

# COMPARISON OF RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR CRIMINAL CONVICTION IN BIRTHING PEOPLE WHO HAVE USED SUBSTANCES DURING PREGNANCY



## AUTHORS

Laura Harkness (1,2)  
 Natalia Fana (3)  
 Sarah Campbell (3)  
 Sarah Lunney (3)  
 Cristian Estrella Almonte (3)  
 Sarah Gander (1,2,3,4)

## AFFILIATIONS

1. Horizon Health Network  
 2. Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick  
 3. NB Social Pediatrics Inc.  
 4. Department of Paediatrics Dalhousie University, Saint John, NB, Canada



## INTRODUCTION

Female incarceration rates in Canada are continuously increasing, yet factors influencing female incarceration remain under-researched. In a criminal justice system built for male inmates, females lack gender specific support to prevent incarceration, while in prison and preparing them for release. The Parent Child Assistance Program (PCAP) PCAP helps to obtain substance use treatment, navigate social support programs, and provide parenting and goal setting techniques that help women build healthy and independent lives. Substance use is known to be highly associated with incarceration of both genders. Thus, PCAP provides a unique opportunity to understand what other factors may play a role in criminalization of people who use substances and how to prevent future incarceration.

## OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study was to examine characteristics of the PCAP population with respect to previous criminal justice system involvement.

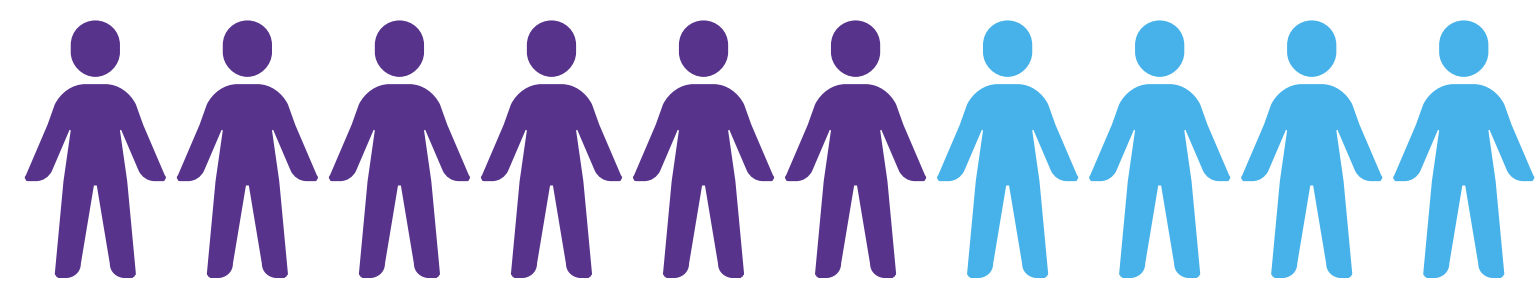
1. Describe previous criminal justice system involvement of the PCAP clients
2. Examine psychosocial characteristics associated clients with a history of criminal conviction versus those with no history of conviction.

## METHODOLOGY

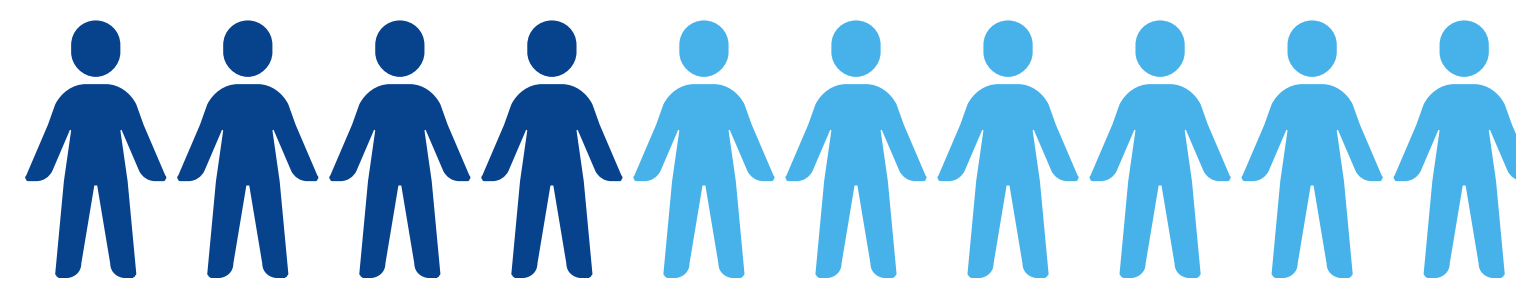
Data was gathered from 88 participants from the PCAP registry. Descriptive analysis of arrest history of participants using done using SPSS. Clients were divided into subpopulations of those with a history of conviction and those with no history of conviction. Subpopulations were statistically analyzed using a Chi-squared test for risk and protective factors of criminal conviction by chi-shared test.

## RESULTS

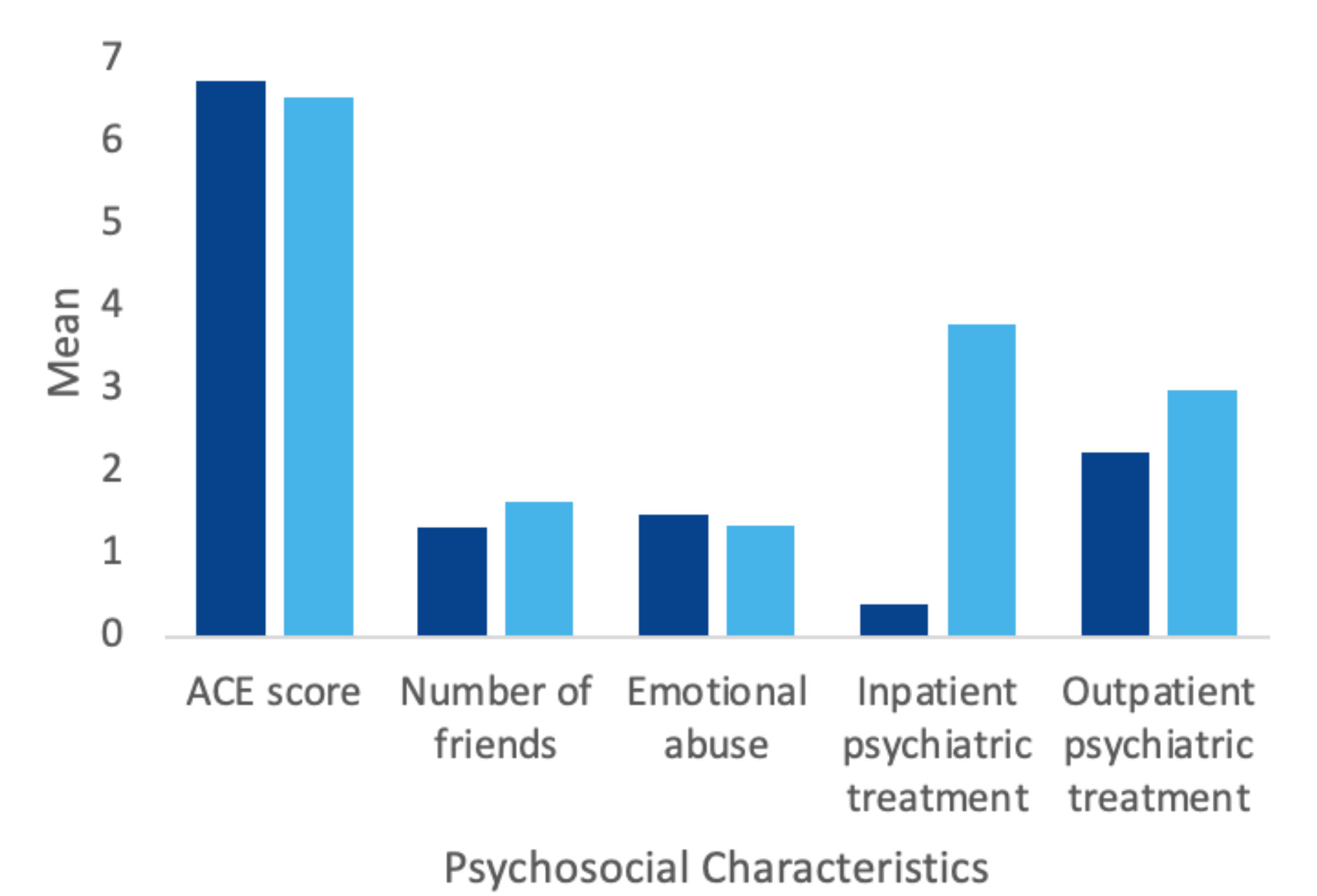
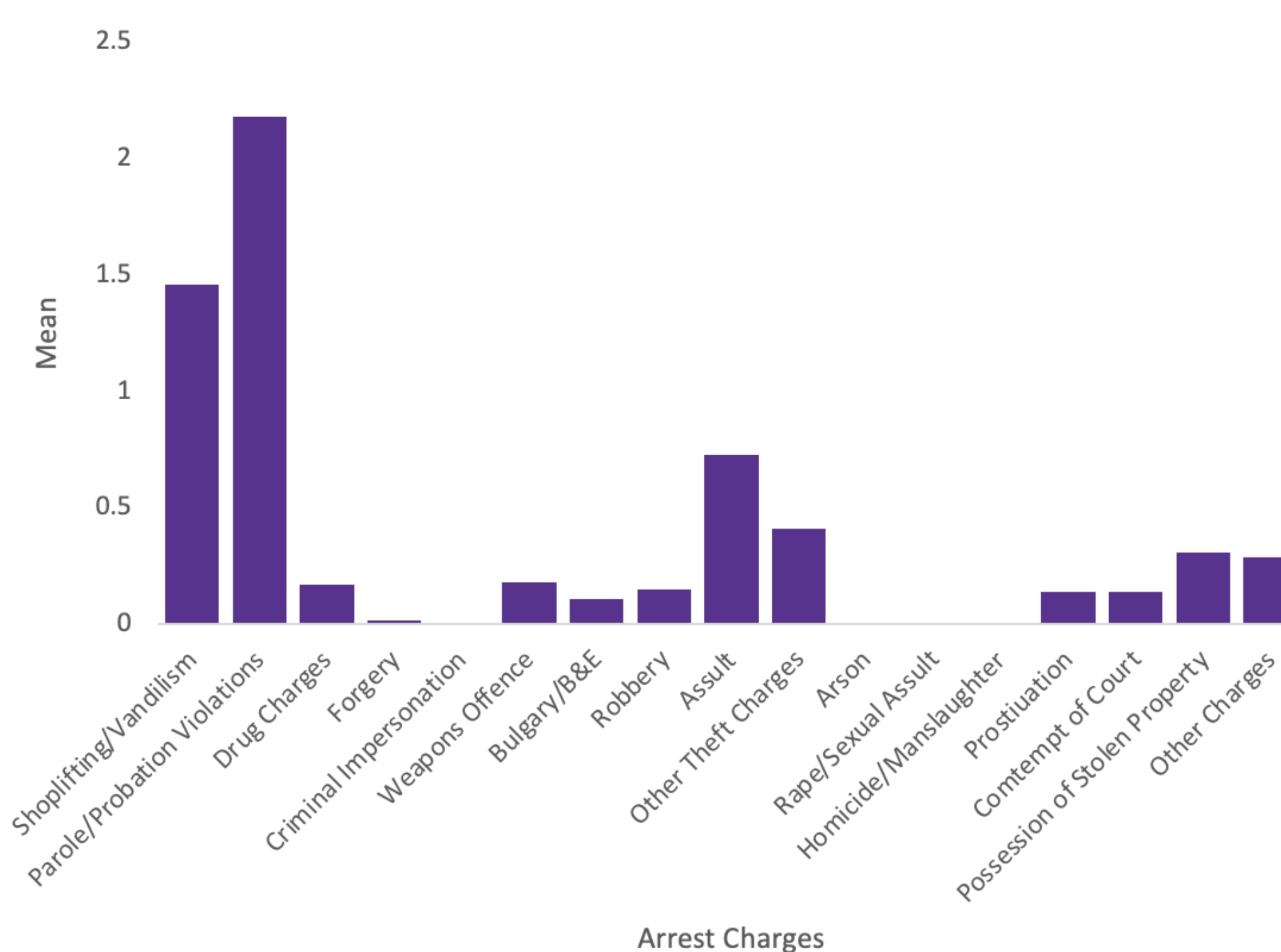
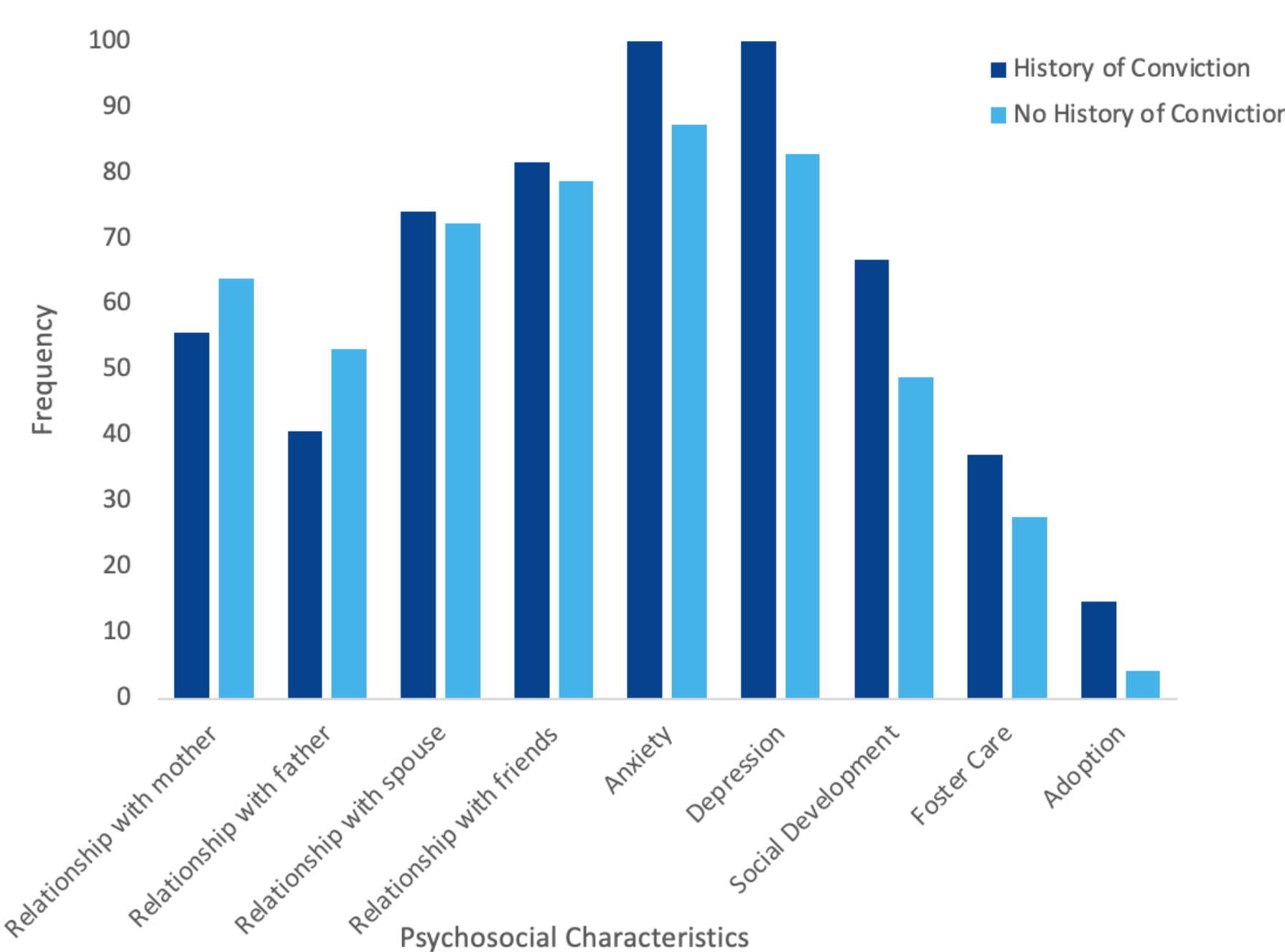
Prior arrest (56.9%)



Conviction (36.5%)



Incarceration rate: 2.24/person  
 Incarceration time 4.84 months/person



## CONCLUSION

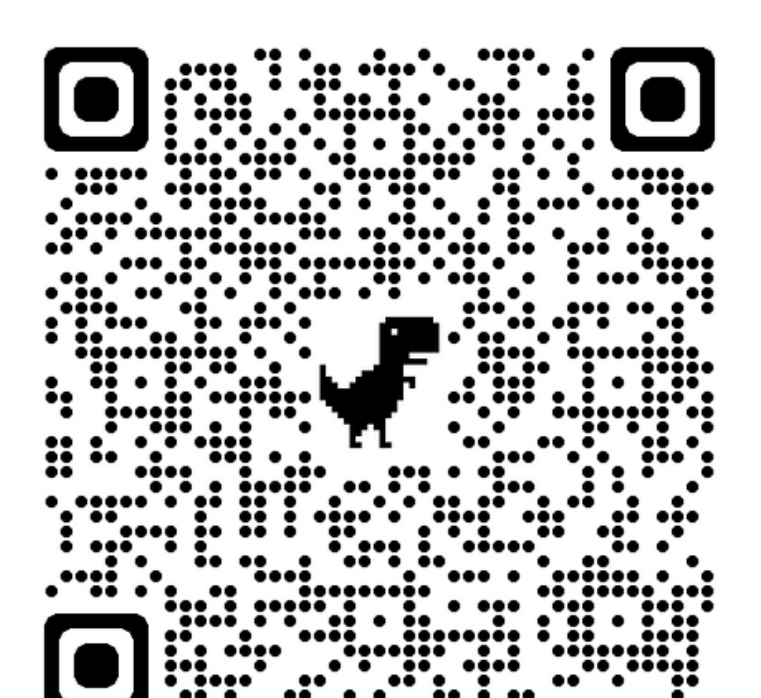
- Parole and probation violations is the most common arrest charge against PCAP clients.
- Clients with a history of criminal conviction have higher rates of depression than those with no history of conviction.
- Clients with a history of criminal conviction have lower rates of inpatient psychiatric treatment than those with no history of conviction
- Rates of adoption, foster care, Department of Social Development, presence of supportive relationships or self-reported anxiety did not differ between convicted and non-convicted populations


**Future Directions:** We suggest this study be repeated with a greater sample size as more PCAP clients are recruited to increase power of the study. Additionally, a study investigating the recidivism rate of PCAP clients using PCAP exit survey may be useful in highlighting characteristics associated with recidivism.

## FUNDING PROVIDED BY



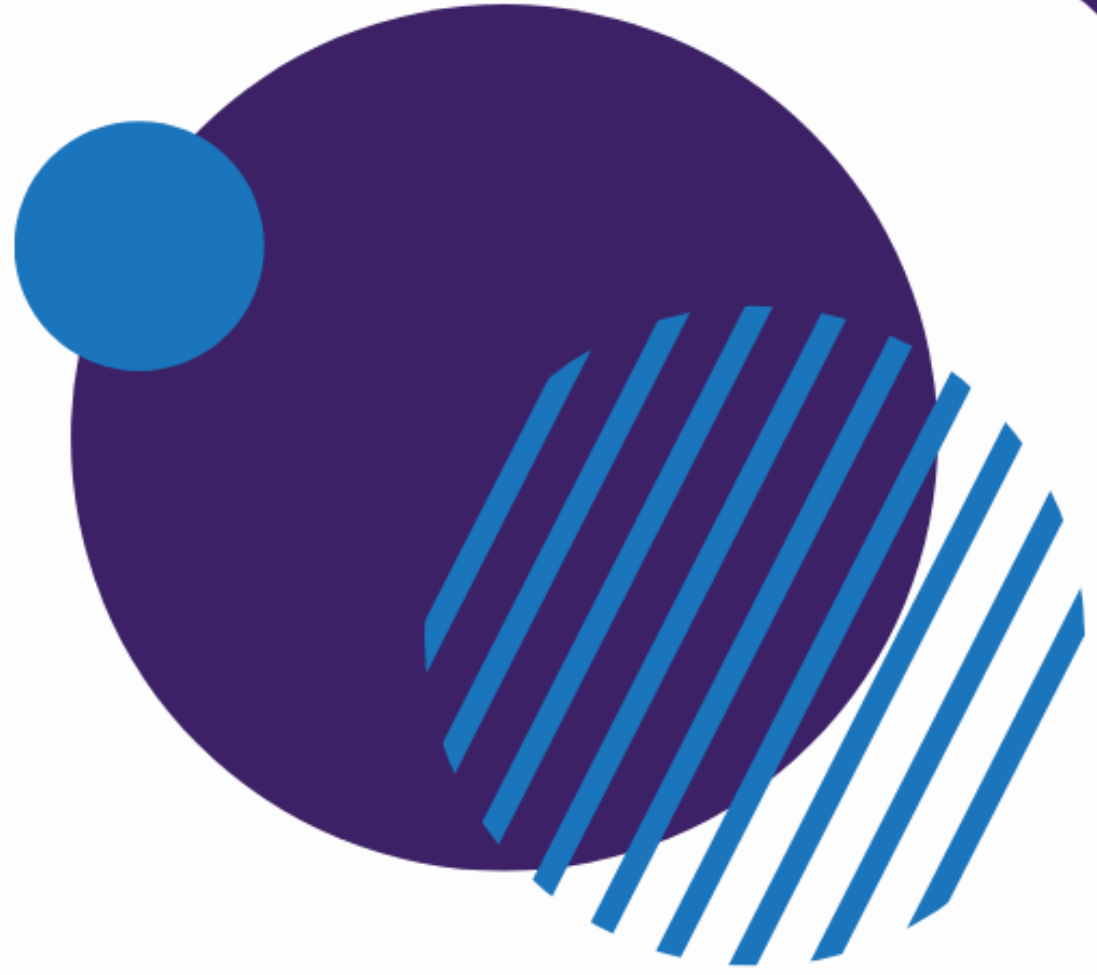
## REFERENCES






### PCAP

Parent Child Assistance Program



PCAP is a **unique program** that provides **personalized** support for women/birthing people who use substances by pairing them with an Advocate for three years. Advocates work with clients to identify, set, and achieve their **goals**. Together, Advocates and clients connect with community resources, and navigate complex systems to build the client's personal assets and autonomy.

Parents who use substances are more likely to experience adversity and feel isolated from their communities. The impact of this directly impacts their children, and the cycle continues. PCAP is only one part of the puzzle needed to disrupt this cycle. Our families need support from every aspect of their community. In the last year, we have watched our first clients graduate from the program. We are so excited for what the future holds for them.



PCAP Team: Holly Seale, Lead PCAP Advocate; Kelly Carline, PCAP Advocate, Hallie Merry, PCAP Advocate; Also Pictured: Joanna Beckett.