The foreclosure crisis is making people sick. According to a new report by Alameda County health officials and an Oakland-based housing rights group, foreclosures are creating health problems for the people and families involved in the process.

The Alameda County Public Health Department, and the group Just Cause, discovered that people undergoing foreclosure have higher levels of stress and increased medical problems.

They took a survey of close to 400 residents in two Oakland neighborhoods hit hard by the crisis, and by past economic strains and high crime levels. They found that people going through foreclosure, or who’ve recently lost their homes, were more than twice as likely to say their mental and physical health had worsened over the past two years, compared with people not going through the process. And, those residents were twice as likely to report stress, depression, or anxiety over the past month.

I can confirm this personally. Until I was able to get a reduced mortgage amount I expected to be forced out of my home at any time. I have substantial equity in my home but disabled and out of work I can’t make mortgage payments. I have it listed for sale at a very low price, in a desirable area, but nothing’s selling. It’s been on the market for months.

I’ve had muscle spasms, headaches, depression, and insomnia. Most folks in my position can’t handle the paperwork and stress of dealing with mortgageholders, State, and County agencies without whom they can’t survive.

The tax break for homebuyers needs to be continued and banks have to start lending again.

James Adams
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