

Incarceration and Sexually Transmitted Infections in a Probability Sample of Inner-city Young Adults

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Objectives: Studies indicate high rates of STIs and HIV among incarcerated populations. The relationship between STIs and a history of incarceration (individuals and their partners) in the general population is less understood.

Methods: The Monitoring STIs Survey Program (MSSP) provides continuous monitoring of trends in three STIs (trichomonas, chlamydial and gonococcal infection) among a probability sample of young adults in Baltimore, MD. Participants are surveyed through private telephone audio computer-assisted survey interviews (TACASI), and provide urine specimens through the mail. This paper reports on data collected the first two years of the study (2006 - 2008).

Results: Males were 2.3 times (95% CI 1.4, 3.8) more likely to report a history of incarceration than females. Nearly 9% of males had been incarcerated in the past year compared to 4% of females. Of 1,559 respondents providing specimens, 9% tested STI positive; 6% (95% CI 4, 9) of males and 12% (95% CI 10, 15) of females.

Current STI was 3.6 (95% CI 1.9, 6.6) times higher among respondents incarcerated in the past year (24%) than respondents not incarcerated (8%).

Forty percent of females reported an incarcerated partner, compared to 12% of males. Among females reporting an incarcerated partner in the past year, 28% tested STI positive, compared to 10% of women reporting no incarcerated partners in the past year (OR=3.2, 95% CI 1.9, 5.6).

Conclusions: Nearly 24% of young adults in Baltimore with a history of recent incarceration and 28% of females whose partner was recently incarcerated had an undetected STI.