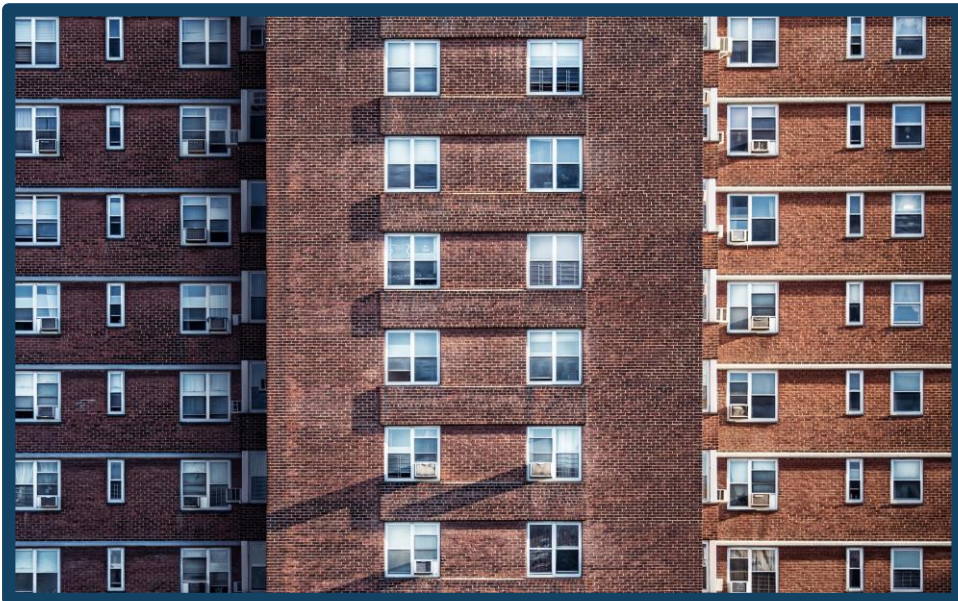




Double-Edged Policy? Consequences of the COVID-19- Related Eviction Moratorium

Submitted by: Jack Tsai

The United States federal government instituted a suspension on evictions in response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. With the end of the federal eviction moratorium, we can retrospectively evaluate the impacts of the federal policy.



We expected positive impacts of the eviction moratorium, but also possible unintended consequences because of the temporary nature of the moratorium. Understanding the full consequences of the eviction moratorium is vital to crafting future policies to address eviction issues long-term.

Methods

This study analyzed data collected May 2020–April 2021 from a nationally representative sample of middle- and low-income US tenants designed to assess health and well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Highlights

Eviction moratoriums like the one enacted during the COVID-19 pandemic may have different consequences on housing instability.

More work is needed to develop policies to protect the unstably housed in cases of natural emergencies.

Results

- Despite the federal policy prohibiting it, about 4.3% of tenants reported experiencing an eviction during the moratorium.
- Adults infected with COVID-19 were not more likely to be evicted.
- Tenants with a history of homelessness were nine times more likely to be evicted.
- 6%–23% of tenants reported delaying paying rent because of the moratorium.
- Tenants who delayed paying their rent, were female, or had a history of mental illness or substance use disorder were more likely to report the eviction moratorium had a negative effect on their landlord relationship.

HOW DID A COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY PERSPECTIVE INFORM YOUR WORK?

Community-based providers should understand issues related to eviction and be prepared to advocate on the federal and local levels on behalf of their clients who are or may become housing unstable. Psychology can be a positive influence in the science and practice of helping individuals achieve and sustain housing stability.

What Does This Mean For?

Research and Evaluation: Money management interventions to help tenants with budgeting and timely rent payments need to be developed. The effect of policies on tenant-landlord relationships needs evaluation and may be important for tenants' housing stability.

Practice: During the federal eviction moratorium, some tenants were still evicted because of missing eligibility paperwork. In the future, tenants may benefit from assistance without the burden of required paperwork.

Social Action: Eviction can lead to homelessness. A history of homelessness increases the risk for future eviction. Social action is needed to end cycles of eviction and homelessness.

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