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DEATHS OF THE INCARCERATED
1976-1985

Over the ten year period 1976 through 1985, Department of Correctional Facilities reported the deaths of 599 inmates. The rate of deaths per 1,000 inmates remained fairly constant until 1984 when it increased to almost twice the previous 8 year average, and this increase persisted into 1985. This report provides detailed information on inmates who died including such variables as gender, age at time of death, county of indictment, ethnicity and cause of death. Some findings of this report include a rise in the number of AIDS-related deaths over the ten year period and the high incidence of such deaths among Hispanic inmates.

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INMATE DEATHS - GENDER

During the ten year period of this study there were 599 inmates who died while incarcerated in New York State prisons. In that ten year period, 97.7% of all reported deaths were males while 2.3% were females. This finding is consistent with the average distribution of the total under custody population from 1976-1984 in which 97.2% were males and 2.8% were females^{1/}.

TABLE 1
NUMBER OF INMATE DEATHS BY GENDER 1976 - 1985

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Sex</u>	
		<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
TOTAL	599	585	14
Percent	100%	97.7%	2.3%
1976	30	29	1
1977	33	32	1
1978	30	28	2
1979	31	31	--
1980	41 ^{a/}	41	--
1981	41 ^{a/}	41	--
1982	62 ^{b/}	61	1
1983	54 ^{c/}	52	2
1984	114 ^{d/}	112	2
1985	163 ^{e/}	158	5

^{a/}Includes one inmate on out to court status.

^{b/}Includes one inmate transferred to Mt. Marcy and one inmate on furlough status

^{c/}Includes one inmate transferred to Mr. Marcy and one inmate on absconder status.

^{d/}Includes one inmate at Mt. Marcy and two inmates on furlough status.

^{e/}Includes two inmates on furlough status and one inmate on work release status.

^{1/}See "Characteristics of Inmates Under Custody, A Ten Year Trend Study", DOCS, December 1985, William R. Chapman and Stuart B. Zausner.

AGE

From 1976 through 1985 the highest concentration of inmates who died were between the ages of 30-34 years while during the period of 1976-1984 the highest proportion of under custody inmates were between the ages of 25-29 years old. In general the proportional age distribution of inmates at the time of their deaths was older than the proportional age distribution of inmates under custody at the end of each calendar year. Among the under custody population between 1976 and 1984, 11.9% of the inmates were forty or older while for the inmates who died during that period 41.4% were forty or older.

TABLE 2
AGE OF INMATES AT TIME OF DEATH
1976 - 1985

<u>Year</u>	<u>16-18</u>	<u>19-20</u>	<u>21-24</u>	<u>25-29</u>	<u>30-34</u>	<u>35-39</u>	<u>40-44</u>	<u>45-49</u>	<u>50-64</u>	<u>65+</u>	<u>Total</u>
1976 - Number	1	0	1	5	3	2	4	3	6	5	30
Percent	3.3%	0	3.3%	16.7%	10.0%	6.7%	13.3%	10.0%	20.0%	16.7%	100.0%
1977 - Number	0	1	1	6	5	6	3	3	7	1	33
Percent	0.0%	3.0%	3.0%	18.2%	15.2%	18.2%	9.1%	9.1%	21.2%	3.0%	100.0%
1978 - Number	0	0	6	2	3	6	2	3	6	2	30
Percent	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	6.7%	10.0%	20.0%	6.7%	10.0%	20.0%	6.7%	100.0%
1979 - Number	1	0	2	5	3	3	1	4	9	3	31
Percent	3.2%	0.0%	6.5%	16.1%	9.7%	9.7%	3.2%	12.9%	29.0%	9.7%	100.0%
1980 - Number	1	2	3	3	6	4	3	5	8	6	41
Percent	2.4%	4.9%	7.3%	7.3%	14.6%	9.8%	7.3%	12.2%	19.5%	14.6%	100.0%
1981 - Number	0	1	3	9	7	2	9	4	5	1	41
Percent	0.0%	2.4%	7.3%	22.0%	17.1%	4.9%	22.0%	9.8%	12.2%	2.4%	100.0%
1982 - Number	0	2	3	12	11	7	4	6	13	4	62
Percent	0.0%	3.2%	4.8%	19.4%	17.7%	11.3%	6.5%	9.7%	21.0%	6.5%	100.0%
1983 - Number	0	1	2	16	10	6	8	6	4	1	54
Percent	0.0%	1.9%	3.7%	29.6%	18.5%	11.1%	14.8%	11.1%	7.4%	1.9%	100.0%
1984 - Number	0	1	3	19	29	19	17	9	13	4	114
Percent	0.0%	.9%	2.6%	16.7%	25.4%	16.7%	14.9%	7.9%	11.4%	3.5%	100.0%
1985 - Number	1	1	7	23	45	30	25	13	18	0	163
Percent	.6%	.6%	4.3%	14.1%	27.6%	18.4%	15.3%	8.0%	11.0%	0.0%	100.0%
TOTAL Number	4	9	31	100	122	85	76	56	89	27	599
Percent	.7%	1.5%	5.2%	16.7%	20.4%	14.2%	12.7%	9.3%	14.9%	4.5%	100.0%

COUNTY

Between 1976 and 1985 the majority of inmates who died while under DOCS custody were originally committed from the five New York City counties. The proportion of New York City inmates who died averaged 76.8% with a range of 59% in 1980 to 88% in 1985. The proportion of inmates from New York City in the general under custody population between 1976 and 1984 was lower at 67.8%. At the same time the proportion of inmates from Suburban New York City counties and from the Upstate counties was higher for the under custody inmates than it was for the inmates who died.

TABLE 3
INMATE DEATHS BY
COUNTY OF COMMITMENT
1976 - 1985

County	Total	Percent	Year									
			1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
TOTAL	599	100.0%	30	33	30	31	41	41	62	54	114	163
NYC Total	460	76.8%	20	22	22	23	24	28	51	37	90	143
New York	200	33.4%	11	9	9	10	10	14	22	19	34	62
Kings	101	16.9%	4	5	5	6	6	5	14	5	21	30
Bronx	93	15.5%	2	5	4	2	6	5	8	7	22	32
Queens	58	9.7%	3	3	3	5	1	4	5	6	9	19
Richmond	8	1.3%	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	4	0
Suburban NYC Total	44	7.3%	2	8	1	2	4	5	2	6	7	7
Westchester	16	2.7%	1	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	4	6
Nassau	18	3.0%	1	4	0	0	4	4	0	3	2	0
Suffolk	10	1.7%	0	1	0	1	0	1	2	3	1	1
Upstate Total	85	15.9%	8	3	7	6	13	8	9	11	17	13

ETHNICITY

Table 4 presents a great deal of information on the number and rates of inmate deaths from 1976-1985 for the total population and for each of the 3 major ethnic groups. For the overall inmate population, the rate of inmate deaths per 1,000 inmates remained fairly constant up until 1984 and 1985 when it rose to more than twice the average rate for the previous eight years (i.e. 1976-1983 was 1.7, 1984 3.4 and 1985 4.9). For the black inmate population the rate of deaths per 1,000 black inmates seemed to remain constant up until 1985 when it more than doubled over the previous nine year average rate (i.e. 1976-1984 was 1.6 while 1985 was 3.9).

For the white inmate population the rate of deaths per 1,000 White inmates declined from 1976 through 1979, while the rate remained somewhat constant between 1980 through 1983 and rose sharply in 1984 and 1985. Although the rates for 1984 and 1985 were higher than the average rates for 1976 through 1983 the increase was not as high as it was for Black inmates (i.e. 1976-1983 average rate was 2.2 and for 1984 and 1985 the average rate was 3.8).

For the Hispanic inmate population the rate of deaths per 1,000 Hispanic inmates showed some minor growth periods between 1976 and 1983 but then grew substantially in 1984 and 1985 (i.e. 1976-1983 average rate was 1.8 and for 1984 and 1985 the average rate was over three times as high at 6.1).

The apparent growth in the death rates for all inmate racial groups in 1984 and 1985 was primarily due to an overall growth in the number of AIDS-related deaths in those two years. On average the overall death rates for the ten year period of this study were lowest for Black inmates and were somewhat similar for both Hispanic and White inmates. This finding is given additional support when comparing the average proportion of the inmate deaths and the average proportion of the inmates under custody for each racial group. Between 1976 and 1985 Blacks accounted for 43.4% of the average inmate deaths while making up 53.5% of the average under custody population. On average Whites accounted for 26.4% of the inmate deaths while making up 25.4% of the under custody population. Hispanics on average accounted for 30.2% of the inmate deaths while constituting 21.4% of the under custody population during this period.

TABLE 4
MORTALITY RATES BY ETHNIC GROUP PER 1,000 INMATES
1976 - 1985

Year	TOTAL			BLACK				WHITE				HISPANIC			
	Death Total	Custody Total	Death ^{b/} Rate	Deaths		% Under Custody POP	Death Rate	Deaths		% Under Custody POP	Death Rate	Deaths		% Under Custody POP	Death Rate
				Number	Percent			Number	Percent			Number	Percent		
1976	30	17,663	1.7	13	43.3%	60.3%	1.2	14	46.7%	25.1%	3.2	3	10.0%	18.0%	1.9
1977	33	19,311	1.7	13	39.4%	55.1%	1.2	13	39.4%	25.0%	2.7	7	21.2%	19.9%	1.8
1978	30	20,066	1.5	13	43.3%	53.9%	1.2	12	40.0%	25.9%	2.3	5	16.7%	20.2%	1.2
1979	31	20,730	1.5	18	58.1%	53.3%	1.6	8	25.8%	27.1%	1.4	5	16.1%	19.6%	1.2
1980	41	21,410	1.9	23	56.1%	52.7%	2.0	10	24.4%	27.8%	1.7	8	19.5%	19.5%	1.9
1981	41	25,218	1.6	16	39.0%	52.8%	1.2	11	26.8%	27.1%	1.6	14	34.1%	20.1%	2.8
1982	62	27,803	2.2	31	50.0%	52.9%	2.1	20	32.3%	26.3%	2.7	11	17.7%	20.8%	1.9
1983	54	30,336	1.8	22	40.7%	52.7%	1.4	12	22.2%	24.4%	1.6	20	37.0%	22.9%	2.9
1984	114	32,956	3.4	42	36.8%	51.4%	2.5	27	22.8%	22.5%	3.5	45	40.4%	26.1%	5.4
1985	163	34,318	4.9	69	38.1%	50.4%	3.9	32	22.6%	22.3%	4.1	62	39.3%	26.7%	6.7
<u>AVG</u>	60		2.2	26	43.4%	53.5%	1.8	16	26.4%	25.4%	2.5	18	30.2%	21.4%	2.7

^{a/}Total for Whites, Blacks and Hispanics, excludes inmates from other ethnic groups as no deaths were reported for these groups.

^{b/}Per 1,000 inmates

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CAUSES OF DEATH

Tables 5, 6, and 7 present information on the causes of death for inmates who died between 1976 and 1985. Table 5 shows that the majority of inmate deaths (474 or 79%) were listed as death by natural causes. Of the 474 natural cause deaths 134 (or 28%) were due to cardiac failure while 175 (or 37%) were due to AIDS-related disorders. The tables show that 42 (or 7%) of the inmate deaths were homicides, while 58 or 10% were suicides.

Table 6 shows that the overall proportion of inmate deaths which were AIDS-related increased from 5% in 1981 to 58% in 1985. None of the other causes of inmate deaths shows that clear a trend either in growth or decline over the ten year period. Table 7 reflects this observation but uses mortality rates per 1,000 inmates as the basis of analysis thus showing the growth of AIDS-related deaths while controlling for the growth in the inmate population over time.

TABLE 5
CAUSES OF DEATHS: 1976 - 1985

Cause	Total	Year									
		1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Natural	474	22	20	23	22	34	32	42	39	99	141
Cardio Vascular	134	14	7	8	8	24	11	18	5	22	17
Cancer	76	4	5	10	7	4	5	16	5	6	14
AIDS-related	175	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	18	55	95 ^{a/}
Other Natural	89	4	8	5	7	6	14	3	11	16	15
Suicide	58	2	5	3	6	4	3	14	10	5	6 ^{b/}
Homicide	42	4	5	3	3	3	6	4	3	7	4 ^{c/}
Other Known Causes	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	5 ^{b/}
Unknown	17	2	3	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	7
TOTAL	599	30	33	30	31	41	41	62	54	114	163

^{a/} Preliminary contingent upon final autopsy reports.

^{b/} One suicide and one drug overdose while inmate was on furlough status.

^{c/} Occurred while inmate was on work release status.

TABLE 7

CAUSE OF DEATH AND MORTALITY RATES^{a/}
1976 - 1985

Cause of Death	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Cardio-Vascular										
Deaths	14	7	8	8	24	11	18	5	22	17
RATE	.79	.36	.40	.39	1.12	.44	.65	.16	.67	.49
Cancer										
Deaths	4	5	10	7	4	5	16	5	6	14
RATE	.23	.26	.50	.34	.19	.20	.58	.16	.18	.40
AIDS-related										
Deaths	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	18	55	95
RATE	0	0	0	0	0	.08	.18	.59	1.67	2.73
Other Natural										
Deaths	4	8	5	7	6	14	3	11	16	15
RATE	.23	.41	.25	.34	.28	.56	.11	.36	.49	.43
Suicide										
Deaths	2	5	3	6	4	3	14	10	5	6
RATE	.11	.26	.15	.29	.19	.12	.50	.33	.15	.17
Homicide										
Deaths	4	5	3	3	3	6	4	3	7	4
RATE	.23	.26	.15	.14	.14	.24	.14	.10	.21	.11
Other Known										
Deaths	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	5
RATE	0	0	0	0	0	0	.04	.03	.03	.14
Unknown										
Deaths	2	3	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	7
RATE	.11	.16	.05	0	0	0	.04	.03	.06	.20
Total										
Deaths	30	33	30	31	41	41	62	54	114	163
RATE	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.9	1.6	2.2	1.8	3.4	4.7

^{a/} PER 1,000 INMATES

CAUSES OF DEATH
BY ETHNICITY

Table 8 presents information on the causes of inmate deaths by the ethnicity of the inmate victims. The table shows that there were eight categories which were used to classify these deaths and for each category the number and proportion of inmate deaths for each ethnic group are presented. Previously the overall proportion of inmates by ethnic group in the under custody population were presented in Table 4. On average Blacks constituted 53.5% of that population but made up 57.9% of the cancer deaths and 57.1% of the homicide deaths. On average Whites constituted 25.4% of the 1976-1985 under custody population but made up 40.3% of the cardio-vascular deaths, 28.9% of the cancer deaths, 39.7% of the suicide deaths, 66.7% of the deaths with other known causes, and 31.3% of the deaths with unknown causes. On average Hispanics made up 21.4% of the under custody population while accounting for 48% of the AIDS-related deaths, 34.8% of the other natural deaths, 28.6% of the homicides, 22.2% of the other known deaths and 31.3% of the unknown deaths.

TABLE 8
CAUSES OF DEATH BY ETHNIC GROUP
1976-1985

<u>Cause</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>	<u>Percent</u>
TOTAL	599	100.0%	260	43.4%	159	26.5%	180	30.1%
Cardio Vascular	134	100.0%	52	38.8%	54	40.3%	28	20.9%
Cancer	76	100.0%	44	57.9%	22	28.9%	10	13.2%
AIDS-related	175	100.0%	62	35.4%	29	16.6%	84	48.0%
Other Natural	89	100.0%	44	49.4%	14	15.7%	31	34.8%
Suicide	58	100.0%	27	46.6%	23	39.7%	8	13.8%
Homicide	42	100.0%	24	57.1%	6	14.3%	12	28.6%
Other Known	9	100.0%	1	11.1%	6	66.7%	2	22.2%
Unknown	16	100.0%	6	37.5%	5	31.3%	5	31.3%