

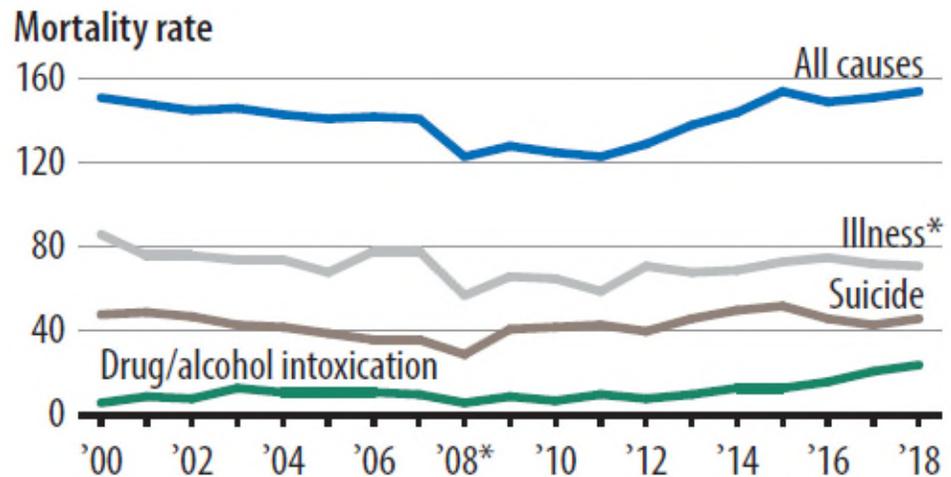


SOUTH CAROLINA DEATHS BEHIND BARS 2015 ——— 2021

Jail
mortality
is rising

FIGURE 1

Mortality rate per 100,000 local jail inmates, by cause of death, 2000–2018



Note: Mortality rates are based on the annual number of deaths and the average daily population. See table 3 and appendix table 6 for rates.

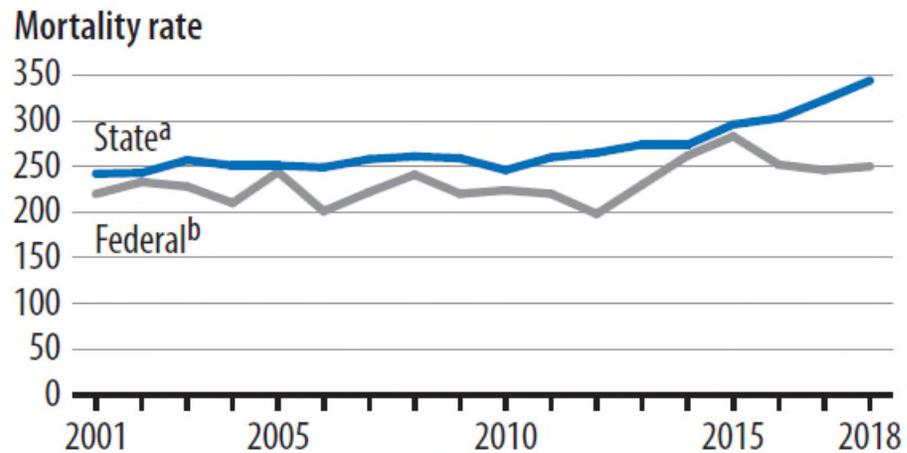
*In 2008, a high number of illness cases were missing cause of death information and were classified as other/unknown. See *Methodology*.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Mortality in Correctional Institutions, 2000–2018*.

Prison
mortality
is rising

FIGURE 2

Mortality rate per 100,000 state and federal prisoners, 2001–2018



Note: Mortality rates are based on the annual number of deaths and a 1-day custody population on December 31. See tables 4 and 6 for rates.

^aIncludes deaths in private state facilities.

^bExcludes deaths in private federal facilities.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Mortality in Correctional Institutions, 2001–2018, and National Prisoner Statistics, 2001–2018; and Federal Bureau of Prisons, 2001–2018.

Oversight of incarceration

S.C. Code Ann. § 17-7-10: Autopsies to be ordered

S.C. Code Ann. §§ 24-9-20: Inspection of jails

S.C. Code Ann. §§ 24-9-35: Reports of deaths of incarcerated persons

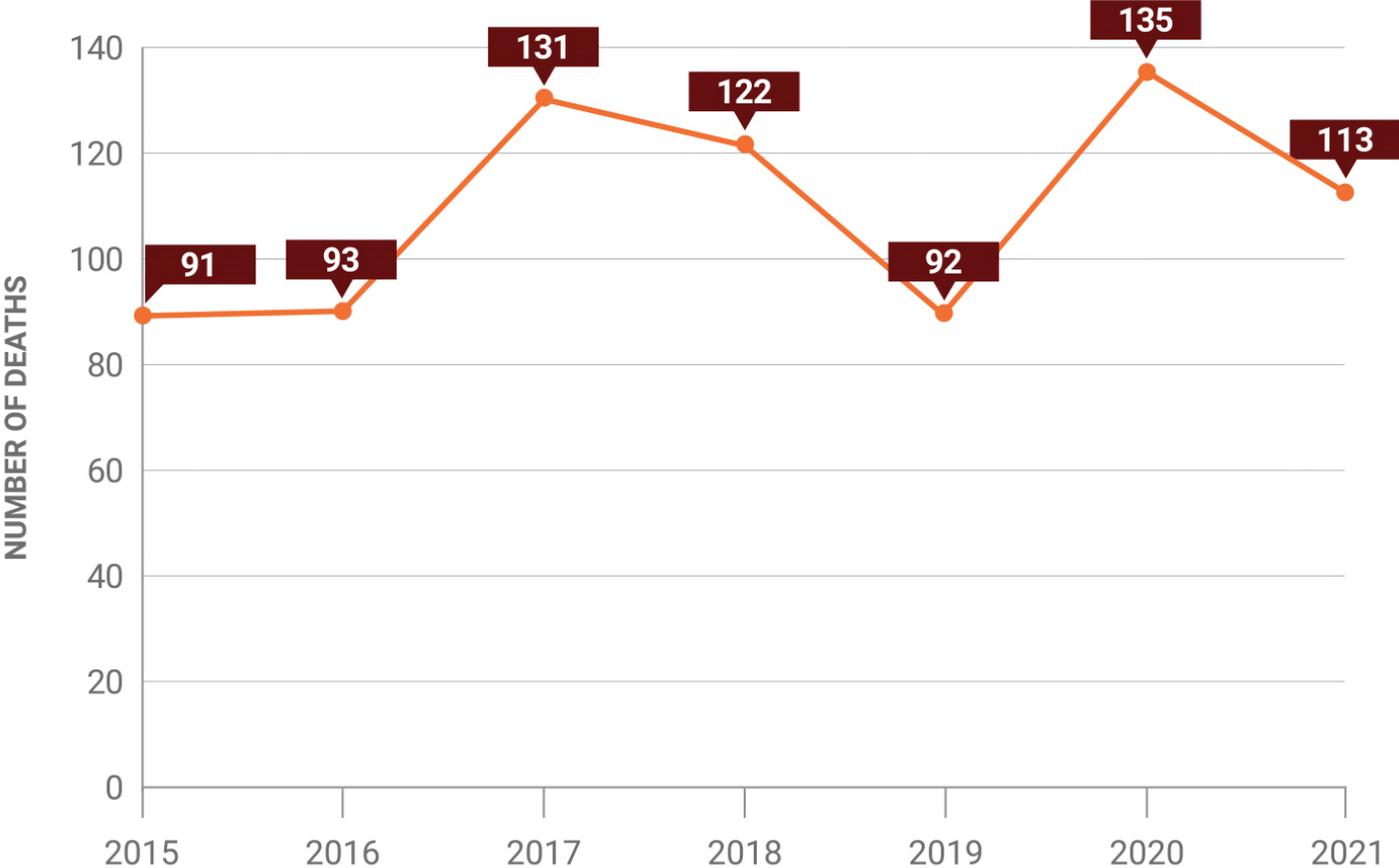
S.C. Code Ann. §§ 24-9-50: Reports on detention facilities

Deaths in Custody Reporting Act (federal)

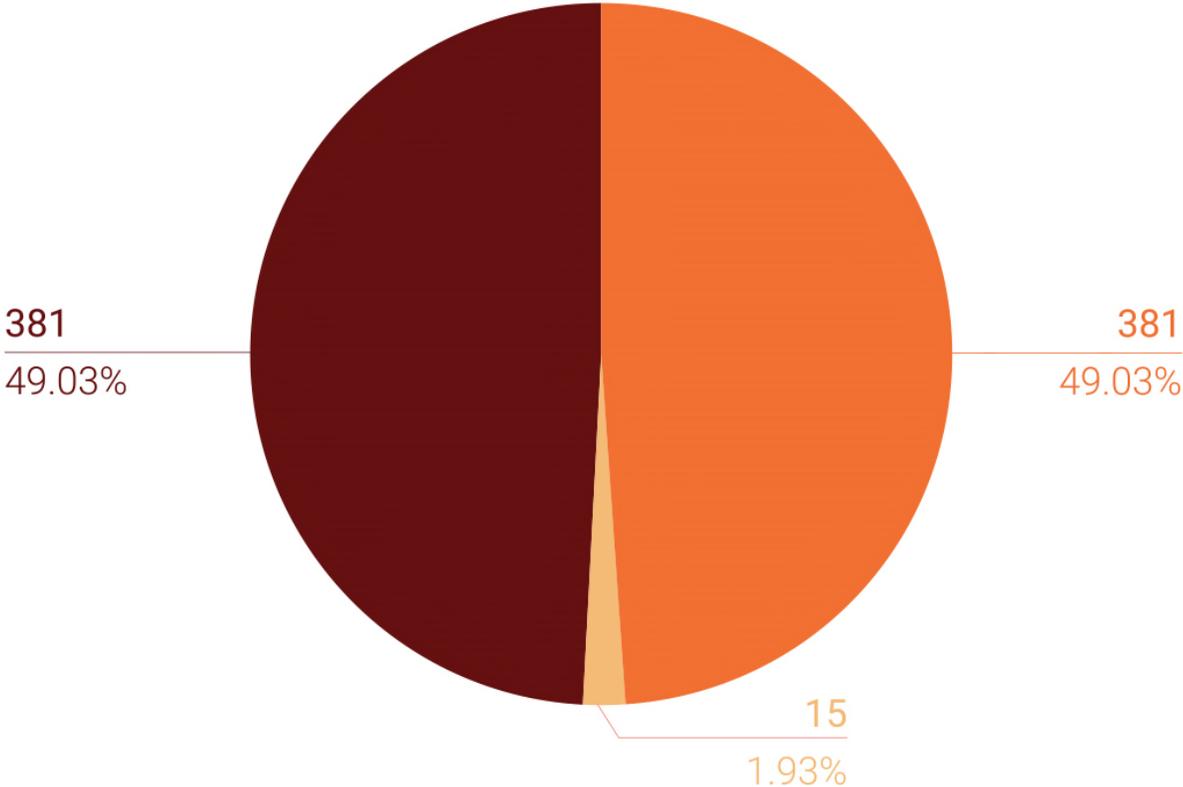
Introduction

From 2015 to 2021, at least 777 people died behind bars in at least fifty-two prisons, jails, and detention centers across South Carolina. This report is the first comprehensive collection and analysis of deaths behind bars in South Carolina, based on public records requests filed with facilities across the state.

Deaths by year



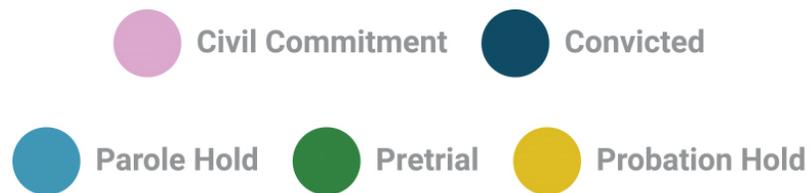
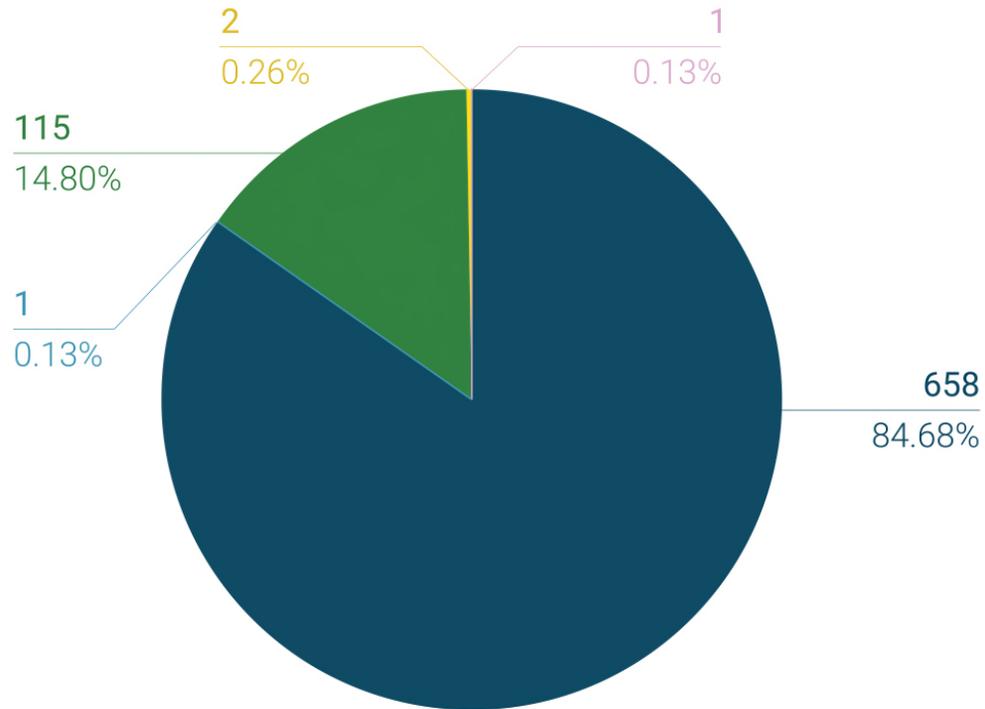
Deaths by race



Black Unknown White

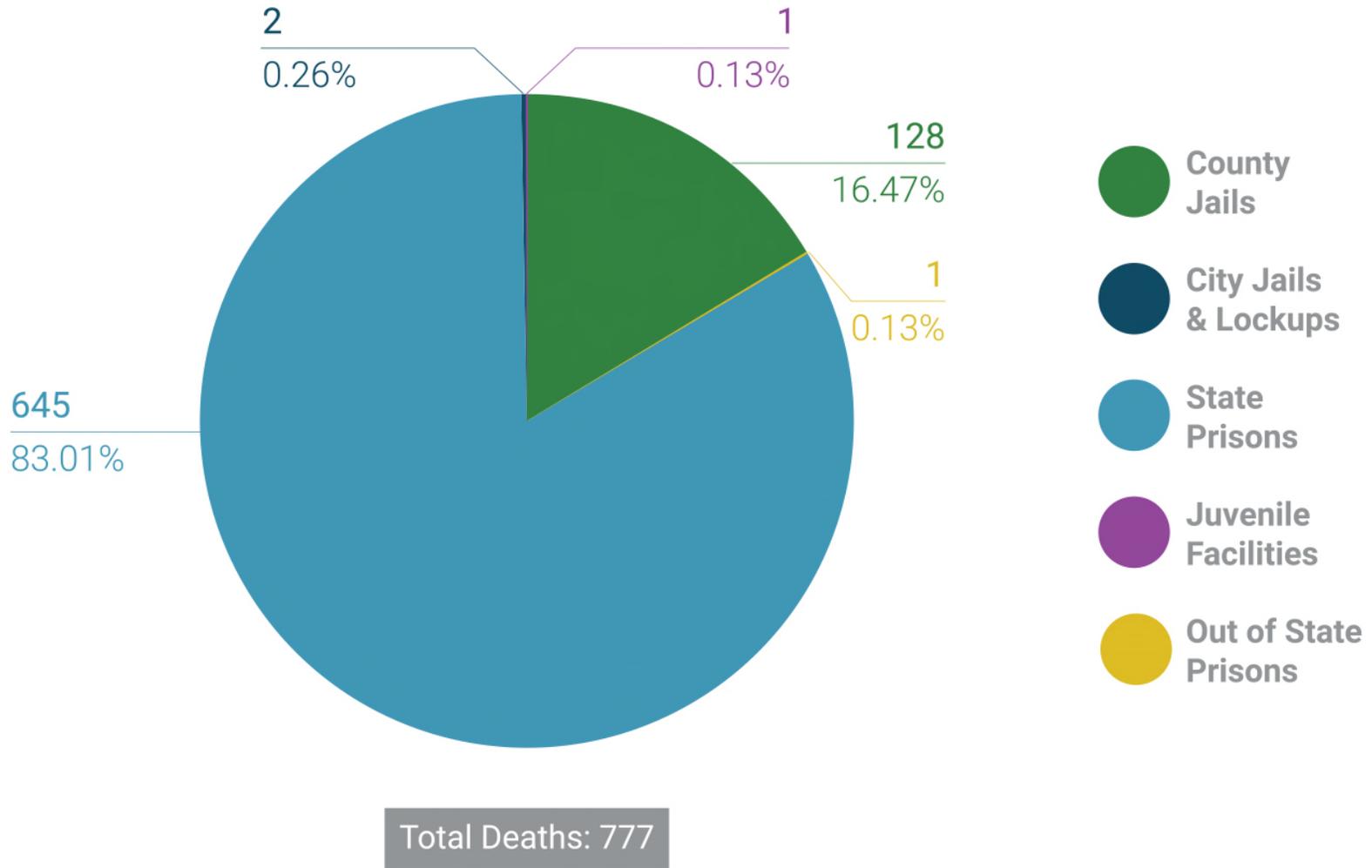
Total Deaths: 777

Deaths by trial status

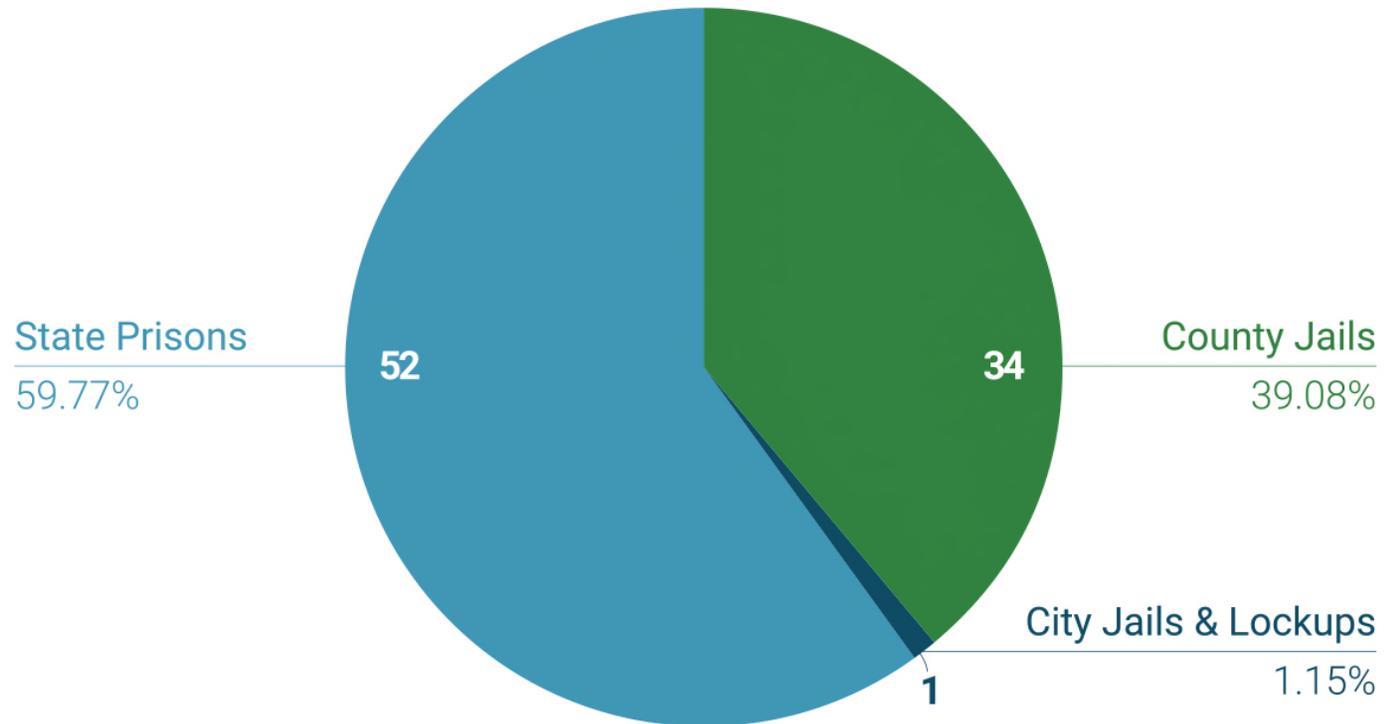


Total Deaths: 777

Deaths by type of facility

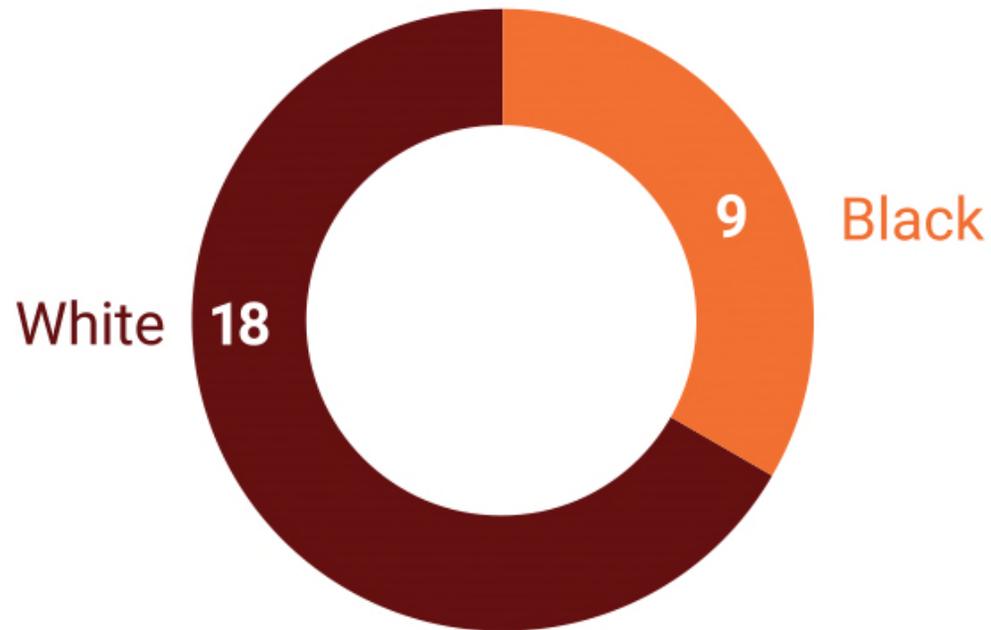


Suicide by type of facility



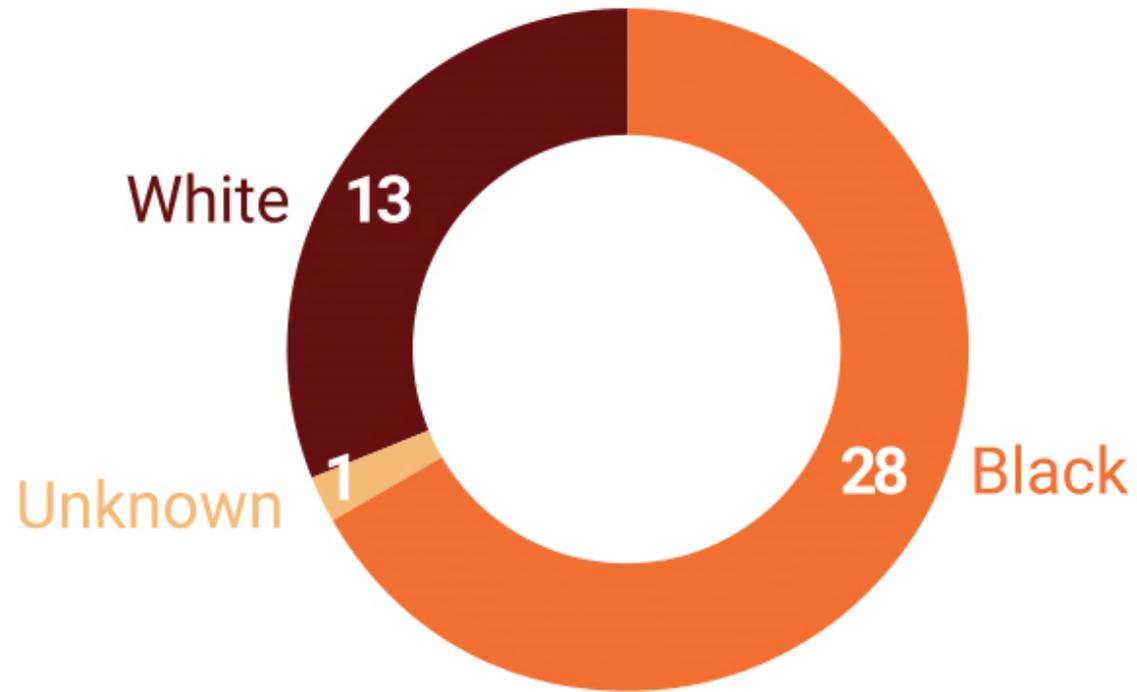
Total Deaths: 87

Drug-related deaths by race



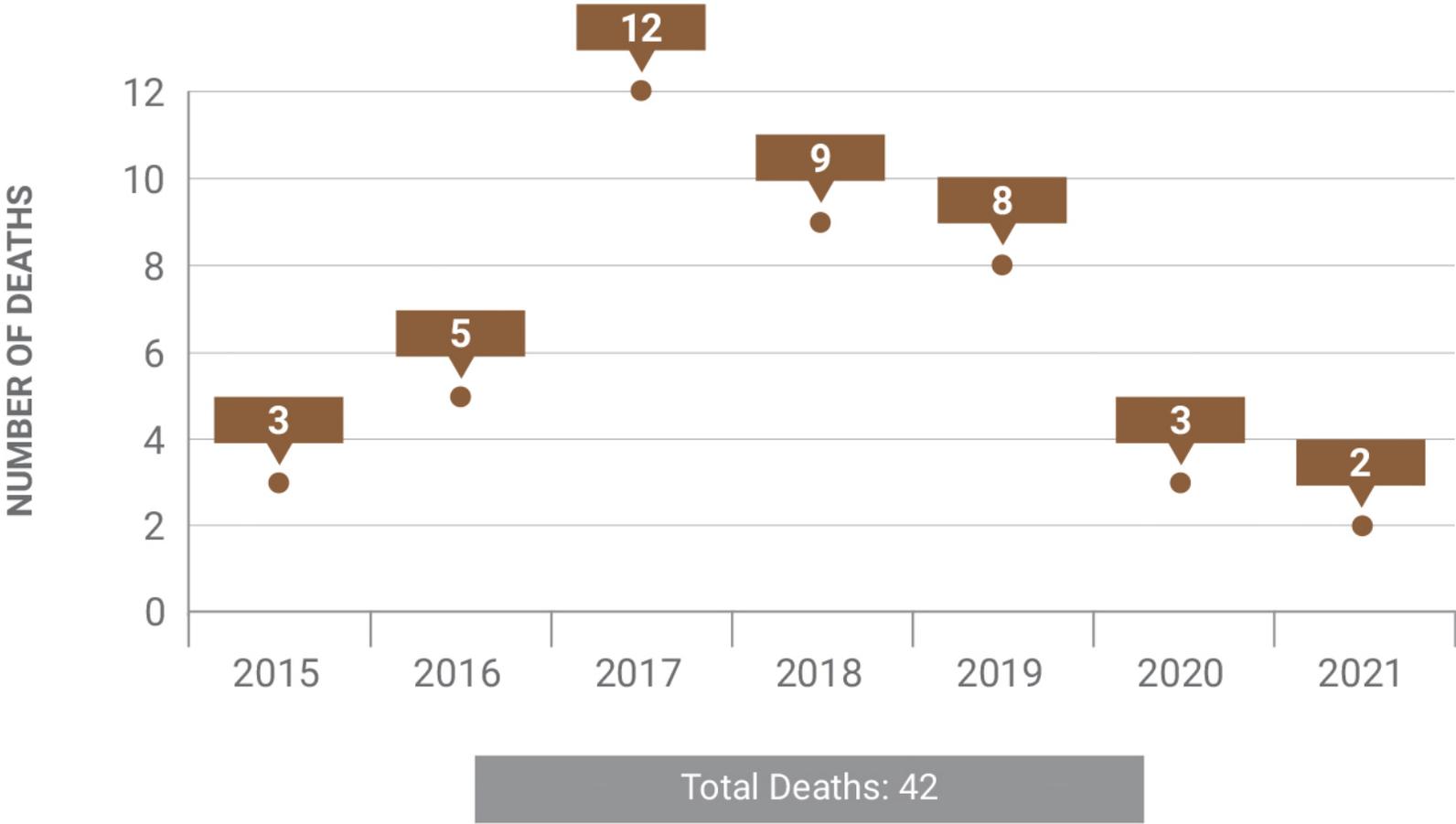
Total Deaths: 27

Deaths by violence and race



Total Deaths: 42

Violent deaths by year



www.incarcerationtransparency.org/southcarolina

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS



DEATHS BEHIND BARS: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF PREVENTABLE DEATHS IN SOUTH CAROLINA'S CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Christina Plakas | October 20, 2023 | *University of South Carolina*



SOUTH CAROLINA JAILS & PRISONS

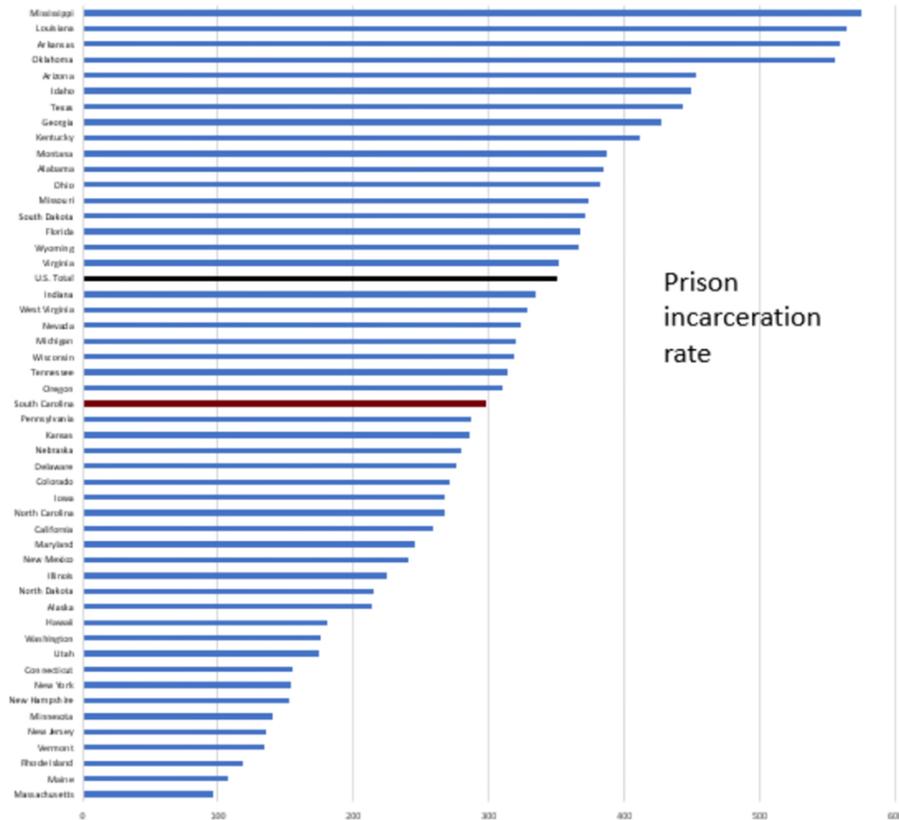


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PRISON INCARCERATION RATE

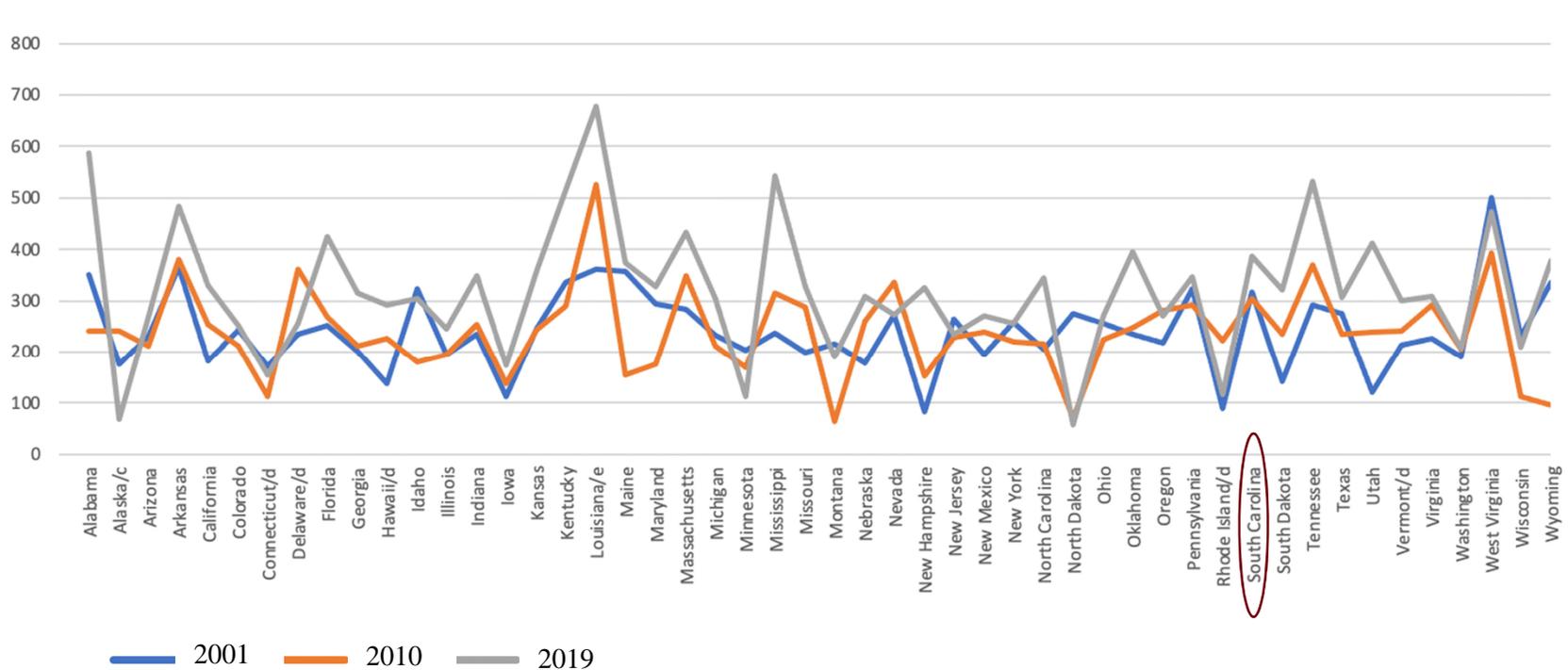


Data Sources: Carson, E. A. (2020). Prisoners in 2020. Bureau of Justice Statistics; Nellis, A. (2021). The Sentencing Project; Sickmund, M., Sladky, T.J., Puzanchera, C., & Kang, W. (2021).



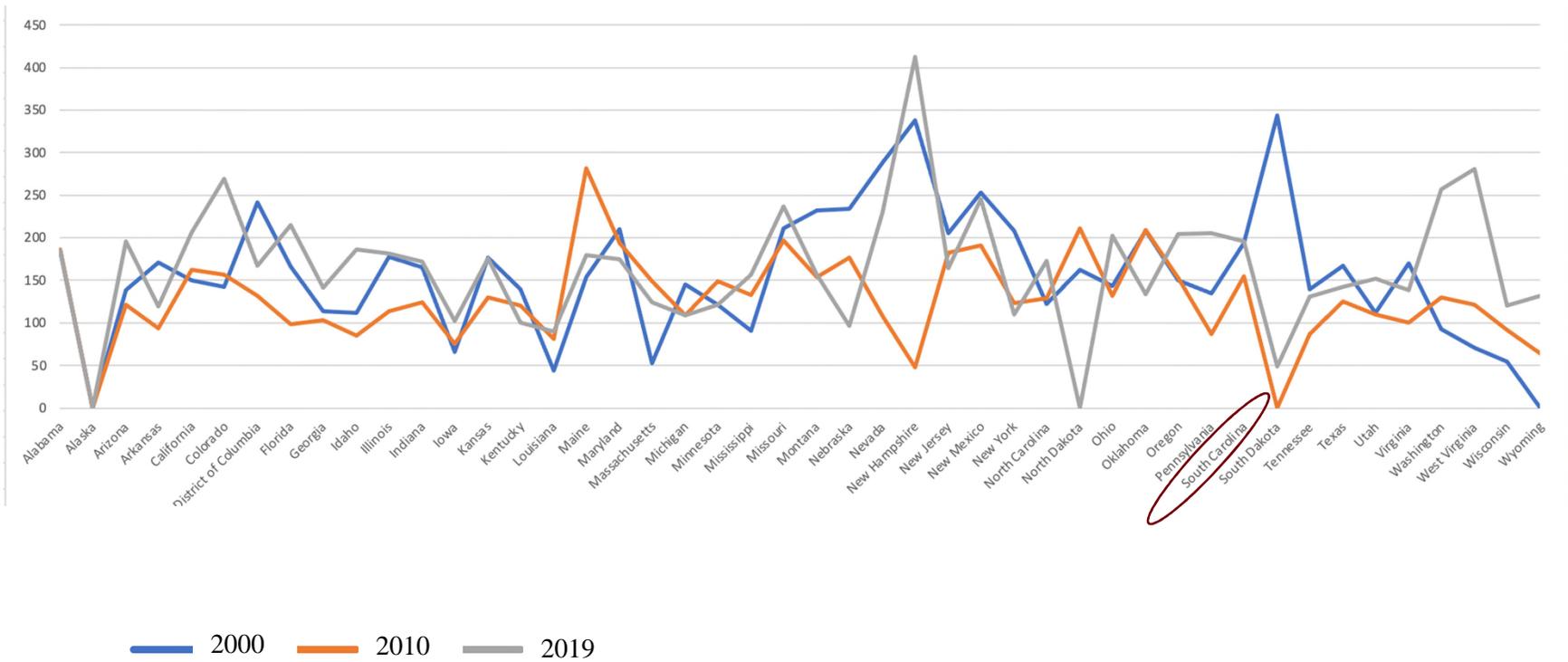
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MORTALITY RATE PER 100,000 STATE AND FEDERAL PRISONERS, BY JURISDICTION



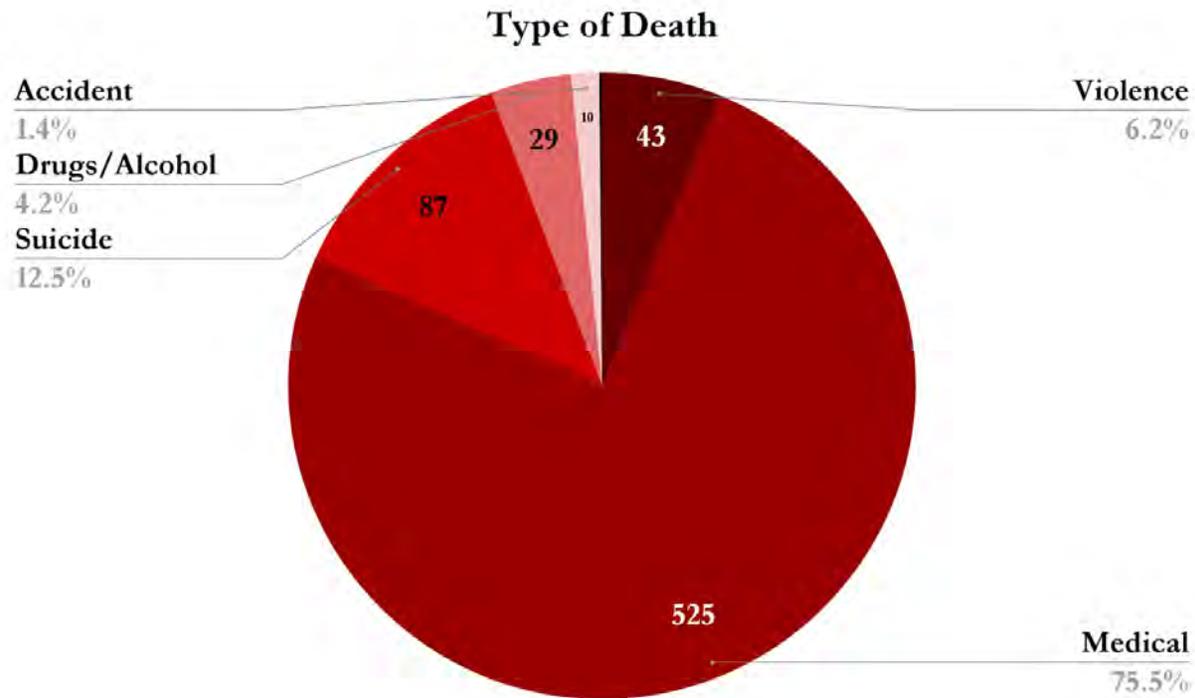
Data Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Mortality in Correctional Institutions, 2001-2019, and National Prisoner Statistics, 2001-2019; and Federal Bureau of Prisons, 2001-2019

MORTALITY RATE PER 100,000 INMATES IN LOCAL JAILS, BY JURISDICTION



Data source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Mortality in Correctional Institutions, 2000-2019

CAUSE OF DEATH IN SOUTH CAROLINA FACILITIES 2015-2021



PRESENT STUDY



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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Of the deaths that occurred behind bars in the state of South Carolina during the years 2015-2021, which can be classified as **preventable** vs. **non-preventable**?
2. To what extent does the manner of death (**preventable** vs **non-preventable**) vary by extra-legal factors and legal factors?



WHY STUDY MANNER OF DEATH?

- A better understanding of preventable deaths will allow future researchers & policy-makers to:
 - Modify or design new:
 - Healthcare practices
 - Intake procedures
 - Alternatives to incarceration



METHODOLOGY & MODELING STRATEGY



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Independent Variables: Extralegal & Legal

Extralegal: Race | Sex | Age

Legal: Trial status | Days incarcerated | Arresting charge

Dependent Variable: Manner of Death: preventable vs. non-preventable

Preventable deaths:

- Suicide
- Homicide
- Accidents (includes drug/alcohol-related deaths)
- Illnesses with low mortality rates in the U.S. population (e.g., diabetic ketoacidosis, gastroenteritis)

Non-preventable deaths:

- Serious illnesses (e.g., cancer, AIDS, etc.)
- Natural causes



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DATASET

Incarceration Transparency

South Carolina

- The data were collected by the University of South Carolina School of Law.
- They submitted public records requests to correctional facilities across the state.
- Years: 2015-2021
- $n=777$
- Includes all deaths behind bars



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DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

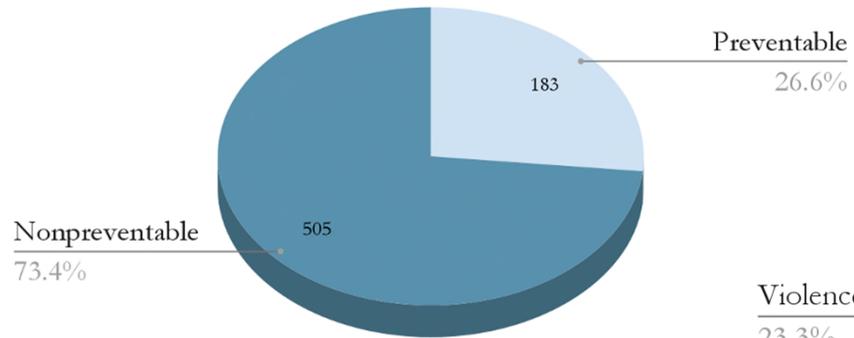


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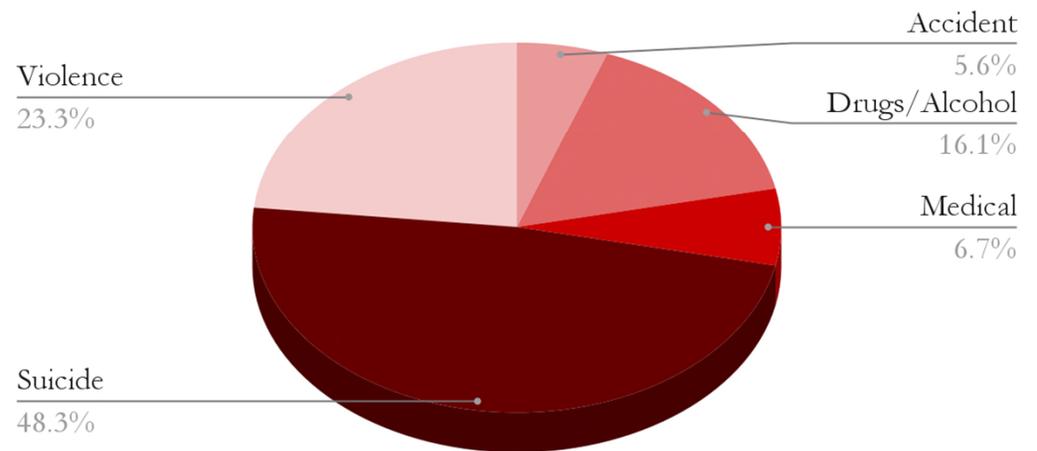


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Type of Death



Preventable Deaths



LOGISTIC REGRESSION



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BINARY LOGISTIC REGRESSION

- Allows you to assess how well your set of variables predicts your dependent variable
- Control variable: Year that the death took place
- Cluster variable: Facility
 - This allows the model to account for the assumption that the deaths that took place in the same facilities may be more similar compared to those that took place in other facilities.
- Diagnostic tests can catch the following:
 - Multicollinearity
 - Heteroskedasticity
 - Omitted variable bias



Binary logistic regression on preventable deaths in South Carolina's correctional facilities between 2015 and 2021 (n=490)

Variable	Marginal Effects	SE	Significance
Male	0.10	.05	0.04*
Age	0.55	.05	0.00*
White			
Black	0.09	.05	0.07
Unknown	-0.43	.06	0.02*
Days Incarcerated (0-3 years)			
3-10 Years	0.03	.04	0.50
10+ Years	0.11	.03	0.00*
Pretrial	0.20	.06	0.00*
Violent Offense	0.08	.04	0.02*
Year of Death (2015)			
2016	-0.00	.05	0.95
2017	-0.08	.05	0.12
2018	-0.12	.05	0.03*
2019	-0.15	.05	0.01*
2020	-0.04	.04	0.28
2021	-0.08	.06	0.14

* $p < 0.5$



TAKEAWAYS

For an individual who is average on all other metrics, how much more likely is it that their death was from preventable causes:

- 10% if they are male instead of female
- 55% if they are 54 years old or younger instead of 55 years old or older
- 11% if they are incarcerated for under 3 years compared to over 10 years
- 20% if they are pretrial instead of convicted
- 8% if they are charged with a violent offense



LIMITATIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH

- Extremely difficult, if not impossible, to determine the number of preventable medical deaths
- Omitted variable bias: one or more relevant independent variables are not included in the regression model
- Does not depict a causal relationship
- Missing data

This research calls for more data on:

- Protective factors (e.g., programs, visitation)
- Carceral Infrastructure Variables (e.g., staffing shortages, overcrowding)
- Contextual Variables (e.g., facility type, poverty level of county)
- More nuanced classifications of deaths
- Mixed-Methods approach



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CONCLUSION

- Preventable & non-preventable deaths affect individuals of all backgrounds.
- Jails & prisons are like mini-cities, they reflect greater society
- Individuals, however, are not affected at equal rates:
 - Men, those under the age of 54, those pre-trial, and those charged with violent offenses are more likely to die preventable deaths than nonpreventable deaths in South Carolina correctional custody.

Next Steps

- Collecting more data
- Personalizing solutions
- Understanding intersectionality
- Adopting oversight mechanisms



THANK YOU!

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this presentation are those of the presenter, Christina Plakas

Any Questions or Concerns may be directed to the presenter:

Name: Christina Plakas

Email:



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