

Health, Housing, and Household Circumstances Among Women on Parole: Findings from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2021–2023

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Methodology

This methods supplement describes the data source, analytic sample, measures, weighting, statistical testing, rate ratios, and limitations that underlie [Health, Housing, and Household Circumstances Among Women on Parole](#), a new analysis from the Council on Criminal Justice. The report uses national survey data to examine housing, physical health, behavioral health, health insurance, and household circumstances among women on parole. By comparing women on parole with women not on parole and men on parole, the report identifies where women on parole report higher rates of circumstances relevant to reentry planning, family stability, health care coordination, supervision, and public safety.

The sections below describe the data source, analytic sample, measure definitions, weighting, statistical testing, and limitations used to produce the estimates presented in the report.

Data Source, Analytic Sample, and Weighting

The analysis uses pooled 2021, 2022, and 2023 public-use data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), a nationally representative survey of the U.S.

civilian, noninstitutionalized population.¹ The analytic sample includes respondents aged 18 and older and compares three groups:

- + Females who reported being on parole in the past year
- + Females who did not report being on parole in the past year
- + Males who reported being on parole in the past year

The three survey years were pooled because the annual unweighted sample of women reporting past-year parole was small, with roughly 90 respondents in each year. Pooling the 2021, 2022, and 2023 files increased the analytic sample available for estimating health, behavioral health, housing, and household measures among women on parole.

Estimates were weighted using NSDUH survey weights to account for the survey design and produce nationally representative annualized estimates for the groups analyzed. Specifically, the analysis used NSDUH's pooled three-year analysis weight, ANALWT2_C3, which divides the original annual weights by three for analyses combining the 2021, 2022, and 2023 public-use files. Weighted and unweighted sample sizes are shown in Table S1.

¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (n.d.). *NSDUH: Combined public-use file (2021-2023)*. <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/data-we-collect/nsduh-national-survey-drug-use-and-health/datafiles/2021-2023>

Table S1. Weighted and Unweighted Sample Sizes by Analytic Group

	2021	2022	2023	Total
Unweighted				
---Females on Parole	94	83	94	271
---Females Not on Parole	26,296	26,165	24,866	77,327
---Males on Parole	162	205	216	583
Weighted for Each Year Individually				
---Females on Parole	417,670	322,063	346,479	1,086,213
---Females Not on Parole	129,931,394	130,878,338	131,836,509	392,646,241
---Males on Parole	1,000,324	1,112,324	1,094,600	3,207,248
Weighted for Each Year Jointly to get Annualized Estimates (Used in the Report)				
---Females on Parole	139,223	107,354	115,493	362,071
---Females Not on Parole	43,310,465	43,626,113	43,945,503	130,882,081
---Males on Parole	333,441	370,775	364,867	1,069,083



View a larger version of this table [here](#).

Measures

The analysis presents estimates across five broad areas: housing instability, self-rated health, health insurance coverage, mental health, substance use disorders, and household context.

Housing Instability

Housing instability was measured using respondent reports of moves they had made in the past 12 months. Three measures were examined:

- + One or more moves in the past year
- + Two or more moves in the past year
- + Three or more moves in the past year

Self-Rated Health

Self-rated health was measured using the NSDUH question asking respondents to rate their overall health as excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor. The report presents the share of respondents who rated their health as fair or poor. This combined measure was used because NSDUH provides a summary health measure that groups fair and poor health together, and because the unweighted number of respondents reporting poor health alone was too small to analyze separately among people on parole.

Health Insurance Coverage

Health insurance coverage was measured using respondent reports of insurance status. The report presents the share of respondents who reported being uninsured in the past 12 months.

Mental Health Disorders

NSDUH estimates past-year mental illness using responses to questions about psychological distress, functional impairment, major depressive episodes, suicidal thoughts, and age. The measure is classified by severity.

The analysis uses the following mental health measures:

- + Major depressive episode (MDE) in the past year
- + Mild/moderate/severe mental illness in the past year
- + Moderate/severe mental illness in the past year
- + Severe mental illness in the past year

Substance Use Disorders

NSDUH classifies substance use disorders using *DSM-5* criteria. Mild disorders meet two or three applicable criteria, moderate disorders meet four or five, and severe disorders meet six or more.

The report includes the following substance use disorder measures:

- + Mild/moderate/severe substance use disorder in the past 12 months
- + Moderate/severe substance use disorder in the past 12 months
- + Severe substance use disorder in the past 12 month
- + Mild/moderate/severe drug use disorder in the past 12 months

- + Moderate/severe drug use disorder in the past 12 months
- + Severe drug use disorder in the past 12 months
- + Mild/moderate/severe opioid use disorder in the past 12 months
- + Moderate/severe opioid use disorder in the past 12 months
- + Severe opioid use disorder in the past 12 months

Household Context

Household context was measured as respondents reporting that they currently live in a household with children under age 18. This measure does not establish respondents' relationship to children in the home, such as whether they are parents or caregivers.

Table S2. Measure Definitions and NSDUH Variables

Domain	Measure	Time Frame	NSDUH variable
Housing Instability	Number of moves	Past Year	MOVSINPYR2
Self-Rated Health	Overall health	Current	HEALTH2
Health Insurance Coverage	Health insurance coverage	Current	IRINSUR4
Mental Health Disorders	Mental Illness, by severity	Past Year	MICATPY
Major Depressive Episode	Major Depressive Episode	Past Year	AMDEYR
Substance Use Disorders	Substance Use Disorder, by severity	Past Year	SVYRSUDANY
Drug Use Disorder	Drug Use Disorder, by severity	Past Year	SVYRDUDANY
Opioid Use Disorder	Opioid Use Disorder, by severity	Past Year	SVYROPIANY
Household Context	Number of minor children in the household	Current	NRCH17_2

View a larger version of this table [here](#).

Statistical Testing

Women on parole were used as the reference group for statistical testing. Each comparison tested whether the estimate for women not on parole or men on parole differed significantly from the estimate for women on parole.

All measures were converted to binary indicators before testing. Statistical tests were conducted using survey-weighted cross-tabulations in Stata. The analyses used NSDUH's pooled three-year person-level analysis weight, ANALWT2_C3, and accounted for the complex survey design using the NSDUH sample design variables VESTR_C and VEREP. Chi-square tests were then used to assess differences between women on parole and each comparison group.

No adjustments were made for multiple comparisons. Results should therefore be interpreted as descriptive comparisons across prespecified groups and measures.

The report also presents selected rate ratios to describe the size of differences between groups. Ratios compare the rate among women on parole with the rate among a comparison group. For example, if 12.6% of women on parole and 1.6% of women not on parole reported moving three or more times in the past year, the rate among women on parole was 7.9 times the rate among women not on parole.

Ratios are descriptive comparisons of point estimates. They are not statistical tests and should be interpreted alongside the statistical testing results. Large ratios may reflect very low rates in the comparison group, as with severe opioid use disorder among women not on parole.

Limitations

The analysis has several limitations. NSDUH data rely on respondent self-report and may be affected by recall error, underreporting, or differences in willingness to disclose sensitive information. The parole measure is also self-reported. Although NSDUH asks separate questions about probation and parole, some respondents may misclassify their supervision status or use those terms differently than researchers or supervision agencies do.

Additionally, the analysis is descriptive. While it compares reported conditions across groups, it cannot determine whether those conditions preceded, contributed to, or were exacerbated by justice system involvement. The analysis also does not examine how often the measured conditions occur concurrently for the same people. For example, the report shows elevated rates of housing instability, mental health conditions, and

substance use disorders among women on parole, but it does not estimate the share of women who experienced multiple conditions at the same time.

The unweighted annual sample of women reporting past-year parole was small, which is why the analysis pooled three years of NSDUH data. Weighted estimates and statistical tests are reported, but estimates for smaller subgroups should still be interpreted with appropriate caution. Finally, the analysis identifies people who reported being on parole in the past year, but it does not measure time since release, length of parole supervision, conditions of supervision, prior incarceration history, or access to services before or after release.

Additional Measures

Estimates for additional measures are included in Table S3 (see next page) for transparency but are not discussed in the main text because they were less central to the report's focus, duplicative of reported measures, or based on small cell sizes.

Table S3. Summary of All Measures Examined

Within Past 12 Months:	Females on Parole (n=271; weighted n=362,071)	Other Females (n=77,327; weighted n=130,882,081)	Males on Parole (n=583; weighted n=1,069,083)
Moved one or more times	39.6%	19.0%**	40.3%
Moved two or more times	22.4%	6.4%**	18.2%
Moved three or more times	12.6%	1.6%**	5.7%**
Overall health is fair or poor	29.3%	15.6%**	17.1%**
Uninsured	11.1%	7.4%*	20.0%**
Pregnancy	2.2%	1.5%	
Any major depressive episode	24.5%	10.1%**	11.9%**
Any mental disorder (mild, moderate, severe)	57.3%	26.7%**	34.9%**
Any moderate or severe mental disorder	39.2%	14.7%**	20.1%**
Any severe mental disorder	23.9%	7.0%**	9.8%**
Any substance use disorder (mild, moderate, severe)	51.4%	14.7%**	47.1%
Any moderate or severe substance use disorder	39.3%	6.1%**	33.5%
Any severe substance use disorder	32.1%	2.9%**	23.7%*
Any drug use disorder (mild, moderate, severe)	45.1%	7.9%**	36.6%*
Any moderate or severe drug use disorder	34.8%	3.2%**	23.6%**
Any severe drug use disorder	28.2%	1.5%**	15.4%**
Any opioid use disorder (mild, moderate, severe)	23.9%	2.1%**	12.5%**
Any moderate or severe opioid use disorder	20.4%	0.7%**	8.3%**
Any severe opioid use disorder	17.8%	0.4%**	5.3%**
Minor children in household	29.1%	30.2%	18.3%**

Notes: Asterisks indicate statistically significant differences from females on parole. One asterisk (*) indicates $p < .05$; two asterisks (**) indicate $p < .01$. Source: National Survey of Drug Use and Health.

View a larger version of this table [here](#).