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Mortality in Local Jails and State Prisons, 2000-2013 - Statistical Tables

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DEATHS IN LOCAL JAILS AND STATE PRISONS INCREASED FOR THE THIRD CONSECUTIVE YEAR

WASHINGTON – For the third consecutive year the number of inmates who died in state prisons and local jails increased, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) announced today. A total of 4,446 inmates died in 2013, an increase of 131 deaths from 2012. This was the highest number of deaths reported to the BJS Deaths in Custody Reporting Program since 2007.

From 2012 to 2013 local jails saw an increase of nine deaths—from 958 to 967 deaths. While the number of illness-related deaths (such as heart disease, liver disease and cancer) in local jails declined, the decrease was offset by an increase in unnatural causes of death, such as suicide, drug or alcohol intoxication, accident and homicide.

As in every year since 2000, suicide was the leading cause of death in local jails, accounting for more than a third (34 percent) of all jail deaths in 2013. The number of suicides in local jails increased from 300 in 2012 to 327 in 2013. The suicide rate increased from 40 to 46 suicides per 100,000 local jail inmates during the year, and has increased 12 percent since 2009.

From 2012 to 2013, the number of drug or alcohol intoxication deaths in local jails increased from 57 to 70 deaths, accidents increased from 18 to 31, and homicides rose from 22 to 28 deaths. Homicides or accidental deaths were less common than other causes of death, each accounting for three percent or less of jail deaths in 2013.

Most jails (80 percent) reported no deaths in 2013. Nearly a quarter (23 percent) of all jail inmate deaths occurred in California and Texas. The typical jail inmate who died in 2013 was male (87 percent), white (54 percent), age 35 or older (70 percent) and in custody for fewer than 7 days (40 percent).

The number of deaths in state prisons increased by 122 deaths from 2012 to 2013—from 3,357 to 3,479 deaths. In 2013, about 90 percent of deaths in state prisons were related to an illness, six percent were suicides and three percent were homicides. Combined, cancer (31 percent) and heart disease (26 percent) accounted for about half of all illness-related deaths in prisons.

Liver disease (10 percent) was the third leading cause of death in state prisons in 2013. Deaths from liver disease increased 16 percent, from 304 deaths in 2012 to 354 deaths in 2013. This was the largest percentage change observed among illness-related prison deaths in 2013.

Every state department of corrections reported at least one prisoner death in 2013. Nearly a quarter of those prisoner deaths occurred in Texas and California. White inmates accounted for more than half of the deaths, and nearly all were male.

Other key findings include—

- The prisoner mortality rate for drug or alcohol intoxication increased 69 percent from 2012 to 2013.
- In state prisons, the percentage of decedents age 55 or older has increased by an average of 8 percent annually since 2001. By 2013, more than half (57 percent) of prisoner deaths were of inmates age 55 or older.
- While the average mortality rate for male and female inmates was nearly equal from 2000 to 2013, the suicide mortality rate among male jail inmates (43 per 100,000) was 1.5 times the rate for female inmates (28 per 100,000).

The report, *Mortality in Local Jails and State Prisons, 2000–2013 - Statistical Tables* (*NCJ 248756*), was written by Margaret E. Noonan of BJS and Harley Rohloff and Scott Ginder of RTI International. Findings are based on data from the Deaths in Custody Reporting Program. The report, related documents and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics' statistical publications and programs can be found on the BJS website at http://www.bjs.gov/.

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