

# How can we facilitate access to palliative care for people who are homeless?

## A systematic review of qualitative research

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### Homelessness - a growing international concern

From 2010- 2015:

**55% increase** in rough sleeping in London<sup>1</sup>  
**50% increase** in people in hostels in New York<sup>2</sup>

**Homelessness & Health** In a UK survey of >2,500 homeless people<sup>3</sup>

**73% reported physical health problems**

**66% reported having, or recovering from a drug or alcohol problem**

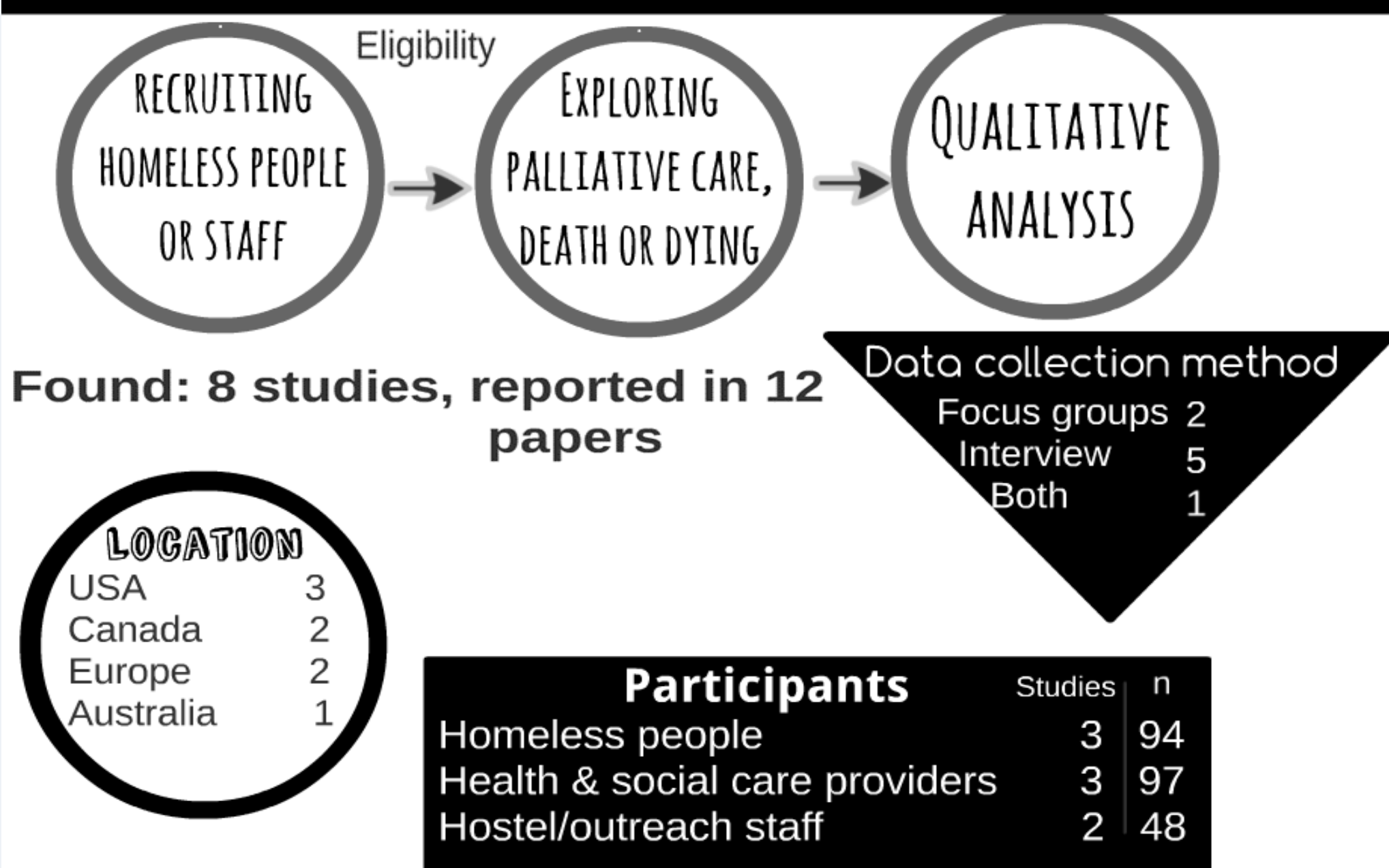
**80% reported mental health issues**



### Aims of the review

- Qualitative synthesis of previous research to explore;
- The views & experiences reported by homeless people, & those supporting them regarding palliative care
- What are the challenges to palliative care access for this population?
- How could we improve access to palliative care?

### Eligibility & included studies



### Findings: Challenges to palliative care

- 1** Chaotic lifestyles associated with being homeless
- 2** Receiving or delivering palliative care in temporary accommodation settings
- 3** Restrictive mainstream health care systems and attitudes of staff

### Recommendations (based on this review)

- 1** Build trust and relationships between homeless people and services
- 2** Increase collaboration between services
- 3** Incorporate flexibility into services
- 4** Provide training and support for staff

### Examples of recommendations in practice

**Groundswell**<sup>4</sup> - Peer advocates building relationships with homeless people to help them address their health needs

**Pathway**<sup>5</sup> - dedicated teams of health & social care professionals in hospitals, working with other services to promote safe hospital discharges

**The Ottawa Inner City Health Project**<sup>6</sup> - Hospice designed specifically for people who are homeless, also provides respite

**St Mungo's**<sup>7</sup> - palliative care coordinator for homeless people & end of life care resource pack for staff

Fostering **RELATIONSHIPS**, increasing **FLEXIBILITY & ACCESS** & promoting **COLLABORATION** could help to improve care for homeless people at the end of their lives.

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