



Indicators of Squalor Observed by District Nurses

Personal indicators	Environmental indicators	Health indicators
Neglect of self care	Filthy environment	Mental health issues eg schizophrenia, obsessive compulsive disorder
Client lives alone	Dirty, unsanitary unhygienic conditions	Cognitive impairment
Socially isolated	Presence of rodents and vermin	Dementia and memory disorders
Inability to perform tasks	Smell associated with decay and bacteria	Deficits in physical or emotional health
Lack of social support	Sleeps in filthy chair, mattress on floor, camp bed etc.	Client has limited insight into their environment
Limited finances or material resources	Uncontrolled hoarding that keeps growing	Prolonged grief
Limited life skills	Chaos and disorder in the hoarded clutter	Long-standing addiction to alcohol,
Continence issues - incontinent of urine and faeces	Unsafe and injurious to one's health	Personality disorders
Problems with eating or feeding themselves	Human excrement	Past trauma eg child abuse, war...
Unable to access ablutions due to hoarded clutter	Mildew, mould and moist microbial environment	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
Usually content living like this	Rubbish that is rotting	Intellectual disability
May refuse to allow nurse access to the house to avoid interference with living circumstances	Food scraps, often includes weevils and maggots	Autism Spectrum disorders e.g. Aspergers Syndrome
Mistrust people especially government authorities, banks, etc	No locks on doors	Physical disabilities
Compelled to save items and unable to discard	Hoarded animals in the house	Overwhelmed by chronic diseases
Indecisive	Unhealthy animals	Depression
Procrastination and disorganisation of possessions and activities	Rubbish in piles Dark in house, drawn blinds	May have familial predisposition
Fear of intervention and losing meaningful items	Cannot sit down in the home.	Decline in decision-making processes and capacity

Table 1. Indicators of squalor identified by district nurses

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Acknowledgements

We thank the University of South Australia for providing funding support to undertake this pilot research, Dr Kay Price, Liz Mattock for their assistance with the literature review, and the RDNS nurses who generously shared their time and knowledge.