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FEMALES IN PRISONS AND JAILS WERE MORE LIKELY THAN MALES TO MEET CRITERIA FOR DRUG DEPENDENCE OR ABUSE

White inmates more likely than black or Hispanic inmates to meet criteria

WASHINGTON — During 2007-09, more than two-thirds of females (69 percent) in state prisons and nearly three-quarters (72 percent) of those serving sentences in local jails met the criteria in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV) for drug dependence or abuse, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) announced today. These figures are higher than the percentages of males in prisons (57 percent) and jails (62 percent) who met the same criteria.

A larger percentage of white state prisoners (62 percent) and sentenced jail inmates (72 percent) met the criteria for drug dependence or abuse than black prisoners (55 percent) or black jail inmates (57 percent). Hispanic prisoners (58 percent) and jail inmates (55 percent) were also less likely than white prisoners or jail inmates to have met the criteria.

Dependence criteria include a pattern of compulsive drug use that leads to significant impairment or distress within a 12-month period. Abuse includes the harmful consequences of repeated drug use, such as the disruption of normal activities or drug-related legal problems.

Overall, more than half (58 percent) of state prisoners and two-thirds (63 percent) of sentenced jail inmates met the criteria for drug dependence or abuse. These percentages were 10 to 12 times higher than the percentage of the U.S. adult population (5 percent) with similar sex, age, race and Hispanic origin characteristics that met the same criteria.

The findings are based on data collected by BJS in the 2007 and 2008-09 National Inmate Surveys (the latest year of data on drug use among the incarcerated populations) and in the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 2007-2009, collected by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The NSDUH data were standardized for comparison purposes to match the sex, age, race and Hispanic origin of the prison and jail populations.

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Among the incarcerated population, younger inmates, white offenders and those held for property offenses were more likely to meet the criteria for drug dependence or abuse than other inmates.

An estimated 64 percent of prisoners and 62 percent of sentenced jail inmates ages 18 to 24 met the criteria for drug dependence or abuse.

More than two-thirds of state prisoners (68 percent) held for a property offense, compared with about half (54 percent) of those held for a violent offense, met the criteria for drug use or abuse. In local jails, nearly three-quarters (72 percent) of sentenced jail inmates held for property offenses met the criteria for drug dependence or abuse, while less than two-thirds (61 percent) of those incarcerated for violent offenses met the same criteria.

The inmate surveys also provided data on drug use by inmates prior to incarceration and drug use at the time of the offense. An estimated 7 in 10 state prisoners (72 percent) and jail inmates (75 percent) reported regular drug use prior to incarceration. About 4 in 10 state prisoners (42 percent) and sentenced jail inmates (37 percent) said they used drugs at the time of the offense for which they were currently incarcerated.

During 2007-09, both prisoners (63 percent) and jail inmates (64 percent) most commonly used marijuana/hashish regularly prior to incarceration, followed by cocaine/crack (34 percent for prisoners and 38 percent for jail inmates). An estimated 17 percent of state prisoners and 19 percent of jail inmates reported regular use of heroin and opiates.

The report, *Drug Use, Dependence, and Abuse Among State Prisoners and Jail Inmates, 2007-2009* (NCJ 250546), was written by BJS statisticians Jennifer Bronson and Jessica Stroop, and Stephanie Zimmer and Marcus Berzofsky of RTI International. The report, related documents and additional information about BJS's statistical publications and programs can be found on the BJS website at www.bjs.gov.

The Office of Justice Programs, headed by Acting Assistant Attorney General Alan R. Hanson, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice and assist victims. OJP has six bureaus and offices: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering and Tracking (SMART). More information about OJP and its components can be found at www.ojp.gov.

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