Prison Health, Aging and Conditions

24 annotated reference entries

A companion to the existing research archive. This collection contains original annotations and source links, not copies of published papers.

How to read this collection

Evidence types, populations and limits accompany every entry. Associations do not establish causation. Reports, policy documents and testimony serve different purposes from clinical studies. Research from other environments cannot be assumed to measure prison-specific effects.

Review scope

Sources were traced from topic-scoped research notes and checked on October 28, 2026. The review is not systematic or exhaustive. Some entries rely on abstracts or official summaries; each states its review depth.

The full package has 57 new source works and one existing-table citation enrichment (MP31). Reports and reviews may reuse evidence; this is not a count of independent experiments.

Use the companion source register for citations and the coverage log for duplicate decisions and unresolved leads. Original source IDs are shared across the website, register, PDFs and RIS file.

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MP01 / Direct evidence | Peer-reviewed meta-analysis

Trauma exposure and mental health of prisoners and ex-prisoners: A systematic review and meta-analysis

Huinan Liu; Tsz Wai Li; Li Liang; Wai Kai Hou (2021). Clinical Psychology Review.

Setting: Review of 62 studies in 16 countries

Across 62 studies, trauma exposure was associated with poorer mental health among prisoners and former prisoners. The review spans 16 countries.

Evidence limits

Trauma may precede incarceration. These associations do not isolate the effects of imprisonment or establish causal direction.

Review and provenance

Reviewed: Publisher indexed abstract; full text unavailable.

Source note: Prison mental health.

DOI: 10.1016/j.cpr.2021.102069

Link access check (28 October 2026): Access blocked (403).

Open source publication

MP02 / Direct evidence | Peer-reviewed observational study

Inmate Mental Health and the Pains of Imprisonment

Timothy G. Edgemon; Jody Clay-Warner (2019). Society and Mental Health.

Setting: United States

Data from 5,552 people in 214 US state prisons link crowding and punitive conditions with depression and hostility; work availability was inversely associated with distress.

Evidence limits

Observational modeling does not prove that these institutional features caused the measured symptoms.

Review and provenance

Reviewed: Publisher abstract.

Source note: Prison mental health.

DOI: 10.1177/2156869318785424

Link access check (28 October 2026): Page or document content returned.

Open source publication

MP03 / Direct evidence | Conference abstract

Dissociative Experiences and Psychopathology in Prisoners (EPA-0564)

C. Garofalo (2014). European Psychiatry, conference supplement.

Setting: Prisoner sample; country not verified in reviewed abstract

In a small sample of 28 male prisoners, dissociative experiences correlated with broader psychopathological symptoms.

Evidence limits

A conference abstract and small correlational sample cannot establish prevalence, causation, or a diagnosis of dissociative disorder. Issue year is 2014; online posting is later.

Review and provenance

Reviewed: Publisher abstract matched to screenshot methods.

Source note: Hippocampus volume loss.

DOI: 10.1016/S0924-9338(14)77955-6

Link access check (28 October 2026): Retrieval unavailable in research tool.

Open source publication

MP04 / Direct evidence | Peer-reviewed matched observational study

Depressive symptoms in older adults with and without a history of incarceration: A matched pairs comparison

Victoria L. Steigerwald; David C. Rozek; Daniel Paulson (2022). Aging & Mental Health.

Setting: United States

Among 160 matched pairs of older adults, incarceration history was associated with more depressive symptoms overall. The sex-stratified difference was significant for women, but not men.

Evidence limits

Matching reduces some differences between groups but cannot remove unmeasured confounding. The female subgroup was small.

Review and provenance

Reviewed: PubMed abstract.

Source note: Prison mental health.

DOI: 10.1080/13607863.2021.1984392

Link access check (28 October 2026): Page or document content returned.

Open source publication

MP08 / Direct evidence | Peer-reviewed cross-sectional study

Assessing Stress Levels, Predictors and Management Strategies of Inmates at Ankaful Prison Complex in the Central Region, Ghana

Edward W. Ansah; Jennifer Addae; John E. Hagan Jr.; Michael A. Baidoo (2023). Behavioral Sciences 13(3), 201.

Setting: Ankaful Prison Complex, Ghana

The Ankaful study documents stress and its correlates across several prison units in Ghana, extending the collection beyond US and European settings.

Evidence limits

Cross-sectional associations cannot separate preexisting mental health needs from incarceration effects. Units and analytic subsamples differ; no pooled prevalence is reproduced here.

Review and provenance

Reviewed: Full-text methods and results excerpts; PubMed metadata.

Source note: Prison mental health.

DOI: 10.3390/bs13030201

Link access check (28 October 2026): Verification challenge; content not retrieved.

Open source publication

MP18 / Peer-reviewed review

Incarceration and Health

Michael Massoglia; William Alex Pridemore (2015). Annual Review of Sociology.

Setting: United States

Reviews links between incarceration, chronic illness, mortality, and the health of families and communities, including possible social and stress pathways.

Evidence limits

The review synthesizes diverse observational evidence; it does not establish one uniform effect of imprisonment on every health outcome.

Review and provenance

Reviewed: PubMed abstract and PMC excerpts.

Source note: Prison mental health.

DOI: 10.1146/annurev-soc-073014-112326

Link access check (28 October 2026): Only site footer returned; article content unverified.

Open source publication

MP19 / Peer-reviewed longitudinal observational study

Losing Years Doing Time: Incarceration Exposure and Accelerated Biological Aging among African American Adults

Mark T. Berg; Ethan M. Rogers; Man-Kit Lei; Ronald L. Simons (2021). Journal of Health and Social Behavior.

Setting: United States

In 410 African American adults, incarceration exposure predicted faster epigenetic aging after adjustment; direct violence exposure strengthened the association.

Evidence limits

An epigenetic clock is a biomarker, not a direct measurement of years of life lost. Observational adjustment cannot eliminate all confounding. DOI ending 55925 is the accompanying brief, not this article.

Review and provenance

Reviewed: Indexed PubMed abstract; original article DOI distinguished from policy-brief DOI.

Source note: Prison mental health.

DOI: 10.1177/00221465211052568

Link access check (28 October 2026): Only site footer returned; article content unverified.

Open source publication

MP20 / Peer-reviewed cross-sectional study

The association between age and functional disability in US adults with lifetime exposure to the criminal legal system, 2015-2019

Laura C. Hawks; Sandra Iregbu; Rebekah J. Walker; Leonard E. Egede (2025). Journal of Affective Disorders.

Setting: United States

National survey data identify substantial functional disability among adults with criminal-legal exposure, including younger adults; adjusted age differences remained.

Evidence limits

Criminal-legal exposure is broader than imprisonment. Cross-sectional disability measures do not establish accelerated biological aging or estimate life expectancy.

Review and provenance

Reviewed: Publisher indexed abstract and PMC methods excerpts; direct retrieval intermittently challenged.

Source note: Prison and life expectancy!!!.

DOI: 10.1016/j.jad.2024.10.111

Link access check (28 October 2026): Verification challenge; content not retrieved.

Open source publication

MP21 / Peer-reviewed repeated cross-sectional study

Health, Access to Care, and Financial Barriers to Care Among People Incarcerated in US Prisons

Emily L. Lupez et al. (2024). JAMA Internal Medicine.

Setting: United States

National prison survey data show unmet medical and mental-health needs. Higher copays relative to prison wages were associated with reduced access to clinicians.

Evidence limits

Self-reported survey measures and state-level policy comparisons do not establish causation. The data describe 2004 and 2016, not current prevalence.

Review and provenance

Reviewed: Publisher abstract, methods, and results.

Source note: Prison mental health/ insurance post-prison -> medical-copay briefing -> primary study.

DOI: 10.1001/jamainternmed.2024.3567

Link access check (28 October 2026): Page or document content returned.

Open source publication

MP22 / Legal scholarship and policy argument

The Reincorporation of Prisoners into the Body Politic: Eliminating the Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy

Mira K. Edmonds (2021). Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law and Policy.

Setting: United States

Argues that ending Medicaid exclusion would improve continuity of care and address structural health inequities related to incarceration.

Evidence limits

This is a legal-policy argument from 2021, not an intervention trial or a statement of current eligibility rules.

Review and provenance

Reviewed: Author institutional repository abstract.

Source note: Prison mental health/ insurance post-prison.

Link access check (28 October 2026): Page or document content returned.

Open source publication

MP23 / Historical scholarly analysis

Can There Be Acceptable Prison Health Care? Looking Back on the 1970s

Susan M. Reverby (2019). Public Health Reports.

Setting: United States

Examines the history of correctional medicine and the recurring tension between confinement, professional care, and accountability.

Evidence limits

Historical interpretation provides institutional context, not a contemporary clinical-outcomes estimate. Published online in 2018; issue year 2019.

Review and provenance

Reviewed: PMC article excerpts and publication metadata.

Source note: Prison mental health/ insurance post-prison.

DOI: 10.1177/0033354918805985

Link access check (28 October 2026): Verification challenge; content not retrieved.

Open source publication

MP24 / Scholarly viewpoint

Establishing National Standards for Carceral Health Care: The Federal Prison Oversight Act

Lawrence A. Haber; Chesa Boudin; Brie A. Williams (2025). JAMA Internal Medicine.

Setting: United States

Calls for consistent healthcare standards and independent oversight in correctional institutions, linking prison conditions to public health.

Evidence limits

A viewpoint recommends policy; it does not test the effectiveness of the oversight law. Published online in 2024; issue year 2025.

Review and provenance

Reviewed: Publisher text and author-hosted viewpoint.

Source note: Interesting prison story angle.

DOI: 10.1001/jamainternmed.2024.6155

Link access check (28 October 2026): Page or document content returned.

Open source publication

Equity for Whom? How Private Equity and the Punishment Bureaucracy Exploit Disabled People

Bowen Cho (2024). Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund.

Setting: United States

Examines disability, privatization, incarceration, and housing insecurity through a civil-rights and political-economy framework.

Evidence limits

Advocacy analysis and documented examples should be distinguished from representative clinical research or a causal estimate.

Review and provenance

Reviewed: Original report webpage and report overview; attachment cover matched.

Source note: Prison in humane conditions -> attached DREDF report.

Link access check (28 October 2026): Page or document content returned.

Open source publication

Spatiotemporal Facility-Level Patterns of Summer Heat Exposure, Vulnerability, and Risk in United States Prison Landscapes

Ufuoma Ovienmhada et al. (2024). GeoHealth.

Setting: United States

Temperature records from 1990-2023 characterize summer heat exposure at 1,614 US prisons. Exposure and vulnerability differed by region, facility characteristics, and population demographics.

Evidence limits

Facility-level temperature estimates do not measure each person's indoor exposure, mental-health symptoms, or individual heat-related illness.

Review and provenance

Reviewed: MIT repository abstract and study description.

Source note: Public research link in a mixed research/contact note; private content excluded.

DOI: 10.1029/2024GH001108

Link access check (28 October 2026): Fetch cache miss.

Open source publication

MP33 / Peer-reviewed cross-sectional study

Assessment of mental distress among prison inmates in Ghana's correctional system: a cross-sectional study using the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale

Abdallah Ibrahim; Reuben K. Esena; Moses Aikins; Anne Marie O'Keefe; Mary M. McKay (2015). International Journal of Mental Health Systems.

Setting: Tamale Central Prison, Ghana

Among 100 prisoners (89 men and 11 women) sampled at Tamale Central Prison, more than half screened as having moderate to severe distress in the preceding four weeks.

Evidence limits

A single-facility distress screening does not diagnose specific disorders, establish a national prevalence, or show that imprisonment caused the symptoms.

Review and provenance

Reviewed: Publisher abstract and methods.

Source note: International prison/ mental health -> Ghana prison coverage -> primary research.

DOI: 10.1186/s13033-015-0011-0

Link access check (28 October 2026): Page or document content returned.

Open source publication

Living With a Death Sentence in Kenya: Prisoners' Experiences of Crime, Punishment and Death Row

Carolyn Hoyle; Lucrezia Rizzelli (2022). The Death Penalty Project / Kenya National Commission on Human Rights.

Setting: Twelve prisons in Kenya

Interviews with 671 people in 12 Kenyan prisons included people sentenced to death and those whose sentences had been commuted to life. Sixty-three percent reported that their mental health had suffered since imprisonment.

Evidence limits

Retrospective self-reports are not clinical diagnoses or a causal comparison. Findings concern this death-sentenced population, not all incarcerated people in Kenya.

Review and provenance

Reviewed: Report methods, sample description and health findings (printed pages 16-18 and 53-54).

Source note: International prison/ mental health -> Kenya reporting -> underlying report.

Link access check (28 October 2026): Page or document content returned.

Open source publication

Promotion of the mental health of prisoners and probationers and management of their mental disorders: CM/Rec(2025)2

Council of Europe Committee of Ministers (2025). Council of Europe.

Setting: Council of Europe member states; policy recommendation

Recommends equivalent mental-health care, early identification, continuity of treatment, informed consent, trained staff, and prevention of self-harm for adult prisoners and probationers.

Evidence limits

A regional policy standard is not evidence that member states have implemented it or that a specified intervention improves outcomes.

Review and provenance

Reviewed: Official recommendation, adopted 26 February 2025.

Source note: International prison/ mental health; mixed research/contact note (private content excluded) -> Council of Europe sources.

Link access check (28 October 2026): Page or document content returned.

Open source publication

Eating Behind Bars: Ending the Hidden Punishment of Food in Prison

Leslie Soble; Kathryn Stroud; Marika Weinstein (2020). Impact Justice.

Setting: United States

Combines surveys of formerly incarcerated people and families, interviews, and policy review to document food quality, hunger, dignity and food-service practices in US prisons.

Evidence limits

Self-selected accounts and policy evidence cannot establish population-wide prevalence or the causal effect of diet on mental illness. The report is an organizational investigation, not a randomized nutrition trial.

Review and provenance

Reviewed: Official executive summary, including research-design diagram; full report exceeds web retrieval limit.

Source note: Food and mental health Plus Prison; inhumane-conditions food reporting -> underlying report.

Link access check (28 October 2026): Page or document content returned.

Open source publication

The World Health Organization European Health in Prisons Project After 10 Years: Persistent Barriers and Achievements

Alex Gatherer; Lars Moller; Paul Hayton (2005). American Journal of Public Health.

Setting: WHO European Region; historical policy network

Reviews a network of 28 countries working to improve prison health and connect prison services with national public-health systems. It identifies persistent institutional barriers alongside practical achievements.

Evidence limits

A historical programme review does not establish present-day European conditions or the effectiveness of every participating system. The WHO European Region is broader than the European Union.

Review and provenance

Reviewed: PMC metadata, abstract and policy discussion.

Source note: Prison mental health.

DOI: 10.2105/AJPH.2003.057323

Link access check (28 October 2026): Verification challenge; content not retrieved.

Open source publication

MP46 / Peer-reviewed longitudinal observational study

The Long Arm of Incarceration: Incarceration History and Mortality Risk in a Nationally Representative Cohort of Older US Adults, 2012-2022

Carmen Gutierrez; Max Lisch; Yuan Zhang; Mateo Farina (2026). American Journal of Public Health.

Setting: United States

Among older US adults, incarceration history was associated with an adjusted mortality hazard ratio of 1.88. Model-based predictions estimated death 5.8 years earlier on average.

Evidence limits

These are adjusted observational associations and model predictions, not proof that incarceration shortened every participant's life by that amount. Exposure combines jail, prison and other correctional settings.

Review and provenance

Reviewed: Health and Retirement Study institutional abstract and metadata.

Source note: Prison mental health -> Prison Policy Initiative later-life briefing -> original study.

DOI: 10.2105/AJPH.2026.308449

Link access check (28 October 2026): Page or document content returned.

Open source publication

MP49 / Peer-reviewed cross-sectional study

Links of Previous Incarceration With Geriatric Syndromes and Chronic Health Conditions Among Older Adults in the United States

Alexander Testa; Dylan B. Jackson; Meghan Novisky; Christopher Kaufmann; Carmen Gutierrez; Jack Tsai; Adam P. Spira; Roland J. Thorpe Jr. (2024). Journals of Gerontology: Series A.

Setting: United States

Data on adults aged 50 and older linked prior incarceration with several reported chronic and functional health conditions, including depression, lung disease and difficulties with daily activities; patterns differed between the parent and spouse/partner samples.

Evidence limits

Associations were not uniform across every condition. Exposure and health measures were self-reported; the design does not establish timing or causation. The parent and spouse samples have different sex compositions.

Review and provenance

Reviewed: Full-text abstract, sample methods and outcome definitions.

Source note: Prison mental health -> later-life research briefing -> original study.

DOI: 10.1093/gerona/glae084

Link access check (28 October 2026): Page or document content returned.

Open source publication

Belgium: prolonged detention of internees without adequate care, Interim Resolution CM/ResDH(2024)331

Council of Europe Committee of Ministers (2024). Department for the Execution of Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights.

Setting: Belgium; internees requiring mental healthcare

Describes persistent problems with detention in prison psychiatric wings without suitable care, and calls for appropriate placements outside prisons and stronger outpatient services.

Evidence limits

This is a record of judgment implementation and a 2024 resolution, not a clinical study or confirmation of Belgium's present compliance. It concerns internees with particular care needs, not all Belgian prisoners.

Review and provenance

Reviewed: Official Council of Europe account, 9 December 2024.

Source note: Interesting prison story angle.

Link access check (28 October 2026): Page or document content returned.

Open source publication

Inspection of the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Federal Medical Center Devens

US Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General (2024). Evaluation and Inspections Division, Report 25-009.

Setting: United States

The April 2024 unannounced inspection of a Massachusetts medical prison identified staffing shortages, gaps in healthcare, missed monitoring rounds and infrastructure problems. The report makes eleven recommendations.

Evidence limits

Findings describe one institution and the inspection period, with some later updates. They are not a national prevalence estimate, controlled causal study, or confirmation of present conditions.

Review and provenance

Reviewed: Official report executive summary and inspection scope; official release.

Source note: Federal prisons shutting down.

Link access check (28 October 2026): Page or document content returned.

Open source publication

Chronic Punishment: The unmet health needs of people in state prisons

Leah Wang (2022). Prison Policy Initiative.

Setting: United States

Analyzes the 2016 Survey of Prison Inmates to describe chronic illness, mental health needs, disability, pregnancy and barriers to care among people in US state-prison custody.

Evidence limits

Self-reported survey data collected in 2016 describe state-prison custody, not all detention settings or current prevalence. The report combines descriptive analysis with advocacy recommendations; it does not establish that prison caused every condition.

Review and provenance

Reviewed: Original report overview, findings and methodology.

Source note: Prison mental health.

Link access check (28 October 2026): Page or document content returned.

Open source publication