policy insider (located in local authority and funder of services)
  – Policy outsider (direct service delivery)
  – Buy-in still needed at all levels
    • Benefits need to be demonstrated first

• On the road to a model IDS
  – Article opportune and can point us in the right direction