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# Experience Immigrants Have With Housing in Waterloo

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# Experience Immigrants Have With Housing in Waterloo

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# A Growing Immigration Population

Advantages for community diversity range from social and economic benefits

# Problem Statement

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- Housing is major challenge to successful settlement
- Housing affects social, psychological and quality of life
- Limited or no study has been done

Patacchini, E., & Venanzoni, G. (2014). Peer effects in the demand for housing quality. *Journal of Urban Economics*, 83 (Supplement C), 6-17. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jue.2014.06.002>

# Purpose of Study

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- Examine immigrants' experience with housing in Waterloo

# Significance of the Study

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- Important to social workers
  - Help identify specific areas needing intervention
  - Maintain and sustain better housing provision
  - How to better prepare our children

**Breaking the housing barriers**

# Method

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- Qualitative Research Approach
- Institutional Review Board (IRB)
- Approval Granted to do Research

# Method continued

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All IRB protocols were professionally observed

- Permission to speak to participants
- Invitation to participate
- Consent form for each interviewee of the study
- List of 10 questions
- Individual interviews



# Procedure

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## **Participants**

- 5 people aware of home environment
- Voluntary involvement and received a ten dollar gift certificate
- Each oral interview took approximately one hour
- 4 persons were interviewed

# Procedure continued

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## Analysis

- Interviews transcribed
- REV an online transcription service
- Used Dedoose to code the transcriptions
- Developed Themes

# FINDINGS

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The Top Three Themes for the Findings Were

- Language Barrier
- Living Conditions
- Institutional System

# Language Barrier

*Burma, Malaysia and Thailand and various countries from Africa especially, Congo and Angola*

- ✓ **Leases written in English not in language tenant could understand**
  
- ✓ **Tenant did not understand how to contact landlord**  
Email    Text    Phone    Written note
  
- ✓ **Tenant did not know what was expected of them**  
When rent was due    How to report repairs or other issues  
How to pay the rent    How to notify if moving
  
- ✓ **Tenant did not know what to expect of the landlord**  
Safe environment    Rodent and bug infestation free

# Safety Issues

“...a lot of garbage in hallways, up the stairs...”

“...a lot of things not getting fixed or repaired in a timely manner”

“...dodge phone calls too, ...when it’s over 100 degrees...air isn’t working...”

”...a lot of garbage and debris...broken glass and stuff.”

# Infestation of bugs

“... they had a huge cockroach nest...”

“...bedbugs is a real problem...”

“...cockroaches in all of the apartments...”

“...cockroaches and bedbugs...”

“...major housing problem, bugs...”

“...cockroach infestation could be prevented...”

# Institutional System

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## **Email**

“You have to send them an email...”

“They would not have a computer”

“They wouldn’t have computer knowledge”

“Maintenance request...through email...”

“Not all of them (have computers)”

# Institutional System continued

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## **Texting**

“They don’t have phone...”

“...Lost deposit because texted landlord...”

## **Handwritten notes**

“...not able to read English so they do not understand notes landlord sends...”

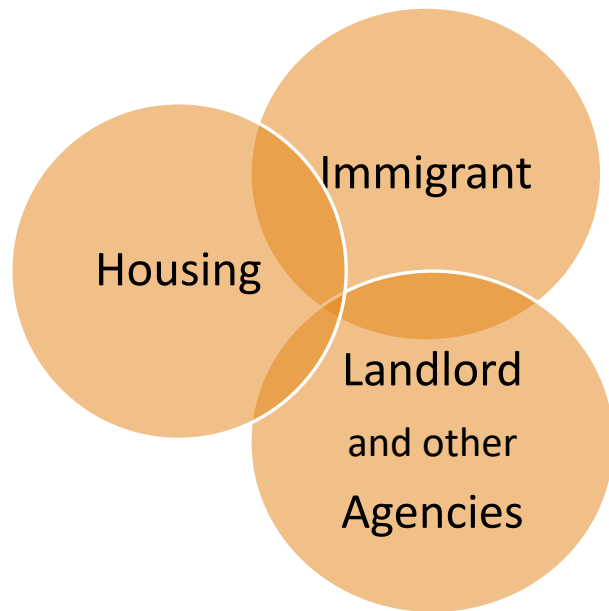
“...need to communicate in hand written notes to landlord...”



# Limitations of Research

Small test sample

# WHAT NOW ??



Advocate

How?



**Hope in a Storm**

Nonprofit  
Organization

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Darlene Fitkin  
&  
Marie Adebiyi

# 501c3

## Grants and Funding

- Collaborate with other agencies and UNI
- Making of film(s) to teach housing issues
- Landlord – Tenant Round Table
- Implement, housing specific, learning lab
- Continue Housing Research, As Needed
  - Landlords
  - Other Agencies
  - Immigrants

# Thank You

Many have helped and encourage me during these last few years to acquire my MSW

- My God, Jesus, who has given me the health and mental ability
- My children for saying “Yes mom, you can do it” many times over during this journey
- My pastors and church family
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- Dr. William Downs for his encouragement and help
- Rod Library staff, especially the research staff, technical people and cleaning staff
- Social Work Department and staff that have taught me and encouraged me
- Marie Adebisi, my friend, business partner

## References

Patacchini, E., & Venanzoni, G. (2014). Peer effects in the demand for housing quality. *Journal of Urban Economics*, 83 (Supplement C), 6-17. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jue.2014.06.002>

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