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Abstract

Objectives: Research on the effects of parental incarceration on children has made great strides in recent years. However, knowledge about the impact of paternal and maternal incarceration on the health of children remains limited, particularly in countries outside the United States. We use Danish registry data to examine the association between parental incarceration and childmortality risk.

Methods: We used a sample of all Danish children born in 1991 linked with parental information. We conducted discrete-time survival analysis separately for boys (N=30,146) and girls (N=28,702) to estimate the association of paternal and maternal incarceration with child mortality, controlling for parental socio-demographic characteristics.

Results: Results indicate a positive association between paternal and maternal imprisonment and male child mortality. Paternal imprisonment is associated with lower child mortality risks for girls. The maternal imprisonment-female child mortality relationship changes directions depending on the model, suggesting no clear association.

Conclusion: These results indicate that the incarceration of a parent may influence childmortality but that it is important to consider the gender of both the child and incarcerated parent.