

County-Level Incarceration Rates Linked to Cancer Mortality

Jail incarceration was associated with increased cancer deaths for common cancers for white people, but not for Black people.

June 5, 2023 By American Cancer Society

A new study led by researchers at the [American Cancer Society](#) (ACS) associates higher county-level jail incarceration rates with higher cancer death rates. Although incarceration has been linked to poor community health outcomes in the US, few previous studies have examined cancer outcomes. The findings [were] presented at this year's [annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology \(ASCO\)](#) in Chicago, June 2-6.

In the study, researchers, led by [Jingxuan Zhao](#), senior associate scientist, health services research at the American Cancer Society and lead author of the study, examined county-level jail incarceration rates and cancer death records from a 20-year period.

Using National Vital Statistics System data, researchers calculated annual county-level deaths citing invasive cancers (colorectal, female breast, lung, prostate) as the underlying cause. Annual county-level local jail incarceration rates were obtained from the Vera Institute of Justice.

The study showed higher county-level jail incarceration rates were associated with higher county-level cancer death rates, underscoring the collateral health consequences of mass incarceration.

The statistical analysis uncovered increases in the county jail incarceration rate were associated with statistically significant increases in cancer mortality rates in the short, medium, and long term. Jail incarceration was associated with increased cancer deaths for all common cancers included in the study and for White people, but not for Black people.

Study authors recommend efforts to identify interventions to decrease the cancer mortality burden in these communities.

This [news release](#) was published by the American Cancer Society on June 3, 2023.

Click here to read the [study abstract](#).

Click here for [more reports from ASCO 2023](#).

