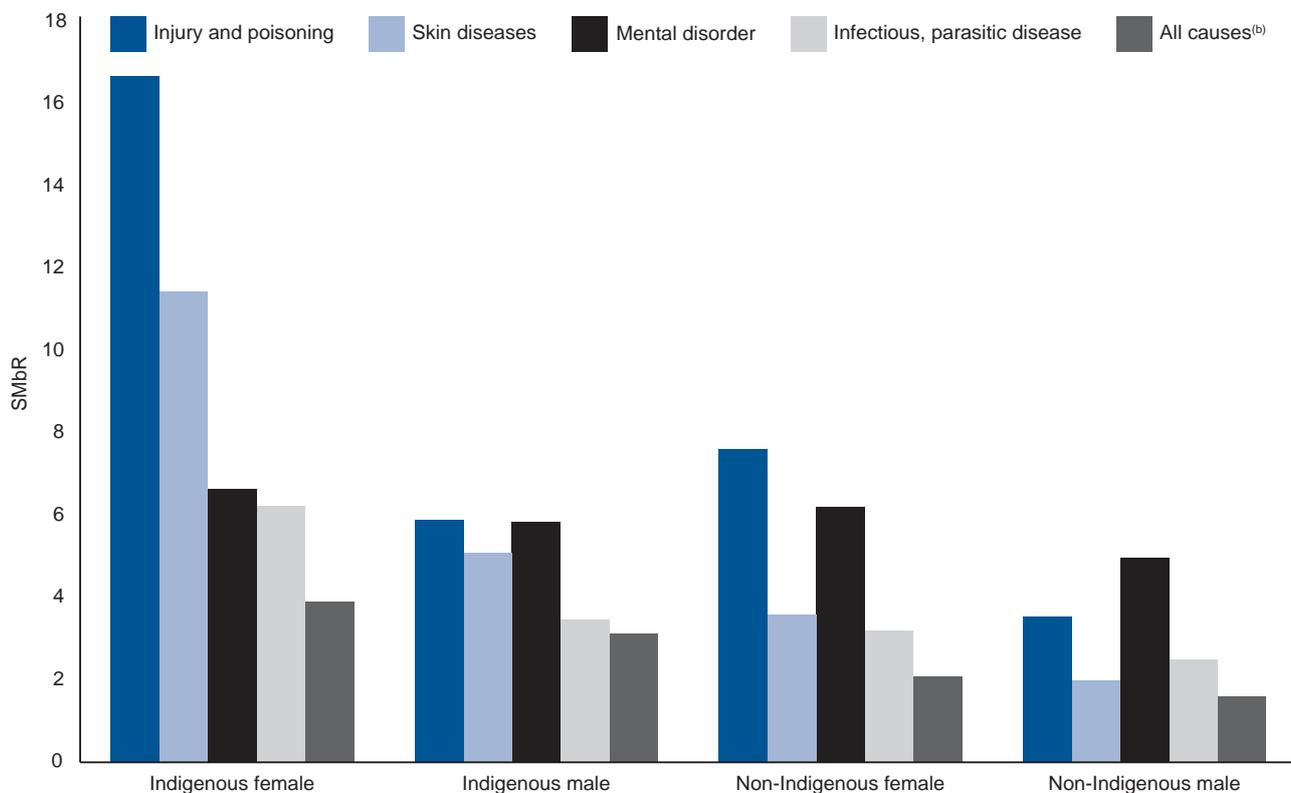


Morbidity after release from prison

Released prisoners are generally assumed to have poorer health, as reflected in a higher morbidity rate, than members of the general population. A recent Criminology Research Council report, *Mortality and morbidity in prisoners after release from prison in Western Australia 1995–2003* is the first comprehensive study to demonstrate the degree to which this holds true. After adjustment for age, released prisoners had substantially higher hospital admission rates or contacts with mental health services than the general population. Indigenous prisoners were between three and four times more likely to be admitted to hospital than persons in the general population of WA and between one and two times more likely than the general Indigenous population of WA. Non-Indigenous prisoners were between 1.5 and two times more likely to be admitted to hospital than the non-Indigenous population of WA. The relative risk of hospitalisation in released prisoners was greatest for injury and poisoning, and mental disorders (including acute and chronic effects of alcohol and drug addiction). In addition to admissions for injury and poisoning and mental disorders, Indigenous prisoners, especially females, had high relative and absolute risks of hospitalisation for a wide range of health problems.

Risk of hospital admission for released prisoners, by selective diagnosis^(a)



Notes: (a) Diagnosis categorisation according to main chapters of ICD-9-CM applied to Western Australian ex prisoners, aged 20–39 years in 1999

(b) All causes is a total of all 18 categories of the ICD-9-CM

SMbR: Standard morbidity ratio – comparison based on respective rates for the general population of Western Australia.

SOURCE: Hobbs M et al. 2006. *Mortality and morbidity in prisoners after release from prison in Western Australia 1995–2003*. Research and public policy series no. 71. <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/rpp/71/index.html>. Also see the summary paper at: <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi2/tandi320.html>