

The Hidden Costs of Isolation: How Prison Isolation Impacts Individuals and Communities

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Introduction

The use of solitary confinement in the United States prison system has become increasingly common and debated as concerns grow about its broader impacts. While often justified as necessary for safety and discipline, research suggests it may cause serious long-term harm. Using data from the United States Bureau of Justice Statistics' *Survey of Prison Inmates, United States, 2016*, through ICPSR, I will analyze how this isolation contributes to psychological distress and how these effects may influence recidivism and community stability.

Data

-United States. Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Survey of Prison Inmates, United States, 2016*. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2024-03-28.
<https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR37692.v5>

Results and Implications

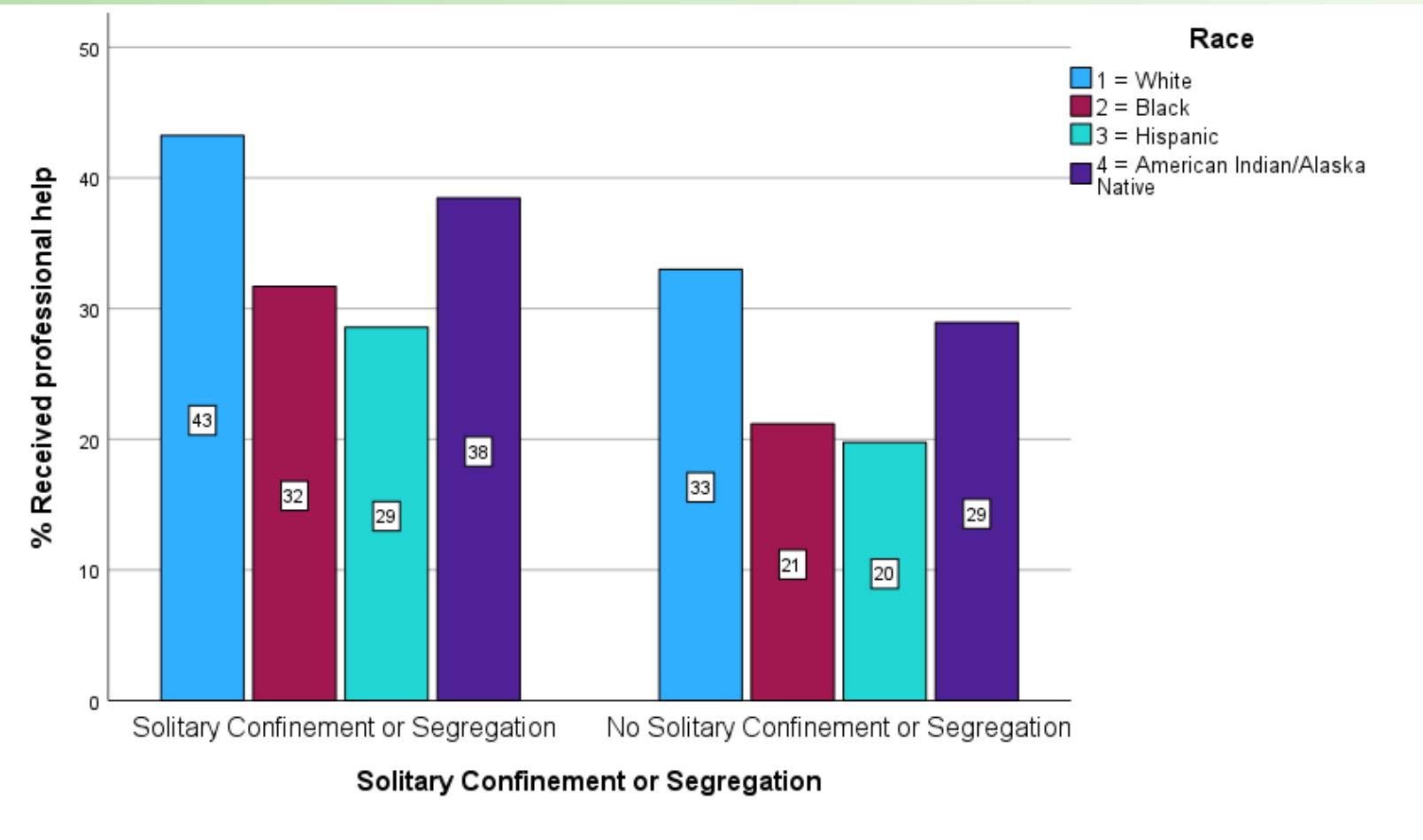
-First hypothesis data: 34.7% of those in solitary received professional help, while 65.3% did not. Those in solitary had higher help rates than those not in solitary, 34.7% vs. 25.6%. White inmates were the most likely to receive help, while Black and Hispanic inmates were less likely, showing clear racial disparities.

-Second hypothesis data: Males were more likely than females to be placed in solitary, 10.1% vs. 7.1%. Among males, Black individuals had the highest rate at 12.1%, followed by American Indian/Alaska Native at 10.0%, Hispanic at 9.0%, and White at 8.5%. White females were the least likely to experience solitary, while American Indian/Alaska Native females were the most likely. This shows both gender and racial disparities.

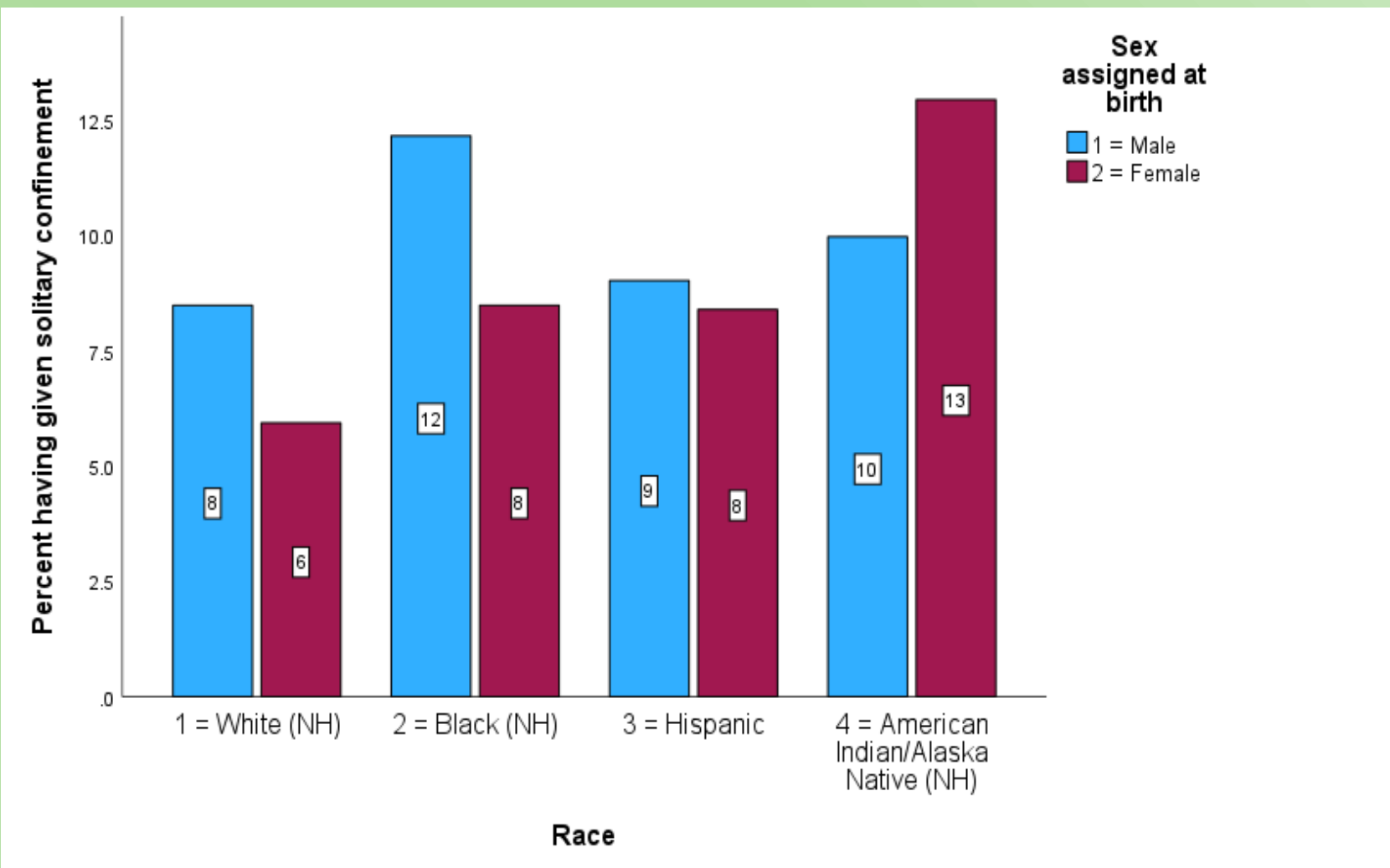
-Third Hypothesis Data: Females were much more likely than males to receive help, 62.7% vs. 29.9%, showing a strong gender gap. Men in and out of solitary are less likely to receive professional help, while women are much more likely to receive care. Solitary confinement is associated with a greater likelihood of needing help.

Hypothesis and Analysis

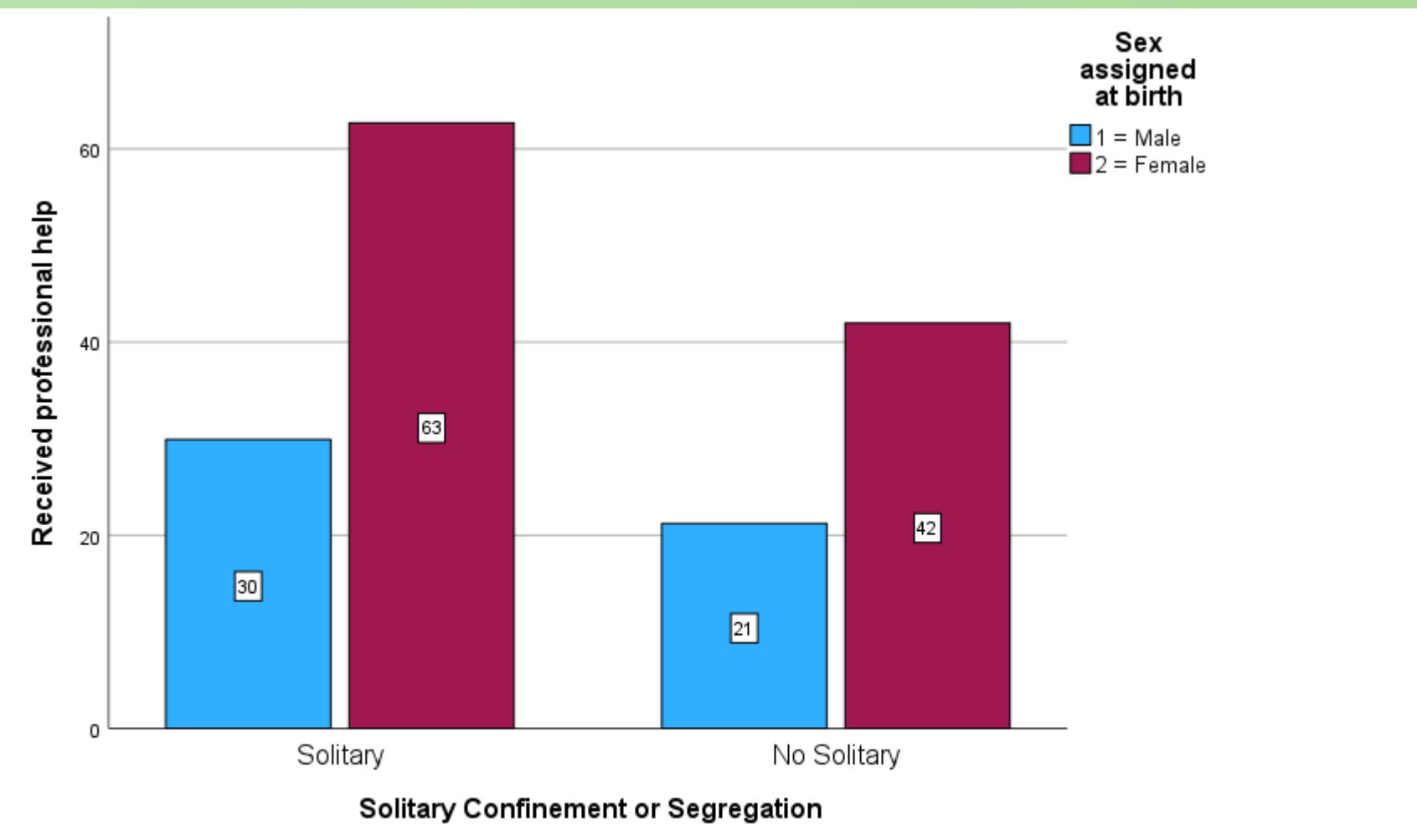
Hypothesis 1: Individuals placed in solitary confinement are more likely to have received professional help, but significant racial disparities exist in who receives that help.



Hypothesis 2: Ethnic males are more likely than females to be placed in solitary confinement across racial groups.



Hypothesis 3: Individuals who experience solitary confinement will need more professional help



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