

Time-to-Release from Jail for Patients Participating in Mental Health Diversion

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Background¹⁻⁴:

- In mental health diversion (MHD), patients receive treatment, not incarceration.
- Diversion programs have helped reduce recidivism & improved health outcomes.
- Release dates from jail are unpredictable & may depend on community programs.

Methods:

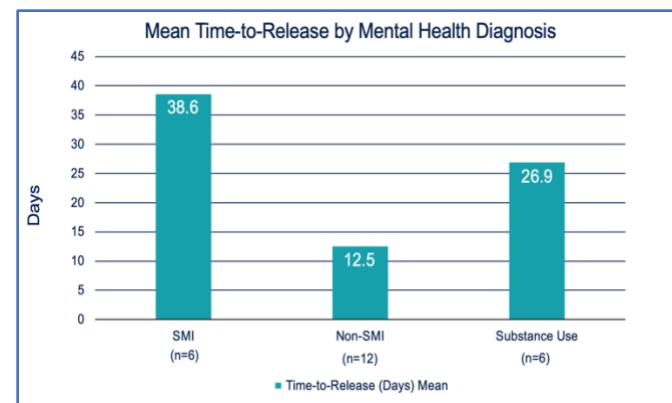
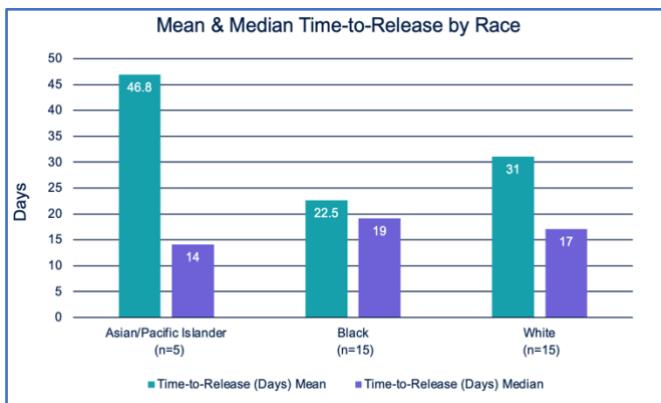
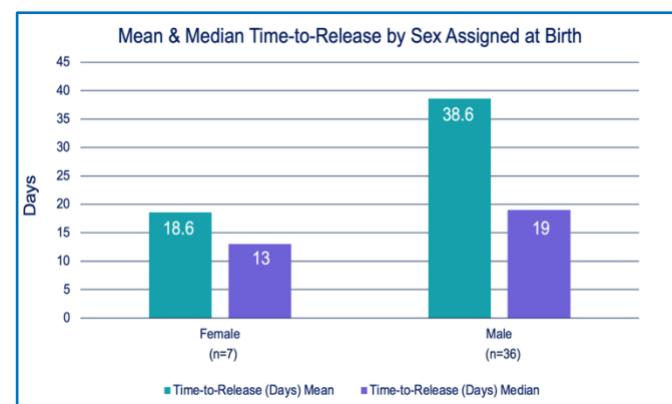
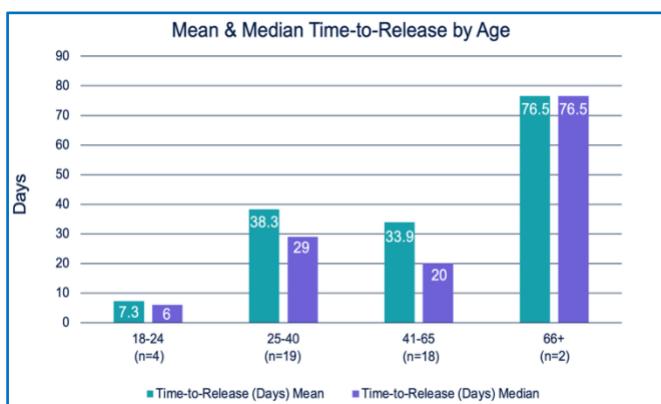
- **Question:** How long are patients waiting in jail post acceptance into MHD?
- **Analysis:** procured SF Superior Court data for patients in MHD from 5/1/2024 – 10/31/2024.
- Calculated **mean** and **median** time-to-release.

Sample Demographics:

- Study population: 43 people.
- 86% were between the ages of 25-65.
- 84% were male.
- 12% AAPI, 35% Black, and 35% White.
- 14% had an SMI diagnosis, and 28% had a substance use diagnosis.

Key Findings:

- 50% of MHD patients are released within three weeks, average release time is ~1 month.
- Most MHD patients are male identifying, but female identifying individuals have shorter wait times.
- Transitional age youth (18-24 y/o) have the shortest wait times, elderly individuals (>65 y/o) have the longest.
- No disparities between Black and White individuals but possible disparities for the AAPI community.
- Patients with serious mental illness (SMI) have longer wait compared to those with other mental health diagnoses.



Recommendations:

- The time-to-release analysis should be repeated with a longer study period (>1 year) to increase the sample size and help account for variability in the distribution of the data.
- Future work should include intersectional analyses with regards to gender, race/ethnicity, and mental health diagnoses to identify more nuanced patterns for release times among MHD patients.
- Comparing program wait times for MHD patients and non-incarcerated patients may help identify system inequities.