



# Department of Justice



## Office of Justice Programs

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### **ABOUT A THIRD OF PRISON AND JAIL INMATES REPORTED A DISABILITY IN 2011–12**

WASHINGTON – An estimated 32 percent of state and federal prisoners and 40 percent of local jail inmates reported having at least one disability in the 2011–12 National Inmate Survey, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) announced today. Estimates of disabilities include six specific classifications: hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care and independent living.

A cognitive disability—defined as serious difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions—was the most common disability reported by prison and jail inmates. An estimated 19 percent of prisoners and 31 percent of jail inmates reported having a cognitive disability. An ambulatory disability was the second most common reported disability, with 10 percent of each population reporting difficulty walking or climbing stairs.

Prisoners were about three times more likely and jail inmates were about four times more likely than the general population (standardized to match the prison and jail populations by sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin) to report a disability. Compared to the general population, prisoners were about four times more likely and jail inmates were about 6.5 times more likely to report a cognitive disability.

Female prisoners (40 percent) were more likely than male prisoners (31 percent) to report having a disability. Similarly, female jail inmates (49 percent) were more likely than male jail inmates (39 percent) to report having a disability. Among specific disability types, female prisoners were more likely than male prisoners to report a cognitive disability, but were equally likely to report having each of the other five disabilities.

Prison and jail inmates of two or more races and white inmates were more likely than blacks to report having at least one disability. Among prisoners, 42 percent of persons of two or more races, 37 percent of whites, 28 percent of Hispanics and 26 percent of blacks reported having a disability. Among jail inmates, 55 percent of persons of two or more races, 40 percent of whites, 38 percent of Hispanics and 35 percent of blacks reported having a disability.

Among prisoners with a disability, more than half (54 percent) reported a co-occurring chronic condition, and about a third (32 percent) reported ever having had an infectious disease, including

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tuberculosis, hepatitis B, hepatitis C or a sexually transmitted infection (excluding HIV). A quarter (25 percent) of prisoners with a disability reported serious psychological distress (SPD) during the past 30 days, and nearly a third (31 percent) were obese or morbidly obese.

More than half (53 percent) of jail inmates with a disability reported a co-occurring chronic condition, and more than a quarter (26 percent) reported ever having had an infectious disease. Additionally, 42 percent of jail inmates with a disability reported past 30-day SPD and 24 percent were obese or morbidly obese.

Prison and jail inmates with a disability were more likely than those without a disability to report a co-occurring chronic condition, ever having had an infectious disease, and past 30-day SPD. There were no significant differences in obesity rates between prison and jail inmates with or without a disability.

Other findings include—

- Independent living, vision, hearing and self-care disabilities each were reported by less than 10 percent of prisoners and jail inmates.
- About 13 percent of prisoners and 16 percent of jail inmates reported having multiple disabilities.
- Prison and jail inmates age 50 or older were more likely than those ages 18 to 24 to report a hearing, vision, ambulatory, self-care and independent living disability, but they were equally likely as those ages 18 to 24 to report a cognitive disability.

Estimates are based on self-reported data from 10 percent of the inmates selected in the BJS 2011–12 National Inmate Survey. A total of 10,259 inmates age 18 or older (4,265 inmates in state and federal prison and 5,994 inmates in jail) completed the disability module.

The report, *Disabilities Among Prison and Jail Inmates, 2011–12* (NCJ 249151), was written by Jennifer Bronson and Laura M. Maruschak of BJS, and Marcus Berzofsky of RTI International. The report, related documents and additional information about BJS statistical publications and programs can be found on the BJS website at <http://www.bjs.gov/>.

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