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## Association Between Improved Mental Illness Treatment and Homelessness Outcomes

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# Association Between Improved Mental Illness Treatment and Homelessness Outcomes

**Introduction:** Each year in the United States, two to three million people experience homelessness. A significantly higher percentage of the homeless population in the United States suffer from severe mental illness as compared to the total population. Research suggests that experiencing homelessness contributes to sensitivity to psychiatric distress in addition to less successful mental health recovery outcomes. Similarly, people without consistent housing often do not have access to health care.

**Purpose:** This literature review evaluated the effectiveness of improving mental illness treatment as a way to also combat homelessness.

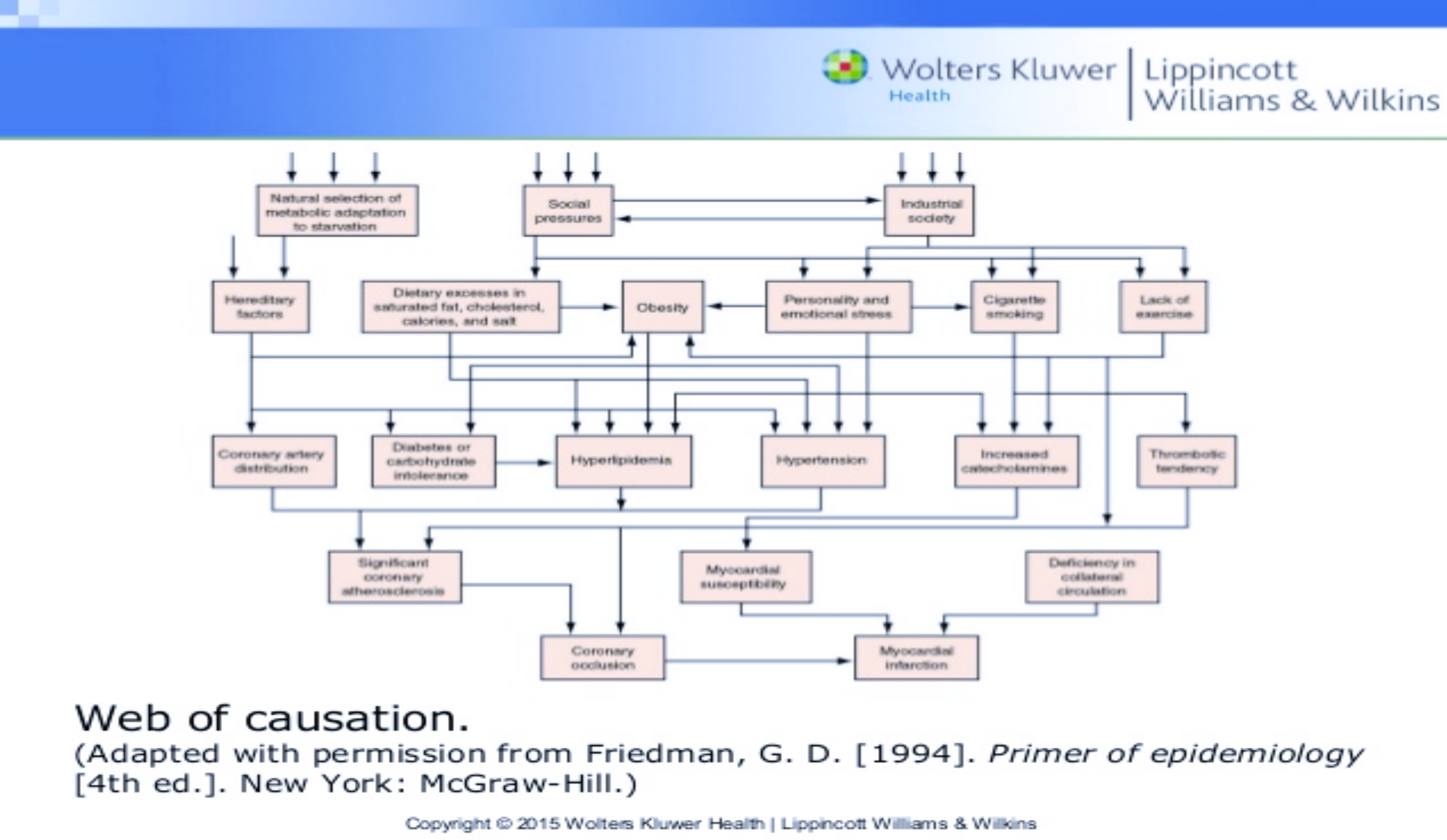


**Methods:** The literature reviewed was from two databases: CINAHL Complete and PsychInfo. The search terms included homelessness, mental illness, interventions, and supportive housing. The search was limited to peer reviewed articles written in English from 2012 to the present. The search excluded adolescents and children.

**Results & Discussion:** A synthesis across studies in the review of literature revealed that much more research needs to be done to definitively prove the efficacy of supportive housing interventions in order to combat both mental illness and homelessness. What research does exist supports that housing is effective; however, more employment and supportive interventions need to be tailored to fit the needs of those who are homeless and mentally ill, rather than just homeless. Preliminary data suggests that permanent supportive housing programs can increase days housed, improve mental health symptoms, and improve perceived overall health.

**Conclusion:** Supportive housing interventions are effective in improving both mental illness and homelessness outcomes, but more research needs to be done.

## Conceptual Framework



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**Nursing implications:** Nurses play a large role in the treatment of mental illness. Nurses must be able to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental illness in order to better treat their patients. They can utilize their therapeutic communication techniques to determine better ways to improve both mental illness and homelessness outcomes. Nurses can assess needs of the homeless population in order to identify their specific health promotion requirements.

