

Mental Health Treatment in United States Prison Systems: The Influence of Varying Treatment Methods on Inmates with Schizophrenia

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Abstract

Schizophrenia is a psychological disorder that produces symptoms commonly of hallucinations, delusions, movement disorders, and confused thought or speech. Americans diagnosed with schizophrenia are three times more likely to be imprisoned than hospitalized for their symptom expression, thus necessitating prison reform to treat individuals and reduce repeat offenses.

In order to conduct the research, surveys will be distributed to IWS in 100 prisons across the United State. Changes in symptoms will be analyzed over the six-month period to observe how medications and other forms of treatment affect symptoms of IWS.

Federal prisons fail to classify serious mental illnesses in prisoners and only require treatment in 3% of inmates. In comparison, California prisons classified over 30% of inmates in need of regular treatment for serious mental illness.

Lack of treatment causes many IWS to experience heightened negative symptoms which, without treatment, drove some inmates to attempt suicide. Administering antipsychotic drugs to people with schizophrenia reduces their negative symptoms, which would help current inmates, and keep non-incarcerated people with schizophrenia out of prison.

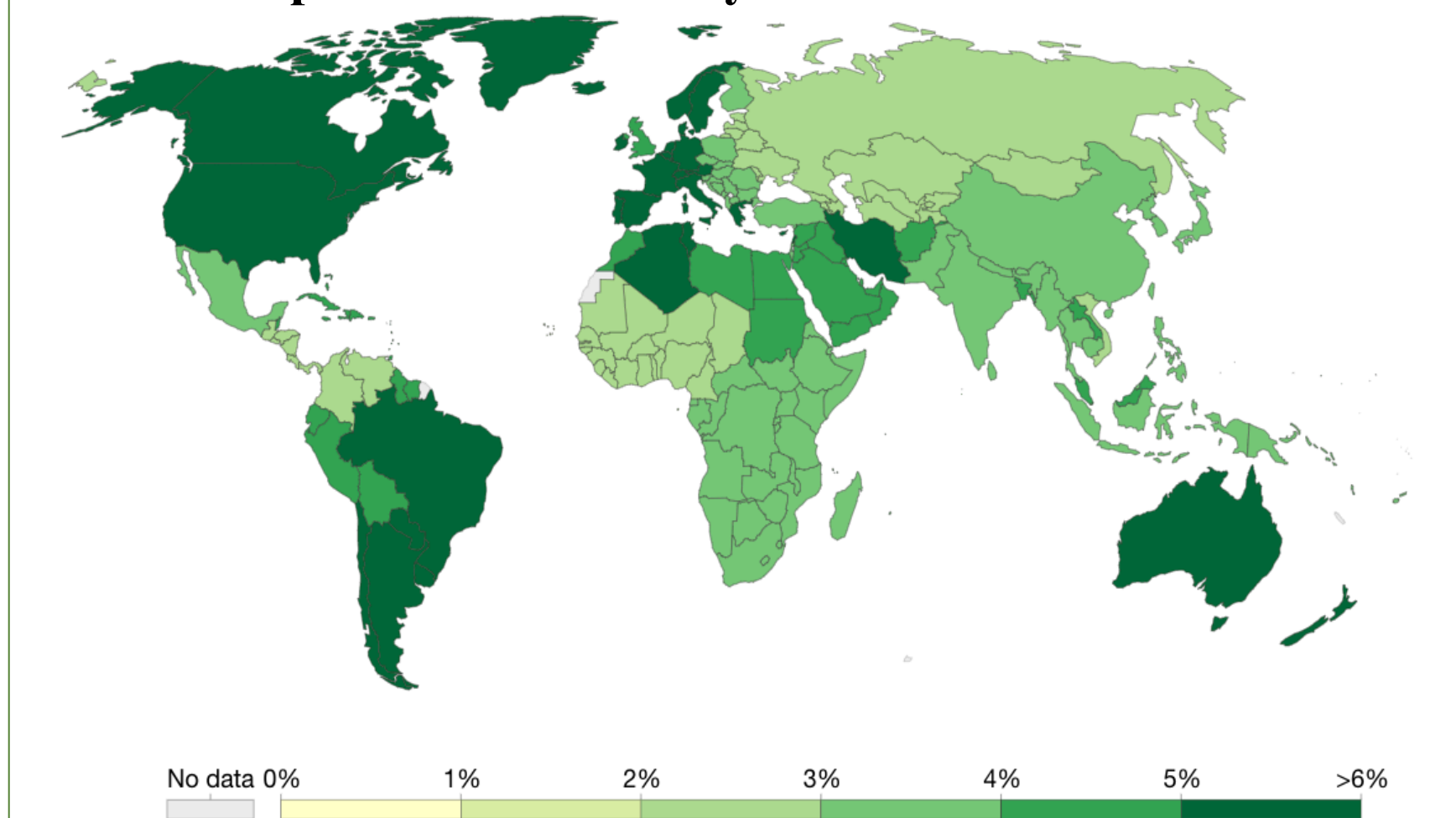
The United States, compared to other countries, lacks in treating IWS, thus reform is needed to fix this problem.

Background Information

2.8 million Americans have Schizophrenia and 383,000 inmates in the US have been diagnosed with it.

Federal prisons only found to require serious mental illness treatment for 3% of inmates whereas CA prisons classified of 30% of inmates in need of treatment.

Share of Population for Anxiety Disorders in 2017:



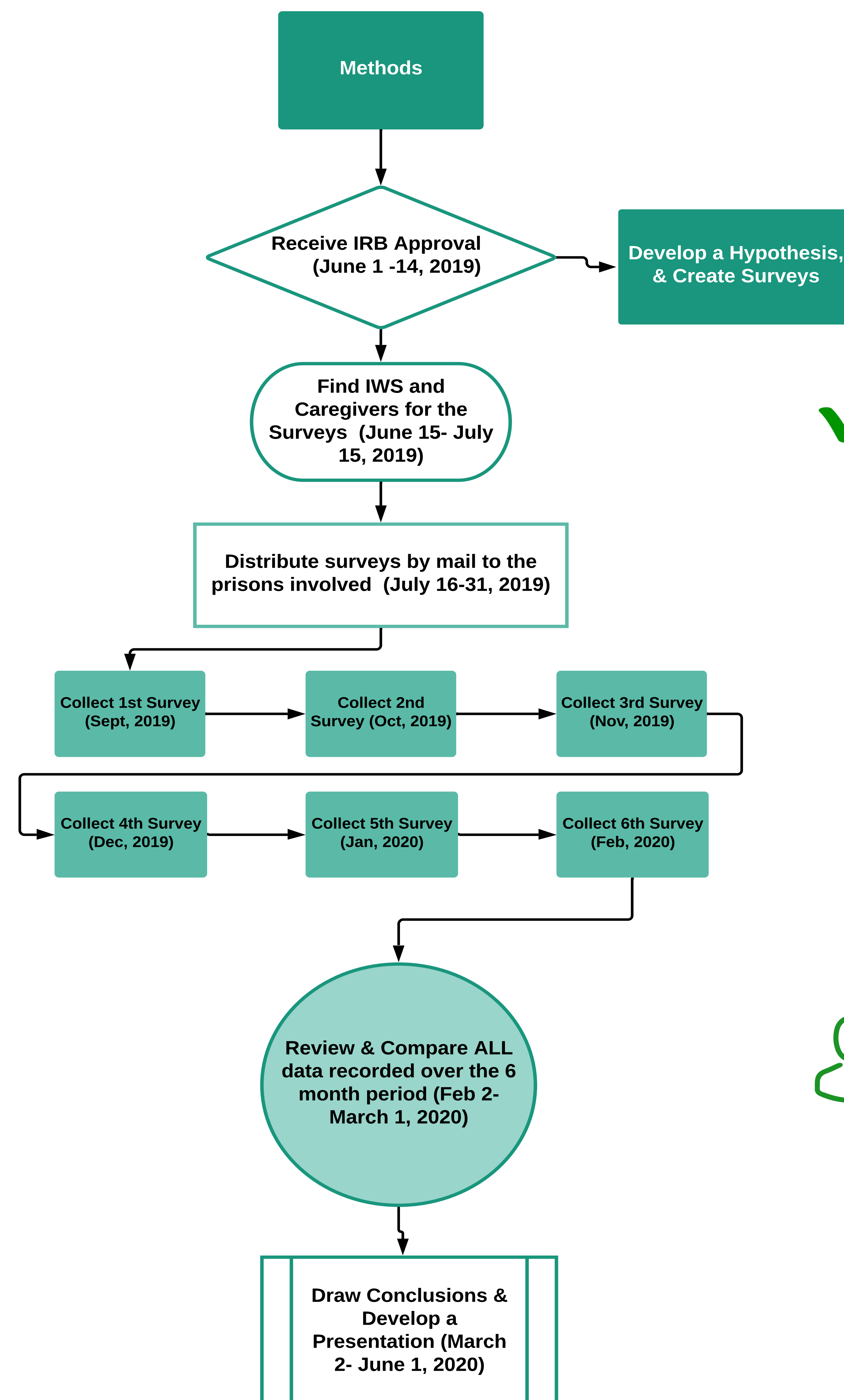
This map shows the global effect of anxiety disorders; schizophrenia is a type of anxiety disorder. We chose this map to show focus on the intensity of disorders in the United States vs. around the world. We chose to focus on the United States and compare it to other countries to show that prison treatments in the United States need reform.

(Figure Adapted from <https://ourworldindata.org/mental-health>)

Americans diagnosed with schizophrenia are three times more likely to be imprisoned than hospitalized.

Methods

The symptoms we analyze will be hallucinations, delusions, movement disorders, suicidal thoughts, and confused thought or speech. Out of all IWS in a given prison, a random sample of 45 IWS and five caregivers will be provided with six self-reporting written surveys on expressed negative schizophrenic symptoms over a six-month period, filling one out every month.



Anticipated Outcomes

1. Prisoners experiencing an increase in their symptoms with schizophrenia due to long term exposure to a prison environment. This includes looking into the treatments performed globally and comparing it to the United States.
2. We are looking into Violent vs. Nonviolent crimes and the anticipated outcome is schizophrenia rates in a prison are much higher within prisoners convicted of violent crimes.

Treatment Variable	% of state prison inmates with a mental illness	% of federal inmates with a mental illness
Lifetime use of medication for a mental condition	13%	24%
Received medication while incarcerated	52%	42%
Ever saw a counselor during lifetime	87%	78%
Saw a counselor in prison	46%	41%
Used self-help group or peer group in prison	21%	19%

A display of current statistics taken from a group of 18,185 inmates regarding the type of mental illness services state and federal prisoners provide in the United States (Reingle-Gonzalez and Connell n.p.).

Conclusion

The economic values associated with different therapeutic methods and treatment reforms for inmates with schizophrenia are important to note. The goal of implementing these programs are to reduce recidivism rates and violent outbursts of inmates with schizophrenia, and there are many cost benefits to this.

Inmate with mental illness → \$130
Inmate without mental illness → \$80

Therefore, the implementation of these solutions could lead to reduced recidivism rates. Ultimately, reduced recidivism rates will keep more people with schizophrenia out of prison and reduce the total costs of housing mentally ill inmates.

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