

Study finds correlation between eviction rates in the US and high number of STIs

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Almost 2.3 million people are evicted from their homes annually and four evictions are filed every minute in the United States. A study published in the journal *Sexually Transmitted Diseases* outlines a correlation researchers found between America's eviction crisis and the high rate of sexually transmitted infections. The study is part of an ongoing collaboration between researchers from American University, Yale University, and Drexel University that is aimed at examining connections between mass incarceration, housing instability, subsidized housing policies, race inequities, and sexually transmitted infections.

According to the study, counties with high eviction rates in three of the four U.S. Census regions—Midwest, South and West—have higher rates of two common STIs: chlamydia and gonorrhea. Notably, the analysis reveals the trend remains true even when researchers controlled for factors such as poverty and other known determinants of STIs.

The Centers for Disease Control reports that chlamydia and gonorrhea have been on the rise in recent years. From 2013 to 2017, chlamydia diagnoses have increased by 45 percent and gonorrhea diagnoses have increased by 67 percent. While both are treatable with antibiotics, they can have serious health consequences if not diagnosed in a timely manner.

"Our findings point to the possibility that housing instability may play a role in one's increased risk for STIs by disrupting long-term relationships and leading to new or more casual relationships," said Linda Niccolai,

first author of the study and professor of epidemiology at Yale University School of Public Health. "Also, individuals might be more likely to engage in riskier sex when their economic vulnerability increases and may engage in sex in exchange for basic necessities."

One way to mitigate risk, the researchers propose, is for policymakers to focus on affordable housing. Housing inequality has reached a peak not seen since the 1930s. [Approximately nine percent of poor renters](#) expect to be evicted in the next two months. Research has recently shown that a full-time, minimum-wage worker cannot afford the average market-rate one-bedroom apartment in 99.6 percent of U.S. counties, according to a report by the National Low Income Housing Coalition. Rising rents in the private housing market, coupled with limited governmental assistance, means the majority of the renting poor in America spend more than half of their income on housing costs.

"Successfully addressing health problems, like the increase in STI infections, will take more than the efforts of physicians and the biomedical industry," said Kim Blankenship, co-author of the study and professor of sociology at American University. "It will require a commitment to ensuring that all Americans are able to live in conditions that promote their health, and this includes access to stable and adequate [housing](#)."

More information: Linda M. Niccolai et al. Eviction From Renter-occupied Households and Rates of Sexually Transmitted Infections, *Sexually Transmitted Diseases* (2018). [DOI: 10.1097/OLQ.0000000000000904](#)

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