


# Mass Incarceration and the Criminalization of Poverty

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Columbia University

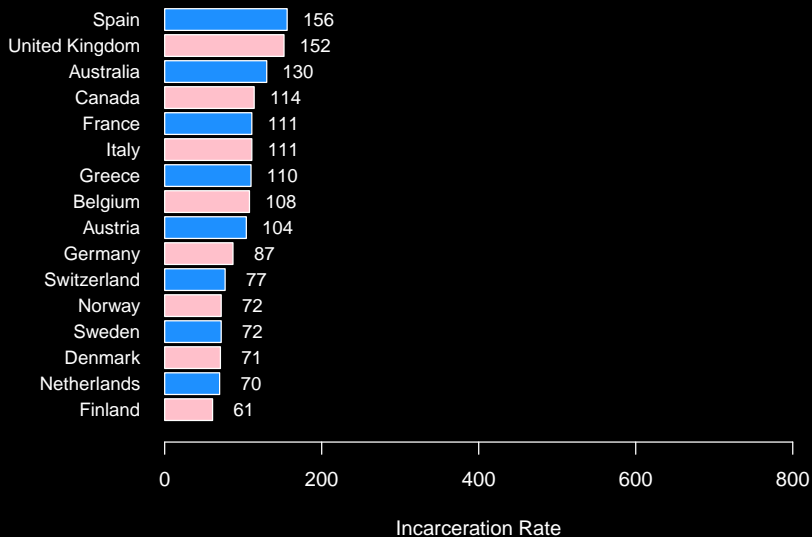
January 2021

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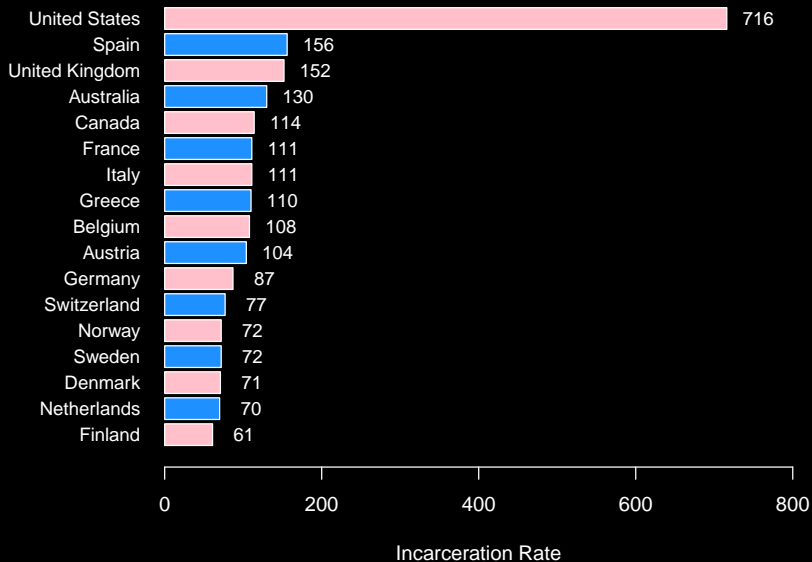
<sup>1</sup>This research was supported by NSF, NIH, Pew Research Center, and the Russell Sage Foundation. 

# I. Mass Incarceration

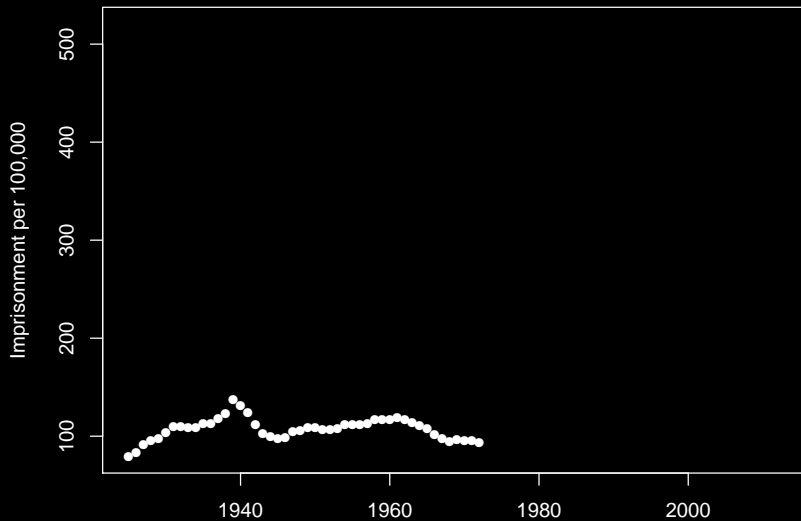
## International Incarceration Rates, 2011



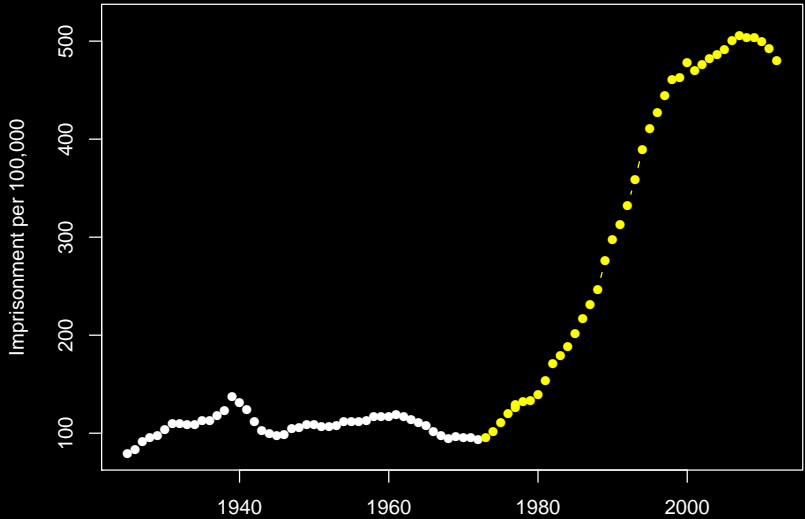
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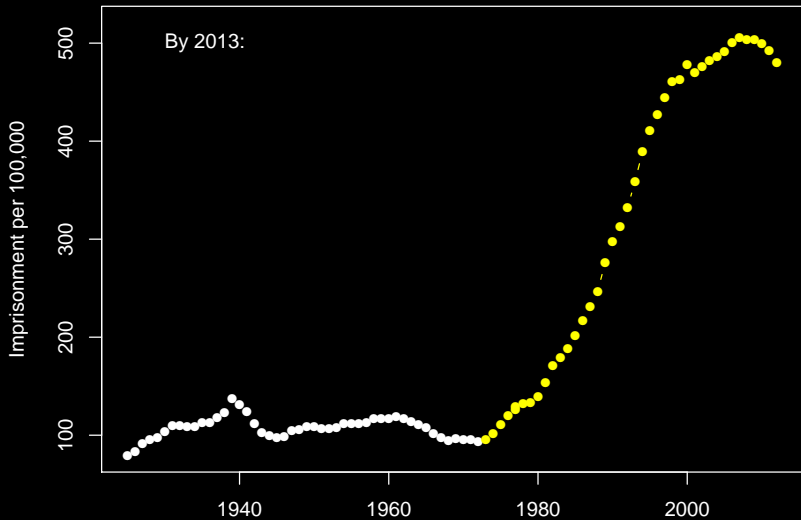
## Imprisonment Rate, 1925 to 1972



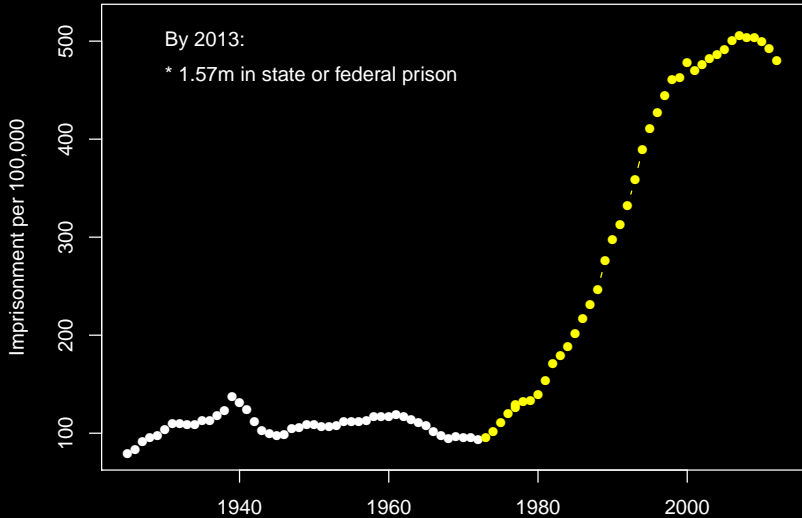
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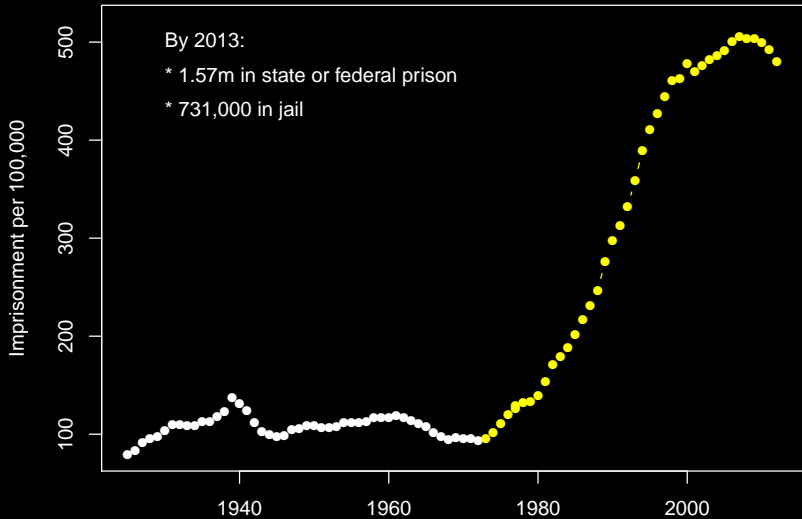


## Imprisonment Rate, 1925 to 2012

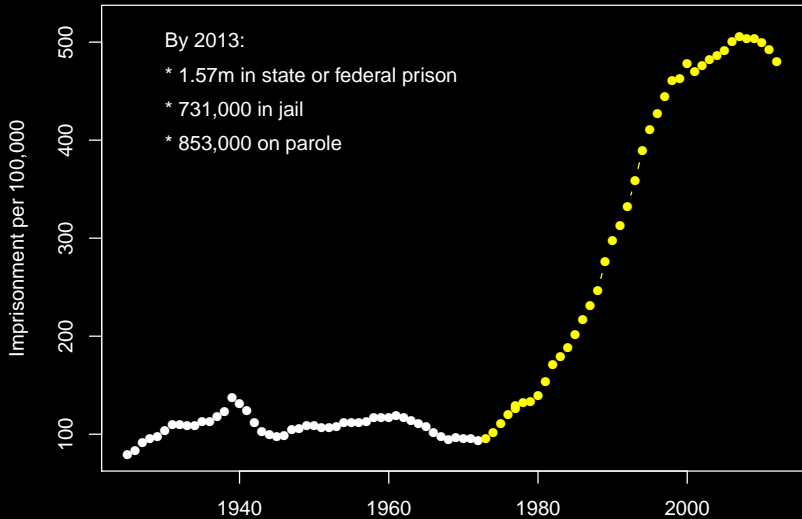




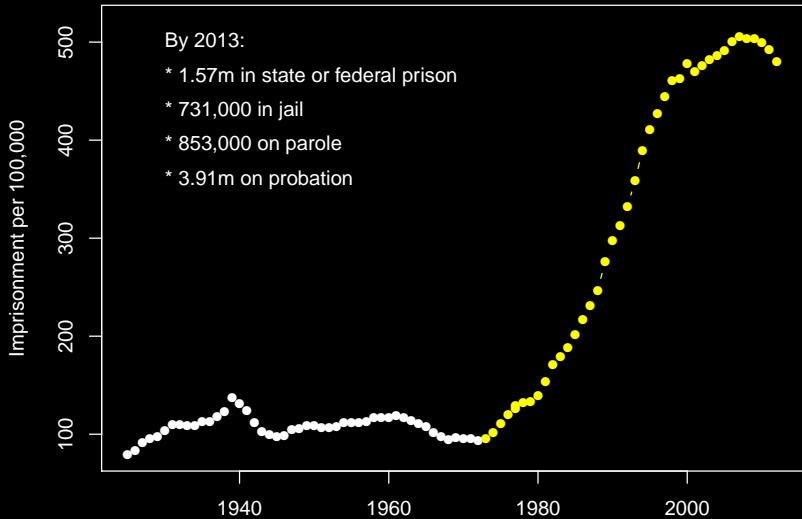
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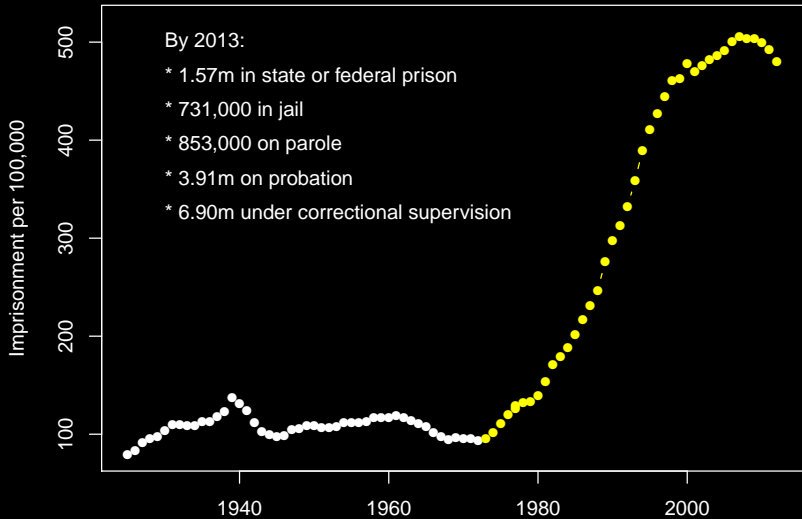
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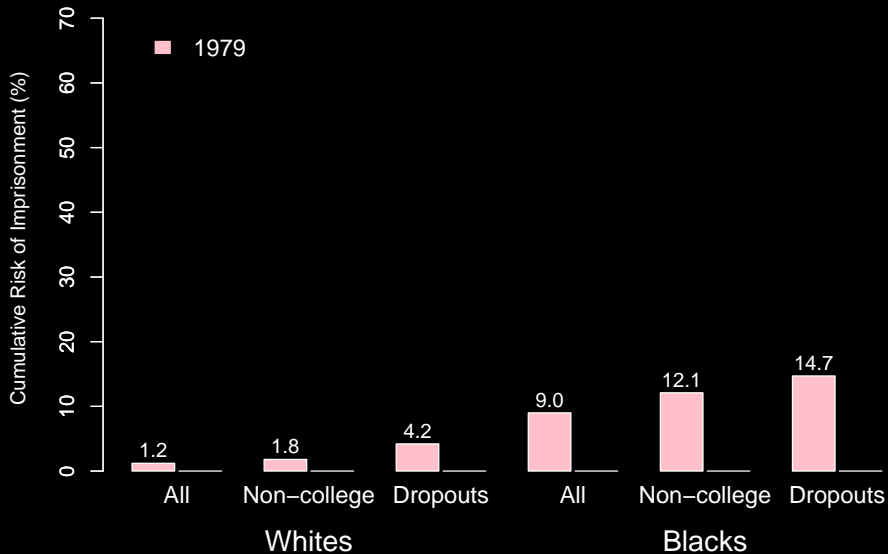
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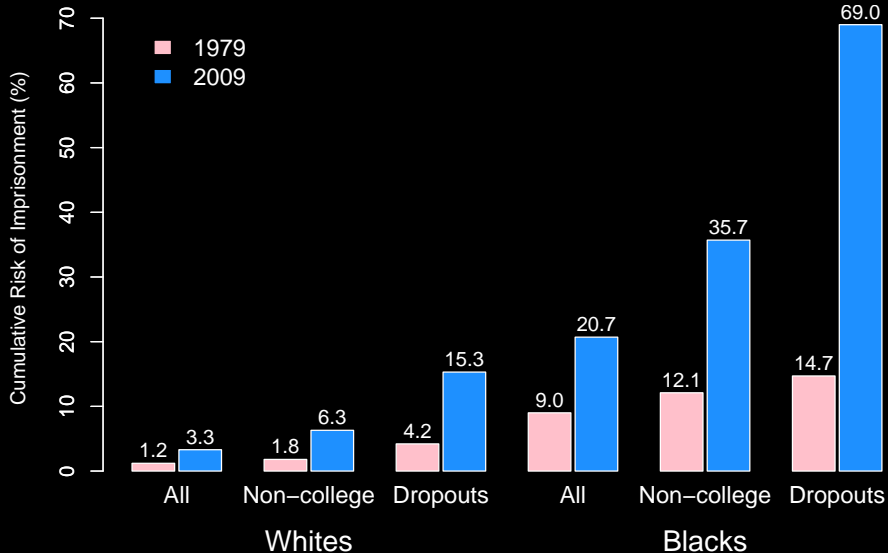
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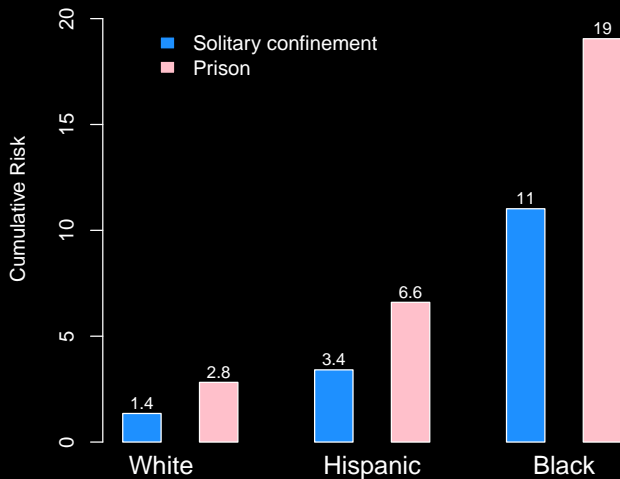
## Men's Risk of Imprisonment by 30–34



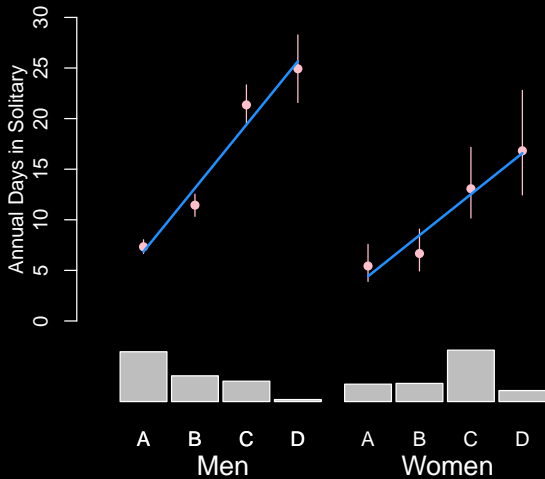
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## Risk of Prison by Age 32, Pennsylvania



## Days in Solitary by Mental Health Status

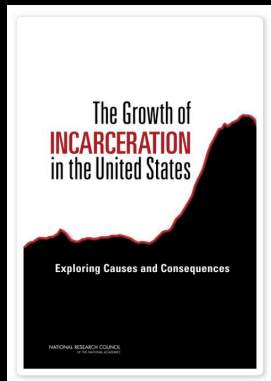




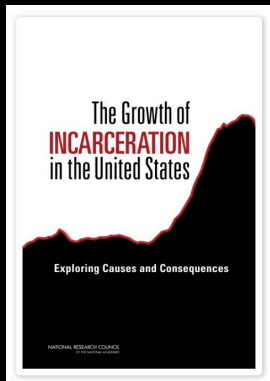
# Key Finding

Mass incarceration criminalized social problems related to racial inequality and poverty on a historically unprecedented scale, contributing to the reproduction of poverty and racial inequality.

# National Academy of Sciences Report

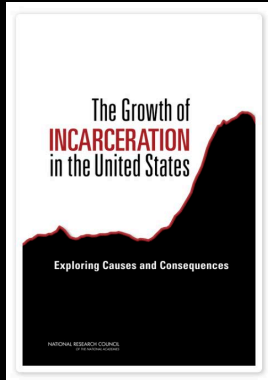


# National Academy of Sciences Report



Given the small crime prevention effects of long prison sentences and the possibly high financial, social, and human costs of incarceration, federal and state policy makers should revise current criminal justice policies to significantly reduce the rate of incarceration in the United States.

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- ▶ Analysis lacked realism, thin statistical portrait of those at risk of incarceration
- ▶ Little detailed analysis of social process of community return
- ▶ Under-coverage

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## II. The Reentry Study



# The Boston Reentry Study

- ▶ Data collection over three years in collaboration with Anthony Braga (Northeastern) and Rhiana Kohl (DOC)
- ▶ A longitudinal interview study with 122 men and women released from Massachusetts prisons and returning to Boston
- ▶ Collected data on employment, housing, health, family, drug use, crime and justice system contact

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# Three Findings

- ▶ Exposure to violence and other trauma in childhood
- ▶ Poor physical and mental health in adulthood
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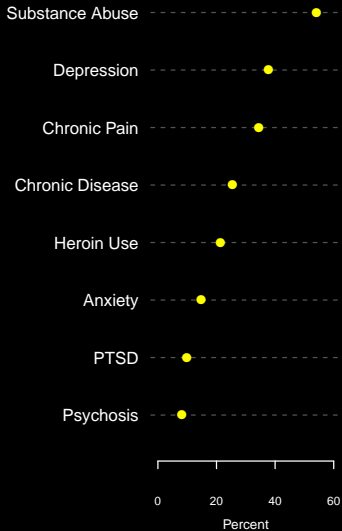
# Childhood Trauma



## Childhood Trauma

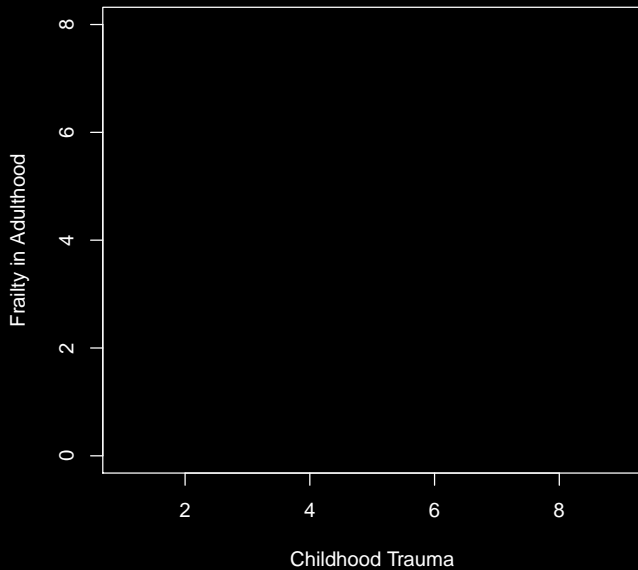


## Adult Frailty

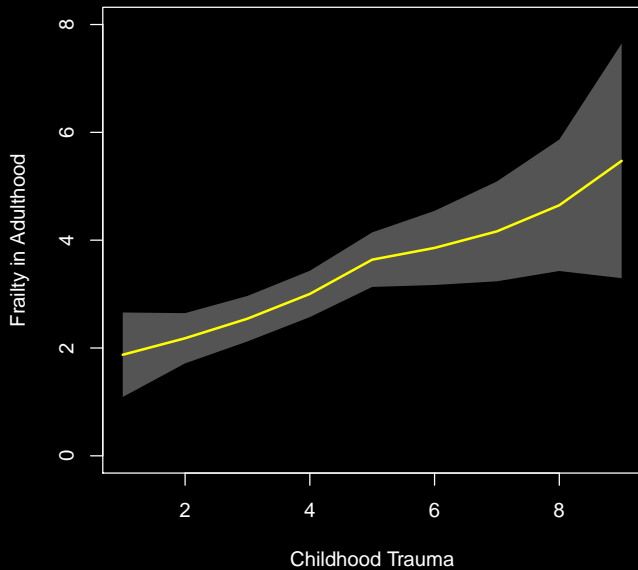




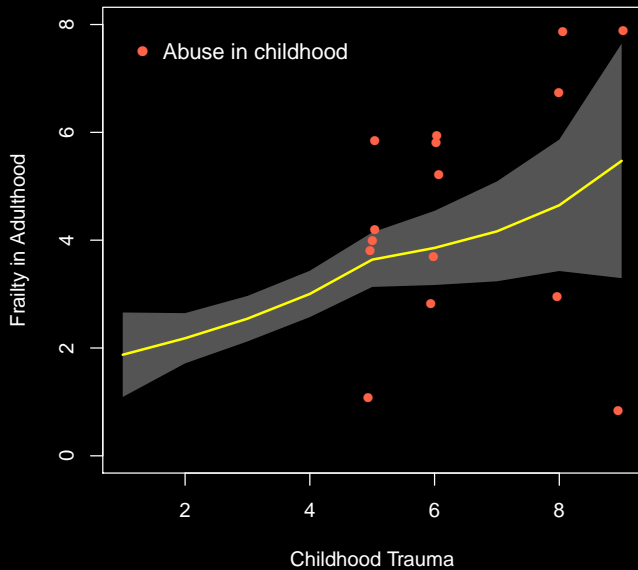
## Childhood Trauma is Related to Frailty in Adulthood



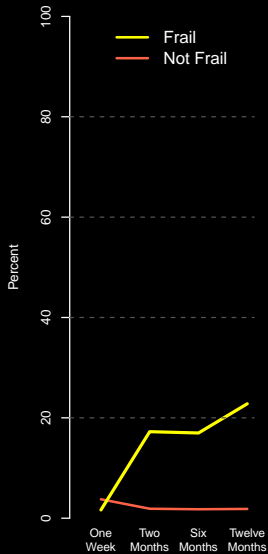
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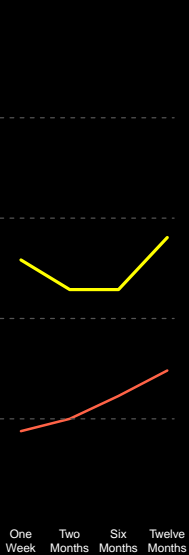
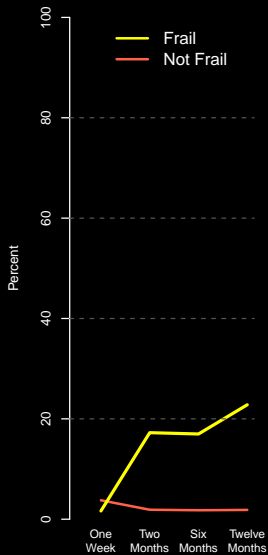


# Hard Drug Use

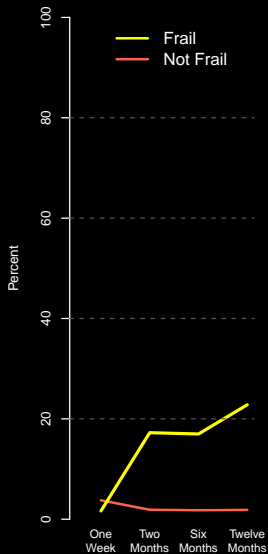


### Hard Drug Use

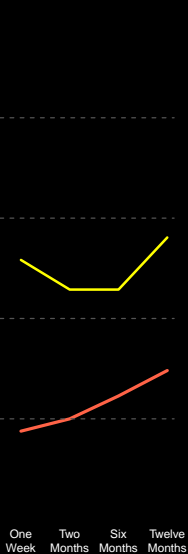
### Unstable Housing



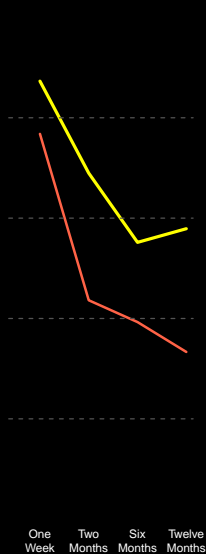
### Hard Drug Use



### Unstable Housing



### Joblessness



### III. Stories

# Thanks

To the 135 men and women and their families and friends that agreed to participate in this research

The Massachusetts Department of Correction, the Boston Police Department, and the Massachusetts Board of Probation

Research staff leaders: Cathy Sirois and Jackie Davis

The research team: Anthony Braga, Rhiana Kohl, Caroline Burke, David Hureau, Tracey Shollenberger, Jessica Simes, Monica Bell, Abena Mackall, Kendra Bradner, Kelley Fong, LeShae Henderson, Jennifer Arzu, Rosa Otieno, Kathleen Culhane, and Caroline Walters

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