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Mental Health and Treatment of Inmates and Probationers

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At midyear 1998, an estimated 283,800 mentally ill offenders were incarcerated in the Nation's prisons and jails. In recent surveys completed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 16% of State prison inmates, 7% of Federal inmates, and 16% of those in local jails reported either a mental condition or an overnight stay in a mental hospital. About 16%, or an estimated 547,800 probationers, said they had had a mental condition or stayed overnight in a mental hospital at some point in their lifetime.

Based on information from personal interviews, State prison inmates with a mental condition were more likely than other inmates to be incarcerated for a violent offense (53% compared to 46%); more likely than other inmates to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of the current offense (59% compared to 51%); and more than twice as likely as other inmates to have been homeless in the 12 months prior to their arrest (20% compared to 9%). Over three-quarters of mentally ill inmates had been sentenced to time in prison or jail or on probation at least once prior to the current sentence.

Over 30% of male mentally ill inmates and 78% of females reported prior physical or sexual abuse. Since admission 61% of mentally ill inmates in State prison and 41% in local jails reported they had received treatment for a mental condition in the form of counseling, medication, or other mental health services.

Highlights

Over a quarter million mentally ill incarcerated in prison or jail

Reported a...	State prison	Federal prison	Jail	Probation
Mental or emotional condition	10.1%	4.8%	10.5%	13.8%
Overnight stay in a mental hospital	10.7	4.7	10.2	8.2
Estimated to be mentally ill*	16.2%	7.4%	16.3%	16.0%

*Reported either a mental or emotional condition or an overnight stay in a mental hospital or program.

- About 10% of prison and jail inmates reported a mental or emotional condition; and 10% said they had stayed overnight in a mental hospital or program.

- Together, 16% or an estimated 283,800 inmates reported either a mental condition or an overnight stay in a mental hospital, and were identified as mentally ill.

Mentally ill inmates were more likely than others to be in prison for a violent offense

Offense	State prisoners	
	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates
Violent	52.9%	46.1%
Property	24.4	21.5
Drug	12.8	22.2
Public-order	9.9	9.8
Criminal history		
None	18.8%	21.2%
Priors	81.2	78.8

- About 53% of mentally ill inmates were in prison for a violent offense, compared to 46% of other inmates.

- Mentally ill offenders were less likely than others to be incarcerated for a drug-related offense (13% versus 22%).

Nearly 6 in 10 mentally ill offenders reported they were under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of their current offense

	State prisoners	
	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates
Before entering prison		
Homeless in 12 months prior to arrest	20.1%	8.8%
Physical/sexual abuse		
Male	32.8%	13.1%
Female	78.4	50.9
Alcohol/drug use		
At time of offense	58.7%	51.2%
Drug use		
In month before offense	58.8%	56.1%

- Mentally ill State prison inmates were more than twice as likely as other inmates to report living on the street or in a shelter in the 12 months prior to arrest (20% compared to 9%).

- Nearly 8 in 10 female mentally ill inmates reported physical or sexual abuse. Males with a mental condition were more than twice as likely as other males to report abuse.

Mental health treatment since admission	Mentally ill inmates	
	State prison	Jail
Any treatment	60.5%	40.9%
Medication	50.1	34.1
Counseling	44.1	16.2

- 6 in 10 mentally ill State inmates reported receiving mental treatment since admission to prison.

Survey items used to measure mental illness

- Do you have a mental or emotional condition?
(prison and jail inmates only) Yes
 No
- Have you ever been told by a mental health professional such as a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, or psychiatric nurse, that you had a mental or emotional disorder?
(probationers only) Yes
 No
- Because of an emotional or mental problem, have you ever —
Taken a medication prescribed by a psychiatrist or other doctor? Yes
 No
- Been admitted to a mental hospital, unit or treatment program where you stayed overnight? Yes
 No
- Received counseling or therapy from a trained professional? Yes
 No
- Received any other mental health services? Yes
 No

Prevalence of mental illness among correctional populations based on offender self reports

The findings in this report are based on the 1997 Survey of Inmates in State or Federal Correctional Facilities, the 1996 Survey of Inmates in Local Jails, and the 1995 Survey of Adults on Probation. In each survey, offenders selected through nationally representative samples were asked a series of mental health related questions. Respondents were asked if they have a mental or emotional condition and whether they had ever received treatment for a mental or emotional problem, other than treatment related to drug or alcohol abuse. (See survey questions in the box above.)

16% of State prisoners identified as mentally ill

For this report, offenders were identified as mentally ill if they met one of the following two criteria: they reported a current mental or emotional condition, or they reported an overnight stay in a mental hospital or treatment program. An estimated 1 in 10 State prison inmates reported a current mental or emotional condition (table 1). A slightly larger percentage (11%) of State inmates said they had been admitted overnight to a mental hospital or treatment program at some point in their life. Overall, nearly a third of all inmates reported they had a current mental condition or they had received mental health service at some time.

Previous studies of the prevalence of severe mental illness in prison or jail

Study	Sample	Mentally ill*
Guy, Platt, Zwerling, and Bullock (1985)	Philadelphia jail pretrial admissions	16%
Teplin (1990)	Cook County jail admissions (males)	10%
Steadman, Fabisiak, Dvoskin, and Holohean (1987)	New York State prisoners	8%

*Generally includes schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major depression. See individual studies for variations in definition.

Table 1. Measures of mental illness among State prison inmates, 1997

	State prison inmates	
	Percent	Cumulative percent
Reported a mental or emotional condition	10.1%	10.1%
Because of a mental or emotional problem, inmate had —		
Been admitted to a hospital overnight	10.7%	16.2%
Taken a prescribed medication	18.9	23.9
Received professional counseling or therapy	21.8	29.7
Received other mental health services	3.3	30.2

To take into account underreporting of current mental or emotional problems, past admission to a mental hospital was included as a measure of mental illness. Overall, 16% of State prisoners met these criteria, including 10% who reported a current mental condition and an additional 6% who said they did not have a mental condition but had stayed overnight in a mental hospital, unit, or treatment program.

Previously estimated rates of mental illness among incarcerated populations vary, depending on the methodology of the study, the institution, and the definition of mental illness. Estimates range from 8% to 16% among studies with more rigorous scientific methods, including random sampling and a standardized assessment or psychological testing. (See the box on this page.)

Past estimates of the rate of mental illness among incarcerated populations are higher than those for the U.S. general population. Among a sample of male jail detainees in Cook County (Chicago), Teplin found 9.5% had experienced a severe mental disorder (schizophrenia, mania, or major depression) at some point in their life, compared to 4.4% of males in the U.S. general population. The Epidemiologic Catchment Area program found that 6.7% of prisoners had suffered from schizophrenia at some point, compared to 1.4% of the U.S. household population (Robins and Regier).

283,800 mentally ill in prison or jail; 547,800 on probation

Using the same criteria described for State prison inmates, 16% of offenders in local jails or on probation and 7% of inmates in Federal prisons were identified as mentally ill in recently completed BJS surveys (table 2). Probationers were somewhat less likely than inmates in State prisons or local jails to report an overnight stay in a mental hospital or treatment program but more likely to report a mental or emotional problem. Federal inmates had lower rates on both measures.

Assuming these rates have not changed since the surveys were conducted, an estimated 283,800 inmates in prison or jail were mentally ill as of June 30, 1998 (table 3). State prisons held an estimated 179,200 mentally ill offenders; Federal prisons held 7,900; and local jails, 96,700. Of those on probation at yearend 1998, an estimated 547,800 were mentally ill.

White inmates more likely than blacks or Hispanics to report a mental illness

Nearly a quarter of white State prison and local jail inmates and a fifth of white offenders on probation were identified as mentally ill (table 4). The rate of mental illness among black and Hispanic inmates and probationers was much lower. Among black offenders,

14% of those in State prison and local jails, and 10% of those on probation were identified as mentally ill. About 11% of Hispanic State prison and local jail inmates, and 9% of Hispanic offenders on probation had a mental illness.

Black and Hispanic inmates in Federal prison were half as likely as white inmates to report a mental illness. About 6% of black inmates and 4% of Hispanic inmates reported a mental condition or an overnight stay in a mental hospital, compared to 12% of white Federal prison inmates.

The prevalence of mental illness also varied by gender, with females reporting a higher rate of mental illness than males. Nearly 24% of female State prison and local jail inmates, and 22% of female probationers were identified as mentally ill, compared to 16% of male State prison and jail inmates and 15% of male probationers.

Offender mental illness highest among the middle-aged

Offenders between ages 45 and 54 were the most likely to be identified as mentally ill. About 20% of State prisoners, 10% of Federal prisoners, 23% of jail inmates, and 21% of probationers between ages 45 and 54 had a mental illness, compared to 14% of State inmates, 7% of Federal inmates, 13% of jail inmates, and 14% of probationers age 24 or younger.

The highest rates of mental illness were among white females in State prison. An estimated 29% of white females, 20% of black females, and 22% of Hispanic females in State prison were identified as mentally ill. Nearly 4 in 10 white female inmates age 24 or younger were mentally ill.

Age	Percent of females in State prison identified as mentally ill		
	White	Black	Hispanic
Total	29%	20%	22%
24 or younger	37	17	23
25-34	23	20	21
35 or older	33	21	23

Table 2. Mental health status of inmates and probationers

	State prison inmates, 1997	Federal prison inmates, 1997	Jail inmates, 1996	Probationers, 1995
Identified as mentally ill*	16.2%	7.4%	16.3%	16.0%
Reported a mental or emotional condition	10.1	4.8	10.5	13.8
Admitted overnight to a mental hospital or treatment program	10.7	4.7	10.2	8.2

*Reported either a mental condition or an overnight stay in a mental hospital or treatment program.

Table 3. Estimated number of mentally ill inmates and probationers, 1998

	Estimated number of offenders*			
	State prison	Federal prison	Local jail	Probation
Identified as mentally ill	179,200	7,900	96,700	547,800
Reported a mental or emotional condition	111,300	5,200	62,100	473,000
Admitted overnight to a mental hospital	118,300	5,000	60,500	281,200

*Based on midyear 1998 counts from the National Prisoner Statistics and Annual Survey of Jails and preliminary yearend 1998 counts from the Annual Probation Survey.

Table 4. Inmates and probationers identified as mentally ill, by gender, race/Hispanic origin, and age

Offender characteristic	Percent identified as mentally ill			
	State inmates	Federal inmates	Jail inmates	Probationers
Gender				
Male	15.8%	7.0%	15.6%	14.7%
Female	23.6	12.5	22.7	21.7
Race/Hispanic origin				
White*	22.6%	11.8%	21.7%	19.6%
Black*	13.5	5.6	13.7	10.4
Hispanic	11.0	4.1	11.1	9.0
Age				
24 or younger	14.4%	6.6%	13.3%	13.8%
25-34	14.8	5.9	15.7	13.8
35-44	18.4	7.5	19.3	19.8
45-54	19.7	10.3	22.7	21.1
55 or older	15.6	8.9	20.4	16.0

*Excludes Hispanics.

Mentally ill more likely than other offenders to have committed a violent offense

Fifty-three percent of mentally ill State prisoners, compared to 46% of other State prisoners, were incarcerated for a violent crime (table 5). Approximately 13% of the mentally ill in State prison had committed murder; 12%, sexual assault; 13%, robbery; and 11%, assault. Among inmates in Federal prison, 33% of the mentally ill were incarcerated for a violent offense, compared to 13% of other Federal inmates. More than 1 in 5 mentally ill Federal prisoners had committed robbery (predominantly bank robbery). Among inmates in local jails, 30% of the mentally ill had committed a violent offense, compared to 26% of other jail inmates. An estimated 28% of mentally ill probationers and 18% of other probationers reported their current offense was a violent crime.

Nearly 1 in 5 violent offenders incarcerated or on probation were identified as mentally ill.

Percent mentally ill among violent offenders

State prison inmates	18.2%
Federal prison inmates	16.6
Jail inmates	18.5
Probationers	22.8

Unlike those in State prisons, the majority of mentally ill offenders in jail

6 in 10 violent mentally ill State prisoners knew their victim

Mentally ill inmates who were incarcerated for a violent offense were more likely to report that the victim of the offense was a woman, someone they knew, and under age 18. Nearly 61% of mentally ill State prison inmates who had committed a violent offense knew their victim. An estimated 16% had victimized a relative and 12% an intimate, such as a spouse, ex-spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend.

More than half of the mentally ill reported that they had victimized a female during the current offense. An estimated 15% reported that their youngest victim was a child, age 12 or under, and 12% reported the victim to be between ages 13 and 17. A weapon was used by 44% of the violent State prisoners who were mentally ill.

or on probation had committed a property or public-order offense. Almost a third of mentally ill offenders in jail and on probation had committed a property offense, and a quarter had committed a public-order offense.

Mentally ill offenders were less likely than other inmates to be incarcerated

Victim characteristics and use of weapon, by mental health status of violent State prisoners

	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates
Gender of victim(s)		
Male	44.3%	51.5%
Female	44.0	37.5
Both males and females	11.7	10.9
Age of youngest victim		
12 or younger	15.4%	10.2%
13-17	11.6	11.0
18-24	17.3	20.7
25-34	25.7	30.9
35-54	23.8	22.8
55 or older	6.2	4.3
Victim-offender relationship		
Knew victim ^a	60.8%	52.1%
Relative	15.6	10.3
Intimate ^b	11.6	8.6
Friend/acquaintance	29.8	27.7
Other ^c	6.5	6.9
Knew none of victims	39.1	47.9
Use of weapon		
Yes	44.0%	41.9%
No	56.0	58.1

^aMore than one victim may have been reported.

^bIncludes spouse, ex-spouse, boyfriend, girlfriend, ex-boyfriend, and ex-girlfriend.

^cIncludes those known by sight only.

for a drug offense. About 13% of mentally ill inmates and 22% of other inmates in State prison were incarcerated for a drug offense. In Federal prison, where the majority of inmates are incarcerated for a drug offense, 40% of those identified as mentally ill and 64% of other Federal inmates were in prison for a drug-related crime.

Table 5. Most serious current offense of inmates and probationers, by mental health status

Most serious offense	State prison		Federal prison		Local jail		Probation	
	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	Mentally ill probationers	Other probationers
All offenses	100.0 %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Violent offenses	52.9 %	46.1%	33.1%	13.3%	29.9%	25.6%	28.4%	18.4%
Murder*	13.2	11.4	1.9	1.4	3.5	2.7	0.5	0.9
Sexual assault	12.4	7.9	1.9	0.7	5.2	2.8	6.8	4.1
Robbery	13.0	14.4	20.8	9.1	4.7	6.9	2.0	1.4
Assault	10.9	9.0	3.8	1.1	14.4	11.0	14.0	10.5
Property offenses	24.4 %	21.5%	8.7%	6.7%	31.3%	26.0%	30.4%	28.5%
Burglary	12.1	10.5	1.0	0.3	9.1	7.4	6.4	4.3
Larceny/theft	4.6	4.1	1.3	0.4	8.4	7.9	5.3	8.8
Fraud	3.1	2.6	5.0	4.9	5.2	4.4	11.7	9.2
Drug offenses	12.8 %	22.2%	40.4%	64.4%	15.2%	23.3%	16.1%	20.7%
Possession	5.7	9.4	3.9	11.9	7.3	12.3	7.2	11.0
Trafficking	6.6	12.2	35.7	46.6	7.0	9.6	6.7	9.2
Public-order offenses	9.9 %	9.8%	17.0%	14.6%	23.2%	24.6%	24.7%	31.6%

Note: Detail does not sum to total because of excluded offense categories.
 *Includes nonnegligent manslaughter.

Half of mentally ill inmates reported 3 or more prior sentences

Mentally ill inmates reported longer criminal histories than other inmates. Among the mentally ill 52% of State prisoners, 54% of jail inmates, and 49% of Federal inmates reported three or more prior sentences to probation or incarceration (table 6). Among other inmates, 42% of State prisoners and jail inmates and 28% of Federal inmates had three or more prior sentences. About 10% of mentally ill prison inmates and 13% of jail inmates reported 11 or more prior sentences.

Mentally ill more likely than other inmates to be violent recidivists

Among repeat offenders, 53% of mentally ill State inmates had a current or past sentence for a violent offense, compared to 45% of other inmates. Forty-six percent of mentally ill jail inmates and 32% of other jail inmates with a criminal history had a current or past sentence or current charge for a violent crime. Among Federal prisoners with a prior sentence, the mentally ill (44%) were twice as likely as other inmates (22%) to have a current or prior sentence for a violent offense.

Although offenders on probation had shorter criminal histories, nearly 3 in 10 of the mentally ill were recidivists with a current or past sentence for violence.

Criminal history	Probationers	
	Mentally ill	Other
None	43.4%	54.1%
Priors	56.6	45.9
Violent recidivists	29.1	17.1
Other recidivists	27.6	28.8

Homelessness more prevalent among mentally ill offenders

Mentally ill offenders reported high rates of homelessness, unemployment, alcohol and drug use, and physical and sexual abuse prior to their current incarceration. During the year preceding their arrest, 30% of mentally ill inmates in jail and 20% of those in State or Federal prison reported a period of homelessness, when they were living either on the street or in a

shelter (table 7). About 9% of other State prison inmates, 3% of other Federal inmates and 17% of other jail inmates reported a period a homelessness in the year prior to their arrest.

Fewer inmates reported they were homeless at the time of arrest. About 4% of mentally ill State and Federal prison inmates and 7% of jail inmates reported they were living on the street or in a shelter when arrested for their current offense. These rates were at least double those for inmates who were not mentally ill.

About 4 in 10 inmates with a mental condition unemployed before arrest

Mentally ill offenders were less likely than others to report they were working

in the month before arrest. About 38% of mentally ill State and Federal prison inmates and 47% of mentally ill jail inmates were not employed in the month before arrest, while 30% of other State inmates, 28% of other Federal inmates, and 33% of other jail inmates were unemployed.

An estimated 30% of mentally ill and 13% of other inmates in State prison received some type of financial support from government agencies prior to their arrest. More than 15% of the mentally ill received welfare, 17% supplemental security income or other pension, and 3% compensation payments, such as unemployment or workman's compensation.

Table 6. Criminal history of inmates, by mental health status

	State prison		Federal prison		Local jail	
	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates
Criminal history						
None	18.8%	21.2%	24.3%	38.8%	21.0%	28.4%
Priors	81.2	78.8	75.7	61.2	79.0	71.6
Violent recidivists	53.4	44.9	43.7	21.6	46.0	31.6
Other recidivists	27.8	33.8	32.0	39.6	33.0	40.0
Number of prior probation/incarceration sentences						
0	18.8%	21.2%	24.3%	38.8%	21.0%	28.4%
1	15.5	19.4	14.0	18.2	14.7	17.9
2	13.8	17.0	12.9	14.7	10.1	11.5
3 to 5	26.3	25.5	23.6	18.9	23.5	19.7
6 to 10	15.6	11.6	15.4	7.3	17.6	14.6
11 or more	10.0	5.3	9.7	2.2	13.2	7.8

Table 7. Homelessness, employment, and sources of income of inmates, by mental health status

	State prison		Federal prison		Local jail	
	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmate
Homeless						
In year before arrest	20.1%	8.8%	18.6%	3.2%	30.3%	17.3%
At time of arrest	3.9	1.2	3.9	0.3	6.9	2.9
Employed in month before arrest						
Yes	61.2%	69.6%	62.3%	72.5%	52.9%	66.6%
No	38.8	30.4	37.7	27.5	47.1	33.4
Sources of income^a						
Wages	56.7%	65.6%	54.0%	66.4%	62.9%	77.1%
Family/friends	22.0	17.7	20.1	12.3	19.7	15.4
Illegal sources	23.4	27.0	22.5	28.8	19.4	14.4
Welfare	15.4	7.8	13.7	3.9	21.9	12.3
Pension ^b	17.3	4.1	16.5	3.7	18.4	4.9
Compensation payments	3.1	1.9	4.7	1.8	3.0	2.1

^aDetail sums to more than 100% because offenders may have reported more than one source of income. For prisoners detail includes any income received in the month prior to arrest. For jail inmates, detail includes any income received in the year prior to arrest.

^bIncludes Supplemental Security Income, Social Security, or other pension.

Over half of mentally ill prison and jail inmates reported wages as their source of income prior to arrest, 23% of prison inmates and 20% of jail inmates reported income from illegal sources.

Offenders on probation were asked about their current employment and sources of income in the past year. Over half of mentally ill probationers and three-quarters of other probationers were currently employed. An estimated 52% of mentally ill probationers and 27% of other probationers said they received income from government agencies in the past year.

	Probationers	
	Mentally ill	Other
Currently employed		
Yes	55.9%	75.9%
No	44.1	24.1
Sources of income*		
Wages	69.3%	86.8%
Family/friends	17.9	16.3
Welfare	26.4	15.5
Pension	24.5	7.6
Compensation payments	10.2	7.7

*More than one source of income may have been reported.

Family history of incarceration and alcohol or drug use prevalent among mentally ill

Overall, 55% of mentally ill State prison inmates, 42% of Federal prisoners, 52% of jail inmates, and 40% of probationers reported a family member had been incarcerated at some point (table 8). About 47% of other State prison inmates, 39% of other Federal inmates, 45% of other jail inmates, and 34% of other probationers reported a history of family incarceration. Nearly a quarter of mentally ill State inmates said their father or mother had served time in prison or jail; 42% said a brother or sister had been incarcerated.

When compared with other inmates and probationers, the mentally ill also reported higher rates of alcohol and drug abuse by a parent or guardian while they were growing up. Approximately 4 in 10 mentally ill State prisoners, jail inmates, and probationers, and 1 in 3 Federal inmates reported their parent or guardian had abused alcohol

or drugs while they were growing up. About 42% reported alcohol abuse by a parent or guardian, and 13% reported drug abuse.

At some point while growing up, a quarter of mentally ill State prisoners and local jail inmates lived in a foster home, agency, or institution. One in six mentally ill probationers reported living in a foster home or institution for a period of time during their childhood.

Mentally ill report high rates of past physical and sexual abuse

Mentally ill male State prisoners were more than twice as likely as other males to report physical abuse prior to admission to prison (27% versus 11%) and nearly four times as likely to report prior sexual abuse (15% versus 4%, table 9). Among male inmates 25% of the mentally ill in Federal prisons or in jails reported prior physical abuse, compared to 5% of other male Federal inmates and 8% of other male jail inmates. Mentally ill male probationers

Table 8. Family background of inmates and probationers, by mental health status

	State prison		Federal prison		Local jail		Probation	
	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	Mentally ill probationers	Other probationers
Family member ever incarcerated	54.9%	46.5%	41.5%	38.5%	51.5%	45.1%	40.3%	34.0%
Parent	23.4	17.4	13.4	11.1	23.7	18.9	19.6	11.1
Brother/sister	41.8	36.5	29.5	29.9	36.2	32.8	25.7	25.6
While growing up —								
Ever lived in a foster home, agency, or institution	26.1%	12.2%	18.6%	5.8%	24.1%	11.5%	15.9%	6.5%
Parent or guardian abused alcohol or drugs								
Alcohol only	30.6%	22.2%	24.6%	16.0%	29.3%	21.9%	32.4%	19.2%
Drugs only	2.0	1.8	1.2	0.8	1.7	1.2	1.0	0.4
Both	10.9	5.7	8.5	2.8	11.1	6.1	9.0	2.4

Table 9. Prior physical or sexual abuse of inmates and probationers, by mental health status

Reported by offender	State prison		Federal prison		Local jail		Probation	
	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	Mentally ill probationers	Other probationers
Ever abused before admission	36.9%	15.2%	34.1%	7.6%	36.5%	12.5%	38.8%	12.1%
Male	32.8	13.1	30.0	5.5	30.7	9.6	31.0	6.5
Female	78.4	50.9	64.1	36.1	72.9	40.3	59.4	35.7
Physically abused	31.0%	12.5%	27.5%	6.4%	30.0%	10.1%	28.1%	9.8%
Male	27.4	10.8	24.5	4.7	25.3	8.0	21.0	5.1
Female	67.6	40.2	50.0	29.4	59.8	30.8	46.7	29.7
Sexually abused	19.0%	5.8%	15.6%	2.7%	23.5%	5.9%	21.9%	5.8%
Male	15.0	4.1	11.6	1.5	17.2	3.4	14.2	2.4
Female	58.9	33.1	45.0	19.3	63.4	29.6	42.3	19.9

Table 10. Prior alcohol and drug use of inmates and probationers, by mental health status

Alcohol/drug use reported by offender	State prison		Federal prison		Local jail		Probation	
	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	Mentally ill probationers	Other probationers
Alcohol/drug use								
At time of offense	58.7%	51.2%	46.5 %	33.0%	64.6%	56.5%	49.0%	46.4%
Drug use								
In month before offense	58.8%	56.1%	48.1 %	44.6%	57.6%	47.3%	39.5%	30.3%
At time of offense	36.9	31.7	29.3	21.9	38.8	30.4	18.1	12.6
Alcohol use								
At time of offense	42.7%	36.0%	27.9 %	19.8%	44.3%	36.0%	41.4%	39.7%

were 4 times as likely as other probationers to report prior physical abuse (21% and 5%, respectively).

The rate of physical abuse reported by mentally ill female inmates was over twice that reported by males. Nearly 70% of female State prisoners, 50% of female Federal prisoners, 60% of female jail inmates, and 47% of female probationers reported a history of physical abuse.

Nearly 60% of female mentally ill State prisoners, 45% of female Federal prisoners, 63% of female jail inmates and 42% of female probationers reported prior sexual abuse.

6 in 10 mentally ill State inmates under the influence of alcohol or drugs at time of offense

Mentally ill inmates were more likely than others to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while committing their

current offense. About 60% of mentally ill and 51% of other inmates in State prison were under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of their current offense (table 10). Rates of alcohol and drug use at the time of the offense were even higher among mentally ill jail inmates, where 65% of the mentally ill and 57% of other jail inmates were under the influence. Among probationers, 49% of the mentally ill and 46% of others reported alcohol or drug use at the time of the offense.

Like other inmates and probationers, the mentally ill were more often under the influence of alcohol than drugs at the time of the current offense. About 43% of mentally ill State prison inmates and 44% of jail inmates had been drinking when they committed their current offense. Thirty-six percent of other inmates in prison and jail reported they were drinking at the time of the offense.

A third of mentally ill offenders alcohol dependent

Based on the CAGE diagnostic instrument, 34% of mentally ill State prison inmates, 24% of Federal prisoners, 38% of jail inmates and 35% of mentally ill probationers exhibited a history alcohol dependence (table 11).

CAGE is an acronym for four questions used by the diagnostic instrument to assess alcohol dependence or abuse. Respondents are asked if they have ever attempted to (C)ut back on drinking; ever felt (A)nnoyance at others' criticism of their drinking; ever experienced feelings of (G)uilt about drinking; and ever needed a drink first thing in the morning as an (E)ye opener or to steady their nerves. A person's likelihood of alcohol abuse is assessed by the number of positive responses to these four questions. Clinical tests involving hospital admissions, found

Table 11. Alcohol dependence and experiences of inmates and probationers while under the influence of alcohol, by mental health history

	State prison		Federal prison		Local jail		Probation	
	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	Mentally ill probationers	Other Probationers
History of alcohol dependence*	34.4%	22.4%	23.9%	15.6%	37.9%	24.3%	34.8%	22.1%
Because of your drinking, have you ever --								
Lost a job?	16.7%	9.0%	8.7%	4.7%	18.0%	10.3%	19.4%	5.3%
Had job or school trouble (such as demotion at work or dropping out of school)?	24.0	13.8	15.4	7.1	--	--	25.2	10.5
Been arrested or held at a police station?	35.2	28.3	30.7	18.3	41.5	30.7	45.7	41.1
While drinking have you ever --								
Got into a physical fight ?	45.7%	37.0%	36.4%	21.7%	49.8%	34.1%	43.9%	30.3%
Had as much as a fifth of liquor in 1 day, 20 drinks, 3 six-packs of beer, or 3 bottles of wine?	48.8	39.5	43.9	29.2	52.9	38.0	45.7	33.7

--Not asked of jail inmates.

*Measured by 3 or more positive CAGE responses. For description of the CAGE diagnostic measure see text.

three or more positive CAGE responses carried a .99 predictive value for alcohol abuse or dependence. (See *Substance Abuse and Treatment, State and Federal Prisoners, 1997*, BJS Special Report, NCJ 172871, for additional information on the CAGE instrument.)

Mentally ill inmates and probationers were more commonly alcohol dependent, reporting three or more positive CAGE responses. About 38% of mentally ill jail inmates reported signs of alcohol dependence, while 24% of other jail inmates reported signs of dependence. Among State prison inmates, 34% of the mentally ill and 22% of other inmates reported three or more positive responses.

Mentally ill offenders report negative life experiences related to drinking

In response to questions concerning their life experiences with alcohol, about 17% of mentally ill and 9% of other inmates in State prison said they had lost a job due to drinking. Among jail inmates with a mental condition, 18% had lost a job due to drinking, while 10% of other jail inmates reported losing a job. Nearly 20% of mentally ill probationers had lost a job; 5% of other probationers.

Amid other alcohol-related problems reported by the mentally ill, 35% of State prisoners had been arrested or held at a police station due to drinking, and 46% had gotten into a fight while drinking. Forty-nine percent of mentally ill State prison inmates, 44% of Federal inmates, 53% of jail inmates, and 46% of mentally ill probationers said they had consumed as much as a fifth of liquor (about 20 drinks) in 1 day.

Mentally ill jail inmates more often reported a prior stay in a detoxification unit for alcohol or drugs. An estimated 22% of the mentally ill in jail and 11% of other inmates reported they had been put in a detoxification unit.

Table 12. Maximum sentence length and time served by inmates, by offense and mental health status

Most serious offense	Mean maximum sentence length ^a		Mean time served			
	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	To date of interview		Total time to be served until release ^b	
			Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates
Local jail inmates						
All offenses	20 mo	26 mo	6.5 mo	6.7 mo	8.7 mo	10.7 mo
Violent	30 mo	37 mo	8.8 mo	9.3 mo	14.7 mo	16.0 mo
Property	26	26	5.3	8.0	7.4	11.6
Drug	18	25	8.9	8.4	8.6	13.5
Public-order	8	20	5.0	3.3	7.0	5.7
Other	10	8	8.4	1.6	10.0	5.3
State prison inmates						
All offenses	171 mo	159 mo	54.4 mo	49.3 mo	103.4 mo	88.2 mo
Violent	230 mo	225 mo	71.8 mo	69.7 mo	142.5 mo	130.7 mo
Property	128	118	38.8	36.6	75.0	62.2
Drug	103	111	30.3	28.5	49.8	49.5
Public-order	83	81	29.1	27.8	50.8	47.6
Other	120	104	32.5	47.8	60.1	80.6

Note: Because data on sentence length and time served are restricted to persons in prison and jail, they overstate the average sentence and time to be served by those entering prison or jail. Persons with shorter sentences leave prison and jail more quickly, resulting in a longer average sentence among persons in the inmate samples.

^aBased on the total maximum sentence for all consecutive sentences.

^bBased on time served when interviewed plus time to be served until the expected date of release.

Mentally ill expected to serve 15 months longer than other inmates in prison

Overall, mentally ill State prison inmates were sentenced to serve an average of 171 months in prison, or about 12 months longer than other offenders (table 12). On average, violent offenders with a mental illness were sentenced to 230 months (5 months longer than other violent inmates) and property offenders 128 months (10 months longer than other inmates).

Mentally ill jail inmates typically had sentences shorter than other jail inmates. On average, mentally ill inmates had a maximum sentence of 20 months, while other inmates an average of 26 months. Violent, drug, and property offenders identified as mentally ill had average sentences that were 6 to 12 months shorter than other offenders.

On average, mentally ill inmates in State prison are expected to serve more time in prison than other inmates. From the time of admission to prison to the time of the survey, mentally ill offenders had served on average 5 months longer than other offenders in State prison. Based on the time of admission to the time of expected release, mentally ill offenders expected to serve a total of 103 months in prison, 15 months longer than other offenders. The largest differences in time served were among violent and property offenders. The mentally ill expected to serve an average of at least 12 additional months for violent and property offenses.

Unlike State prisoners, mentally ill inmates in local jails expected to serve less time than inmates who are not mentally ill. Overall, both mentally ill jail inmates and other inmates had served about 6½ months from the time of admission to the time of the survey. On average, mentally ill inmates expected to serve a total of 9 months in jail prior to release; other inmates expected to serve about 11 months.

Disciplinary problems common among mentally ill inmates

Mentally ill inmates in State or Federal prison, as well as those in jail, were more likely than others in those facilities to have been involved in a fight, or hit or punched since admission. Among State prisoners 36% of mentally ill inmates reported involvement in a fight, compared to 25% of other inmates (table 13). Mentally ill inmates in Federal prison were over twice as likely as others to report involvement in a fight (21% compared to 9%).

Twenty-four percent of mentally ill State prison inmates had been involved in two or more fights since admission, and 12% reported involvement in four or more fights. Among jail inmates 10% of the mentally ill had been involved in two or more fights, compared 6% of those not mentally ill.

Consistent with their more frequent involvement in fights, disciplinary problems were more common among mentally ill inmates than other inmates. More than 6 in 10 mentally ill State prison inmates had been formally charged with breaking prison rules since admission. About half of other inmates reported they had been charged with breaking the rules. Among Federal prison inmates 41% of the mentally ill had been charged with a rule violation, compared to 33% of inmates not identified as mentally ill.

6 in 10 mentally ill received treatment while incarcerated

An estimated 60% of the mentally ill in State and Federal prison received some form of mental health treatment during their current period of incarceration (table 14). Fifty percent said they had taken prescription medication; 44% had received counseling or therapy; and 24% had been admitted overnight to a mental hospital or treatment program.

Among jail inmates, 41% of those identified as mentally ill had received some form of mental health services

since admission. The majority of those receiving treatment (34%) had been given medication. Fewer jail inmates (16%) than State prisoners (44%) said they had received counseling or therapy since admission.

Just over half of mentally ill probationers had received treatment since their sentence to community supervision. Counseling was the most common form of treatment (44%), followed by medication (37%), and an overnight stay in a mental hospital or treatment program (12%).

When sentenced to probation, an offender may be required by the court or probation agency to meet various conditions of the sentence, such as maintaining employment, submitting to drug testing, or participating in treatment. An estimated 13% of probationers were required to seek mental health treatment as a condition of their sentence. Forty-three percent of those required to participate in treatment had done so by the time of the survey.

Female mentally ill more likely than males to report treatment

Nearly 70% of mentally ill females in State prison, 77% of those in Federal prison, and 56% in local jails received mental health services while incarcerated, while 60% of males in State prison, 57% in Federal prison, and 38% in local jails reported treatment.

White mentally ill inmates reported higher rates of treatment than black or Hispanic offenders. About 64% of white State prison inmates identified as mentally ill had received treatment, compared to 56% of black offenders and 60% of Hispanic offenders.

	Percent of mentally ill receiving mental health services		
	State prison	Federal prison	Local jail
Gender			
Male	59.9%	57.4%	38.4%
Female	67.3	76.5	56.2
Race/Hispanic origin			
White	64.1%	65.4%	44.7%
Black	56.4	50.0	34.2
Hispanic	59.9	62.5	40.6

Table 13. Fights since admission and violation of prison or jail rules, by mental health status

Discipline problem reported by inmate	State prison		Federal prison		Local jail	
	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates
Number of fights since admission						
None	64.3%	75.6%	79.4%	90.9%	80.9%	86.7%
1	11.4	9.6	11.6	5.2	9.4	7.0
2 to 3	12.8	7.8	5.2	2.5	7.0	4.1
4 or more	11.5	7.1	3.8	1.4	2.6	2.3
Charged with breaking prison or jail rules	62.2%	51.9%	41.2%	32.7%	24.5%	16.0%

Table 14. Mental health treatment in prison or jail or on probation for those identified as mentally ill

	Percent of mentally ill offenders			
	State prison	Federal prison	Local jail	Probation
Since admission, the offender had —				
Been admitted overnight to a mental hospital or treatment program	23.6%	24.0%	9.3%	12.2%
Taken a prescribed medication	50.1	49.1	34.1	36.5
Received counseling or therapy	44.1	45.6	16.2	44.1
Received any mental health service	60.5	59.7	40.9	56.0

Overall, 17% of inmates in State prison, 10% in Federal prison, 11% in local jails, and 12% of those on probation had received some form of mental health services since their current admission to prison or jail or sentence to probation. The most common form of treatment in local jails was medication, reported by 9% of inmates. Probationers were more likely to have received counseling (10%) than to have taken medication (6%) while under supervision. Among State prison inmates 12% said they received medication while incarcerated, and 12% participated in counseling or therapy.

Methodology

Data in this report are based on personal interviews conducted through three BJS surveys, the 1997 Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities, the 1996 Survey of Inmates in Local Jails, and the 1995 Survey of Adults on Probation. Detailed descriptions of the methodology and sample design of each survey can be found in the following: *Substance Abuse and Treatment of Adults on Probation, 1995* (NCJ 166611); *Profile of Jail Inmates, 1996* (NCJ 164629); and *Substance Abuse and Treatment of State and Federal Prisoners, 1997* (NCJ 172871).

Accuracy of the estimates

The accuracy of the estimates presented in this report depends on two types of error: sampling and nonsampling. Sampling error is the variation that may occur by chance because a sample rather than a complete numeration of the population was conducted. Nonsampling error can be attributed to many sources, such as nonreponses, differences in the interpretation of questions among inmates, recall difficulties, and processing errors. In any survey the full extent of the nonsampling error is never known. The sampling error, as measured by an estimated standard error, varies by the size of the estimate and the size of the base population. Estimates of the standard errors for selected characteristics have been calculated for each survey (see appendix tables). These standard errors may be used to construct confidence intervals around percentages. For example, the 95% confidence interval around the percentage of State prison inmates who were identified as mentally ill is approximately 16.2% plus or minus 1.96 times 0.40% (or 15.4% to 16.9%).

Percent of all offenders who received mental treatment

State prison inmates	17.4%
Federal prison inmates	10.0
Local jail inmates	11.4
Probationers	11.5

Appendix table 1. Standard errors of mental health status for inmates and probationers

	Estimated standard errors			
	State prison inmates	Federal prison inmates	Jail inmates	Probationers
Identified as mentally ill	0.40%	0.55%	0.61%	0.89%
Reported a mental or emotional condition	0.33	0.45	0.54	0.84
Because of a mental or emotional problem, inmate had —				
Been admitted to a hospital overnight	0.34	0.45	0.47	0.67

These standard errors may also be used to test the statistical significance of the difference between two sample

Appendix table 2. Standard errors of selected characteristics of mentally ill inmates and probationers

Selected characteristic	Estimated standard errors							
	State prison		Federal prison		Local jail		Probation	
	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	Mentally ill inmates	Other inmates	Mentally ill probationers	Other probationers
Current offense								
Violent	1.36%	0.60%	3.65%	0.75%	1.71%	0.84%	2.74%	1.03%
Property	1.17	0.49	2.19	0.55	1.64	0.76	2.79	1.20
Drug	0.91	0.50	3.81	1.05	1.23	0.72	2.23	1.08
Public-order	0.81	0.36	2.92	0.78	1.55	0.83	2.62	1.24
Criminal history								
Any priors	1.06	0.49	3.33	1.07	1.47	0.89	3.03	1.35
Alcohol/drug use at time of offense	1.35	0.60	3.88	1.04	2.17	1.14	3.04	1.33
History of alcohol dependence	1.29	0.50	3.32	0.79	1.72	0.74	2.89	1.10
Ever abused								
Males	1.37	0.43	3.92	0.52	2.14	0.52	3.24	0.72
Females	1.93	1.30	5.63	4.03	2.38	1.46	5.92	3.03
Involved in fight or was hit or punched after admission	1.31	0.52	3.16	0.63	1.48	0.60	--	--
Homeless								
In year before arrest	1.09	0.34	3.01	0.38	0.91	0.26	--	--
At time of arrest	0.52	0.13	1.50	0.12	1.69	0.63	--	--

statistics by pooling the standard errors of the two sample estimates. For example, the standard error of the difference between mentally ill State prisoners and other inmates who were incarcerated for a violent offense would be 1.49% (or the square root of the sum of the squared standard errors for each group). The difference would be 1.96 times 1.49 (or 2.91%). Since the difference of 6.8% (52.9% minus 46.1%) is greater than 2.91%, the difference would be considered statistically significant.

Estimating the number of mentally ill offenders under correctional supervision

Estimates of the total number of persons in prison, jail and on probation with a mental illness were obtained by multiplying the ratio of inmates or probationers identified as mentally ill from the personal interviews conducted in the three BJS surveys referenced above, by the total number of inmates in State prison, Federal prison, and local jails and the total number of offenders on probation.

For example, the total number of State prison inmates with a mental illness was estimated by multiplying the ratio of mentally ill offenders in State prison (16.2%) obtained from the 1997 Survey of Inmates in State Correctional Facilities, by the total State prison custody population at midyear 1998 (1,102,653) from the National Prisoner Statistics data collection.

Appendix table 3. Standard errors of mental health treatment in prison, jail or on probation for those identified as mentally ill

	Percent of mentally ill offenders			
	State prison	Federal prison	Local jail	Probation
Since admission, the offender had –				
Been admitted overnight to a mental hospital or treatment program	1.15%	3.32%	1.01%	2.00%
Taken a prescribed medication	1.36	3.91	2.22	2.90
Received counseling or therapy	1.35	3.88	1.26	3.03
Received any mental health service	1.33	3.84	2.16	3.03

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This report and others from the Bureau of Justice Statistics are available through the Internet —

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/>

The data from the 1997 Surveys of Inmates in State and Federal Correction Facilities, the 1995 Survey of Adults on Probation, and the 1996 Survey of Inmates in Local Jails are available from the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data, maintained by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, 1-800-999-0960. The archive may also be accessed through the BJS Internet site.