

Incarceration history tied to lower access to health care

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An incarceration history is associated with worse access to and receipt of health care, according to a study published online Feb. 23 in *JAMA Health Forum*.

Jingxuan Zhao, M.P.H., from the American Cancer Society in Atlanta,

and colleagues examined whether incarceration history is associated with access to and receipt of health care in the United States. The analysis included 7,963 individuals (586 with incarceration history) participating in the 2008 to 2018 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 cohort.

The researchers found that compared with people without incarceration history, people with incarceration history had lower percentages of having a usual source of care or receiving [preventive services](#), including physical examinations (69.6 versus 74.1 percent), blood pressure tests (85.6 versus 91.6 percent), blood cholesterol level tests (59.5 versus 72.2 percent), blood glucose level tests (61.4 versus 69.4 percent), dental check-ups (51.1 versus 66.0 percent), and breast (55.0 versus 68.2 percent) and colorectal cancer screening (65.6 versus 70.3 percent).

When further adjusting for [educational attainment](#) and health insurance, the associations of incarceration history and access to care were attenuated for most measures but remained statistically significant for measures of having a usual source of care, blood cholesterol level test, and dental check-up only.

"Efforts to improve access to education and [health insurance coverage](#) for people with an incarceration history might mitigate disparities in care," the authors write.

More information: Jingxuan Zhao et al, Incarceration History and Access to and Receipt of Health Care in the US, *JAMA Health Forum* (2024). [DOI: 10.1001/jamahealthforum.2023.5318](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamahealthforum.2023.5318)

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