

South Africa - The Psychological Strain of Living in Tin Can Town

Irin Global - Cape Town - 30 October 2012 (IRIN) - A recent academic study has identified a range of mental health disorders suffered by shack dwellers in South Africa's Western Cape Province, from chronic insomnia to low self-esteem.

The study, *The Impact of Living in Transitional Communities; The Experiences of People in Blikkiesdorp and Happy Valley*, was conducted by the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). Because of budget considerations, the study was constrained to two settlements.

"The researchers did not have the resources to do large-scale interviews, so instead we set up four different focus groups of between 10 and 20 people living in Blikkiesdorp and another similar transit camp called Happy Valley. And we found there was a high level of correlation between the findings in each case," Shaheed Mahomed, a CPUT civil engineer lecturer and Blikkiesdorp community activist told IRIN.

Among the mental health issues identified were depression, anxiety and panic attacks, chronic insomnia, anger and low self-esteem.

Read more: [The Psychological Strain of Living in Tin Can Town](#)

Irin Global - Humanitarian News and Analysis - A Service of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs