

# Chapter 11


## Cancer Diagnosis and Treatment Barriers Among Prisoners

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### ABSTRACT

*The WHO emphasizes the need to protect prisoners from cancer and address health inequities within prison settings, highlighting the significant challenges they face in maintaining their health. A study titled *Cancer Diagnosis and Treatment Barriers Among Prison Inmates* explores methods to safeguard the well-being of inmates. This research was conducted in various central prisons across India. Secondary data from the National Crime Records Bureau (2016–2022) supplemented the study, which also examined other health issues such as tuberculosis (TB), cancer, HIV, blood pressure, diabetes, skin diseases, heart and lung problems, and disabilities. The study focused on diagnosing and treating inmates, exploring the methodologies adopted by prison administrations, and addressing barriers to identifying cancer cases among prisoners.*

### INTRODUCTION

Prisoners worldwide often have multiple and complicated healthcare needs. The research study covered the prison population in India. It tended to focus on infectious diseases and non-communicable mental diseases of the prison inmates. A recent study found that people living in prisons are strongly willing to be screened for cancer to protect their health in general. Some of them had no access to healthcare ser-

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vices before they were detained. So, prison inmates get unique opportunities to bring health to vulnerable communities. There are three types of cancer: breast, cervical, and colorectal, as per the WHO. Many prisons are only taking steps in this direction, according to Dr. Ferreira-Borges. There are some major factors involved in the health of detained people. It includes various things such as record maintenance, which is improperly done in prison documents. There is a low prioritization of addressing health issues, leading to inconsistent healthcare quality. It highlights the major obstacles people face in prisons while trying to stay healthy.

Secondary data was also used for the research study, from the National Crime Record Bureau, covering the period from 2016 to 2022. The research study compared other diseases such as TB, Cancer, HIV, Blood Pressure, Diabetes, Skin Disease, Heart Problems, Lung-related problems, and disability-related issues. The focus of the research study was on the 518 sample size of prison inmates, their diagnosis, the methodologies adopted by prison administration for diagnosis and treatment, and how barriers were overcome to rectify the identification of cancer in inmates. There is no doubt that cancer is one of the most common and dangerous diseases among prisoners accounting for 30% of all deaths in this population (Carson, 2021). The study focuses on the increased risk of cancer mortality among incarcerated individuals, compared to the general population, after release. It is very difficult to distinguish between cancers diagnosed during incarceration and those diagnosed after release (Binswanger et al., 2007; Oladeru et al., 2022).

The study mainly emphasizes that prisoner life is very difficult and that it is leading to the development of serious illnesses. Even though healthcare providers are involved in prisoners' care, they face tremendous issues. The study comprehensively examines the best care among prisoners. The study encountered various provisions of care for prisoners (Lyckholm&Glancey, 2016). To create awareness about cancers and provide important information towards cancer early detection, as most men in prison are not provided with knowledge about cancer. Even minimal knowledge of the screening services should be provided when a prisoner enters jail, along with the importance of health. Improving the screening services by providing screening equipment in health facilities can increase the uptake of early detection. Additionally, availing health providers to offer screening services is essential. To create awareness, peer educators among inmates should be used, and regular basic information about cancer screening, such as IEC materials, should be given. Communication and education materials, including posters, paintings, and brochures, should be displayed in the prison and inside the clinic to create awareness (Atuhe et al., 2023).

The scientific study to detect, prevent, and treat cancer in the USA shows that cancer incidence is increasing and survival rates are significant. The reasons for the increase in cancer incidence and survival include minority status, low educational level among the population, and poverty. These factors are consistently associated with a high incidence of cancer and late diagnosis (Manz et al., 2021). A 2004 national survey report emphasizes that incarcerated individuals had a 22 per cent higher cancer diagnosis rate compared to the general population (Binswanger et al., 2009). Cancer caused 27 per cent of deaths in state prisons between 2001 and 2016, with the mortality rate quite high, increasing by 59 per cent during this period, from 58 to 92 per 100,000 individuals incarcerated in state prisons (Carson& Cowhig, 2020). People who are recently released from incarceration and those among the incarcerated population face cancer, which is a leading cause of high-level mortality. According to the study, there is no comprehensive record of cancer-related deaths in prisons that is comparable with general population statistics. According to a previous study, one-third of prison inmates between 55 and 64 years of age are at risk for cancer, which further increases the cancer burden among incarcerated people (Manz et al., 2021; Oladeru et al., 2022; American Civil Liberties Union, 2012).

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