Female Troubles

Amnesty International reviews three of the most prevalent physical and mental health issues that threaten women behind bars.

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Sexual abuse

Because male officers have almost unlimited authority to supervise female inmates at all times, women are, essentially, powerless and at high risk of abuse. Women who complain about sexual assault and harassment often suffer from retaliation from male correctional officials. Guards wield almost unlimited power in prison and can threaten inmates' children, withhold visitation rights or place prisoners in solitary confinement. These actions tend to keep female inmates quiet about abuses such as rape, sexual assault and extortion as well as groping during body searches. In addition, because of ineffective complaint procedures, prison officials often aren't held accountable for their actions.

Inadequate reproductive health care

In 1994, the National Institute of Corrections stated that the gynecological services available for women in prison were inadequate. Only half of the state prison systems surveyed offered specific services for women, such as mammograms and Pap smears, and often there's a long wait to be seen.

Shackling during pregnancy

Shackling of pregnant prisoners is policy in federal prisons as well as the U.S. Marshall Service and almost all state prisons. Reports document that shackling during labor may cause complications during delivery such as hemorrhage or decreased fetal heart rate. If a caesarian section is needed, a delay of even five minutes may result in permanent brain damage to the baby.

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/women-prison-health-24035-9860