

Suicide Risk for Medicaid-Eligible Philadelphians who Experienced Incarceration

The Epidemiology of Suicide Team

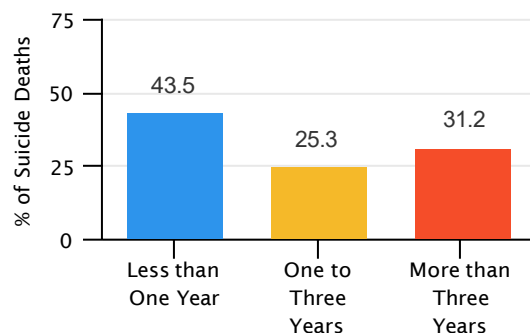
Background & Study Goals

While incarceration has been identified as a potential risk factor for suicide, studies rarely combine death and jail records. Using case reports from the Medical Examiner's Office and incarceration episodes from the Philadelphia Department of Prisons, we examine the relationship between incarceration and suicide among ever-Medicaid-eligible Philadelphians. We also compared differences in characteristics using pairwise t-tests and examined the timing of incarceration prior to suicide death, as well as the cause of suicide death.

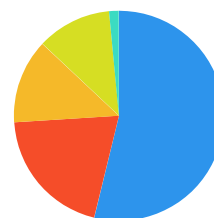
Characteristics of ever-Medicaid-eligible Philadelphians with 1+ incarceration episode who did and did not die by suicide, 2003-2018

	Died by suicide (n=253)	Did not die by suicide (n=113,826)	p-value
Age at initial episode	33.1	31.7	<0.05*
Age at most recent episode	35.4	35.3	0.89
Number of episodes	2.8	3.3	<0.05*
Female	12.3%	21.9%	<0.001*
Asian	1.2%	0.7%	0.30
Black	43.9%	67.3%	<0.001*
Hispanic	13.8%	14.2%	0.88
White	38.3%	15.9%	<0.001*

Time in Years Between Most Recent Incarceration Episode and Death (n=253)



Cause of Suicide Death for Formerly Incarcerated ever-Medicaid-eligible Philadelphians (n=253)



● Suffocation
 ● Firearm
 ● Poisoning
 ● Blunt Trauma
 ● Other

Practice & Policy Implications

Of the 1,013 Philadelphians who died by suicide between 2003 and 2018 and were ever-Medicaid-eligible, one-quarter experienced at least one incarceration episode. Of these 253 individuals, 44% were discharged from prison in the year prior to their death. Suffocation, which includes hanging and asphyxiation, was the leading cause of suicide death. These findings point to the need for better identification of at-risk individuals during incarceration and safety planning efforts prior to and during re-entry.