

# Research shows recent release from jail a big risk factor for suicide

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Inmates released from jail have a ninefold increased risk of suicide

within the following year, compared to people who've never been incarcerated, new research shows.

"Suicide prevention efforts should focus on people who have spent at least one night in jail in the past year," concluded the team led by Ted Miller, a senior research scientist with the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation in Beltsville, Md.

For the study, researchers pooled data from 10 different studies of death rates among formerly incarcerated adults. They used that data to estimate the suicide rate among the nearly 7.1 million adults who had been released from jail at least once in 2019.

Inmates had a nine times greater risk of dying by suicide within one year of their release, and a seven times greater risk of suicide within two years of release, researchers found. People newly released from jail account for an estimated 20% of all adult suicide deaths, but they only account for just under 3% of the entire adult population.

Adults are often arrested while in the throes of a mental health crisis, researchers noted.

It's now possible for [health systems](#) to link [jail](#) release data to patient health records, and thus can target for outreach patients who have been recently released, the researchers noted.

"Focused suicide prevention efforts could reach a substantial number of [adults](#) who were formerly incarcerated within 2 years, when death by suicide is likely to occur," the researchers concluded in a news release from the American Psychiatric Association.

The new study was [published](#) May 10 in the journal *JAMA Network Open*.

**More information:** Ted R. Miller et al, Share of Adult Suicides After Recent Jail Release, *JAMA Network Open* (2024). DOI: [10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.9965](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.9965)

The National Alliance on Mental Illness has more about [post-incarceration support](#).

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