What Do We Want to Measure When We Measure Criminal Justice Contact? Some Thoughts

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Today, I want to

- Present a very basic figure.
- Note where most research is.
- Talk a bit about disparities.
- Talk a bit about mechanisms.
- Not take up too much time.
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Present a very basic figure
An (Insanely) Simplified Path of Criminal Justice Contact

1. Crime
2. Police
   - No Police
   - Arrest
     - No Charge
     - Charge
       - Bail
         - No Conviction
           - Parole
           - Prison
           - Jail
         - Conviction
           - No Bail
             - Probation
             - Unsupervised
An (Insanely) Simplified Path of Criminal Justice Contact

- Crime
  - No Police
  - Police
    - Arrest
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1. Crime
   - No Police
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   - No Arrest
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4. Charge
5. Bail
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   - Conviction
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   - Parole
9. Prison
10. Jail
11. Unsupervised
12. Probation
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Note where most research is
Here and throughout

I'm going to try to really focus on health.
Here and throughout

- I’m going to try to really focus on health.
An (Insanely) Simplified Path of Criminal Justice Contact

- Crime
  - No Police
    - No Charge
    - Bail
      - No Conviction
        - Jail
          - Unsupervised
        - Conviction
          - No Bail
            - Charge
              - Arrest
                - Police
                  - Crime

An (Insanely) Simplified Path of Criminal Justice Contact

Crime

- No Police
- Police
  - No Arrest
  - Arrest
    - Charge
      - No Bail
      - Bail
        - Conviction
          - Unsupervised
          - Probation
          - Jail
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Talk a bit about disparities
We all know

- How criminal justice contact is concentrated.
- So I’m not going to spend any time on that...
We all know

- How criminal justice contact is concentrated.
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We all know

- How criminal justice contact is concentrated.
- So I’m not going to spend any time on that...
Disparities are not constant

- Disparities in rates (by crime type).
- Disparities in transition probabilities (by crime type).
Disparities are not constant

- Disparities in rates (by crime type).
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Disparities are not constant

- Disparities in rates (by crime type).
- Disparities in transition probabilities (by crime type).
Rates or transition probabilities

- Rates tell us about total disparities by a given stage.
- Transition probabilities tell us about stage-specific disparities.
Rates or transition probabilities

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Rates or transition probabilities

- Rates tell us about total disparities by a given stage.
- Transition probabilities tell us about stage-specific disparities.
Total or by crime type

- Total tells us about, well, total.
- Crime type allows us to compare apples to apples.
Total or by crime type

- Total tells us about, well, total.
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Total or by crime type

- Total tells us about, well, total.
- Crime type allows us to compare apples to apples.
Let’s think about this for drugs
An (Insanely) Simplified Path of Criminal Justice Contact

- No Police
- No Arrest
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- Parole
- Prison
- Jail
- Unsupervised
- Probation

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Crime → Police → No Arrest → No Charge → Bail → No Conviction → Parole
Crime → Police → No Arrest → No Charge → Jail → Parole
Crime → Police → No Arrest → No Charge → Unsupervised → Parole
Crime → Police → No Arrest → No Charge → Prison → Parole
And now let’s think about it for homicide
An (Insanely) Simplified Path of Criminal Justice Contact

No Police → No Arrest → No Charge → No Conviction

Police → Arrest → Charge → Bail → No Bail

Conviction → Jail → Probation → Unsupervised

Prison → Parole
Talk a bit about mechanisms
Three things to consider

▶ Differences across levels of criminal justice contact.
▶ Differences within a level of criminal justice contact.
▶ Mechanisms may differ (greatly) for individuals and families.
▶ Let's go back to the final figure again...
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- Prison
- Parole

Crime → Police → Arrest → Charge → Bail → No Conviction → Conviction → No Bail → Jail → Probation → Unsupervised → Prison → Parole
I lied, one more thing
If we had maybe five questions

- Self-reported criminal activity ("health behaviors"). [All]
- Ever arrested? When? [All]
- Ever incarcerated? When? [Only the ever arrested]
- Crime incarcerated for. [Only the ever incarcerated]
- Type of facility incarcerated in. [Only the ever incarcerated]
- I guess I lied again. That isn’t five.
- But we lose a lot of folks in skips after arrest/incarceration.
If we had maybe five questions

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I realize that we don’t have that many questions

- But this strikes me as good for own effects and family effects.
- And lets us look at multiple levels of criminal justice contact (and crime), which seems vital for teasing out disparities.
- Would love to do character of criminal justice contact...
- And duration/frequency would also be great, although I think crime type helps a bit with that for jail incarceration. And I also think there’s little duration action among prisoners.
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