



## Study Guide: Criminal Justice System

### Issues and Questions

This week we explore the relationship between health and the justice system. We will approach this association from multiple vantage points, examining the impact of incarceration on employment, the interaction between prison and the healthcare system, and looking at the way in which law enforcement deaths present a public health concern.

Criminal Justice System readings begin with **Dumont et al.** which give a description of the health profiles of incarcerated individuals, the relationship between health care and correctional facilities, and the impact of release on formerly incarcerated individuals and the communities to which they return. **Travis et al.** elaborate on the extensive evidence documenting the negative effects that incarceration has on employment and earnings, acknowledging that the effects of incarceration extend further than the individual who was imprisoned. **Pager** furthers this point by presenting experimental evidence showing how a criminal record functions as a barrier to employment and has implications for racial disparities. Lastly, the piece by **Krieger et al.** looks at law enforcement related deaths and suggests that police killings and deaths should be part of publically available data. Public health practitioners should be concerned with tracking and analyzing this information.

Those of you conducting your HIA research on expungement should use these texts to begin to conceptualize how expungement may affect the health outcomes of youth and the communities that they come from.

### Questions

1. What types of neighborhoods are arrests concentrated in? What does this mean for the health profiles of inmates? Furthermore, what are some of the challenges to addressing the healthcare needs of incarcerated populations? What are some of the opportunities?
2. Dumont et al. describe a high rate of mortality shortly following prison release. For instance, “former prisoners are 12 times more likely than the general public to die of any cause in the 2 weeks following release and 129 times more likely to die of a drug overdose.” What accounts for this high rate of mortality? Are there other health consequences upon release for the formerly incarcerated individuals, their families, and/or the communities inmates come from?
3. Why should law enforcement related deaths be a public health concern? Are public health practitioners positioned to address this issue? Think of the Massachusetts state regulations as an example.
4. What are the three mechanisms that Travis et al. identify as being able to explain the poor employment outcomes for ex-prisoners? Can you list examples within each category? What are



the effects of incarceration on employment and earnings? What are the four types of programs aimed at increasing employment and reducing recidivism?

5. What do criminal record studies tell us about racial perceptions of criminality? In other words, how does incarceration and racial disproportionality affect the employment outcomes of those WITHOUT a criminal record? (Refer to Travis et al. and Pager)

### **Key Terms**

War on drugs  
Estelle v. Gamble  
Selection  
Transformation  
Labeling

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