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RESEARCH TOPIC: Examining the causes and experiences of street homelessness around the University of the Witwatersrand: A psychosocial and spatial perspective

ABSTRACT

The homeless community in Johannesburg has a large presence, is heterogeneous and is seemingly growing in size as a result of poverty, migration towards the city in search of job opportunities and escapes from traumatic lives. For this reason, understanding the causes and experiences of homelessness is important in managing and embracing the problem and planning for more integrated and sustainable solutions. There is a lack of research and data on the lived experiences of homelessness. This is a key gap that necessitates a study that provides insight into the psychosocial and spatial profile of those that are homeless. This research will outline a data collection process that is linked to broadly understanding homelessness, its roots in South Africa and Johannesburg and the causes and experiences of seven homeless individuals that inhabit areas around the University of the Witwatersrand. It is beyond the scope of this study to present findings on the entire homeless population in Johannesburg. Instead, the research aims at illuminating how the homeless population can be better understood and assisted.