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Medical Problems of Jail Inmates

By Laura M. Maruschak
BJS Statistician

In 2002 an estimated 229,000 jail inmates reported having a current medical problem other than a cold or virus. Many of these problems reflect conditions existing before admission. Medical problems reported by inmates included:

- arthritis (13%)
- hypertension (11%)
- asthma (10%)
- and heart problems (6%).

Under 5% of inmates reported cancer, paralysis, stroke, diabetes, kidney problems, liver problems, hepatitis, sexually transmitted diseases, tuberculosis (TB), or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

An estimated 227,200 jail inmates reported having impaired functioning, most commonly a learning impairment (22%), such as dyslexia or attention deficit disorder, or having been enrolled in special education classes. Around 2% of jail inmates said they had a mobility impairment, requiring the use of a cane, walker, wheelchair, or other aids to do daily activities. About 8% of jail inmates said they had a mental health condition that kept them from participating fully in school, work, or other activities.

An estimated 83,000 jail inmates reported being injured since admission. About 7% of jail inmates reported being injured in a fight and 7% reported an injury due to an accident.

The findings in this report are based on the 2002 Survey of Inmates in Local Jails. Data are presented separately on medical problems, impairments, and injuries reported by jail inmates.

Highlights

More than a third of jail inmates reported having a current medical problem

	Total	Percent of inmates	
		Convicted	Unconvicted
Current medical problem*	36.9%	35.8%	37.7%
Any impairment	36.6	35.2	37.0
Injury since admission	13.4	12.6	15.6

*Medical problems include at least 1 of 14 specific problems (see note on table 1). Excludes reports of a cold or flu.

- 42% of inmates who reported a current medical problem said they had seen a health care professional about the problem.

- Nearly two-thirds of jail inmates said they had been tested for tuberculosis since admission; over a fifth reported being tested for HIV.

22% of jail inmates reported having a learning impairment; 11% said they had impaired vision

Type of impairment	Percent of jail inmates		
	Total	Convicted	Unconvicted
Physical	33.9%	32.7%	34.3%
Learning	21.7	20.8	21.5
Speech	3.7	3.4	4.4
Hearing	6.4	6.3	6.0
Vision	11.3	10.5	12.3
Mobility*	1.7	1.4	2.3
Mental	8.3	7.2	9.3

*Includes use of a cane, wheelchair, walker, hearing aid, or other aids in daily activity.

- Around 15% of all jail inmates reported having two or more impairments.

- About 1 in 5 jail inmates said they considered themselves to have a disability.

- Heart valve damage (290 per 10,000 inmates) and arrhythmia (211 per 10,000) were the most commonly reported types of heart problems.

- About a quarter of convicted (26%) and unconvicted (25%) jail inmates reported having a dental problem.

- Inmates age 24 or younger (17%) were more than twice as likely as those age 45 or older (8%) to report being injured since admission.

- About 61% of inmates age 45 or older reported having a current medical problem; 44% reported an impairment.

- More than half (53%) of female jail inmates reported having a current medical problem, compared to about a third (35%) of male inmates.

- About 5% of female jail inmates said they were pregnant at the time of admission.

- Among inmates who were homeless in the year before their arrest, 49% reported a current medical problem, compared to 35% of those who were not homeless.

- More than 4 in 10 inmates reported having a medical exam since admission to jail.

22% of jail inmates reported one medical problem; 14%, two or more

The majority of jail inmates (63%) did not report a current medical problem. Around a fifth (22%) reported having 1 of 14 specific medical problems (See note on table 1) and 14% reported two or more.

Number of current medical problems	Percent of jail inmates		
	Total	Male	Female
0	63.1%	65.2%	47.4%
1	22.4	21.7	28.3
2	8.7	8.1	13.5
3 or more	5.7	5.0	10.8

The prevalence of a current medical problem did not vary by conviction status. Nearly the same percentage of convicted (36%) and unconvicted jail inmates (38%) reported having a current medical problem (table 1).

Medical problems were highest among female and older inmates

More than half (53%) of female jail inmates reported having a current medical problem, compared to about a third (35%) of male jail inmates. Male and female inmates were equally likely to report having had surgery since their admission (about 1.4%).

Among jail inmates age 45 or older, 61% reported a medical problem, compared to a quarter of those 24 or younger. Older and younger inmates were equally likely to report having surgery.

About 1 in 8 jail inmates reported currently having arthritis

Jail inmates reported a wide-range of medical problems, with arthritis as the most common (13%), followed by hypertension (11%), and asthma (10%) (table 2). Heart problems (6%), followed by kidney problems and tuberculosis (4%) were the next most frequently reported medical conditions. With the exception of paralysis, stroke, and tuberculosis, female inmates reported higher levels of each specific type of medical problem than male inmates.

Women most likely to report cervical cancer, men skin cancer

Female inmates reported a higher rate of ever having cancer than males (831 per 10,000 inmates, compared to 108 per 10,000 inmates). By specific type of cancer, 490 per 10,000 female jail inmates reported ever having cervical cancer, 110 per 10,000 reported ovarian cancer, and 91 per 10,000 reported ever having breast cancer.

Male jail inmates most commonly reported ever having skin cancer (37 per 10,000 inmates), followed by lung cancer (15 per 10,000), and testicular and colon cancer (both 13 per 10,000).

Type of cancer	Rate of those who reported ever having cancer by type per 10,000 inmates	
	Male	Female
Any	108	831
Breast	2	91
Cervical	~	490
Uterine	~	49
Ovarian	~	110
Colon	13	29
Prostate	11	~
Testicular	13	~
Lung	15	16
Skin	37	69
Leukemia	10	34

~ Not applicable.

Table 1. Estimated number and percent of jail inmates who reported a medical problem, by conviction status, gender and age, 2002

	Current medical problem*		Had surgery since admission		Dental problem since admission	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All inmates	229,300	36.9%	8,800	1.4%	159,000	25.6%
Conviction status						
Convicted	121,700	35.8%	5,500	1.6%	89,900	26.5%
Unconvicted	67,800	37.7	2,000	1.1	44,700	24.9
Both	38,700	39.2	1,400	1.4	23,600	23.9
Gender						
Male	191,500	34.8%	7,600	1.4%	138,400	25.2%
Female	37,800	52.6	1,200	1.7	20,600	28.7
Age						
24 or younger	46,600	25.0%	1,700	0.9%	44,200	23.7%
25-34	66,500	33.7	3,700	1.9	49,300	25.0
35-44	70,200	43.3	2,500	1.5	45,500	28.1
45 or older	46,000	60.5	1,000	1.3	20,000	26.4

Note: Number of inmates with each problem was estimated and then rounded to the nearest 100. See Appendix tables for standard errors for the survey estimates.
*Inmates were determined to have a current medical problem if they reported currently having at least 1 of 14 specific problems: arthritis, asthma, cancer, diabetes, a heart condition, hypertension, kidney problems, liver problems, paralysis, problems due to a stroke, hepatitis, HIV, a sexually transmitted disease, or tuberculosis.

Table 2. Percent of jail inmates reporting specific current medical problems, by gender and age, 2002

Current medical problem	All inmates	Gender		Age			
		Male	Female	24 or younger	25-34	35-44	45 or older
Arthritis	12.9%	12.0%	19.4%	5.3%	9.4%	16.6%	32.5%
Asthma	9.9	8.7	19.4	10.9	10.8	8.9	7.3
Cancer	0.7	0.5	2.5	0.2	0.7	0.6	2.2
Diabetes	2.7	2.5	4.1	0.6	2.3	2.9	8.4
Heart problem	5.9	5.5	9.2	4.4	4.6	6.4	11.7
Hypertension	11.2	10.8	14.1	5.3	8.5	14.3	26.1
Kidney problems	3.7	3.0	8.9	2.3	4.0	4.4	4.8
Liver problems	0.9	0.8	1.6	0.1	0.4	1.3	3.4
Paralysis	1.3	1.3	1.3	0.3	1.3	1.7	3.1
Stroke	3.2	3.2	3.3	1.3	2.9	4.9	4.8
Hepatitis	2.6	2.3	5.0	0.4	1.4	4.6	7.2
HIV	1.3	1.2	2.3	0.2	1.1	2.1	2.7
Sexually transmitted disease	0.9	0.8	2.0	0.7	0.7	1.0	1.7
Tuberculosis*	4.3	4.3	4.0	2.2	3.8	5.3	8.6

*Includes all inmates who reported ever having TB.

Heart valve damage was the most commonly reported heart problem

An estimated 880 jail inmates per 10,000 reported ever having a heart problem, including heart valve damage (290 per 10,000 inmates), arrhythmia (211 per 10,000), and angina (130 per 10,000). About 126 per 10,000 had suffered a heart attack.

Heart condition	Ever heart problem per 10,000 inmates, by type
Any	880
Angina	130
Arrhythmia	211
Hardening of arteries	38
Heart attack	126
Heart disease	95
Valve damage	290
Tachycardia	74
Other	43

Prevalence of a medical problem did not change with time served

Inmates who had served a year or more were as likely as those who had served 7 or fewer days to report a current medical problem (about 38%) (table 3). As time served increased, jail inmates who reported having had surgery or a dental problem since admission increased. Among inmates who had served 7 or fewer days, 0.2% reported surgery since admission, compared to 1.6% who had served from 61 to 180 days. About 3.5% of jail inmates who had served more than a year reported having surgery since admission.

Jail inmates who had served more than a year were nearly 3 and a half times more likely than those who had served 7 or fewer days to report having a dental problem since admission.

More than a third of jail inmates reported an impairment

An estimated 227,200 jail inmates said they had an impairment, including a learning, speech, hearing, vision, mobility, or mental impairment (table 4). About 1 in 5 jail inmates said they considered themselves to have a disability (not shown in a table).

Around 22% of jail inmates reported a learning impairment, such as dyslexia or attention deficit disorder, or having been enrolled in special education

classes. About 6% of jail inmates reported difficulty hearing a normal conversation even when wearing a hearing aid. Among jail inmates, 11% reported difficulty seeing ordinary newsprint even when wearing glasses.

Based on a single survey question, 8% of jail inmates reported having a mental or emotional condition that kept them from participating fully in school, work, or other activities. In a recent BJS study, an estimated 64% of jail inmates were found to have a mental health problem. This measure was based on a series of survey questions about prior diagnoses of a mental health problem or symptoms of a mental disorder as specified in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder, DSM-IV. It was not restricted to impaired functioning due to a mental health condition. (See *Mental Health Problems of Prison and Jail Inmates*, available at <<http://ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/mhppji.htm>>.

Females most likely to report a physical or mental impairment, males a learning impairment

Overall, 39% of female inmates and 36% of male inmates reported having any physical or mental impairment (table 5). Male inmates were more likely than female inmates to report a learning impairment (22% compared to 18%).

Females more commonly than males reported a vision impairment (14% compared to 11%) or a mental impairment (15% compared to 7%).

More than 40% of inmates age 45 or older reported an impairment

Inmates age 45 or older were the most likely to report having a physical or mental impairment, followed by those 24 or younger. Forty-four percent of jail inmates age 45 or older and 38% of those age 24 or younger said they had a physical or mental impairment.

Among the specific physical impairments, 12% of jail inmates age 45 or older reported difficulty hearing, 24% reported difficulty seeing, and 7% had a problem with mobility. A tenth of those age 45 or older said they had a mental impairment.

Table 3. Current medical problems reported by jail inmates, by time served, 2002

Time since admission	Percent of inmates		
	Current medical problem	Since admission	
		Had surgery	Dental problem
7 or fewer days	38.2%	0.2%	12.2%
8-14 days	34.3	0.7	15.2
15-30 days	37.3	0.4	19.9
31-60 days	36.8	0.8	24.6
61-180 days	37.4	1.6	30.9
181-364 days	35.6	3.9	35.1
1 year or more	37.8	3.5	42.4

Table 4. Estimated number and percent of jail inmates with an impairment, 2002

Type of impairment	All inmates		Convicted		Unconvicted		Both ^a	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Any	227,200	36.6%	119,300	35.2%	66,400	37.0%	40,000	40.6%
Physical	210,500	33.9	110,800	32.7	61,500	34.3	36,900	37.5
Learning	133,800	21.7	70,300	20.8	38,300	21.5	24,500	25.0
Speech	23,200	3.7	11,400	3.4	7,900	4.4	3,700	3.8
Hearing	39,900	6.4	21,200	6.3	10,800	6.0	7,300	7.5
Vision	69,700	11.3	35,400	10.5	22,000	12.3	11,600	11.8
Mobility ^b	10,500	1.7	4,900	1.4	4,200	2.3	1,400	1.5
Mental	51,500	8.3	24,400	7.2	16,700	9.3	9,700	10.0

Note: Number of inmates with each impairment or mental condition was estimated and then rounded to the nearest 100. Detail equals more than total because inmates may have had more than one impairment.

^aIncludes inmates with a prior conviction, but no new conviction for the current charge.

^bIncludes use of a cane, wheelchair, walker, hearing aid, or other aids in daily activity.

Inmates age 24 or younger (28%) were more than twice as likely as those 45 or older (11%) to report a learning disability. Four percent of both inmates age 24 or younger and those age 45 or older reported a speech impairment.

15% of jail inmates had 2 or more impairments

Jail inmates typically reported having one impairment (21%). About 10% reported two impairments, and nearly 6% reported having three or more. The number of impairments varied little by age. Inmates age 35 or older (17%) were slightly more likely than those 34 or younger (14%) to have 2 or more impairments.

Number of impairments	Percent of jail inmates by age		
	Total	34 or younger	35 or older
0	63.4%	64.8%	61.1%
1	21.2	20.8	21.9
2	9.8	9.2	10.8
3 or more	5.6	5.2	6.2

Around 1 in 8 jail inmates reported being injured since admission to jail

Overall, an estimated 82,900 jail inmates (13%) reported being injured since admission (table 6). Inmates were equally likely to report that they had been injured in an accident (7%) as to report that they had been injured in a fight (7%).

Injuries highest among male and younger inmates

Among jail inmates, men (14%) were more likely than women (10%) to report being injured since admission. About 7% of males, compared to 4% of females, reported being injured in a fight. Male and female jail inmates reported nearly the same rate of being injured in an accident.

Jail inmates age 24 or younger (17%) were more than twice as likely to have been injured since admission than inmates age 45 or older (8%). They were more than five times as likely to report being injured in a fight since admission (11% compared to 2%).

The percent of inmates who reported being injured in an accident slightly decreased as age increased. About 8% of inmates age 24 or younger reported being injured in an accident, compared to 6% of those age 45 or older.

Violent offenders had higher rates of fight-related injuries

About 11% of violent offenders in jail reported being injured in a fight since admission, compared to 6% of property and drug offenders and 5% of public-order offenders.

Most serious offense	Percent of jail inmates since admission	
	Injured in an accident	Injured in a fight
Violent	8.8%	10.8%
Property	7.1	6.4
Drug	7.0	6.2
Public-order	6.6	4.6

Inmates with an impairment had higher rates of injuries

Among inmates with an impairment, nearly 10% reported being injured in an accident and 10% reported being injured in a fight. Around 6% of those without an impairment had been injured.

Inmates who reported a mental impairment were almost twice as likely as those not reporting a mental impairment to be injured in a fight or in an accident since admission. Nearly 13% of those with a mental impairment were injured in a fight and 12% were injured in an accident. Among those without a mental impairment, almost 7% had been injured in a fight or in an accident.

Type of impairment	Percent of jail inmates since admission	
	Injured in an accident	Injured in a fight
Physical		
Yes	9.7%	9.8%
No	6.3	5.6
Mental		
Yes	11.6%	12.9%
No	7.0	6.5

Table 5. Impairments of jail inmates, by gender and age, 2002

	Percent of inmates who reported an impairment						
	Any impairment	Learning	Speech	Hearing	Vision	Mobility*	Mental
Gender							
Male	36.3%	22.1%	3.8%	6.3%	10.8%	1.7%	7.5%
Female	38.7	18.0	3.3	7.6	14.4	1.7	14.9
Age							
24 or younger	37.5%	28.4%	4.0%	4.0%	7.3%	0.3%	7.1%
25-34	33.0	21.1	3.3	5.2	8.2	1.0	7.2
35-44	36.5	19.8	3.9	8.1	13.5	1.8	10.5
45 or older	44.0	10.7	4.1	12.0	24.1	6.9	9.9

*Includes use of a cane, wheelchair, walker, hearing aid, or other aids in daily activity.

Table 6. Percent of jail inmates who reported an injury since admission, by conviction status, gender and age, 2002

Characteristics	Percent of inmates who reported an injury since admission		
	Total	In an accident	In a fight
Total	13.4%	7.4%	7.0%
Conviction status			
Convicted	12.6%	7.9%	5.9%
Unconvicted	15.6	7.5	8.8%
Both	12.1	5.5	7.7
Gender			
Male	13.8%	7.5%	7.4%
Female	10.1	6.7	4.1
Age			
24 or younger	17.4%	8.2%	10.6%
25-34	13.6	7.5	7.2
35-44	11.2	7.1	4.8
45 or older	7.8	5.8	2.5

Likelihood of injury increased with time served in jail

Among jail inmates who had served 7 or fewer days at the time of the interview, 4% reported an injury compared to 30% of those jail inmates who had served 1 year or more at the time of the interview (table 7).

The risk of injury due to an accident or a fight increased with time served. About 3% of jail inmates who had served 7 or fewer days reported being injured in an accident, compared to 17% of inmates who had served 1 year or more at the time of interview. Jail inmates who had served 1 or more years at the time of interview were 8 times as likely (16%) to report being injured in a fight as those who had served 7 or fewer days (2%), and about 2½ times as likely as those who had served between 31 and 60 days (7%).

Male inmates incarcerated between 15 days and 1 year were more likely to have been injured than female inmates (figure 1). Among those who had been incarcerated more than 1 year at the time of the interview, females were more likely than males to have been injured.

As time served in jail increased, the prevalence of injuries among inmates age 34 or younger and inmates age 35 or older increased (figure 2). Except for inmates who had served 7 or fewer days, inmates age 34 or younger consistently had higher rates of injuries than those age 35 or older as time served increased.

Jail inmates who reported any impairment had higher rates of injuries than other inmates, regardless of how long they had served in jail (figure 3).

Regardless of the time served in jail, violent jail inmates had higher rates of fight-related injuries than other inmates (figure 4). Among jail inmates who had served 7 or fewer days, nearly 3% of violent offenders and 2% of nonviolent offenders reported having been injured in a fight. Among those inmates who had served a year or more, 22% of violent offenders said they had been injured in a fight, compared to 12% of nonviolent offenders.

Table 7. Percent of jail inmates who reported an injury since admission, by time served, 2002

Time since admission	Percent of inmates who reported an injury		
	Total	In an accident	In a fight
7 or fewer days	4.3%	2.7%	2.0%
8-14 days	5.3	3.5	2.0
15-30 days	7.1	3.9	3.5
31-60 days	13.1	7.1	6.5
61-180 days	16.6	9.1	9.1
181-364 days	21.0	11.2	11.4
1 year or more	30.0	17.0	15.9

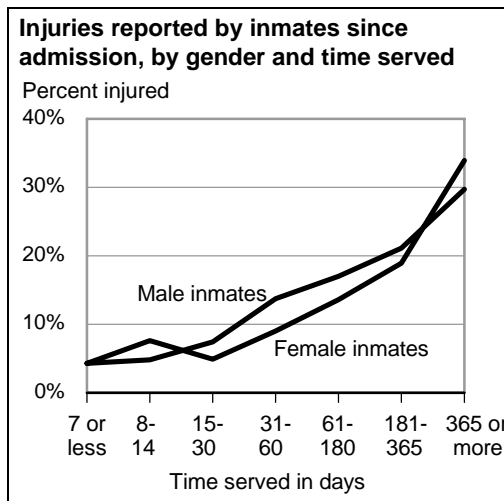


Figure 1

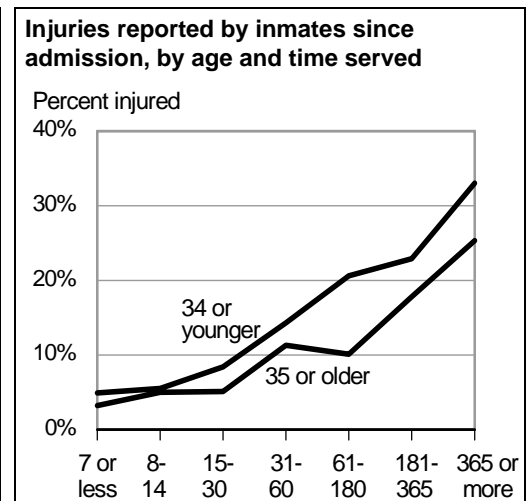


Figure 2

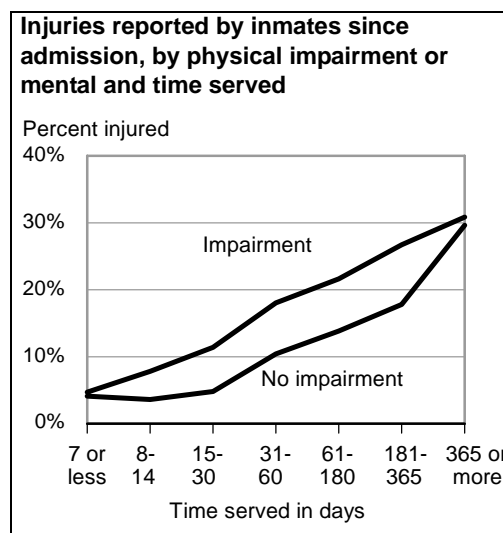


Figure 3

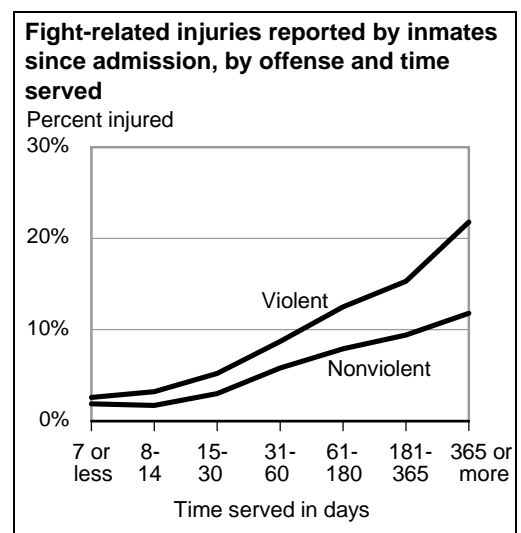


Figure 4

Health-related problems more common among homeless or unemployed inmates

Of jail inmates who reported being homeless or living in a shelter in the year prior to arrest, nearly half said they had a current medical problem or a physical or mental impairment, compared to a third of those who were not homeless (table 8).

Medical problems and physical or mental impairments were also more prevalent among inmates who reported being unemployed before their arrest or receiving government assistance. Nearly 44% of jail inmates who were unemployed in the month prior to their arrest, compared to 34% of those who were employed, reported having a physical or mental impairment. About 41% of inmates who were unemployed and 35% who were employed reported having a current medical problem.

More than half (57%) of jail inmates who received financial support from government agencies in the month prior to arrest reported a current medical problem. About a third (34%)

of jail inmates who received income from wages reported a current medical problem.

Fifty-five percent of inmates who received income from government transfers reported having a physical or mental impairment, compared to 33% of those who reported receiving wages.

Medical problems common among inmates with a history of drug use or dependence

Jail inmates who reported ever using drugs (38%) were more likely than those who never used drugs (31%) to report a current medical problem. Thirty-eight percent of inmates who ever used drugs, compared to 30% of those who never used drugs, reported an impairment. An estimated 53% of jail inmates who reported ever using a needle to inject drugs said they had a current medical problem, compared to 35% of those who did not use a needle. About 45% of jail inmates who used a needle to inject drugs, compared to 37% of those who did not, reported having a physical or mental impairment.

Among jail inmates dependent on or abusing drugs, 4 in 10 reported having a physical or mental impairment, compared to about 3 in 10 inmates who were not dependent on drugs.

Among jail inmates who were dependent on or abusing alcohol, two-fifths reported a current medical problem, compared to about a third of those who were not dependent or abusing alcohol. About 40% of those dependent on or abusing alcohol had an impairment, compared to 34% of those who were not dependent on or abusing alcohol. Alcohol or drug abuse or dependence is based on symptoms for diagnosing substance dependence or abuse in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders - fourth edition (DSM-IV) (See *Substance Dependence, Abuse, and Treatment of Jail Inmates, 2002*, BJS Special Report, www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/sdatji02.htm.)

Table 8. Health-related conditions reported by jail inmates, by selected background characteristics, 2002

	Percent of inmates				
	Current medical problem	Impairment	Since admission		
			Injured	Surgery	Dental problem
Homeless in year before arrest					
Yes	48.8%	48.8%	16.4%	2.4%	31.3%
No	34.9	34.6	12.9	1.3	24.6
Employed in month before offense					
Yes	35.0%	33.5%	13.6%	1.5%	25.3%
No	41.1	43.6	12.9	1.2	25.0
Source of income					
Wages/salary	34.1%	32.5%	13.2%	1.3%	24.6%
Government transfers	57.1	54.8	16.1	1.5	27.3
Other	39.4	38.9	16.8	1.6	30.0
Alcohol dependence or abuse					
Yes	39.6%	40.0%	13.4%	1.4%	27.2%
No	34.5	33.6	13.5	1.5	24.0
Ever used drugs					
Yes	38.0%	38.0%	14.0%	1.4%	27.4%
No	31.2	30.0	10.5	1.5	17.0
Used drugs in month before arrest					
Yes	36.9%	38.4%	13.8%	1.9%	29.0%
No	35.8	34.2	10.8	1.2	21.6
Used needle to inject drugs					
Yes	53.1%	44.5%	14.4%	2.1%	32.7%
No	34.7	36.6	14.0	1.3	26.3
Drug dependence or abuse					
Yes	39.0%	40.3%	15.6%	1.8%	29.5%
No	34.0	32.2	10.9	1.1	20.9

Most inmates reported receiving health assessment or medical exams since admission

About 80% of inmates reported that at the time of admission they were questioned about their health or medical history. Nearly half said that staff checked them to see if they were sick, injured, or intoxicated.

More than 4 in 10 jail inmates reported having a medical examination since admission to jail. A third of inmates reported having a blood test since admission. Six in ten inmates said they had been tested for TB, and more than 2 in 10 reported they had been tested for HIV.

Medical service provided	Percent of all jail inmates
At time of admission	
Staff checked to see if you were sick, injured, or intoxicated?	47.3%
Staff asked questions about your health or medical history?	81.1
Staff asked if you had ever thought about suicide?	79.4
Since admission	
Has anyone pricked your skin to test for TB?	62.6%
Have you had a blood test for any reason?	33.6
Has your blood been tested for HIV?	21.6
Have you had a medical exam?	43.1

Among jail inmates who reported a current medical problem, 42% also reported visiting a health care professional because of the medical problem. Twenty percent of inmates who had been injured reported seeing a health care professional, as did 21% of those who said they had a dental problem.

	Percent of inmates who saw a health care professional*
Current medical problem	41.8%
Injury	20.4
Dental problem	20.5

*Of inmates who reported a medical problem.

Since their admission to jail, 44% of female jail inmates reported having a medical examination. Nearly 20% reported having a pelvic exam. About 5% were pregnant at time of admission. Among those female inmates who were pregnant at the time of admission, 48% had received an obstetrics exam since admission and 35% had received some type of pregnancy care, such as instructions on child care, exercises, special diet, medication, or special testing.

	Percent of female jail inmates
Had a medical exam since admission?	44.0%
Had a pelvic exam since admission?	19.8
Were you pregnant at admission?	5.2
If yes to pregnant:	
Had an obstetric exam?	48.0%
Received pregnancy care?	34.9

Methodology

Data in this report are based on hour-long personal interviews with jail inmates. As part of an omnibus survey conducted every 5 to 6 years, these questions provide an opportunity to estimate the prevalence of a variety of diseases, illnesses, chronic problems, and other health-related conditions of inmates.

In the 2002 Survey of Inmates in Local Jails, offenders were randomly selected from a nationally representative sample of facilities and were asked questions regarding their current offense and sentence, criminal history, personal and family background, physical impairment and mental condition, and medical problems since admission to prison. Detailed descriptions of the methodology and sample design can be found in *Profile of Jail Inmates, 2002*, available at <<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/pji02.htm>>.

The accuracy of the survey estimates presented in this report depends on two types of error: sampling and non-sampling.

Sampling error is the variation that may occur by chance because a sample rather than a complete numeration of the population was conducted.

Nonsampling error can be attributed to many sources, such as nonresponses, differences in the interpretation of questions among inmates, recall difficulties, and processing errors. The accuracy of the estimates depends on the ability and willingness of inmates to report such problems. Inmate self-reported data may underestimate the prevalence of some medical conditions, especially those problems that require more sophisticated diagnosis and those that are more sensitive in nature. In any survey the full extent of the nonsampling error is never known.

The sampling error, as measured by an estimated standard error, varies by the size of the estimate and the size of the base population. Estimates of the standard errors for selected characteristics have been calculated (see appendix tables at <<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/mpji02.htm>>).

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The Bureau of Justice Statistics is the statistical agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. Jeffrey L. Sedgwick is director.

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This report in portable document format and in ASCII and its related statistical data and tables — [enter description] — are available at the BJS World Wide Web Internet site: <<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/mpji.htm>>

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Appendix table 1. Standard errors of jail inmates who reported a medical problem, by conviction status, 2002

Current medical problem	Standard error for estimated percentages	
	Convicted	Unconvicted
Current medical problem	0.89%	1.20%
Any impairment	0.09	1.20
Injury since admission	0.61	0.95

Appendix table 3. Standard errors of jail inmates with an impairment, by conviction status, 2002

	Percent of jail inmates	
	Convicted	Unconvicted
Any impairment	0.90%	1.20%
Learning	0.81	1.04
Speech	0.36	0.56
Hearing	0.45	0.59
Vision	0.61	0.82
Mobility	0.22	0.37
Mental	0.47	0.75

Appendix table 2. Standard errors of jail inmates who reported specific current medical problems, by gender, 2002

Current medical problem	Standard error for estimated percentages		
	Total	Male	Female
Any problem	0.65%	0.72%	1.20%
Arthritis	0.48	0.52	0.99
Asthma	0.38	0.41	0.94
Cancer	0.11	0.10	0.37
Diabetes	0.22	0.23	0.46
Heart problem	0.32	0.34	0.70
Hypertension	0.45	0.50	0.81
Kidney problems	0.24	0.25	0.75
Stroke	0.26	0.28	0.40

Appendix table 4. Standard errors of jail inmates with a current medical problem or an impairment, by gender and age, 2002

	Standard error for estimated percentages	
	Current medical problem	Any impairment
Gender		
Male	0.72%	0.75%
Female	1.20	1.28
Age		
24 or younger	1.04%	1.23%
25-34	1.16	1.19
35-44	1.31	1.29
45 or older	1.93	2.04