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HIV in Prisons, 2004 and Medical Problems of Jail Inmates

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HIV-POSITIVE STATE AND FEDERAL PRISONERS DECREASED FOR A FIFTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR

More than one third of jail inmates reported a medical problem in a national survey

WASHINGTON - The numbers of both HIV-positive state and federal prisoners and AIDS-related prisoner deaths decreased for the fifth consecutive year, according to a new report by the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). BJS released a separate report that showed an estimated 37 percent of county and municipal jail inmates reported having a current medical problem other than a cold or virus in a national survey.

Between 2003 and 2004, the number of HIV-positive inmates in state and federal prisons fell from 23,663 to 23,046. The number of HIV-positive state and federal prisoners has fallen each year since 1999, when the number stood at 25,807.

During 2004, the number of confirmed AIDS cases in state and federal prisons increased from 5,944 to 6,027. The rate of confirmed AIDS cases in state and federal prisoners (50 per 10,000 prison inmates) was more than three times higher than in the total U.S. population (15 per 10,000 persons).

The number of AIDS-related deaths in state and federal prisons fell from 282 in 2003 to 203 in 2004. The death rate from AIDS in state prisons dropped by one-third from 21 per 100,000 inmates in 2003 to 14 deaths per 100,000 in 2004.

With the introduction of protease inhibitors and combination antiretroviral therapies in recent years, corrections officials have successfully reduced the number of deaths as well as the rate of death due to AIDS-related causes. During 2004, 6 percent of state inmate deaths were attributable to AIDS down from 34 percent in 1995.

Twenty states reported a decrease in the number of HIV-infected prisoners during 2004, and 24 states and the federal system reported an increase. Florida reported the largest increase (138) in HIV-positive inmates, followed by Mississippi (54 new cases). New York reported the largest drop 500 fewer cases.

Among state prisoners tested, female inmates (1.9 percent) were more commonly reported to be HIV infected than were males (1.6 percent). Black non-Hispanic female inmates reported the highest percentage of HIV infection (3.4 percent). Inmates age 45 or older (2.6 percent) were more likely than those 24 or younger (0.3 percent) to be HIV positive.

According to a recently completed national survey of county and municipal jail inmates, an estimated 229,000 had a medical problem other than a cold or a virus. About 26 percent reported having had a dental problem since admission, 13 percent said they had been injured while in jail, and one percent said they had undergone a surgical procedure.

Among the current medical problems reported, jail inmates were most likely to report having arthritis (13 percent), followed by hypertension (11 percent), and asthma (10 percent). Other specific problems were heart conditions (6 percent); kidney problems and tuberculosis (4 percent each); stroke, diabetes, and hepatitis (3 percent each); as well as cancer, paralysis, liver problems, HIV, and STDs (about 1 percent each).

About 6 in 10 jail inmates age 45 or older reported having a current medical problem, compared to 1 in 4 inmates age 24 or younger. Since their admission to jail more than 40 percent of all inmates reported having had a medical examination.

One-third of jail inmates reported an impairment including learning, speech, hearing, vision, or mobility. Eight percent of jail inmates reported a mental or emotional condition that kept them from participating fully in school, work, or other activities.

The reports, *HIV in Prisons, 2004* and *Medical Problems of Jail Inmates*, were written by BJS statistician Laura M. Maruschak. Following publication, the reports can be found at https://bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=954 and https://bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=786

For additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics statistical reports programs, please visit the BJS website at: https://bjs.gov.

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