

REIMBURSING INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH: A SCOPING REVIEW

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Background:

Little is known about global practices regarding the provision of reimbursement for study participation to people who are incarcerated. To determine current practices related to the reimbursement of incarcerated populations for research, we aimed to describe variations in practice across jurisdictions and correctional environments to help inform the development of more consistent and equitable practices.

Methods:

We conducted a scoping review by searching PubMed, Cochrane library, Medline, and Embase, and conducted a grey literature search for English and French language articles published until September 30, 2022. All studies evaluating any correctional-based research were included if recruitment of incarcerated participants occurred inside any carceral setting; we excluded studies if recruitment occurred exclusively following release. Where studies failed to indicate the presence or absence of reimbursement, we assumed none was provided.

Results:

A total of 2,965 unique articles were identified, 2,226 were eligible for full text review, and 274 were included. Of these, 178 (65%) did not offer reimbursement to incarcerated individuals. A minority (n=9; 5%) included reasons explaining the absence of reimbursement including Department of Corrections policies (n=4), system-level policies (n=4), and researchers' discretion (n=1). Among the 96 (35%) studies that provided reimbursement, the most common form was a one-time monetary (n=53; 55%) compensation during incarceration. Reimbursement ranged between \$3-610 USD in total and few studies (n=9; 9%) articulated the presence of a policy directing reimbursement.

Conclusion:

The majority of research conducted to date in carceral settings globally has not reimbursed incarcerated participants. Increased transparency regarding reimbursement (or lack thereof) is needed as part of all correctional research and advocacy efforts are required to change policies prohibiting reimbursement of incarcerated individuals. Future work is needed to co-create international standards for the equitable reimbursement of incarcerated populations in research, incorporating the voices of people with lived and living experience of incarceration.

Disclosure of Interest Statement

None of the authors have any conflicts of interest to disclose in relation to this work.