



Research Snapshot



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Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS
at Yale University

Dual Incarceration and Condom Use in Committed Relationships

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What is the research about?

Incarceration strains relationships and has been associated with unprotected sex. Relationships where both individuals have a history of incarceration (dual incarceration) may face even greater disruption and strain. This study looks at whether dual incarceration is associated with condom use, and whether this association varies by relationship type.

Why is this important for HIV prevention and treatment?

The finding that HIV risk is increased in committed relationships where both individuals cycle in and out of incarceration further highlights the negative health impacts of mass incarceration. Understanding the mechanisms through which incarceration heightens HIV risk is important to reduce the health effects of

our criminal justice system on communities.

What did the researchers do?

The data comes from 210 adults with a history of incarceration who participated in the Structures, Health and Risk among Re-Entrants, Probationers and Partners (SHARRPP) study. We used appropriate analytic techniques to assess whether dual incarceration was associated with condom use and whether this association varied for committed and non-committed partnerships.

What did the researchers find?

Participants described 496 sexual partnerships that took place just before or since their most recent incarceration. Both partners had experienced incarceration in 23% of the partnerships. Participants described just over half of these partnerships as committed. Committed partnerships where

both partners had a history of incarceration were significantly more likely to use condoms inconsistently than those where only one person had a history of incarceration.

How can you use this research?

Our findings demonstrate the importance of assessing incarceration experiences at the relationship level to fully understand condom use. Incarceration may have unique impacts on committed partnerships, where condomless sex may be tied to intimacy and trust. Reducing incarcerations may reduce HIV risk in relationships with higher levels of criminal justice involvement.

Original Research Article:

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