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Can We Close the Revolving Door?: Recidivism vs. Employment of Ex-Offenders in the U.S.

Richard Freeman

Harvard University and National Bureau of Economic Research

INTRODUCTION

The 2–3 years that many inmates spend in prison and the additional years that some violent offenders are incarcerated provides society with a unique opportunity to alter their behavior and rehabilitate them to re-enter society and the job market as productive citizens.¹ Ideally, the incarceration experience should change offenders' assessment of the benefits and costs of crime in two ways. It should shift their preferences or values, so that they weigh more heavily the costs of crime on others relative to the benefits to them. And it should change the options or incentives facing them in favor of legitimate work relative to illegal activities. By altering the values and incentives of inmates, the ideal criminal justice system would release ex-offenders who would find work in the legitimate labor market and make a positive contribution to their families and communities rather than return to crime.

Data on recidivism shows that the vast majority of prisoners are not rehabilitated in these ways. Two-thirds of released prisoners are re-arrested and one-half are re-incarcerated within 3 years of release from prison (Langan and Levin, 2002).² Rates of recidivism necessarily rise thereafter, so that upwards of 75%–80% of released prisoners are likely to be re-arrested within a decade of release. For many men aged 20–40, the prison door is a revolving one. Commit serious crime; get arrested and incarcerated; spend some time in prison; get out; commit more crimes; get arrested and incarcerated; and so on. Fifty-six percent of state prisoners released in 1999 had one or more prior convictions; and 25% had three or more convictions. Not until men reach their mid-forties does the rate of re-arrest fall noticeably.

The huge numbers of prisoners released annually—some 600,000 in 2001—and the number of other ex-offenders under probation implies that a massive number of persons who have been incarcerated or have been under supervision of the criminal justice system live in civil society, as potential participants in the job market. In 2001 there were about 3 million ex-prisoners and millions more ex-offenders released from probation in non-supervised settings.

¹ Prisoners released in 1994 had a mean length of sentence of 58.9 months, but they served only 20.3 months before release. See BJS, *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1994*, Table 1.

² <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/rpr94.pdf>

Given the high cost of crime and incarceration, almost any program that reduces recidivism will pass social benefit-cost tests.

What are the characteristics of persons released from prison and the characteristics of the larger stock of ex-offenders in civil society? How do ex-offenders perform in the labor market? How substantial is the flow of released prisoners to the labor market? Should we view the high rate of recidivism as a sign of the failure of rehabilitation or as the best we can expect given the labor market problems associated with the characteristics of inmates? What might we do to improve the rehabilitative impact of incarceration and increase the flow of immigrants?

This paper examines these questions. It summarizes the basic facts about the characteristics of prisoners and ex-offenders, the rate of recidivism in recent years, and the skill deficits and employer decisions that limit the employment prospects of ex-offenders. In addition, the paper stresses the medical problems—mental illness, physical ailments, and addictions—that afflict many prisoners and the difficulties some have in empathizing with potential victims and thus making socially acceptable moral judgments. These medical factors help explain the high rate of recidivism and correspondingly modest effects of rehabilitation programs.

THE EX-OFFENDER POPULATION

Administrative agencies gather data on the numbers and characteristics of persons under supervision of the criminal justice system, ranging from prison and jail inmates to released prisoners, to those serving probation. We thus have information on the flow of persons re-entering society from incarceration or living in civil society under supervision of the criminal justice system. We do not have good data on the stock of persons who have ever been incarcerated or probated, and thus on the ex-offender population outside supervision of the criminal justice system. Absent a validated question about past prison or jail experience in the Census or Current Population Survey (or other large national survey), we must infer the number and characteristics of ex-inmates in the general population from data about prisoners, current and past releases, and so on. Since 95% of prisoners are released from prison at some point, and

nearly all persons under supervision of the criminal justice system leave supervision, the administrative and survey data provides reasonably good indicators of the ex-offender population in non-institutional settings.

Table 1 shows that there were 2 million persons in jail or prison in 2001, 700,000 persons on parole from prison, and 2 million persons on probation, for a total population under supervision of the criminal justice system of 4.7 million persons. The vast majority of all the groups are men. A disproportionate number are black. The vast majority are relatively young, between ages 18 and 34. Many have had less than high school education upon entry to the system (though many earn GEDs while in prison), and score less on literacy and other standardized tests than persons with similar schooling. Among 18–24 year old men with less than high school education, a huge proportion were incarcerated in 2001; among young black men in this group, over half were incarcerated in 2001. Since most offenders have low measured skills, they invariably have less legitimate earnings opportunities than other persons, even in the often disadvantaged communities from which they come. Their incarceration and re-entry into the job market disproportionately impacts the market for less skilled workers.

How many ex-inmates are in civil society and thus potentially in the job market at any time?

Life table estimates of the lifetime likelihood of going to state or federal prison by age provide one way to estimate the number of ex-prisoners in the non-institutionalized population. Using 1991–1992 data on first admissions to prison, Bonczar and Beck (1997) estimate that 9% of all males are incarcerated in state and local prisons at one point in their life. The percentage ever incarcerated rises rapidly from the teen years to age 40–45 and then rises slowly thereafter. By age 50 virtually all men who will ever be incarcerated have already been in State or Federal prison. Since the mean age of U.S. men aged 15 and over was 47 years in 2001, we can use the estimated percentage of men ever incarcerated at that age—8.35% in the Bonczar and Beck analysis (table 1) as a reasonable estimate of the proportion who had been incarcerated at least before then. Deducting the percentage of men in prison or jail—approximately 1.3%, I estimate that approximately 7% of noninstitutionalized U.S. men had been incarcerated at one point in their life. An alternative calculation based on the length of time a typical prisoner may



spend incarcerated gives similar results. If a typical male prisoner spends 6 years of his adult life behind bars, serving multiple sentences, and lives to age 68, in a steady state there would be approximately seven times as many ex-offenders in society as convicted criminals serving prison sentences.³ Among blacks, the Bonczar and Beck life table estimate is that approximately 27% had gone to prison for the first time by age 40. With approximately 5% of black men incarcerated, I estimate that 22% of noninstitutionalized men had been incarcerated at one point in their life. More refined calculations can improve these estimates, but the order of magnitude is clear—on the order of 6–7 times as many men with prison records are out of prison than incarcerated.⁴ A substantial minority of American men working in normal society have been incarcerated in some point at their lives; and an even larger proportion have been under supervision of the criminal justice system in some fashion.

Finally, note that because the average American man has 6–8 close living relatives—parents, siblings, spouse or partner and children—a huge proportion of the population has a close relative who has been incarcerated. If incarceration were randomly distributed, over half of the people in the country would have a close relative who had been under supervision of criminal justice at one point in their lives. Since incarceration/probation is concentrated among low income Americans, blacks, and since criminal activity runs in families, the proportion of persons with family members who have been incarcerated or probated will be smaller, but still be proportionately higher among the low income population. Rehabilitating offenders and helping them succeed in the labor market has a potentially huge reach in dealing with poverty and social problems.

³ I assume the adult life span is 18 to 68 so the person lives 50 adult years. If 6 of those years are spent in prison, that person would be in civil society 44 years, giving a ratio of 44/6 or about 7.

⁴ Uggen and Manza (2002) estimate the number of ex-felons in states which disenfranchise felons in 2000 using a life table method of tracking releases from felony probation and prison. For the states they give estimates for they report 1.654 million ex-felons and 282.7 million prisoners or about 6 to 1. But their ex-felons include persons who had been on felony probation, so these statistics are not readily comparable.

The Flow of Re-entrants

On average, inmates in state prisons, who constitute the bulk of the U.S. prison population, serve sentences of 3.4 years. This implies that 1/3 of the prison population leaves correctional institutions annually. Consistent with this, table 2 shows that 600,000 prisoners were released in 2001 from an incarcerated population of some two million, for a release rate of 32%. Because the length of sentences that prisoners serve has increased, the ratio of the number of persons released to the number incarcerated fell in the 1990s. Given the likely slower growth of the huge prison population in the 2000s, we can expect the re-entry of some 600,000–700,000 inmates into civil society per year in the decade.

How do these numbers look relative to the labor force? In 2000 the labor force had some 142 million persons, so the flow of re-entrants to the labor force was 0.005, which is relatively modest. But it is more insightful to compare the number of released prisoners to the growth in the labor force. In the 1990s the labor force grew by about 2 million persons a year. This means that **the flow of 600,000 released prisoners into civil society was approximately 30% of the annual growth of the labor force.** This does not mean that the criminal justice system was a net supplier of people to the workforce. It wasn't. The prison/jail population was rising over this time. This also does not mean that the labor force grew by 600,000 or so ex-offenders. Many released prisoners did not join the civilian labor force. Even so, the near one-third ratio of released prisoners to the average annual growth of the workforce gives some notion of the potential impact of released prisoners on the labor market. If in the 2000s the growth of the workforce slackens, the ratio of released prisoners to growth of the labor force could rise substantially.

Table 2 also gives figures on annual entries into parole and the total number of persons on parole in the state penal system and on the size of the population serving probation sentences. The number of annual entries into parole is modestly smaller than the number released from prisons because some prisoners are released upon completion of sentence rather than into parole. The stock of parolees is higher than the annual entry or number released because ex-offenders can be on parole for more than one year. The number of convicted persons serving probation sentences is on the same magnitude of the incarcerated population. Because probation sentences are relatively short, the numbers of entries and exits are of comparable magnitude—around 2



million people in 2000, with the larger number of entries than exits indicating a rise in the probation population.

Since the vast bulk of released prisoners are paroled, data on the characteristics of parolees provide a good indicator of the characteristics of persons released. Columns 1 and 2 of table 3 shows that state parolees reflect the general characteristics of the prison population. They are largely male, and are disproportionately black and young. During the 1990s, as prison sentences lengthened, the age distribution of parolees shifted upward. In 1990 the mean age of a parolee was 31. In 1999, the mean age was 34. Column 3 of table 3 gives characteristics of prisoners released in 1994, the most recent year in which the Bureau of Justice Statistics surveyed released prisoners. The figures on gender, race, and age are similar to those for parolees. In addition, however, the survey of released prisoners obtained data on their education. Consistent with the evidence on the prison population in table 1, a disproportionate number of released prisoners have very limited schooling, with 19% having less than 8 years of education and 67% having less than high school. Persons with so few years of schooling face an extremely difficult job market, both because demand has shifted toward more educated workers and because of the influx of unskilled immigrants, many illegal immigrants, largely from Mexico.

The bottom lines of Table 3 report on the success of parolees and on their past criminal convictions, which reflect the past success of incarceration and parole in rehabilitating prisoners. These data, together with the recidivism statistics to be presented next, gave me the title for this paper. Only 39% of parolees succeed, while 42% of those discharged from parole are returned to jail or prison for breaking the terms of the parole. Looking backwards, 56 percent of state parolees in 1999 had criminal convictions prior to the sentence for which they were being paroled. One quarter had served three or more previous convictions. The implication is that a majority of the released prisoners transition from prison to civil society and back.

RECIDIVISM

The Bureau of Justice Statistics has conducted two studies of recidivism of released prisoners that provide national estimates of the recidivism rate of prisoners in the 1980s and



1990s. The *National Recidivism Study of Released Prisoners* tracked a sample of prisoners released in 1983 and in 1994 for three years, and compiled the percentage of them that were re-arrested, re-convicted, or reimprisoned for new crimes within the three-year follow-up period. These figures are based on official criminal history records maintained by each State and the FBI. Because the labor market was much stronger in the mid-1990s than in the mid-1980s, we would expect recidivism to be lower for the 1994 cohort than for the 1983 cohort, all else the same.

Table 4 records rates of recidivism for prisoners from the two surveys. In 1994 67.5% of the released prisoners were re-arrested within 3 years. The bulk of the arrests occurred in the first or second year after release. Extrapolation of the curve relating re-arrest to years out suggests that upwards of 75% of prisoners will be re-arrested within the decade. Surprisingly given the labor market situation in 1983, the re-arrest rate for the 1983 cohort was modestly lower than that for the 1994 cohort. The implication is that **the 1990s job market did not reduce recidivism** even as it contributed to the crime reduction in that period. In both years 47% of those re-arrested were convicted of a new crime in the same period. Fifty-two percent of the released prisoners from 1994 were back in prison within the three-year period, which compares to the 41 % re-incarcerated in 1983. Approximately half of those reincarcerated in 1994 (25.4% of the total number of released prisoners) were back in prison for a new crime rather than for some technical parole violation.

Turning to re-arrest rates by characteristics of the released prisoners, the rate of re-arrest is modestly higher for blacks. The rate declines slowly by age until prisoners reach their forties, when it drops noticeably. The rate of re-arrest is also lower for the more educated than for the less educated. In addition, prisoners who were more intensely involved in crime, as measured by the number of previous arrests, were more likely to be re-arrested in the three years after release. But even released prisoners who had only one arrest prior to their incarceration had a sizable 41% chance of being re-arrested in the ensuing three years. Finally, the probability of re-arrest is almost independent of time served (Langan and Levin, Table 13).

The high rate of recidivism does not mean that incarceration had no effect on the criminal behavior of prisoners beyond incapacitation. There is some suggestive evidence that the rate of criminal activity is lower post-incarceration than before incarceration. Ninety-three percent of released prisoners in the 1994 cohort reported that they had been arrested for a crime other than

the one for which they were incarcerated. By contrast, these same prisoners had a 67 percent arrest rate in the three years after release. While that rate will rise over time, the declining rate of increase in arrests suggests that it will still be at least 10 percentage points lower than the 93 percent arrest rate before incarceration. In addition, arrest records show that the 1994 cohort of released prisoners averaged 2.7 arrests in the three years after release, for an estimated arrest rate of 0.9 arrests per year. By contrast, these prisoners averaged 15 arrests prior to their incarceration. Given the age distribution of prisoners, and assuming no previous spells of incarceration, these prisoners had roughly 14 years as adults prior to incarceration in which they were at risk of arrest. This gives an estimate of 1.1 arrests per year. The data for the cohort of prisoners released in 1983 shows a similar picture. All of these statistics suggest that the spell of incarceration reduced the arrest rate, and possibly the amount of crime committed by these prisoners.

To be sure, absent a good control group of offenders similar to the prisoners who were not incarcerated, it is not possible to make any firm assessment of the effect of incarceration on arrests and crime. Perhaps the fall in arrests is part of the normal life cycle of crime. Perhaps it reflects greater ability to avoid arrest while committing crime. That the rate of arrests is lower after incarceration than before, however, leaves open the possibility that prison did indeed reduce the rate of crime despite high recidivism.

Even if persons released in 1994 committed fewer crimes per year after release than before release, they still committed a substantial proportion of crimes in ensuing years. The Justice Department estimates that 4.7% of all arrests for serious crimes from 1994 to 1997 were to prisoners released in 1994. Since over this period there were three other cohorts of released prisoners, the implication is that nearly one-fifth of arrests for serious crime in the period were on persons released in the period.

EX-OFFENDERS IN THE LABOR MARKET

Ex-offenders do not do well in the job market. As far as we can tell from micro-surveys and administrative data, they have relatively low employment rates and earn less than other

workers with comparable demographic characteristics (see Freeman, 1999; Western, 2002). Since offenders also did less well in the job market prior to incarceration, it is less clear whether incarceration per se reduces their employment and earnings prospects. Micro-survey data suggests that it does, but administrative data is equivocal. In either case, there is no indication that incarceration improves employment opportunities.

Ex-offenders face several daunting problems in succeeding in the job market. On the demand side, employers generally prefer other workers to ex-offenders. Some employers cannot legally hire persons with criminal records for some jobs. Other employers eschew ex-offenders for fear that customers or other workers would sue them if the ex-offender harmed them during work activities. In the Multicity Study Holzer et al. asked employers in four major cities if they would accept an applicant with a criminal record. **Just 12.5% of employers said that they would definitely accept such an application, and 25.9% said that they probably would.** By contrast, employers had no problem accepting applications from workers in disadvantaged groups. Nearly one-third of employers concerned about hiring prisoners said that they always check on criminal background and 17% said that they check sometimes, which links their responses to behavior. The implication is that ex-offenders who seek work have a greater difficulty finding it and thus have to spend more time searching than other workers.

On the supply side, ex-offenders will have lower education; and because of incarceration they will also have less work experience than non-ex-offenders with similar demographic characteristics. But there is a potentially even deeper supply side problem: a disproportionate share of inmates have medical problems likely to impair their ability to work in the job market. Table 5 summarizes estimates from several Justice Department surveys on the mental and physical problems of inmates. At the broadest level, 21% of prisoners report that they have some condition that limits their ability to work. This exceeds the 11% of all persons who report such a condition nationwide. Because the US job market penalizes persons with impairments severely, there is a sizable difference between their employment and earnings and those of others. The table shows that between 10% and 16% of inmates have been diagnosed or reported themselves as mentally ill. These statistics are consistent with earlier studies for Philadelphia and Cook County jail admissions and New York state prisoners (Ditton, p 2). By contrast, only 2% of the general population is estimated to be mentally ill. Consistent with these estimates, 13% of

prisoners receive therapy or counseling for mental illness and 10% receive psychotropic medicine.

As for other ailments, nearly a third of inmates report some physical impairment or mental condition. Ten percent report a learning disability—over three times the proportion reported in the general population. Twelve percent report a hearing or vision problem. While some of these medical problems undoubtedly affect the ability of inmates to function in criminal work as well as in the legitimate job market, the fact that so many inmates have such impairments suggests that they create greater difficulties in the job market. Finally, the bottom lines of table 5 report on the most widely publicized medical problems that inmates have: drug and alcohol abuse. The link between these problems and recidivism is substantial, and the criminal justice system has developed many programs to treat these ailments.

The statistics in table 5 suggest that the mental and physical impairments and the drug and alcohol illnesses of prisoners could be major impediments to their succeeding in the job market and avoid recidivating. On the order of one-half of ex-offenders arguably carry so many medical problems with them that it is unrealistic to expect them to re-enter society as normal productive citizens without much greater social assistance than the U.S. has been willing to provide.

Viewed in this light, that rehabilitation programs work as well as they do is surprising. There is non-experimental evidence that prison educational programs and prison work improve re-entry outcomes (Saylor and Gaes, 1997). The meta analysis of adult correctional treatment by Gaes et al (2000) found (consistent with other meta analyses of interventions) that most correctional programs work modestly well, although diverse design flaws create some uncertainty about results. They also reported that on average behavioral/cognitive treatments produced larger effects than education, vocational training, or prison labor programs. This implies that the medical/mental problems of prisoners should be addressed first, before seeking to train them for work. However, as with most criminology studies, the outcome variable is recidivism rather than labor market success. Because the boundary between crime and legitimate work is diffuse for many disadvantaged young men (Fagan and Freeman, 1999), the decision to desist from crime and the decision to seek legitimate work are not dichotomous. Getting an ex-offender a job does not mean that they will eschew a criminal opportunity if it arises.



CONCLUSION: IMPROVING THE REENTRY PROCESS

The decision of an ex-offender to recidivate or to integrate into the job market and desist from crime depends on the **incentives** the person faces and on the **preferences or values** with which they assess those incentives.

Most analysis focuses on incentives. Some analysts stress the potential rewards from legitimate activity, which as we have seen, are lower for those who choose crime than for many other persons in their community. Reentry programs that raise the expected rewards from legitimate work reduce recidivism and increase employability. Other analysts stress the risks of re-arrest and incarceration. By raising those risks, the criminal justice system can deter crime.

Economists pay less attention to the values or preferences that lead some persons to choose crime over legitimate activity on the notion that values and preferences are less amenable to change. But differences in values or preferences can be critical in re-entry. And, economists' predilections aside, there is no reason to believe that preferences are less amenable to change than are social incentives. Since criminal activity is risky, attitudes toward risk presumably affect recidivism and assimilation into the job market. If risk aversion grows with age, this would help explain the drop in crime as men get older. There is also evidence that persons who commit crime weigh the well-being of others less than do others. Neurologists have long known that injuries to the frontal lobe of the brain can lead people to engage in socially deleterious activity.⁵ Recent work with brain scans link attitudes and aggressive behavior to activation in different areas of the brains.⁶ This opens the door for analysis of the physical grounding of preferences, and offers ways to measure changes in those preferences or values. There are many programs designed to give prisoners "socially acceptable" values, ranging from in-prison ministries to

⁵ For a review see M.C. Brower and B.H. Price. "Neuropsychiatry of Frontal Lobe Dysfunction in Violent and Criminal Behavior: A critical review." *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery, & Psychiatry* 2001 (Dec) 71:6. The site www.brainplace.com contains abstracts of articles under the listing aggression.

⁶ For analysis of the biosocial bases of antisocial and violent behavior in both children and adults, see the work of Adrian Raine, listed at <http://www-rcf.usc.edu/~raine/>

other forms of moral teaching, meeting with victims, and so on, which have the potential for complementing programs to improve prisoner options.

In sum, incarceration has been a revolving door for a large proportion of the offender population, in part because the prison population has serious medical problems that make normal work lives difficult and preferences that do not give adequate weight to the well-being of others. Since persons with physical and mental health problems, limited education, and poor literacy do badly in the US job market independently of a criminal record, ex-offenders fare poorly in the job market. The criminal justice system can help offenders obtain skills while in prison and help them gain work upon release, but to greatly reduce recidivism and improve the employment prospects of ex-offenders, it has to deal with the medical problems and preferences of this group as well.



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Table 1: Magnitude of Incarcerated Population and Persons on Parole and Probation, 2001

	Incarcerated Population		Non-Incarcerated under Supervision	
	Prison	Jail	Probation	Parole
Numbers	1,330,980	631,240	3,932,751	732,351
Male	94%	88%	78%	88%
Black	47%	41%	31%	41%
<24	22%	31%	27%	--
25-34	46%	37%	37%	--
35-44	23%	24%	25%	--
45+	9%	8%	12%	--
% <8 years	14%	13%	8%	--
Some HS	26%	33%	22%	--
GED	29%	14%	11%	--
HSG	21%	26%	35%	--
Some	9%	10%	19%	--
CG or more	2 %	3%	5%	--

Source:

Numbers, from Glaze Lauren “Probation and Parole in the US, 2001” August 2002, NCJ 195669 Characteristics of Prisoners, *Sourcebook of Crime*, table 6.29, with data for 1997 state prisoners Harlow, Caroline, “Education and Correctional Populations,” January 2003 NCJ 195670 with data for jail inmates from 1996 and with data for probationers for 1995. Data on probationers from Bonczar, Thomas “Characteristics of Adults on Probation, 1995” Dec 1997 NCJ 16426.7 Data on jail inmates from Harlow, Caroline, “Profile of Jail Inmates, 1996,” April 1998 NCJ 164620

Table 2: Flows of Persons from Supervision of Criminal Justice System, 2001

Released Prisoners	1990	2001
State Prisons	405,400	595,000
Rate of Release	37%	32%
Parole Population		
Annual Entries	371,000a	473,688
Total Population, year end	531,407	731,147
Probation Population		
Total	2,670,234	3,932,751
Entries	--	2,110,550
Exits	--	1,999,164

Source:

a. Estimated from Hughes, Timothy and Doris Wilson, Reentry Trends in the U.S., <http://www.oip.usdoj.gov/bis/pub/pdf/reentrv.pdf> by adjusting state annual entries. Probation data, Glaze, Lauren "Probation and Parole in the US, 2001" August 2002, NCJ 195669.

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of State Parolees and Released Prisoners

	State Parolees/Prisoners to be Released		Released Prisoners
	1990	1999	1994
Male	92%	91%	91%
Black	49	47	49
% < 24	24%	17%	21%
%25–29	27	19	23
%30–34	22	20	23
%35–39	14	19	16
40–44	7	14	9
45+	6	12	8
% <8 years	17	11	19
Some HS	45	40	48
HSG	30	42	26
C+	8	7	7

Number of prior convictions

0	--	44%	--
1	--	27%	--
2	--	10%	--
3–5	--	15%	--
> 5	--	10%	--

Source:

Released Prisoners, Langan, Patrick and David Levin, *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1994*, June 2002, NCJ 193427

State Parolees, Hughes, Timothy, Doris Wilson, Allen Beck, “Trends in State Parole, 1990-2000, Oct 2001 NCJ 184735

Table 4: Rates of Recidivism for Prisoners Three Years After Release

	Prisoners Released in	
	1994	1983
Percent re-arrested in three years	67.5%	62.5%
Percent convicted for new crime	46.9%	46.8%
Percent back in prison	51.8%	41.4%
Percent reincarcerated for new crime	25.4%	--
Percentage of prisoners re-arrested in three years, by characteristic		
% Male	91%	68.4%
% Black	49%	72.9%
% < 24	21%	75%
% 25–29	23%	71%
% 30–34	23%	69%
% 35–39	16%	66%
40–44	9%	58%
45+	8%	45%
Number of prior arrests		
1	38%	41%
2	48%	48%
3	55%	55%
4	58%	60%
5	59%	64%
6	65%	67%
7-10	68%	70%
11-15	75%	79%
16+	82%	82%

Source:

Langan, Patrick and David Levin. Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1994, June 2002, NCJ 193427, Tables 1,8,12.

Beck, Allen and Bernard Shipley. Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1983, April 1989, NCJ 116261, Table 11.

Table 5: Percentage of State Inmates with Medical and Related Problems, 1997

1. Medical	
Some physical impairment or mental problem	31%
Learning disability	10%
Hearing or vision problem	12%
Mental	10%
Speech	4%
Condition that limits ability to work	21
2. Mental Health Problems Estimated to be mentally ill	16%
Reported mental or emotional problem	10%
Overnight stay in mental hospital	11%
3. Alcohol or Drug use before Incarceration, prisoners expected to be released within next six months	59%
Drug use before offense in month before offense	59%
Drug use at time of offense	34%
Alcohol abuse	
Binge drinkers	42%
Alcohol dependent	25%
Identified as mentally ill	14%
4. Homeless at arrest	12%
5. Mental Health Treatment, 2000	13%
Inmates receiving therapy/counseling	13%
Inmates receiving psychotropic medications	10%

Source:

Maruschak, Laura and Allen Beck, “Medical Problems of Inmates, 1997” BJS Special Report, Jan 2001, NCJ 181644, line 1

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