

## Problem

- Deterrence theory posits that severe punishment will decrease criminal behavior. However, previous findings are mixed.

**Aim:** To examine four different types of mandatory minimum laws and their effects on incarceration rates.

**RQ:** Do mandatory minimum laws affect incarceration rates?

## Data

- State sentencing policy on Incarceration Rates from the year 2002.
- Mandatory minimum sentencing and incarceration rates variables collected from the United States Justice Department.

## Measures

### Independent Variables

- Truth in sentencing
- Determinate sentencing
- Mandatory sentence for drug possession
  - Mandatory sentence for drug sale

### Dependent Variable

- Incarceration Rate

### Analysis

- Descriptive Statistics
- Independent t-tests

## Implications

- The non-significant findings suggests that severe punishments such as mandatory minimums do not affect the incarceration rate. The deterrence theory does not support or sustain this study.
- Limitations include no access to the crime rate leaving the incarceration rate as the dependent variable, as well as using data from only 2002.
- Legislators should consider the research before implementing mandatory minimum laws into their jurisdictions.

Table 2		T-Tests for Independent Variables			
		Incarceration Rate (BJS)			
Mandatory Minimum		n	Mean	SD	t(df)
Truth In Sentence	No	11	324.09	114.7	-1.692(48)
	Yes	39	409.23	154.83	
Determinate Sentence	No	33	397.42	156.79	.451(48)
	Yes	17	377.06	139.97	
Drug Possession	No	19	353.11	128.02	-1.415(46)
	Yes	29	416.34	164.57	
Drug Sale	No	38	382.05	135.62	-.704(48)
	Yes	12	417.25	193.72	

## References

- Stamen, Don. Impact of State Sentencing Policies on Incarceration Rates in the United States, 1975-2002. [distributor], 2007-09-27. <https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR04456.v1>
- Salkind N. J., Frey, B. B. (2020). Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics (7th ed.) SAGE Publications. <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019020133>