

**INCARCERATION OF WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES:
AN INFLUENTIAL DETERMINANT OF MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH**

By

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A recorded lecture presented to the faculty of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Public Health in the Department of Maternal and Child Health. Chapel Hill, N.C.

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First Reader

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Presentation

Incarceration of Women in the United States: An Influential Determinant of Maternal Child Health (Fall 2014, 29 minutes)

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Note for Instructors

With proper credit, feel free to include this lecture and any associated readings or slides in your course. Through this project, I hope to advance discussions and understanding of the role incarceration plays in health equity, social determinants of health, and public health in the United States. Specific citations can be found in the notes section of the presentation.

Presentation Abstract

The United States incarcerates more people than any other country. Since 1972, the number of people incarcerated in prisons and jails has increased by 600%, with a 2010 prison and jail population of roughly 2.2 million (Mauer, 2013). This increase of incarceration has been due predominantly to changes in sentencing policies rather than changes in crime rates (The Sentencing Project, 2014a). This presentation is intended to offer an introduction to the importance of incarceration as a social determinant of health in the United States, with a focus on the population of adult women. Public health's emphasis on identifying and preventing root causes poises the field well to increase partnerships and advocacy for prevention and improved health of all individuals in our community.

This presentation provides an overview of some of the known health impacts of the incarceration system on adult women the United States. It covers concepts of health equity, social determinants of health, health in all policies as they relate to mass incarceration. Health risks and challenges specific to women who are incarcerated will be included, and trends in research on maternal child health indicators in relation to incarceration. This lecture will provide a starting point to stimulate your interest in learning more about the multitude of links between incarceration and public health.

Target Audience

The presentation is targeted at students, faculty, and professionals in the field of maternal and child public health.

Learning Objectives

This lecture will provide an overview of:

- The link between incarceration and public health
- The need for public health leadership in criminal justice research, dialogue, and advocacy

Required Readings

American Public Health Association. (1991). APHA Policy Statement No. 9123: Social Practice of Mass Imprisonment. APHA Public Policy Statements, 1948 to present, cumulative. Washington, DC: APHA, current volume. <http://www.apha.org/policies-and-advocacy/public-health-policy-statements/policy-database/2014/07/29/10/00/social-practice-of-mass-imprisonment>

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The Rebecca Project. (2010). Mothers behind bars: A state-by-state report card and analysis of federal policies on conditions of confinement for pregnant and parenting women and the effect on their children. Washington, D.C: National Women's Law Center. <http://www.nwlc.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/mothersbehindbars2010.pdf>

The Sentencing Project. (2014a) Fact Sheet: Trends in U.S. Corrections. http://sentencingproject.org/doc/publications/inc_Trends_in_Corrections_Fact_sheet.pdf

Suggested Readings

Mauer, M. (2013). The changing racial dynamics of women's incarceration. Washington, D.C.: The Sentencing Project. Retrieved from http://sentencingproject.org/doc/publications/rd_Changing%20Racial%20Dynamics%202013.pdf

Rich, J. D., Chandler, R., Williams, B. A., Dumont, D., Wang, E. A., Taxman, F. S., ... & Western, B. (2014). How Health Care Reform Can Transform The Health Of Criminal Justice-Involved Individuals. *Health Affairs*; 33(3), 462-467.

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World Health Organization. (2009), Women's health in prison: Correcting gender inequity in prison health. Retrieved from http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/76513/E92347.pdf

Suggested Discussion Questions

1. How have you seen incarceration impacting public health in your own work?
2. Do you think public health leaders have an obligation to get involved in preventing mass incarceration? Why or why not?
3. If so, what strategies would you want to tackle first? Research? Policy advocacy? Other strategies?

Multimedia resources for further learning

Recorded lecture: Drucker, E. (2013, February). Mass incarceration: A public health catastrophe. *The Dean's Seminar Series on the Prevention of Incarceration*. Lecture conducted from Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, New York, NY. <http://www.mailman.columbia.edu/events/deans-seminar-series-prevention-incarceration>

Recorded webinar: National Institute of Corrections. (2012, August). Health, justice, women: Transforming systems – Changing lives. Satellite and internet broadcast participant guide. Washington, DC. Retrieved from <http://nicic.gov/library/026332>

Full Resource List

American Progress. (2012). *The top 5 facts about women in our criminal justice system*. Retrieved from

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Clarke, J. G., Adashi, E. Y. (2011) Perinatal care for incarcerated patients: A 25-year-old woman pregnant in jail. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 305(9), 923-929. doi:10.1001/jama.2011.125.

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Fettig, A. (2012). \$4.1 million settlement puts jails on notice: Shackling pregnant women is unlawful. American Civil Liberties Union. Retrieved from <https://www.aclu.org/blog/content/41-million-settlement-puts-jails-notice-shackling-pregnant-women-unlawful>

Goshin, L., Byrne. M. (2011). Evaluation of a supportive housing alternative to incarceration for women charged with a felony and their children. Drew House. Retrieved from http://www.housingplussolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/DrewHouse_Report.pdf

Hartogs, J. (2013, May). Mothers to do jail time at home under new program. CBS Interactive Incorporated. New York, NY. Retrieved from <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/mothers-to-do-jail-time-at-home-under-new-program/>

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