

Socio-economic, health and hygienic characteristics place the homeless people at risk groups. The higher incidence of health problems may have a multi-faceted etiology, including: smoking, alcohol, drugs, poor hygiene, insufficient food intake, poor quality diets etc. The prevalence of chronic diseases and cardiovascular risk factors is generally significantly higher in the homeless population than in the general population. Nutritional status of the homeless is also often compromised; many studies have reported malnutrition and insufficient intake of micronutrients whose daily turnover is enhanced by heavy smoking and alcohol consumption.

The objective of our studies was to (a) define in the Prague homeless population the prevalence of protein-energetic malnutrition and (b) describe some of the major cardiovascular risk factors and to make comparisons between this group and the general Czech population, (c) to assess levels of selected vitamins (A, E, C, B1, B2, B6) and trace elements (Zn, Se, Cu) in blood and (d) exposition to Pb and Cd and to compare the results with individuals representing the general Czech population, (e) to assess the nutrient intake of main nutrients and compare it with the daily recommendations.