

'Housing Policy Debate' publishes study on affordable housing

February 11 2016

Housing Policy Debate recently published a study on the effect micro-neighborhood conditions have on adult educational attainment in subsidized housing. University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing's (Penn Nursing) Therese S. Richmond, PhD, FAAN, CRNP, the Andrea B. Laporte Professor of Nursing, and Associate Dean for Research and Innovation, served as the study's senior author. The research team was led by former Penn Robert Wood Johnson Health & Society post-doctoral fellow, Laura Tach PhD, who is now an Assistant Professor at Cornell University College of Human Ecology.

The ACHIEVEability model of affordable housing aims to promote self-sufficiency by requiring enrollment in college as a component of their family self-sufficiency program. For this study, the researchers were interested in knowing if the location of subsidized housing had any impact on whether or not its residents were able to accrue educational credits.

The team researched a quasi-random assignment of 84 ACHIEVEability [participants](#) to their housing units. Investigators evaluated whether micro-neighborhood environments - the group of city blocks immediately surrounding [housing units](#) - affected participants' progress in achieving college credits. The study found that participants did succeed in their educational pursuits in line with program requirements, earning about 12 college credits per year, but the characteristics of the neighborhood in which the subsidized housing was located did affect this progress.

The study concluded that participants who were assigned housing located in poorer, more violent, and less educated block groups earned credits at a significantly slower rate than participants assigned housing in more advantaged block groups.

"Our findings suggest that the ACHIEVEability model does work in helping to promote self-sufficiency," said Richmond, the study's senior author. "But the results suggest that the micro environments immediately surrounding residents of subsidized housing do matter. Making even modest improvements in the blocks on which affordable [housing](#) units are located could have a major impact on the pace at which residents make educational progress."

More information: Laura Tach et al. The Effect of Microneighborhood Conditions on Adult Educational Attainment in a Subsidized Housing Intervention, *Housing Policy Debate* (2016). [DOI: 10.1080/10511482.2015.1107118](https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2015.1107118)

Provided by University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing

Citation: 'Housing Policy Debate' publishes study on affordable housing (2016, February 11) retrieved 30 March 2023 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-02-housing-policy-debate-publishes.html>

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