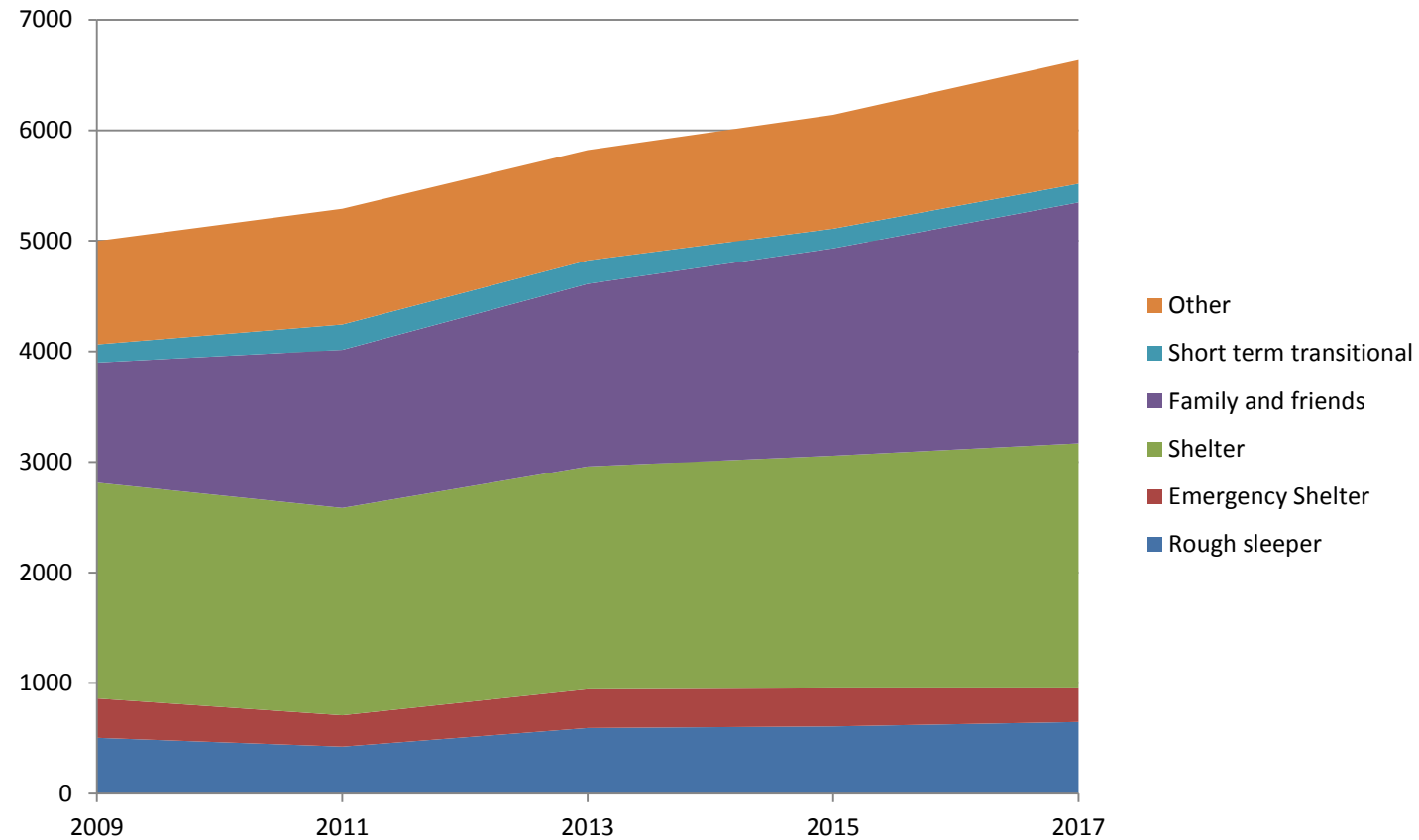




## The risk of homelessness in a Scandinavian welfare state

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# Overall trend in homelessness in Denmark 2009-2017, National counts



## || Focus of study

- What is the profile of individual risk factors amongst homeless people?
- How does risk factors build up prior to homelessness?
- What is the prevalence of homelessness in different risk groups in the general population?  
(Bivariately and multivariately)
- What does this show about structural and systemic deficiencies?

## Understanding of risks of homelessness

Risk factors of homelessness operate on both structural, systemic and individual level

**Adverse structural factors** Lack of affordable housing, exclusion of vulnerable people in the labour market etc.

**Systemic deficiencies** Insufficient welfare benefits, inadequate (or too complex) support systems etc.

**Individual vulnerabilities** Mental illness, substance abuse problems, low cognitive skills etc.

## Combining data sources

### **Micro data on the general Danish adult population**

Psychiatric diagnoses, addiction diagnoses, social benefits, prison sentences etc.

### **Shelter data**

Continuous recording of shelter users throughout the year, every year

Personal numbers on all persons

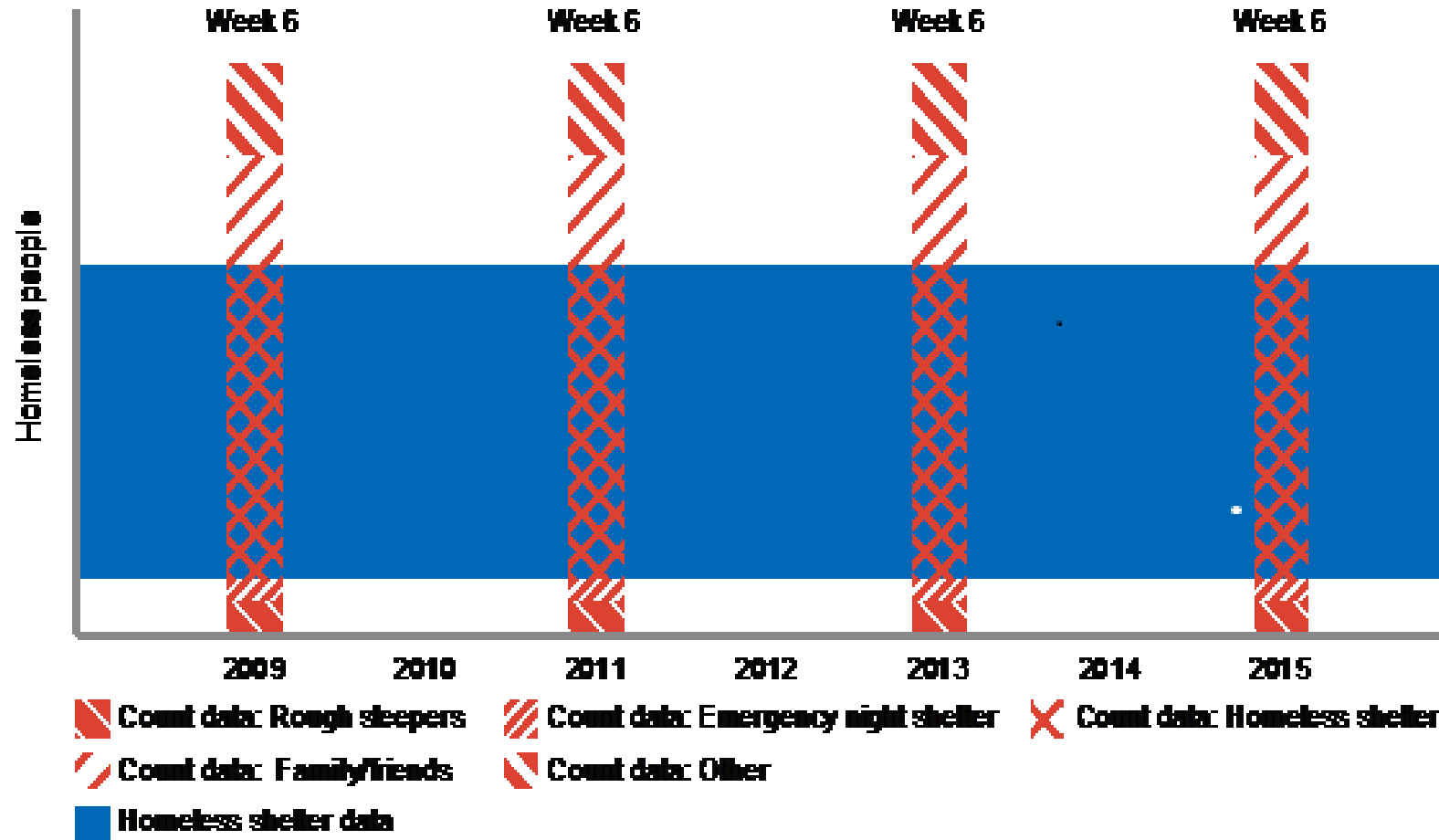
**National homelessness counts** – point-in-time one week count every second year (since 2007)

‘Broad definition’ close to ‘ETHOS light’: rough sleepers, shelter users, sofa surfers, short term transitional housing, institutional discharge

Extended service based count – not only homeless services but also a broader range of welfare services – e.g psychiatric facilities, addiction treatment services, social welfare centers, job centers

Personal numbers on 80-85 pct. – enables linking to general micro data

# Overview of data structure of homeless data



## || Total analysis population – recorded as homeless sometime during 2009-2015

	Number of persons
Shelter data	21,555
Count data	15,080
Total (Shelter data + count data)	29,325

Profile of homeless people – (lifetime) prevalence of mental illness and substance abuse problems (combined data from homeless shelters, homelessness counts and general health data)

	2009	2011	2013
Mental illness	46	48	50
Substance abuse problems	66	63	63
- Hard drugs	34	32	32
- Hashish	31	31	33
- Alcohol	47	44	42
Mental illness or substance abuse problems	75	74	74
Mental illness and substance abuse problems	37	37	39
N	7,841	8,249	8,648



## Prevalence of risk factors in years prior to first registration of homelessness between 2009 and 2015, 30-49 year old homeless males and females

	10 years before first homelessn. episode	5 years before first homelessn. episode	3 years before first homelessn. episode	2 years before first homelessn. episode	1 year before first homelessn. episode
<b>Males</b>					
Mental illness (MI)	13	23	28	32	36
Substance abuse problem (SA)	18	31	39	43	48
MI or SA	25	40	48	53	59
Prison sentence	25	30	32	33	34
N	6,869	6,869	6,869	6,869	6,869
<b>Females</b>					
Mental illness (MI)	25	36	42	46	51
Substance abuse problem (SA)	16	27	34	38	43
MI or SA	32	46	53	58	64
Prison sentence	4	5	6	7	7
N	2,308	2,308	2,308	2,308	2,308

## Overall prevalence of homelessness during measurement period 2009-2015 in risk groups defined in 2009

Risk group	Men, pct homeless			Women, pct. homeless		
	18-29y	30-49y	+50y	18-29y	30-49y	+50y
Total population	1.4	1.3	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.1
<b>Ethnic background</b>						
Danes	1.3	1.2	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.1
Immigrants	2.2	2.1	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.3
Children of immig.	2.7	2.4	0.9	0.8	0.6	0.5
<b>Vulnerabilities</b>						
Mental illness	6.7	6.7	2.8	2.2	2.0	0.8
Substance abuse	13.4	15.1	5.7	8.0	10.0	2.7
Prison sentence	11.8	9.5	5.0	12.5	12.3	3.7
Total N	392.835	785.351	943.267	381.844	770.579	1.045.946

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Risk group	Men, pct homeless			Women, pct. homeless		
	18-29y	30-49y	+50y	18-29y	30-49y	+50y
Total population	1.4	1.3	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.1
<b>Education</b>						
Academic	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
Vocational	0.4	0.8	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.1
Compulsory (9th gr.)	2.4	2.9	1.1	1.0	1.2	0.3
< 9th grade	9.0	5.2	0.4	4.0	1.4	0.1
<b>Employment</b>						
Employed	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.1	< 0.1
Students	0.7	0.9	0.8	0.2	0.4	0.4
Social assist. ben.	13.6	14.9	9.6	4.6	3.9	2.4
Disability pension	3.4	5.5	2.2	2.2	1.9	0.6
Total N	392.835	785.351	943.267	381.844	770.579	1.045.946

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Risk group	Men, pct homeless			Women, pct. homeless		
	18-29y	30-49y	+50y	18-29y	30-49y	+50y
Total population	1.4	1.3	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.1
<b>Income poverty</b>						
Low income (<13,000€/year)	2.3	3.7	1.1	0.6	1.0	0.1
Above 13,000€/year	0.7	1.0	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.1
Total N	392.835	785.351	943.267	381.844	770.579	1.045.946

## Multivariat logistic regression - risk of homelessness 2009-2015, risk factors in 2009, odds ratios

	Total population 18-59 y old	Men 18-59 y old	Women 18-59 y old
N	2.999.637	1.511.718	1.487.919
<b>Gender</b> (ref: men)	2.3***	-	-
<b>Age</b> (ref: 18-24y)			
25-39	0.8***	0.7***	0.8***
40-49	1.0	1.0	1.0
50-59	0.8***	0.8***	0.6***
<b>Ethnic background</b> (ref: Dane)			
Immigrant	1.5***	1.7***	1.3***
Child of immigrant	1.7***	1.6***	1.9***

# Multivariat logistic regression – continued

## Odds-ratios

	Total population 18-59 y old	Men 18-59 y old	Women 18-59 y old
<b>Mental illness</b> (vs. no mental illness)	3.5***	3.2***	4.4***
<b>Substance abuse problems</b>			
Hard drugs (vs. no hard drugs)	1.7***	1.6***	1.9***
Hashish (vs. no hashish)	1.7***	1.7***	2.1***
Alcohol (vs. no alcohol)	3.9***	3.5***	5.3***
<b>Prison sentence</b> (vs. no prison sentence)	2.3***	2.4***	2.3***

## Multivariat logistic regression – continued

### Odds-ratio

	Total population 18-59 y old	Men 18-59 y old	Women 18-59 y old
<b>Low income</b> (<13.000 €/year) (vs. no low income)	1.9***	2.0***	1.8***
<b>Education</b> (ref. professional/academic)			
Vocational	3.1***	3.1***	2.9***
Compulsory school	5.1***	4.9***	4.9***
<b>Employment status</b> (ref: job)			
Social assistance benefits	3.4***	3.2***	3.8***
Disability pension	1.2***	1,1***	1.6***

## Implications & conclusions

A significant proportion in key risk groups are affected by homelessness over the seven year period – 1 in 7 younger male social assistance benefit receivers and likewise 1 in 7 younger male substance abusers become homeless during the period

Primary risk factors are not only related to psychosocial vulnerabilities but also to exclusion from the labour market and being on social assistance benefits

Many homeless people were known in the psychiatric treatment system and the addiction treatment system for a long period prior to being homeless. Need for more focus on early prevention and awareness of the housing situation for these groups

There is a need to strengthen interventions for people with complex support needs due to mental illness and substance abuse problems

– e.g. Assertive Community Treatment





Thanks for the attention

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