



CENTRAL HEATING – ITS INFLUENCE ON THE USE OF THE HOUSE AND THE BEHAVIOUR AND RELATIONSHIPS OF THE HOUSEHOLDS IN WINTERTIME

A QUALITATIVE STUDY

Meryl Basham on behalf of the Torbay Healthy Housing Group

BACKGROUND

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Watcombe Housing Project -a
randomised controlled trial.

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Need for a qualitative study to give an additional dimension as to what difference the installation of central heating has made to people's every day lives from their perspective

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- The use of the house, by children and adults
- The behaviour and relationships within the household
- Social relationships e.g. neighbours

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- Subset. Households with at least two children because of the issue of space having more impact than on single or couple occupancy(17)
- Ten households agreed to participate

ETHICAL ISSUES

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Approval from Torbay Local Research Ethics Committee, the Riviera Housing Trust and the Watcombe Housing Project Research Team

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Written consent was obtained from all interviewees with the proviso of withdrawing at any time and the opportunity to comment on report.

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- Inter rater comparison was used to assess the reliability of the coding and thematic analysis

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- Increased conflict and stress in relationships
- Lack of motivation to maintain the house and high energy costs

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3: "...you couldn't talk...and it put a really bad strain on us at one point."

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- Improved leisure and social opportunities for some households.
- Improved comfort levels

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42: "Well we can have a conversation now...talk about things without the kids interfering".

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3: "...we're like a '*normal*' family now, we can do normal things...we're walking round in t shirts".

42: "Well we can have a conversation now...talk about things without the kids interfering".

42: "He used to get asthma ... he doesn't get it now"

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- Personalities/coping skills and support systems
- Health status
- Knowledge of efficient use of heating
- Ratio of energy costs to income of householders.
- Households' with young children and larger families appear to be most affected by the lack of central heating.
- External factors community/neighbourhood

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- All the rooms in the house were utilised
- There was an improvement in people's relationships, health and well being.
- Some people who had a previous disposition to respiratory illness improved

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- Fuel poverty and the fear of higher costs.

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- Fuel poverty and the fear of higher costs.
- A need for simple control systems for equipment and knowledge of how to use the systems effectively and efficiently.

FUTURE RESEARCH

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Funded by The EAGA Charitable Trust and in liaison with Riviera Housing Trust & Teignbridge District Council

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To test whether the findings of the Watcombe Study are replicated in other areas with different household compositions

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PHASE 1 Method

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- Cost and type of heating, payment methods, use of energy, comfort levels and use of ventilation
- The use of the space within the house, the social relationships and behaviour of residents.
- 12 taped semi -structured interviews from the larger sample reflecting a range of domestic situations and comfort levels pre and post central heating

Phase 2 Method

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Post central heating

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- Repeat of questionnaires with additional questions about knowledge of equipment, energy advice given and any additional improvements made

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- Repeat of questionnaires with additional questions about knowledge of equipment, energy advice given and any additional improvements made
- Repeat of twelve in depth taped interviews

ANALYSIS

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Data from the questionnaires numerically coded and entered into SPSS analysed using χ^2 and paired tests. Open ended questions-content analysed.

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Data from the questionnaires numerically coded and entered into SPSS analysed using χ^2 and paired tests. Open ended questions-content analysed.

Data from the in-depth interviews will be transcribed and analysed as before.

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The findings of this and future studies should form part of the debate as to the priorities of the use of the resources available.