People With HIV Typically Don’t Get Timely Post-Incarceration Care

This is according to an analysis of people with HIV leaving jails and prisons in Connecticut.

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A recent analysis of people with HIV incarcerated in Connecticut found that the proportion receiving prompt care of the virus upon leaving jail or prison was quite low.

Publishing their findings in The Lancet HIV, researchers studied data on 1,350 people with HIV who were incarcerated 3,302 times and then released from jails and prisons in Connecticut between 2007 and 2014. The investigators relied on databases from the state’s departments of corrections and public health.

Following 3,181 incarceration periods eligible for the researchers’ analysis, in 672 cases (21 percent) the individual was linked to HIV care within 14 days of release, and in 1,042 cases (34 percent) they received HIV care within 30 days. Of those linked to care within 30 days, 301 (29 percent) had a fully suppressed viral load at that point.

Factors associated with a greater or lesser likelihood of receiving HIV care within 14 days of release included: being incarcerated for one month to one year compared with less than one month (a 1.52-fold increased likelihood); receiving antiretroviral treatment while incarcerated (1.39-fold increased likelihood); receiving case management while incarcerated (1.65-fold increased likelihood); having two or more medical conditions in addition to HIV, compared with having none (1.86-fold increased likelihood); having been re-incarcerated compared with having been incarcerated for the first time (30 percent less likely); and having received a conditional release (38 percent less likely).

Being Latino, receiving a bonded release and having a psychiatric condition were also associated with being linked to care within 30 days, however having been re-incarcerated was not.

Prompt linkage to HIV care after release, the study authors concluded, “is suboptimal but improves when inmates’ medical, psychiatric and case management needs are identified and addressed before release. People who are rapidly cycling through jail facilities are particularly vulnerable to missed linkage opportunities. The use of integrated programs to align justice and health care goals has great potential to improve long-term HIV treatment outcomes.”

To read the study abstract, click here.

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