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2022



European Monitoring Centre
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

Session

Substance use and prison

Prevalence of heroin use before and during imprisonment in Europe:

Results from a comprehensive literature review and analysis of survey prevalence data from seven European countries

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The authors declare they have no conflict of interest



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BACKGROUND

856 000 people in prison at 31/1/2019
142 * 100.000 adult inhabitants

Many of those entering prison came from vulnerable groups and poor communities

Those coming from deprived groups have also been reported engaging more often in risky behaviours such as injecting drug use

People using illicit drugs are at greater risk of being arrested and imprisoned for drug law offences and other drug-related crimes

Between 30 and 75% of people with problematic drug use have been in prison at some point during their lives





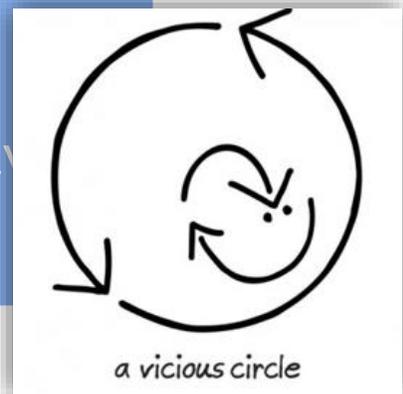
BACKGROUND

History of incarceration and drug use have common social determinants

- social marginalisation
- economic deprivation
- school dropout
- unemployment
- childhood neglect and abuse
- parents with histories of substance use or mental health disorders

How does substance use change once in prison?

- Many people stop using drugs when they enter prison or reduce their use
- Others continue to use but may change their drug-using patterns and behaviour
- Others may start using drugs or switch substances once they are in prison





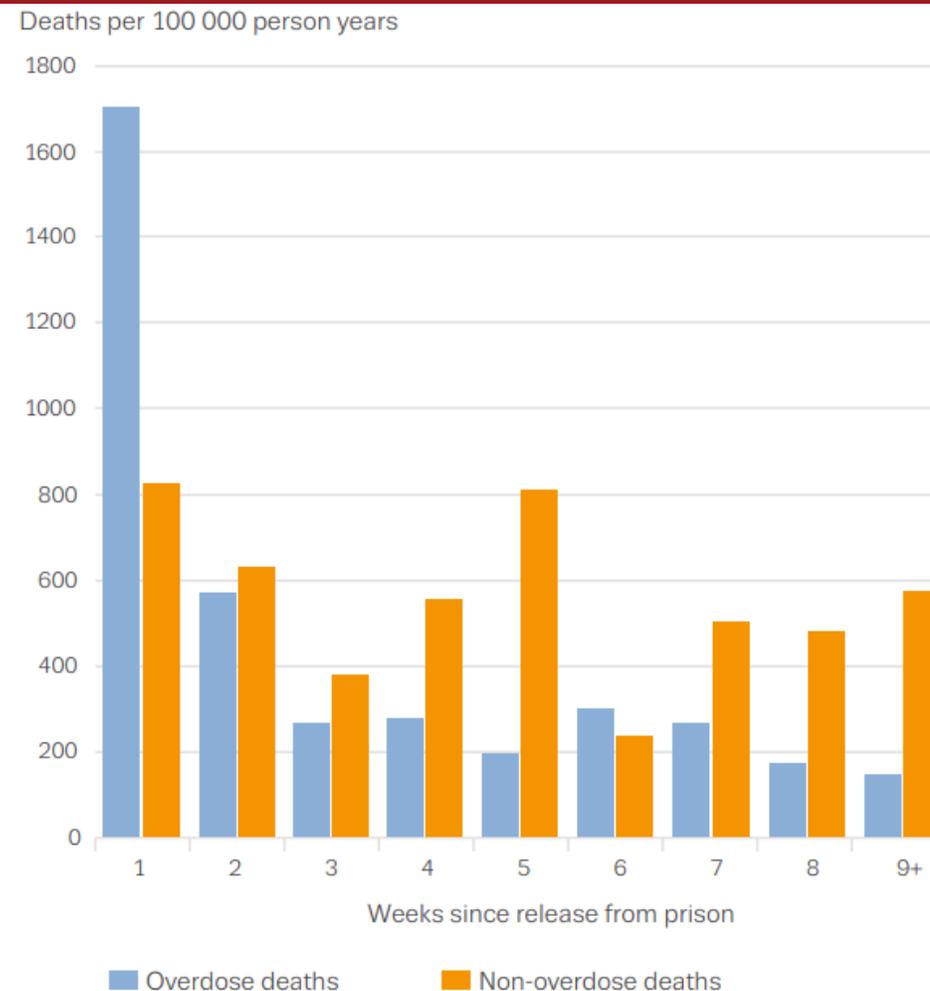
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Mortality inside prison

- EU 10.5 deaths VS 1.5 in the general population with suicide leading cause of death
- 78% of deaths are violent deaths
1 in 10 of those violent deaths are due to
 - **intentional or accidental drug overdose or intoxication**

BACKGROUND

Mortality after prison release



OBJECTIVE

The aim of the study was to describe the prevalence of heroin use among PLP in Europe before and during incarceration using:

- the outcome of a comprehensive review of literature on drug use prevalence among PLP
- the analysis of data from seven countries collected by a model European Questionnaire on Drug use among people in Prison (EQDP).



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METHODS

➤ Literature review following the PRISMA guidelines

- Databases:
Cochrane Library, Embase, MEDLINE, PsychINFO and PubMed
- Article published between January 2008 and March 2018
- Only EU studies



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	Year of data collection	n° prisoners/prisons in the country		Final sample size	
Czechia	2018	20171 PLP	35 prisons	1695 (8.4%)	35 prisons
Spain	2016	60172 PLP	80 prisons	5024 (8.4%)	71 prisons
Latvia	2018	2966 PLP	9 prisons	1017 (34.3%)	9 prisons
Portugal	2014	13343 PLP		2149 (16.1%)	
Slovenia	2015	3905 PLP	13 prisons	688 (17.6%)	11 prisons
Poland	2018	72204 PLP		1251 (17.3%)	6 prisons
Lithuania	2017	6699 PLP	11 prisons	1094 (16.3%)	10 prisons



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RESULTS

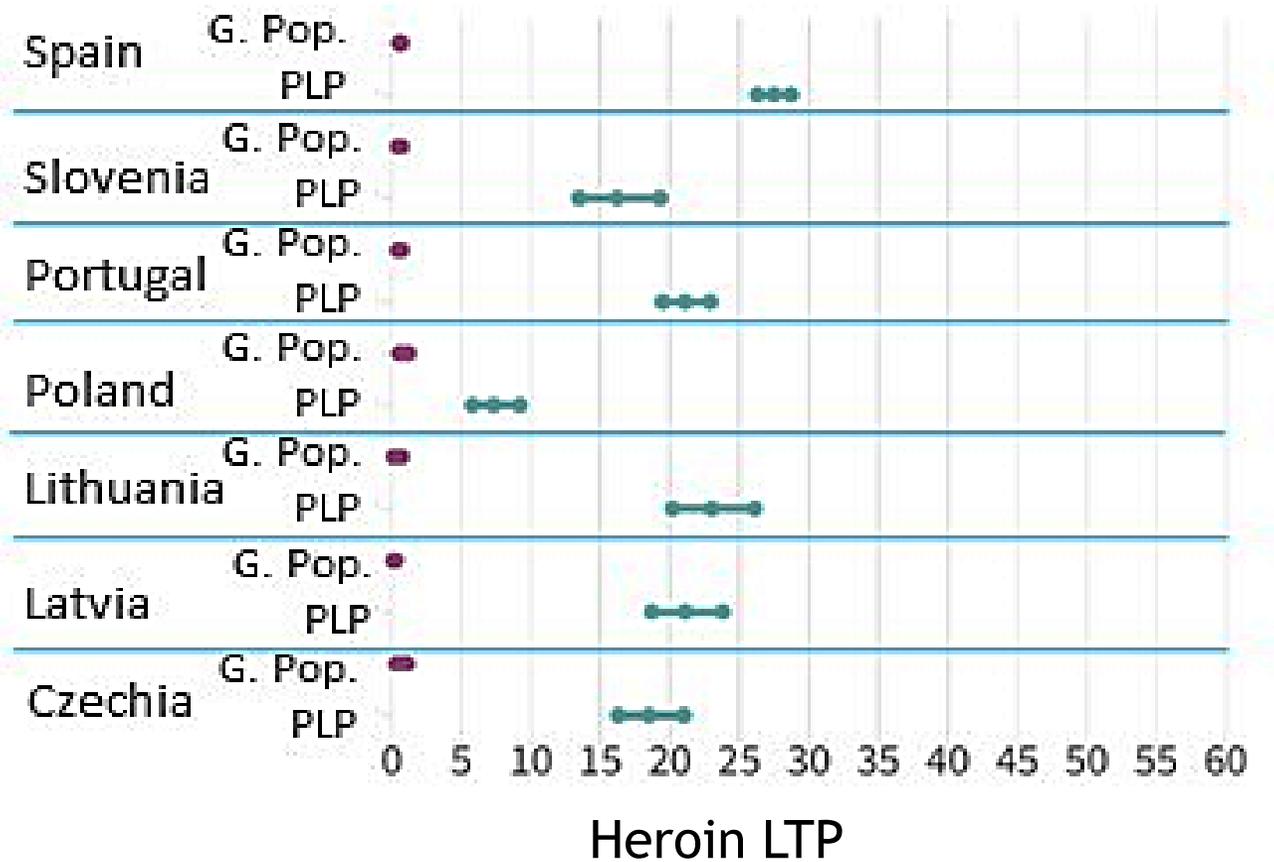
Period and authors	Country	Heroin (%)
Lifetime prevalence		
Stewart 2009 ^a	UK	37
Nobile 2011	Italy	9.4
Sannier et al. 2012	France	18.9
Rodríguez-Díaz et al. 2013	Spain	65
Verdolini et al. 2017	Italy	15.2
Young 2017	UK	45.2
Huddy 2017	UK	12 [^]
Last year		
Mir 2015 ^(b)	Germany	35 [^]
Konstenius 2015 ^{(b)*}	Sweden	12 [^]
6 Months		
Sánchez anf Wolff 2017	Spain	17.6
Sánchez et al. 2018 ^(b)	Spain	24.9
Last month		
Zabala-Banos 2016 [*]	Spain	18.4 [^]

^aIncludes both men and women.

^bIncludes only women.

*Regards prevalence of SA/SD.

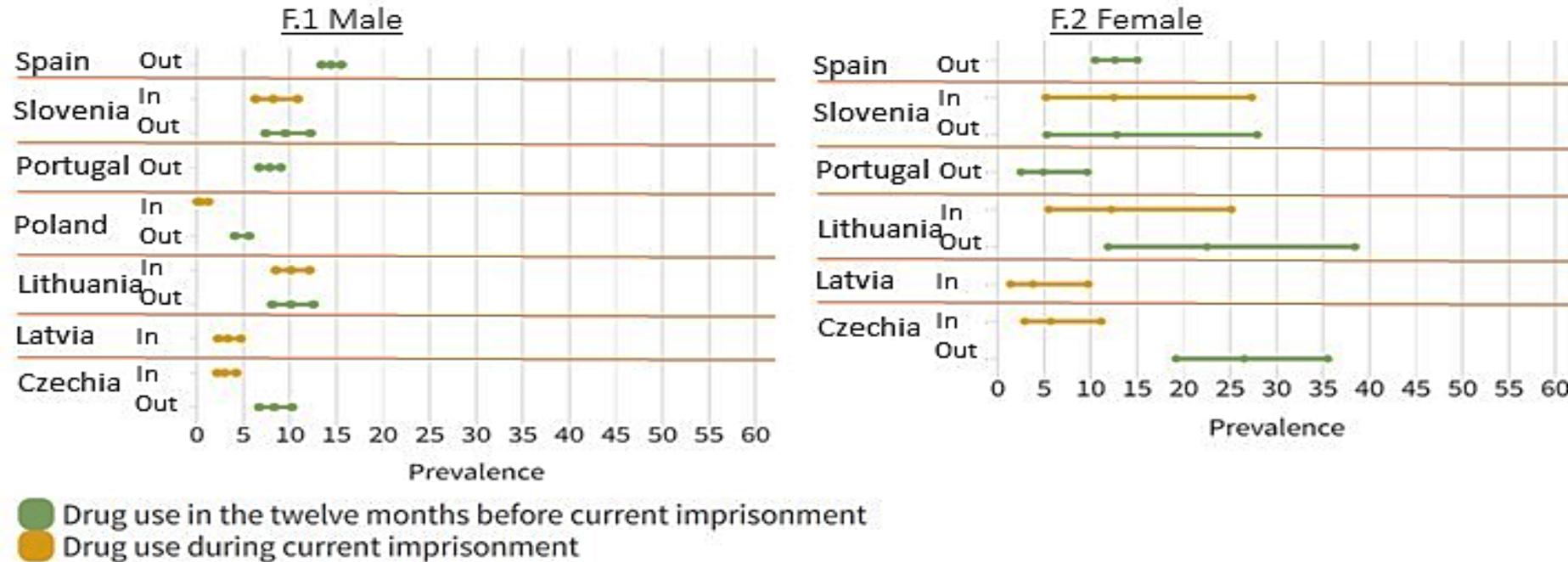
[^]includes other opiates.





RESULTS

F. Prevalence of heroin use among PLP



Individual risk factor analysis

From a multivariate logistic regression resulted that people with these characteristics had a higher likelihood of being heroin users (p-value<0.05):

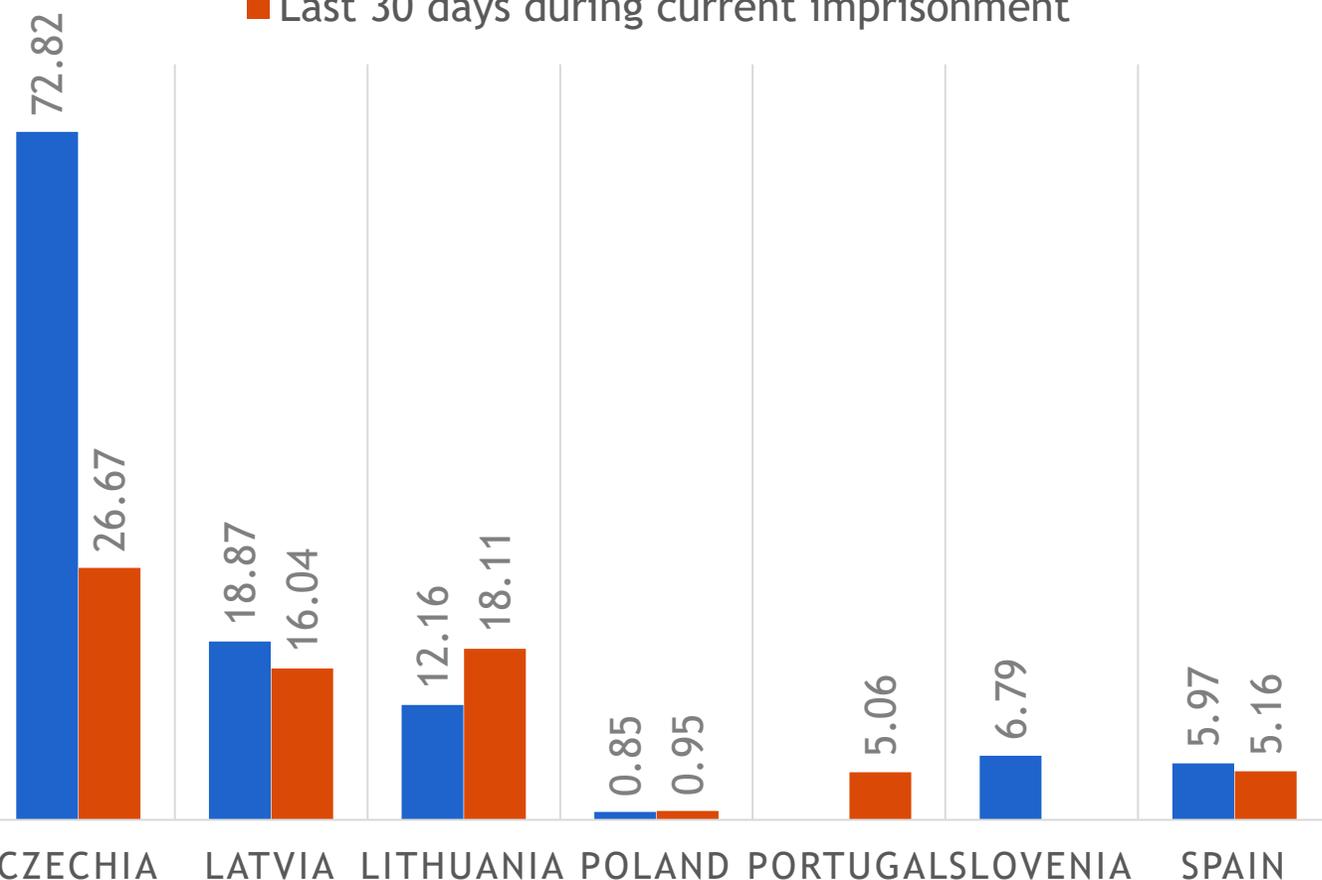
- Female
- Recidivist offenders
- Individuals with a history of mental health conditions



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INJECTING DRUG USE

- Last 30 days before current imprisonment
- Last 30 days during current imprisonment



RESULTS

Countries	Availability OAT		
	Continuation from the community to prison	Initiation in prison	Continuation from prison to the community
Czechia	YES (6/35)	NO	N/a
Latvia	YES (6/9)	NO	YES (initiative of the patient)
Lithuania	NO	NO	NO
Poland	YES	YES	YES (120/176)
Portugal	YES	YES (not in all prison)	YES
Slovenia	YES	YES (not in all prison)	YES
Spain	YES	YES	YES

CONCLUSION



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This research confirms the high prevalence of people in prison who have experienced drug use, especially when compared with the general population.

Differences in reported prevalence rates between countries may be attributable to the priority given by certain law enforcement agencies to drug-related offences and domestic drug laws.

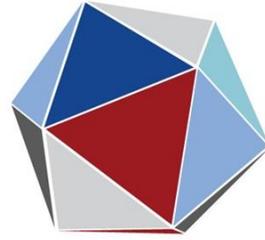
The prevalence of heroin use prior to imprisonment among women is higher than that of men.

Data from this analysis also confirmed that substances are consumed inside prisons, although mostly at reduced levels compared with use before imprisonment.

Prisons may be the first place where hard-to-reach people with drug problems who commit crimes can get in touch with drug rehabilitation programs.



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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

**There is no Public Health
without Prison Health**

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