

Immigration Detention & Health Disparities

Caitlin Patler, PhD

Associate Professor of Public Policy

Berkeley Public Policy
The Goldman School

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Presentation goals

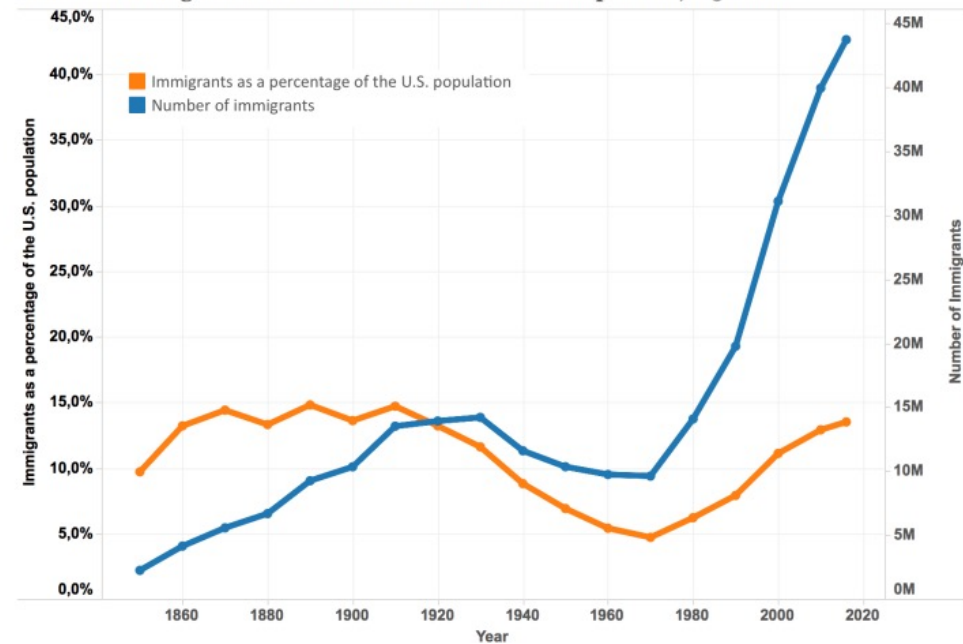
Immigration detention is a parallel but not identical system of mass incarceration

Health harms of detention, inside detention and in the community

Toward a research agenda bridging immigration detention, immigrants in the CLS, & later life health disparities

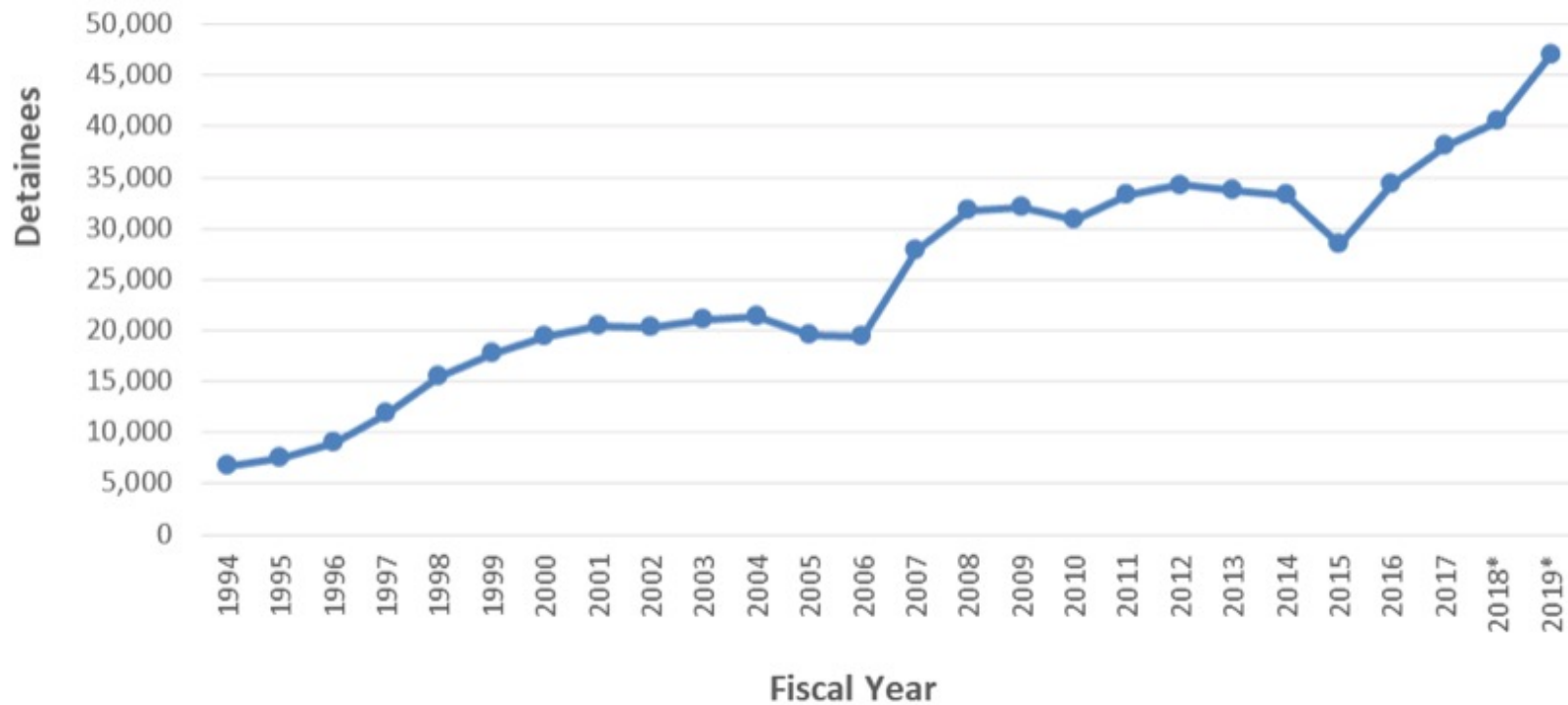
Part I. Parallel but not identical systems

Number of Immigrants and Their Share of the Total U.S. Population, 1850-2016

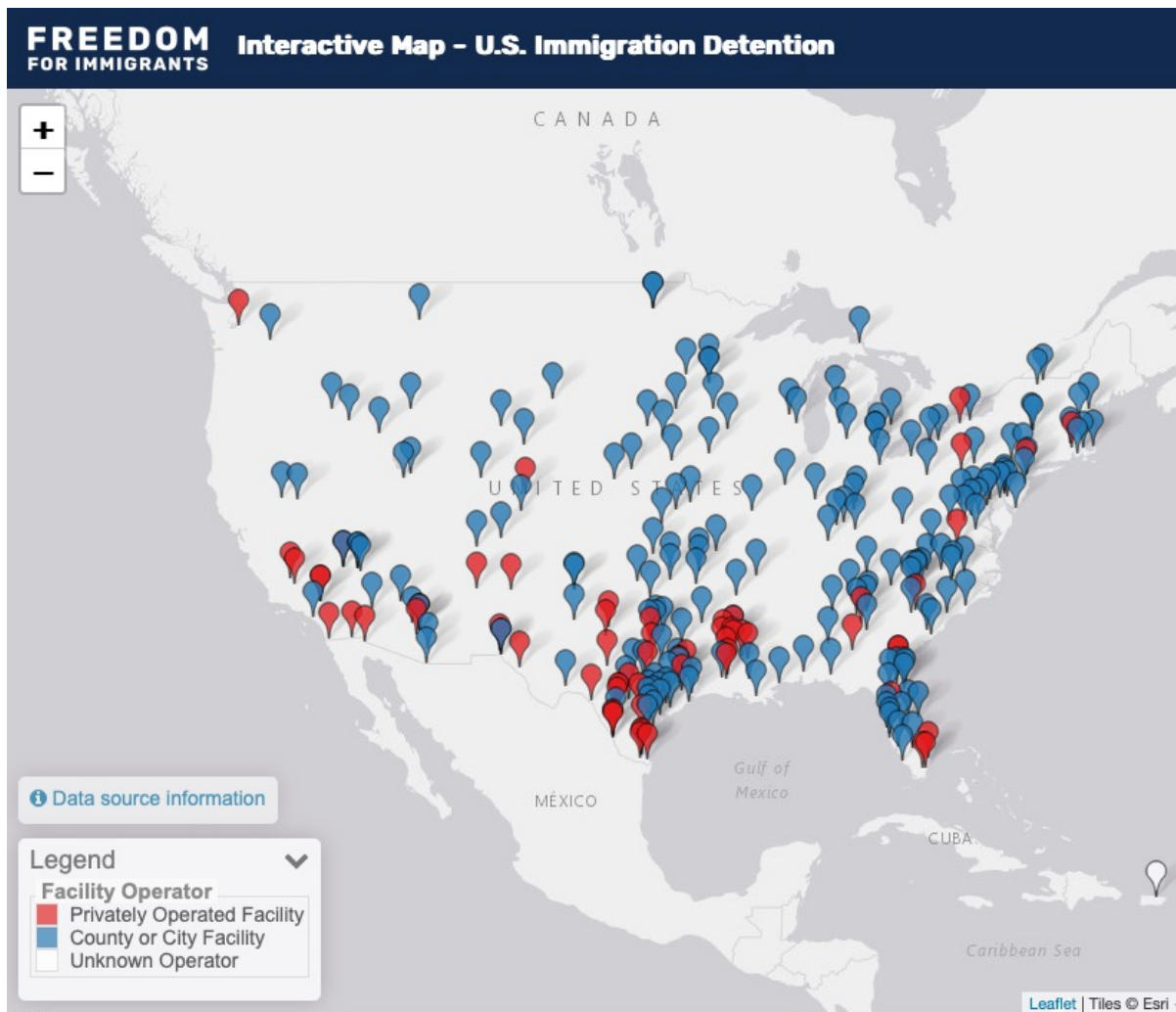


Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Data Hub
<http://migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub>

Average Daily Population (ADP) of Immigrant Detainees, FY 1994-2019



[Source: Center for Migration Studies tabulations of ICE and DHS statistics](#)



[Source: Freedom for Immigrants](#)

Legal features of US immigration detention

- Civil law (not criminal)
- Detention not a sentence
- Legally considered non-punitive
- Some constitutional protections unavailable
 - No public defender system
 - Few limits on detention length
 - No systemic mechanism for bond
 - Mandatory detention
- ICE can detain any noncitizen (even LPR)
- “Indefinite imprisonment without trial”



Photo: John Moore / Getty Images 5

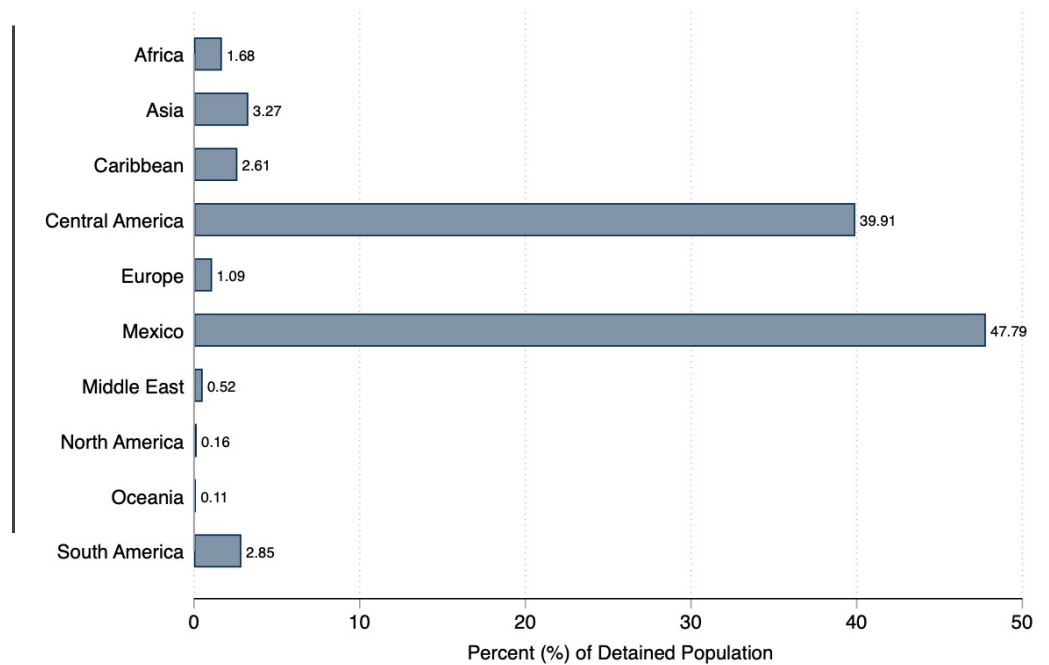
- Setting: jails/jail-like facilities, restrictive settings, controlled movement, punitive practices
- Time: routinely >6 months
- Defining feature: facilitate exclusion/expulsion of racialized minority populations under guise of race-neutral policy (Diaz, Nwadiuko et al 2023)



Images: Immigrant detainees in Adelanto Detention Facility (San Bernardino, CA), Santa Ana Jail (Santa Ana, CA)

Who are detained immigrants?

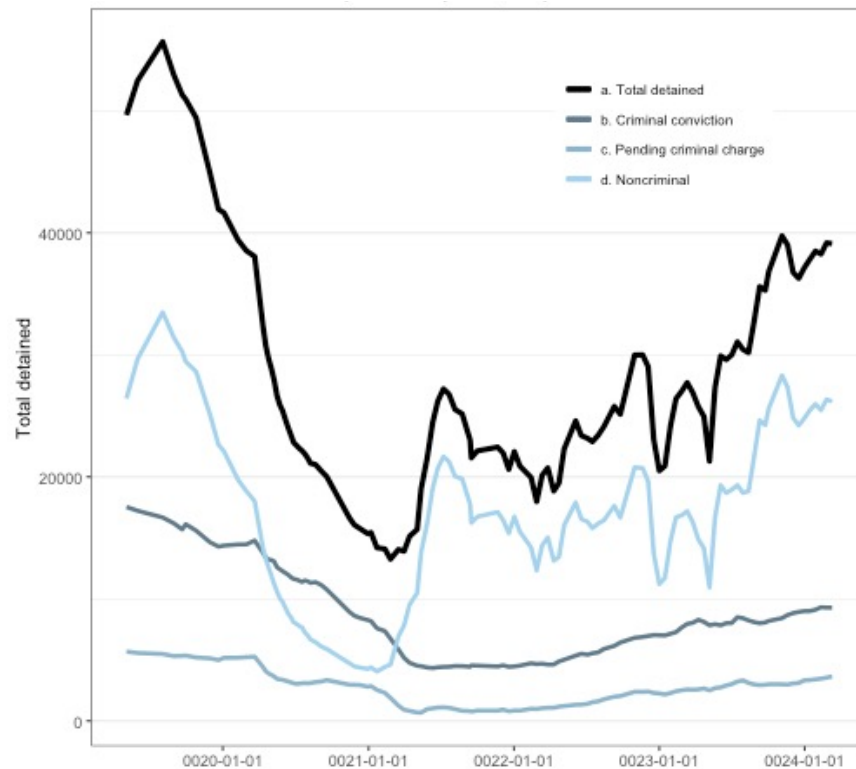
Figure. Region of Origin of Adult Detained Immigrant Population, 2015 (N=296,651)



Data source: TRAC

Who are
detained
immigrants?

Figure. ADP detained immigrants, by criminal conviction status, May 2019- March 2024



Source: TRAC (analysis in Patler & Jones n.d.)

Health harms of detention: on the inside



Substandard care with little oversight

- Medical care focused on acute care, often to neglect of preventive care / chronic disease management (Venters & Keller 2009)
- ICE regularly fails to meet standards for healthcare delivery
 - Violations of Performance-Based National Detention Standards in 78% of deaths in ICE custody from 2011-2018 (Grassini et al. 2021)

INVESTIGATIONS

Government's own experts found 'barbaric' and 'negligent' conditions in ICE detention

AUGUST 16, 2023 · 5:01 AM ET

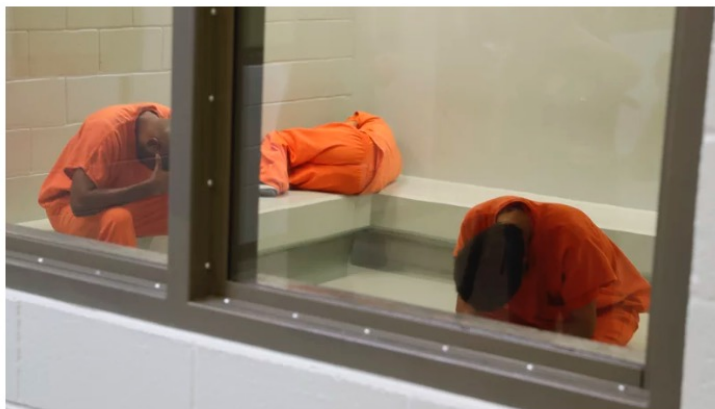
HEARD ON [ALL THINGS CONSIDERED](#)



Tom Dreisbach



11-Minute Listen



Immigrants await processing at an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention center in Adelanto, California. By filing a lawsuit under the Freedom of Information Act, NPR obtained a trove of inspection reports detailing serious problems at this ICE facility and others across the United States.

Chris Carlson/AP

May 8, 2017

Systemic Indifference

Dangerous & Substandard Medical Care in US Immigration Detention



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On April 6, 2015, Raul Ernesto Morales-Ramos, a 44-year-old citizen of El Salvador, died at Palmdale Regional Medical Center in Palmdale, California, of organ failure, with signs of widespread cancer. He had entered immigration custody four years earlier in March 2011. He was first detained at Theo Lacy Facility, operated by the Orange County Sheriff's Department, and then at Adelanto Detention Facility, operated by the private company Geo Group, both of which had contracts with US Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE") to hold non-citizens for immigration purposes.



May 8, 2017 | News Release
US: Detention Hazardous to Immigrants' Health



March 23, 2016 | Report
"Do You See How Much I'm Suffering Here?"

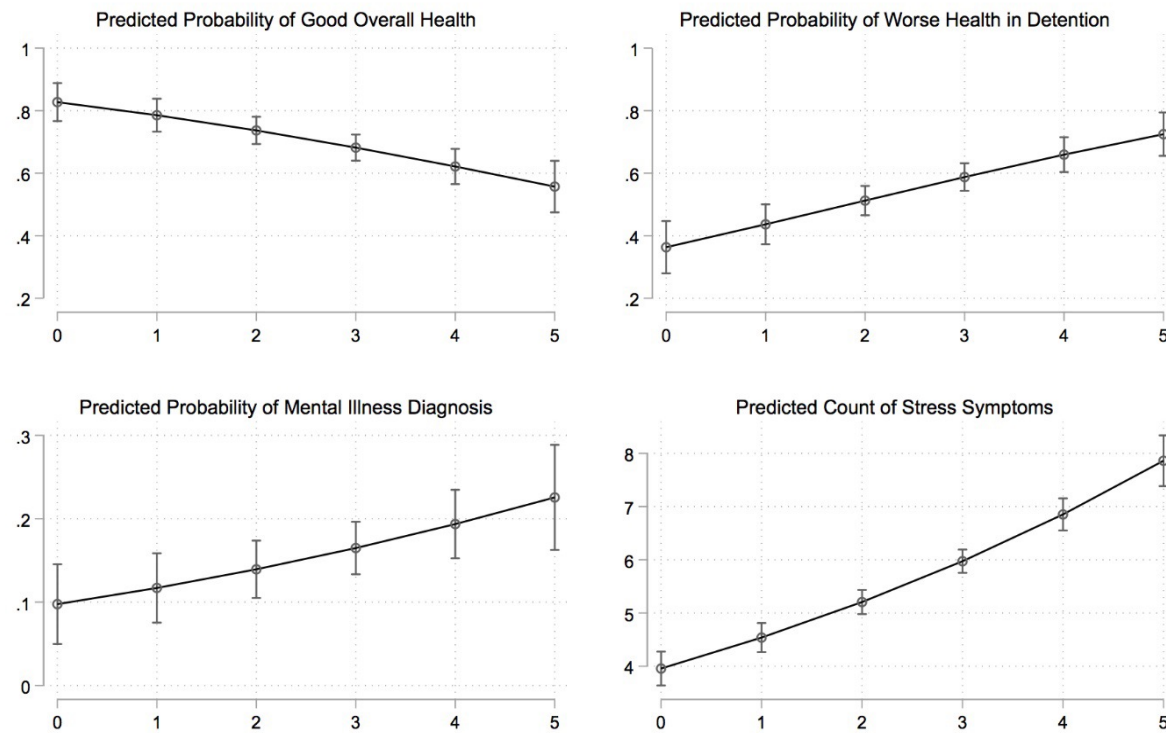
An ICE investigation into the death of Morales-Ramos found that the medical care he received at both facilities failed to meet applicable standards of care in numerous ways. Two independent medical experts, analyzing ICE's investigation for Human Rights Watch, agreed that he likely suffered from symptoms of cancer starting in 2013, but that the symptoms essentially went unaddressed for two years, until a month before he died.

Conditions of
confinement
→ poor
health

- Neglect of basic needs, physical environment accelerates illness (Saadi et al 2021, Diaz, Ortiz et al 2023, Diaz, Nwadiuko et al 2023)
- Physical violence and sexual assault, with sexual & gender minorities at increased risk (Lue et al 2023, Minero et al 2021)
- Stress & distress from perceived dehumanization, injustice, isolation, separation from loved ones (Diaz, Ortiz et al 2023)
- Conditions can accumulate to worsen health outcomes (Saadi et al 2021)

Figure. Predicted health outcomes by index of confinement conditions

Source: Saadi, A., Patler, C. & De Trinidad Young, ME. Cumulative Risk of Immigration Prison Conditions on Health Outcomes Among Detained Immigrants in California. J. Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities 9, 2518–2532 (2022). Doi: 10.1007/s40615-021-01187-1



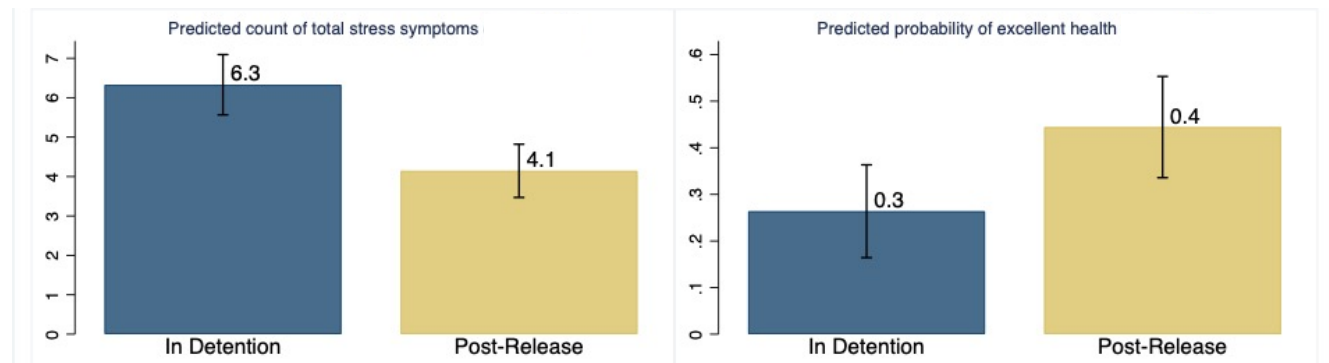
Data: 2013-14 Rodriguez Survey (n=493). Model controls for sex, age, education, ethnicity, language capacity, undocumented status, pre-detention health insurance, detention facility, months detained by ICE, total months pre-detention incarceration, and index of confinement (sleep deprivation, difficulty accessing family visitation, experienced verbal or physical abuse, witnessed verbal or physical abuse, difficulty accessing medical care, difficulty accessing psychological care)

Mental health harms & punitive conditions

- Mental health deterioration (Patler et al 2017)
- Past trauma/stressors exacerbated and worsen as detention length increases (von Werthen, et al 2018)
- Solitary confinement used regularly, including among people with serious mental illness (Patler et al 2017, Franco et al 2024, Nwadiuko, Nishi et al 2022)
- High burden of hospital admissions for psychiatric illnesses, suicidal ideation, and self-harm (Nwadiuko, Diaz et al 2022)
- Proportion of deaths attributed to suicide has increased dramatically (Terp et al 2021, Erfani et al 2021)
- In contrast, release from detention associated with decreased stress (Patler et al 2021)

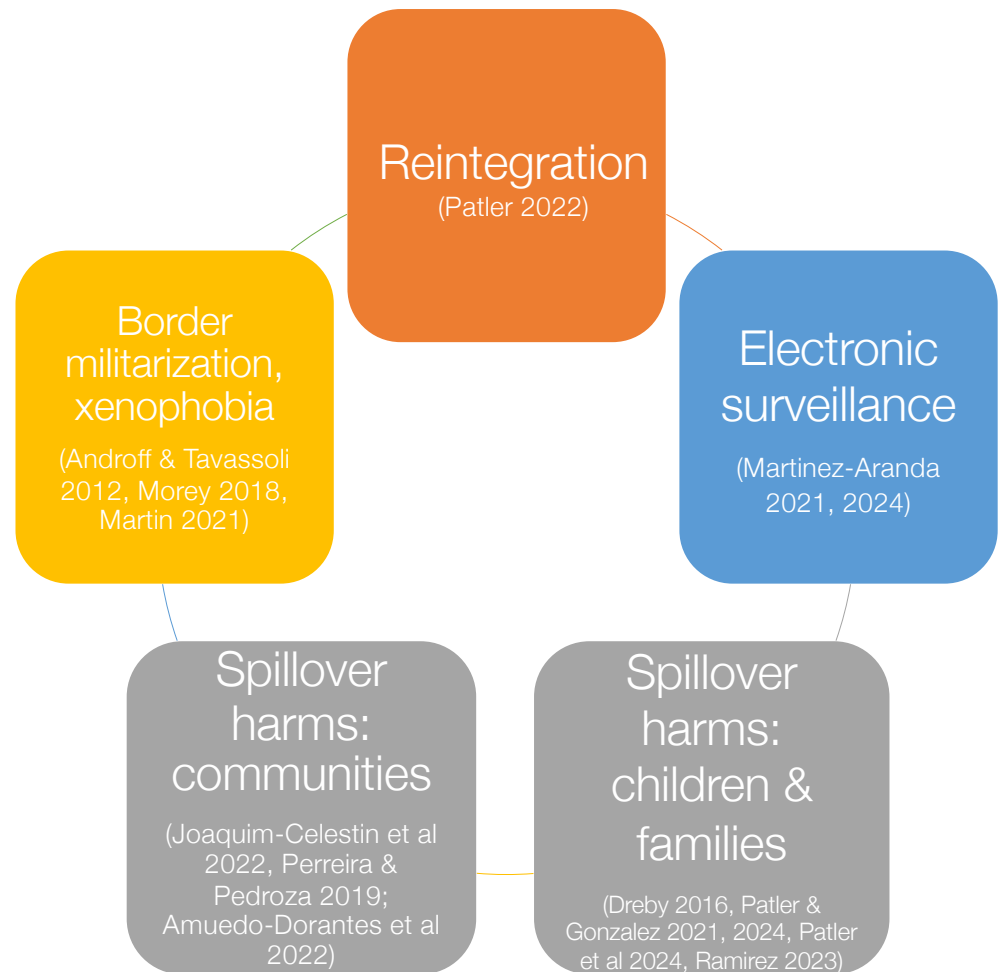
Figure. Predicted stress and health outcomes, from detention to release

Source: Patler C, et al. Release from US immigration detention may improve physical and psychological stress and health: Results from a two-wave panel study in California. *SSM – Mental Health* 1, 100035 (2021). Doi: [10.1016/j.ssmmh.2021.100035](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmmh.2021.100035)

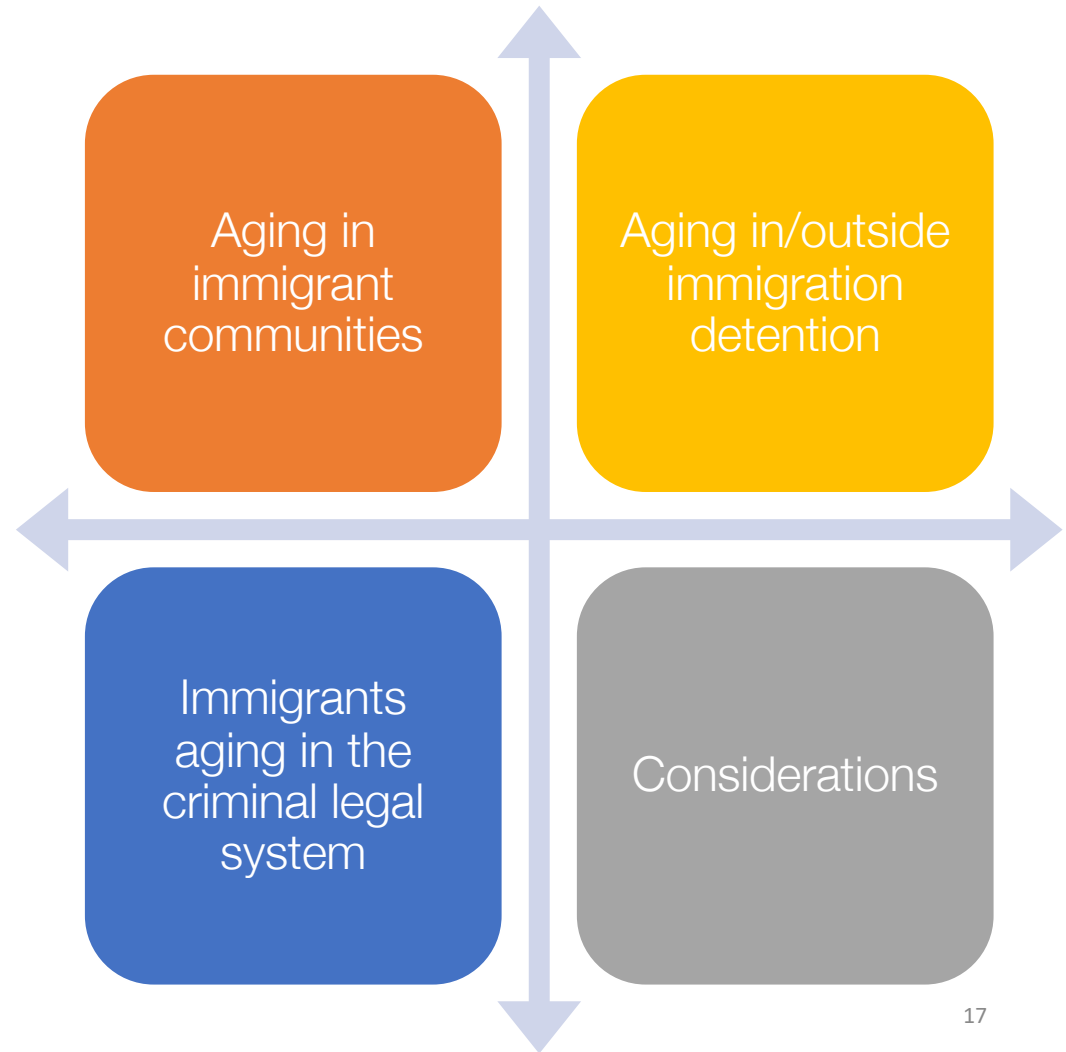


Data: Rodriguez Survey, detention & post-release surveys (n=144 observations, 79 respondents). Model controls for sex, age, education, ethnicity, language capacity, undocumented status, chronic health condition, length of detention, and whether seen by a healthcare professional since release.

Harms of detention: on the outside



Toward an agenda
to bridge research on
detention, immigrants in
the CLS, and later life
health disparities in
immigrant communities



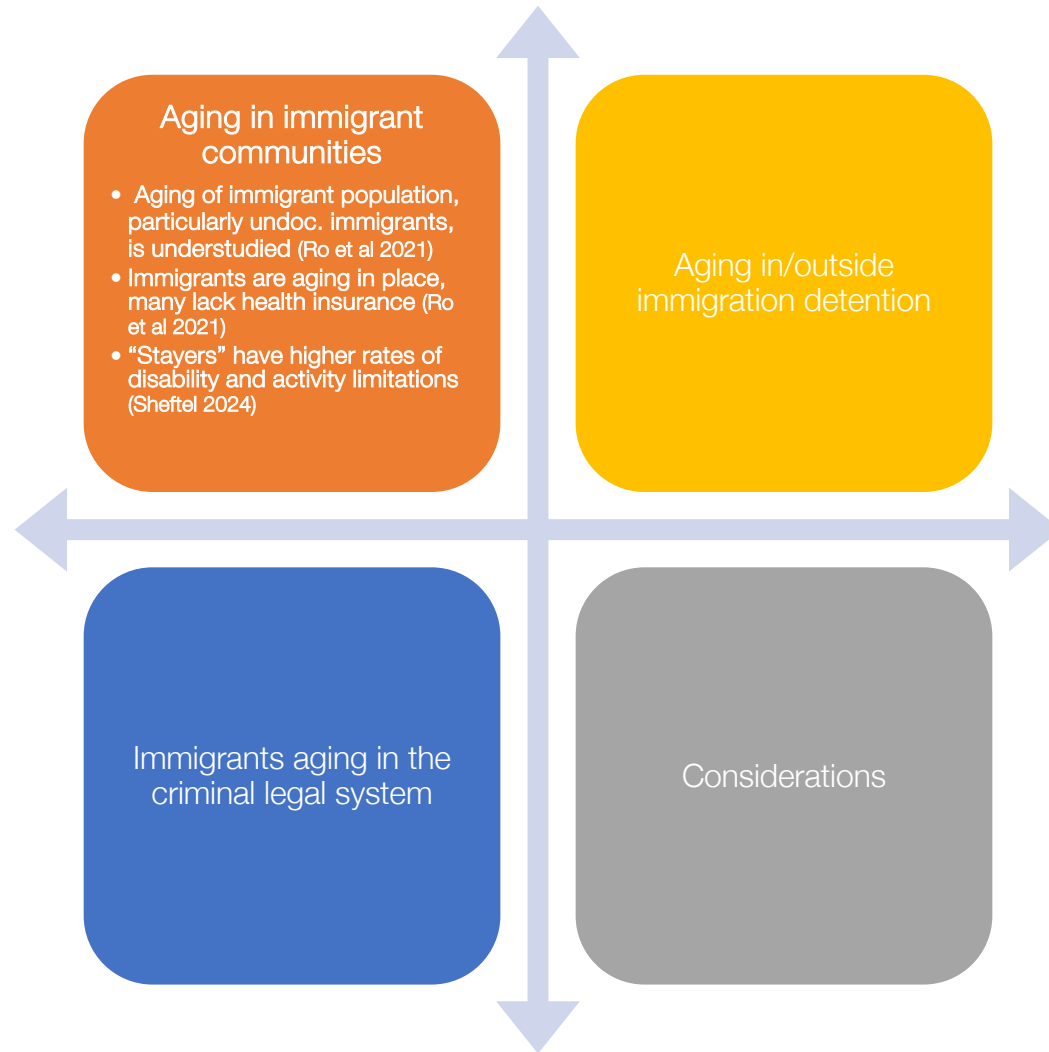
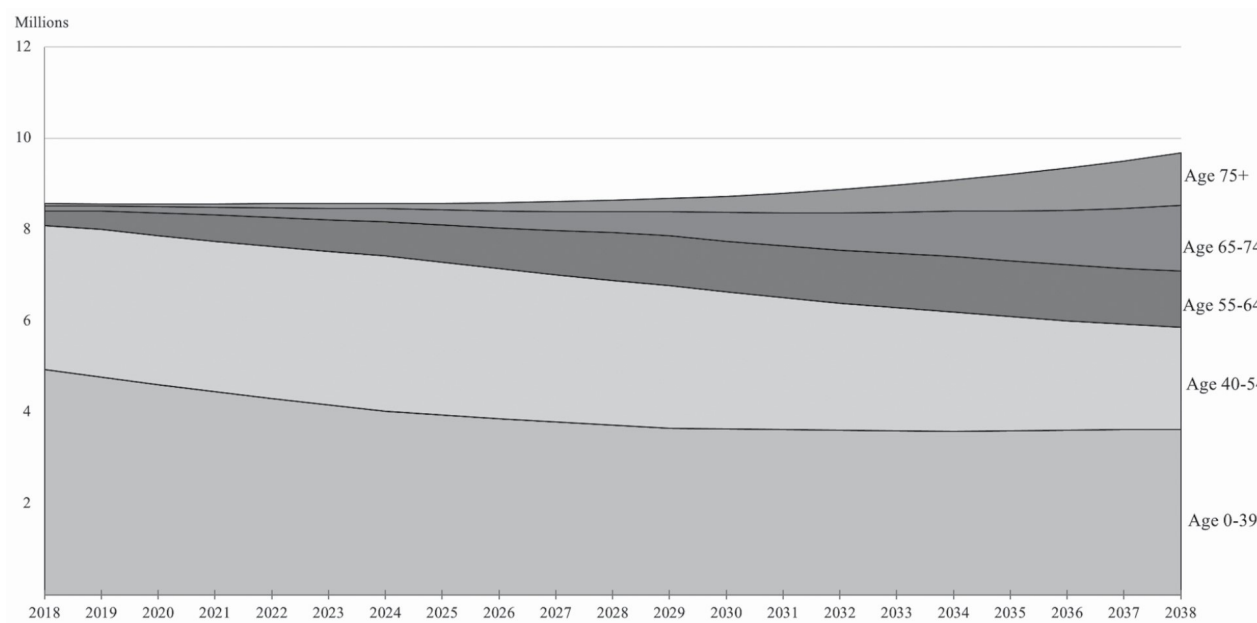


Figure. Projected number of Latino undocumented immigrants by age under the status quo scenario, 2018–2038



Source: Ro A, Van Hook J, Walsemann, KM. Undocumented Older Latino Immigrants in the United States: Population Projections and Share of Older Undocumented Latinos by Health Insurance Coverage and Chronic Health Conditions, 2018–2038. *J Gerontol B Psychol Sci Soc Sci*, Volume 77, Issue 2, February 2022, Pages 389–395, <https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbab189>

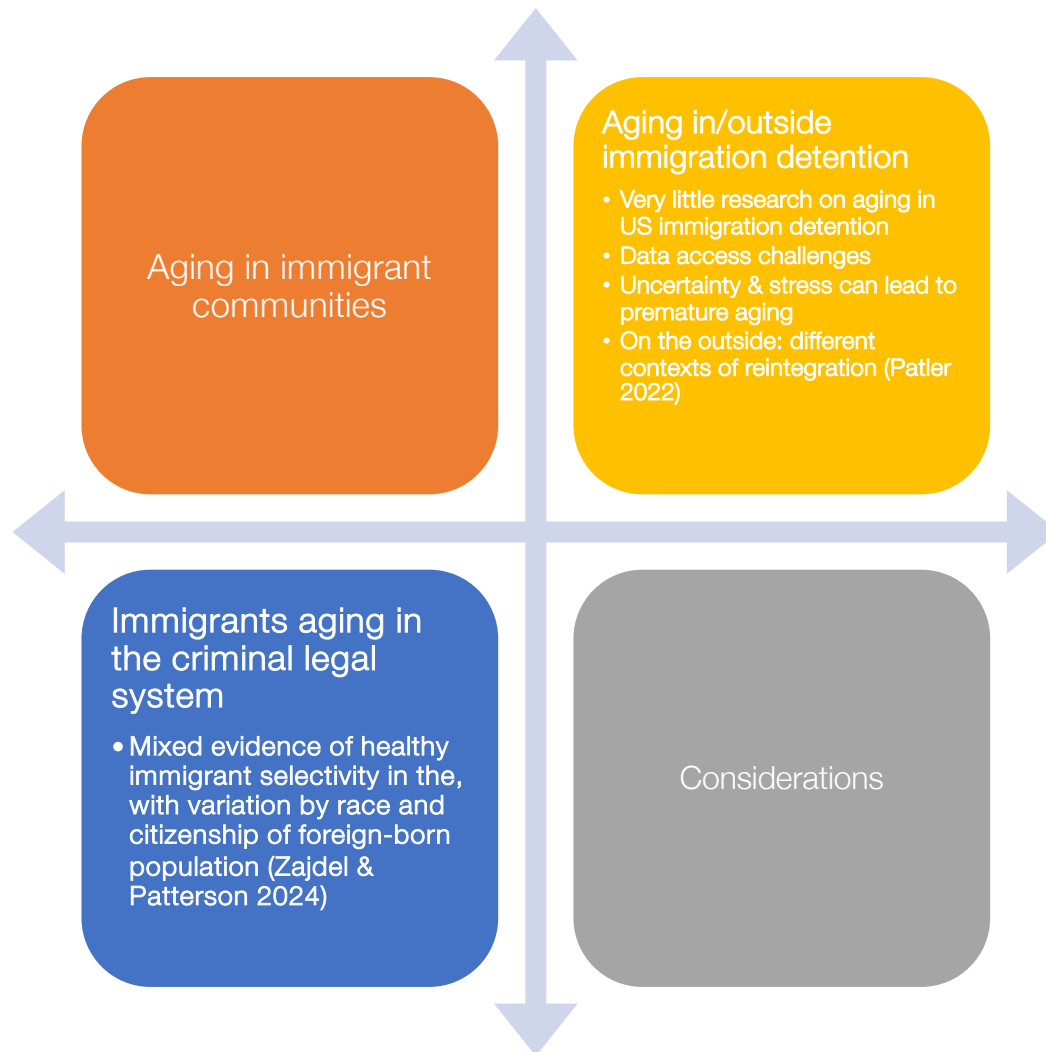
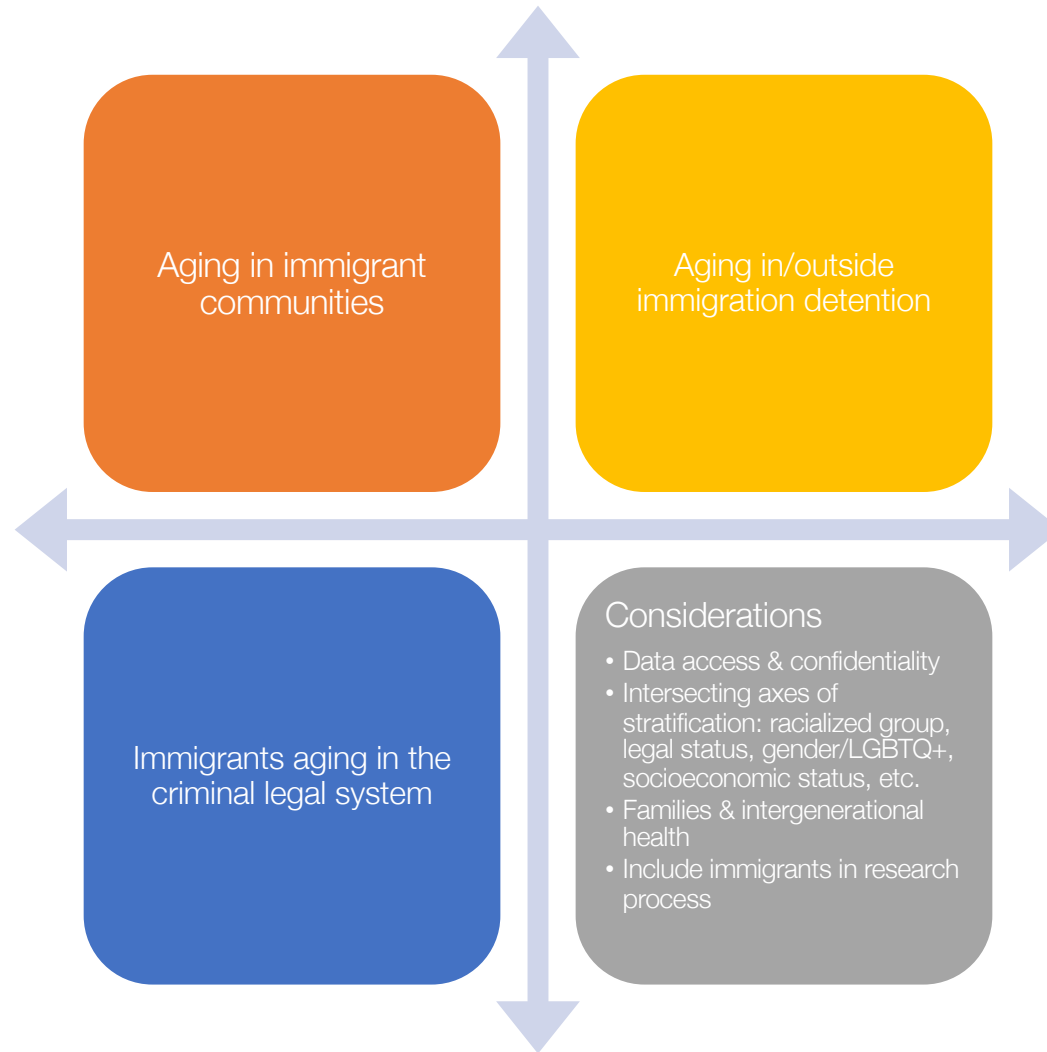


Table. Health profiles of adult men in ICE detention and state/federal prison

	<u>Detained immigrants</u> <u>(ICE)</u>		<u>Incarcerated</u> <u>immigrants</u> <u>(state/federal</u> <u>prison)</u>	<u>Incarcerated</u> <u>US-born</u> <u>(state/federal prison)</u>
Condition (%)	Age 18+	Age 50+	Age 18+	Age 18+
Any chronic condition	42%	65%	37%	50%
Diabetes	7%	20%	9%	8%
Hypertension/High BP	20%	41%	23%	30%
Cardiovascular disease / Heart condition	6%	16%	5%	7%
Sample size	486	49	2,086	15,877

Sources: Data on detained immigrants from cross-sectional, observational survey data from the 2013-14 Rodriguez Survey (adapted from Patler & Saadi [2021]). Data on foreign-born incarcerated from 2016 BJS Survey of Prison Inmates (Zajdel & Patterson 2024). Data on non-incarcerated from 2016 NHIS (Zajdel & Patterson 2024).



Thank you!

patler@berkeley.edu

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