

## Abstract

Researchers have speculated that negative life events are more common in troubled neighborhoods, amplifying adverse effects on health. Using a clustered representative sample of Chicago residents (2001-03;  $n=3,105$ ) from the Chicago Community Adult Health Survey, we provide the first documentation that negative life events are highly geographically clustered compared to health outcomes. Associations between **neighborhood context** and negative life events were also found to vary by event type. We then demonstrate the power of a contextualized approach by testing path models in which life events mediate the relation between **neighborhood characteristics** and health outcomes, including self-rated health, anxiety, and depression. The indirect paths between **neighborhood** conditions and health through negative life event exposure are highly significant and large compared to the direct paths from **neighborhood** conditions to health. Our results indicate that **neighborhood** conditions can have acute as well as chronic effects on health, and that negative life events are a powerful mechanism by which **context** may influence health.