**Correctional Visitation and Reentry Outcomes: a Systematic Review**

**Victoria Sacco, MPH;** *Tung Sung Tseng, Ph.D.;* Gabrielle Gonzales, MPH,

School of Public Health, Behavioral and Community Health Sciences, Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, New Orleans

**Background:** Formerly incarcerated individuals experience a high risk of financial insecurity, housing instability, and inadequate healthcare access during their reentry into the community. Subsequently, these circumstances may increase feelings of stress and psychological distress that precedes criminality and recidivism. One potential solution to mediate reentry stressors includes maintaining quality connections and relationships that provide emotional and tangible social support. While prior studies support the associations between social support and reduced stress, improved health, and reduced recidivism rates, there is less known about social support’s impact via correctional visitation. **Objectives:** The objective of this review is to explore the existing literature on social support through prison and jail visitation and its relationship with recidivism and community reentry outcomes. **Methods:** The systematic review utilized the PRISMA process in four databases (PsycINFO, Criminal Justice Abstracts, SCOPUS, and CINAHL) and the selected search terms included variations of visitation and incarceration using Boolean logic during the period of 2000 to 2022. Following the selection of studies, quality assessment indicators measured each study’s methodological quality and risk of bias. **Results:** Thirty original studies were selected, with sample sizes ranging from 168 to 42,630 participants. Visitation was the primary predictor and main outcomes included recidivism, in-prison misconduct, reentry challenges, and health factors. Most studies found visitation improved overall recidivism and reentry outcomes, but in studies with additional detail, such as visitation frequency and visitor relationship type, not all correctional visitation was found consistently positive. **Conclusion:** This study systematically explores the evidence available for how external social contact during incarceration may predict reentry outcomes and recidivism rates. The results of the study showed that while visitation during incarceration may generally be beneficial, some nuance still exists. Findings may have greater implications for further research, as well as policy related to correctional settings and the community reentry period.

**Word count:** 299