Discussion and Conclusions

Prisoners are at a higher risk of suicide and self-harm, and there appear to be varying reasons for the higher risk of suicide compared to the general population. Substance use and mental health disorders are more prevalent among offenders (i.e. prisoners or inmates) than the non-imprisoned population. The less severe the mental illness is that co-occurs with the addiction, the more likely an individual may be to have success in treatment and therefore less likely to return to incarceration. Severe mental illness seems to go hand in hand with severe addiction and less success in treatment. Estimates show a suicide attempt rate of 2.3% among offenders and 0.4% among non-imprisoned populations. According to Major, Beasley & Jason (2017), people with a high personal need for structure experience cognitive rigidity which prevents them from coming up with creative solutions. Many drug dealers have a high personal need for structure may use drugs to cope with things outside their control. Suicide is often the result of mental illness. It is also difficult to treat substance abuse without treating mental illness and in turn may lead to a cycle of jail, treatment relapse, jail. In a 2018 study of the characteristics of non-suicidal self-injury and suicide attempts among incarcerated males, there was a high prevalence of non-suicidal injury and suicidal attempts among incarcerated males with a history of recent IV drug use; history of suicide attempts was significantly associated with more than three overdoses. The rapid expansion of the prison and jail population over the last four decades may have contributed to the increasing number of deaths from drug use disorders.

References