

The health impacts of energy performance investments in low-income areas: a mixed-methods approach

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Plain English summary

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What was the question?

Living in cold homes can be harmful to people's mental and physical health. In this study, we wanted to see whether or not improving the energy efficiency of homes, through measures such as wall insulation and new heating systems, could improve the health of people living in them.

What did we do?

We analysed the health records of people who received energy efficiency measures to assess changes in emergency admissions to hospital over time. We also interviewed residents before and after they received energy efficiency measures, and monitored the homes of a smaller number of households.

What did we find?

We found that energy efficiency measures contributed to people's general well-being by making homes warmer, and easier and cheaper to heat to a comfortable level. Warmer homes also made people feel less socially isolated. However, we found no evidence that energy efficiency measures improved people's mental and physical health.

What does this mean?

Improving the energy efficiency of homes provides social and economic benefits to people living in them. However, area-based programmes may not improve chronic health conditions, reduce the number of hospital visits or reduce costs for the health service.

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This report

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