Rapid Reviews COVID-19

Review 2: "Disparities in COVID-19 Related Mortality in U.S. Prisons and the General Population"

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RR:C19 Evidence Scale rating by reviewer:

- **Strong.** The main study claims are very well-justified by the data and analytic methods used. There is little room for doubt that the study produced has very similar results and conclusions as compared with the hypothetical ideal study. The study's main claims should be considered conclusive and actionable without reservation.

Review:

This is a review of the manuscript "disparities in COVID-19 related mortality in US prisons in the general population."

First, I should note that I have a professional, collaborative relationship with author Lauren Brinkley-Rubinstein. We have collaborated for several years on manuscripts and research grants. I am familiar with the Covid Prison Project, which is integral to this paper, however I have not been aware of this paper or discussed it with her or any of the other authors. Furthermore, I believe I can give it an unbiased review, in spite of this.

This project uses pooled, publicly available data on COVID-19 mortality in correctional settings in the US compared with community mortality related to COVID-19. They found a significantly higher mortality burden overall for people in prison and several states where these disparities were extreme. The authors appropriately conclude that these findings underscore the need for more drastic release efforts.

Although the study is limited by available data, this is crucial data with valid conclusions and unlikely to be changed by more accurate information.

The findings are strong or strong to reliable, and certainly actionable without reservation, and with some urgency, I might add.

The main findings are consistent with sparse published literature to date and highlights and extends our knowledge substantially.

The major limitation of the study, which I believe is directly a result of a limitation of the available data, is the lack of information on racial and ethnic status of individuals

in the criminal justice system with COVID-19. That should be noted in the discussion and, if there is any available data, perhaps that should be included in the results.

This data is rapidly evolving and the data should be updated at the time of final publication.

I would strongly recommend this be accepted with the above noted minor revisions.