

## Abstract

### Objectives

Qualitative and quantitative research on immigrants experiencing homelessness is quite rare. The aim of this study is to synthesize the available literature on the demographics, prevalence, risk factors, barriers, and recommendations regarding homelessness within the immigrant population.

### Methods

A systematic literature search following databases: PubMed, Embase, and Google Scholar for articles published between January 1, 2001, and March 01, 2021 was conducted. This search was supplemented by cross-referencing references of the retrieved publications. Peer-reviewed studies written in English that examined homelessness within the immigrant community in various settings were included. A qualitative approach to synthesize the existing literature.

### Results

18 studies were identified that met the inclusion criteria. Based on the study objectives and the available literature, the articles were grouped into four categories 1) demographic characteristics 2) factors that increase risk of homelessness 3) barriers to escaping homelessness and 4) recommendations.

### Conclusion

Homelessness among immigrants is underrecognized and under-investigated. Homeless immigrants have distinct social, economic, and health needs that are currently unmet. More research is needed to truly understand the needs of this vulnerable population in the United States as most research conducted has been elsewhere.

## Purpose

This literature analysis hopes to focus on the following three questions:

1. What are the factors that place immigrants at an **increased risk** for homelessness?
2. What are the **barriers** preventing homeless immigrants from leaving homelessness?
3. Are there any **recommendations** on how to address these issues?

## Introduction

### Homelessness in the United States

- Significant **public health issue**
- **Multifaceted**
- Affected by:
  - Individual challenges
  - Structural failings
  - Economic collapse
  - Natural disasters

- **Immigrants** rarely mentioned homelessness literature

### Immigration in the United States

- **45 million immigrants** in the U.S. (**13.7% of US population**)
- U.S. immigrant population **↑ 7.4%** between 2010 - 2020

### Homelessness among the Immigrant Population

Many unique features and challenges that differ from the native-born population

- Lower median income, lower paying jobs, higher likelihood of poverty
- Language barriers
- Trouble accessing federal and state services

Challenges immigrants face make **homelessness a constant threat**

**Very little qualitative and quantitative research on immigrants experiencing homelessness**

## Methods

### Systematic Review

**Study design:** Investigation limited to peer-reviewed studies examining homeless immigrants in various contexts

**Databases used:** PubMed, Google Scholar, Embase

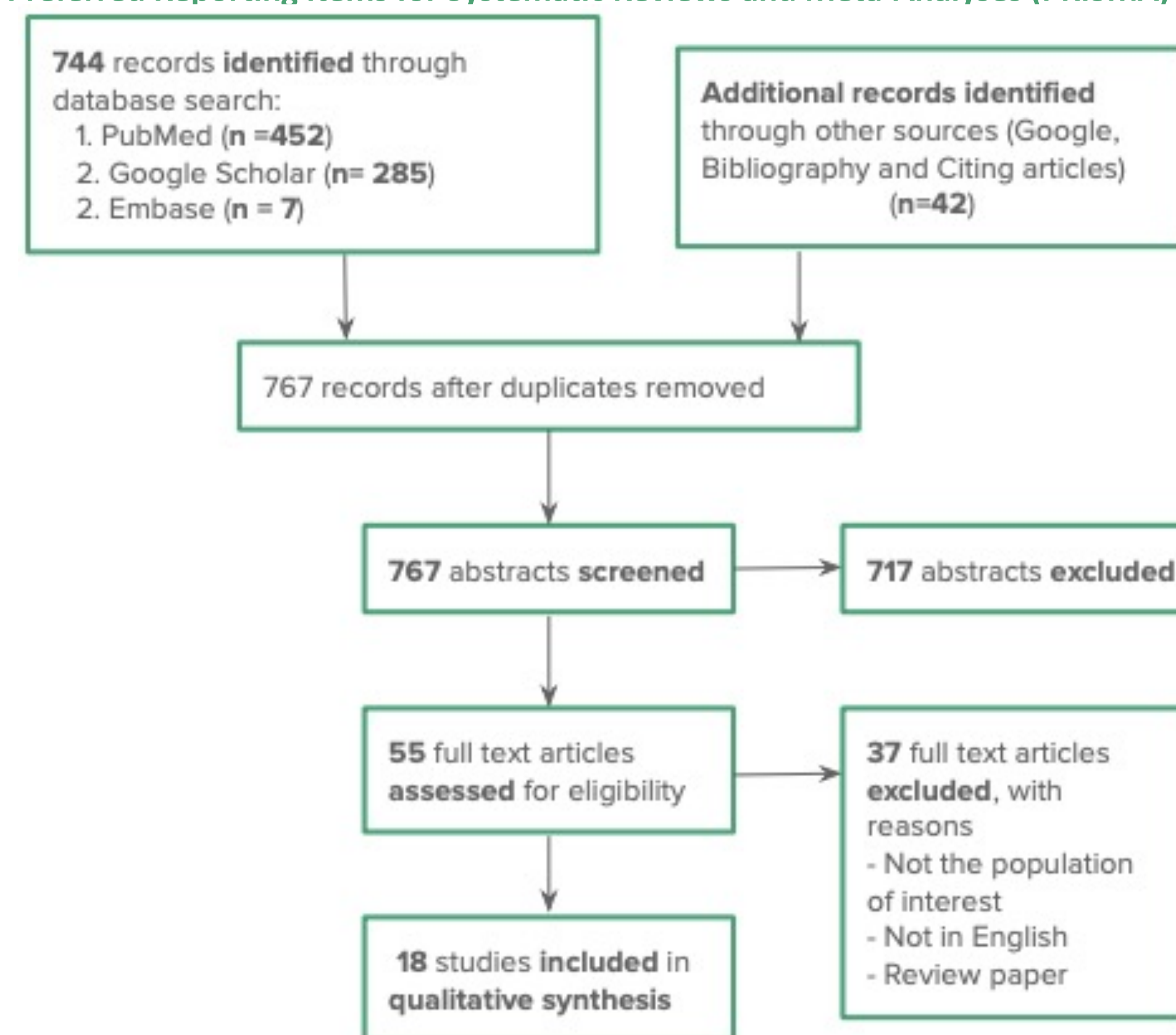
Table 1: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
1. Peer-reviewed publications	1. Studies with focus on tuberculosis, hepatitis, and HIV/AIDS
2. Published between January 2001 to March 2021	2. Studies with focus on children, youth, or minors.
3. English-language publications	
4. Subjects were homeless adults	
5. Study utilized qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods.	

Table 2: Database Search Terms

Search terms	MESH terms
Immigrants	Immigrants
Immigrant	Emigrants and immigrants
Foreign born adults	Homeless
Homeless	Homeless persons
Homelessness	Access to health care
Homeless persons	Adult
Healthcare	Clinical Trials
Health status	Randomized Controlled Trials
Resources	Treatment Outcome
COVID	
Native born adults	Follow-Up Studies
Clinical Trial	Prospective Studies
Randomized Controlled Trial	Longitudinal Studies
Evaluation Study	
Comparative Study	
Quasi-experimental	

Figure 1: Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) Flow Diagram



## Results

### Overview of Articles

Figure 2: Study Methods

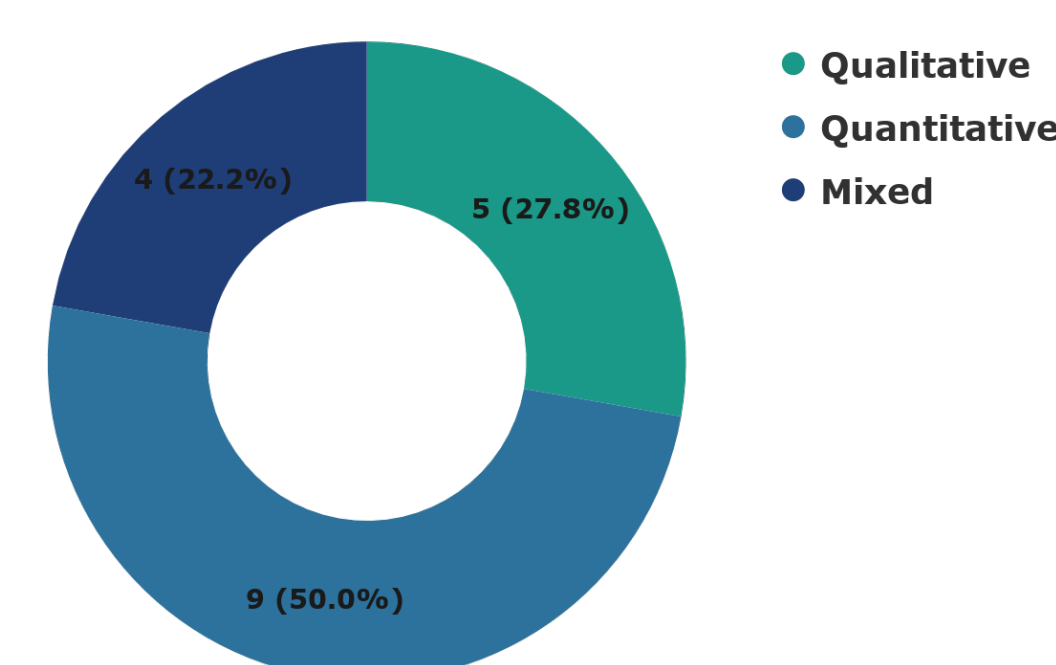


Figure 3: Study Country of Origin

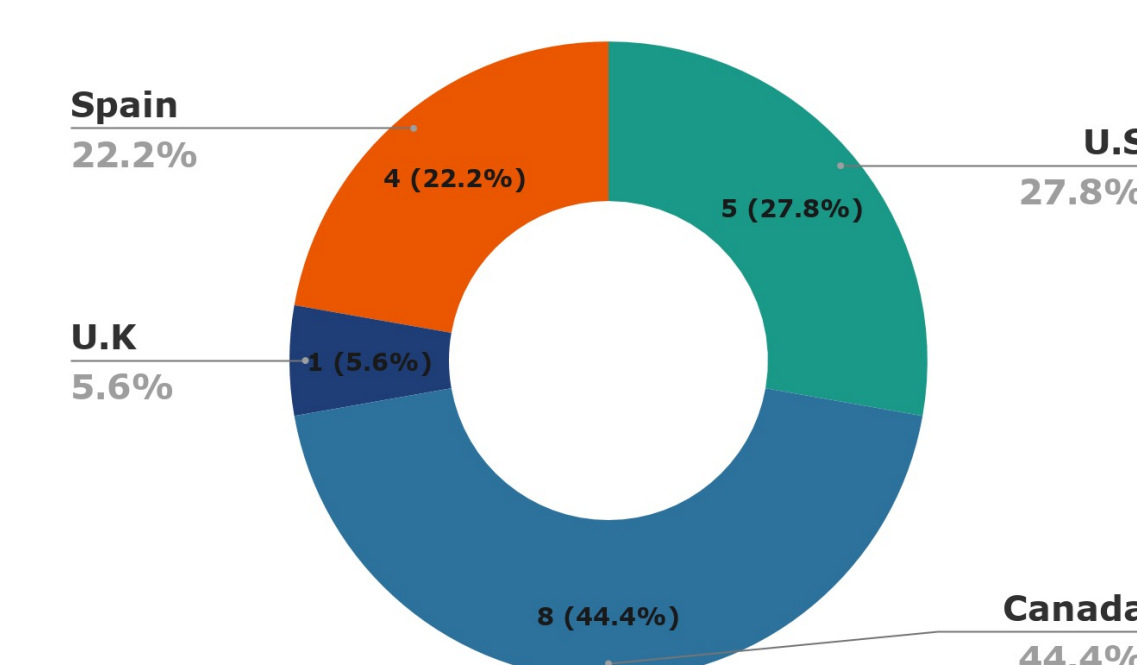


Figure 4: Years Published

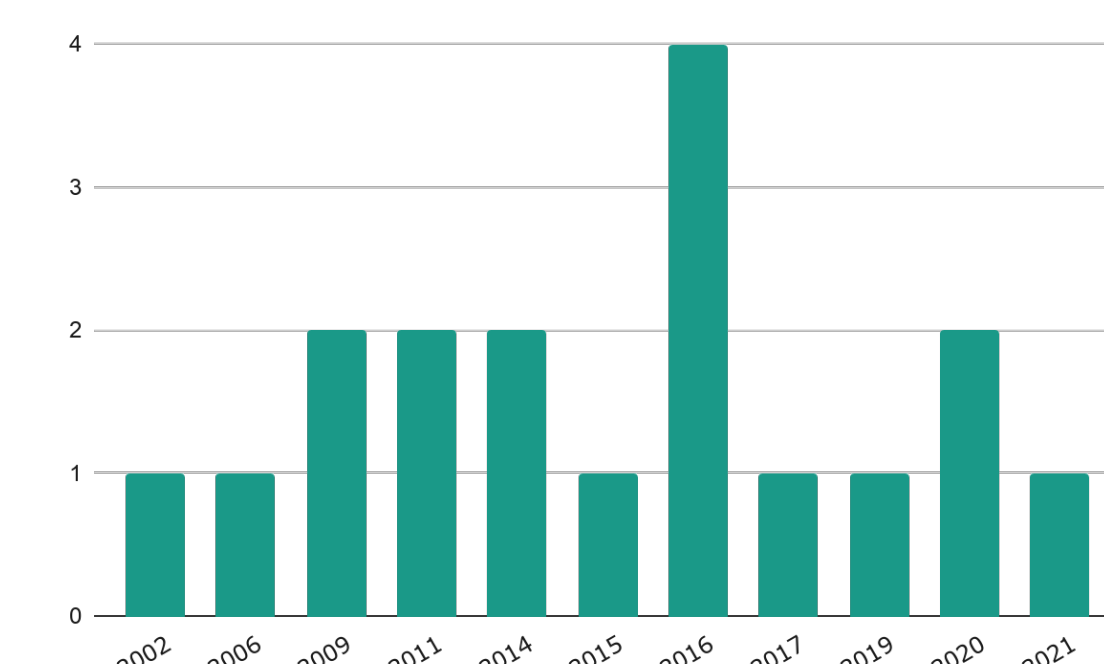
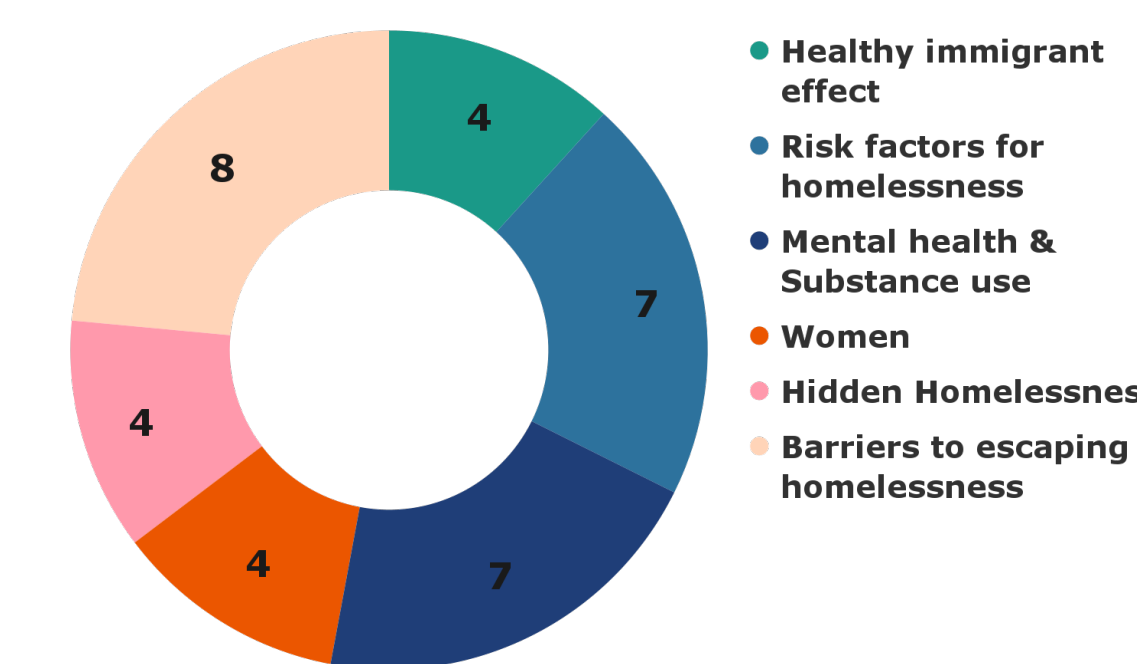


Figure 5: Themes



## Results

### Overview of Themes

Themes	Findings	Study
<b>Healthy Immigrant Effect</b>	<b>Applies to homelessness:</b> - Homeless immigrants less likely to engage in risky health behaviors, better health status, less chronic health conditions, lower levels of healthcare utilization - Health status of non-recent immigrants not significantly different from native born individuals → acculturation → adopt lifestyles and behaviors of native-born population <b>Alternative explanations:</b> - Homelessness is multifaceted → immigrants as vulnerable as native-born individuals	Chiu et al (2009) Klodawsky et al (2014) Tsai & Gu (2019) Gil-Salmeron et al (2021)
<b>Risk factors for Homelessness</b>	<b>Lack of legal status:</b> unable to access social, economic, and healthcare programs <b>Undocumented immigrants:</b> unable to access federally funded programs and services <b>Limited access to affordable &amp; safe housing</b> <b>Economic:</b> Financial crises, insufficient income, lack of employment, and difficulty accessing protected jobs <b>Limited knowledge</b> of support programs or institutional resources	Chiu et al (2009) Klodawsky et al (2014) Gilleland et al (2016) Márquez & Urraza (2016) Navarro-Lashayas & Eiroa-Orosa (2017) Tsai & Gu (2019) Chinchilla & Gabriellian (2020)
<b>Mental Health &amp; Substance Use</b>	<b>Mental Health</b> - Recent immigrant < recent immigrants < non-immigrant homeless persons to have poorer mental health - Psychological distress ↑ with ↑ length of stay & highly related to accommodation status <b>Substance Use</b> - ↑ likelihood of substance abuse with ↑ length of stay - Native born population more likely to smoke cigarettes, consume alcohol, and use illicit substances	Chiu et al (2009) Dealberto et al (2011) Klodawsky et al (2014) Zerger et al (2014) Navarro-Lashayas & Eiroa-Orosa (2017) Vázquez et al (2020) Gil-Salmeron et al (2021)
<b>Women</b>	<b>IPV direct cause of homelessness</b> <b>Immigrant women:</b> - May feel shame seeking help and services - May not have community or family support or financial independence - Less likely to engage in formal help-seeking - May feel trapped in abusive relationships: immigration laws, language barriers, social isolation, lack of financial resources	Crisafi & Jasinski (2016) Gilleland et al (2016) Paradis et al (2020) Vázquez et al (2020)
<b>Hidden Homelessness</b>	Immigrants less likely to sleep in homeless shelters & more likely to sleep in informal settings <b>Doubling up = hidden homelessness</b> - Common in immigrant communities - Impacts accuracy & data availability on homeless immigrants and their access to shelters - No precise method to identify areas of hidden homelessness	Fiedler et al. (2006) Haan (2011) Conroy & Heer (2016) Gilleland et al (2016)
<b>Barriers to Escaping Homelessness</b>	Homeless immigrants' income levels ↓↓↓ than native homeless persons <b>Limited access to affordable &amp; safe housing</b> <b>Weaker family networks, social isolation, &amp; mental illness</b> <b>Shelters underutilized:</b> - Cultural differences in interpretation of homelessness - Fear that children will be removed from household & threat of deportation - Difficulty qualifying for public benefits and housing program - Fear of label as public charge - Lack of bilingual staff and proper translation of documentation	Chiu et al (2009) Zerger et al (2014) Márquez & Urraza (2016) Gilleland et al (2016) Navarro-Lashayas & Eiroa-Orosa (2017) Chinchilla & Gabriellian (2020) Vázquez et al (2020) Gil-Salmeron et al (2021)

## Conclusions

Objective of this systematic analysis was to increase our understanding of homelessness in the immigrant population

- Six themes were identified
- Each theme provide invaluable information regarding homelessness immigrants, but important gaps remain