

Prisoner Health is Public Health



Professor Michael Levy
Director, ACT Justice Health Services



Australian Prisoners

- ABS – 30 June 2011 – 29,106 prisoners (26% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)
- Productivity Commission - 2008/2009 - \$2.8 billion spent on corrective services
- Kinner – ~ 385,000 Australians have been incarcerated (2%)
- Quilty – ~ 4% of Australian children are impacted by parental incarceration

Prisoner Health

Australian Prisoners

- Education: Low school achievement = best independent predictor of convictions up to age 32 years.
- Disability: 18% ♀ and 27% ♂ scored below “pass” on intellectual disability screening
- Employment: ~ 50% of total will never gain meaningful employment; those that do resume work experience a drop in salary

Prisoner Health

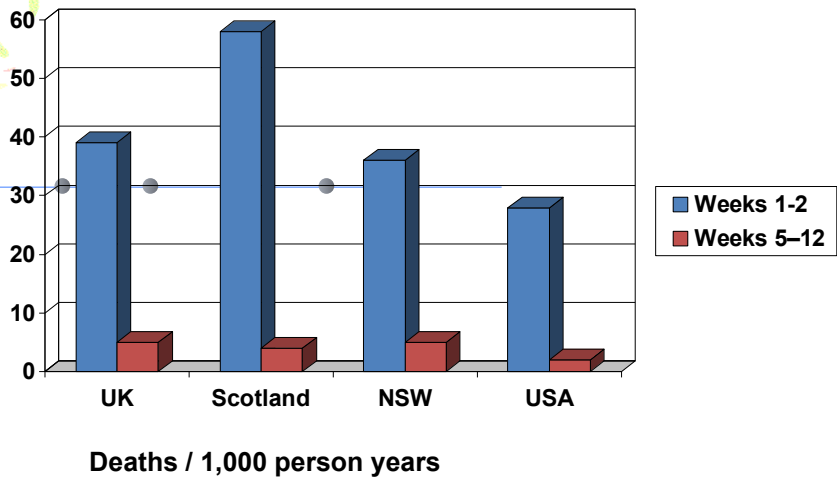
Australian Prisoners

- 81% of prisoners are current smokers, and 74% smoke daily (18% of the general population are current smokers, and 15% smoke daily)
- 52% of prison entrants report drinking at risky levels (21% of the general population)

Australian Prisoners

- 80% of prisoners have been estimated to have used illicit drugs in their lifetime (39% of the general population)
- 31% of prisoners reported having ever been diagnosed with a mental health disorder (2.5 times higher than the general population)
- 16% of prisoners were currently receiving medication for mental illness

Post-release Mortality



Delivering Health Services

- Few inmates had never seen a doctor (4% of males and 2% ♀)
- 75% ♂ and 78% ♀ had their last medical consultation was in PRISON
- Aboriginal inmates can be introduced to Community Controlled services, while incarcerated

Prisoner Health

Delivering Health Services

- 22% ♀ and 17% ♂ had been admitted to a general or psychiatric hospital in the past 12 months for an overnight stay or longer
- Mental health problems were the most common cause of hospitalizations for both women and men
- Prison hospital admission (previous 12 months): 9% ♀ and 29% ♂
- Emergency Department - 13% ♀ and 5% ♂ had visited an emergency or community outpatient department in the past 4 weeks

Prisoner Health

Delivering Health Services

- Prison clinics provide a broad range of health services to prisoners, integrating nursing care, general practitioners, dental services, pharmacies, and specialist medical services
- Inmates are required to use the clinic to obtain many routine items taken for granted in the community such as NRT, analgesics, Band-aids, and skin creams

Prisoner Health

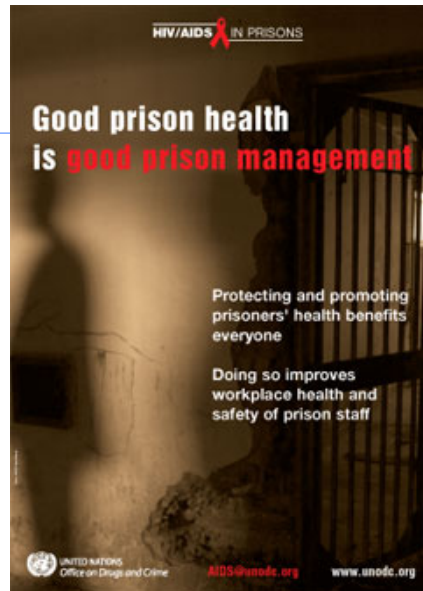


Harm Minimisation The Australian Way

- Immunisation (hepatitis A, hepatitis B)
- Condoms / dental dams
- Bleach
- Pharmacotherapies
- Regulated provision of injecting equipment

Harm Minimisation The Australian Way

- All jurisdictions offered hepatitis vaccination, with the ACT and Tasmania conducting evaluations
- The provision of condoms occurred in six jurisdictions – with Queensland and NT not allowing access
- Disinfectants were provided in all jurisdictions except Western Australia, Tasmania, and NT

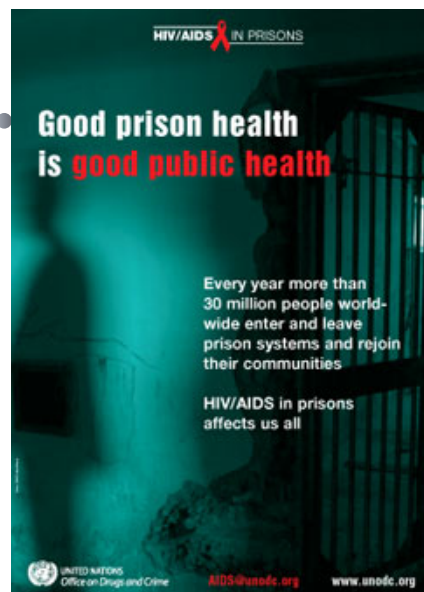


Prisoner Health and Public Health

- 1st wave – sanitary movement
- 2nd wave – rational science movement
- 3rd wave – welfare movement
- 4th wave – social determinism, and beyond

Prisoner Health is Public Health

- 1st wave – prison reform
 - 2nd wave – prison reform
 - 3rd wave – prison reform
 - 4th wave – ???????
-
- Social determinants, justice reinvestment



Conclusions

- Connection between prison and community health care services is essential for health engagement and public health benefit
- Prison health can substantially contribute to crime reduction and community safety
- Prisoner health is public health

Nelson Mandela

It is said that no one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails. A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones.

**WORD OF
THE DAY**
(PLUS POLL)

why

- for what reason or purpose
- the reason for which



POLL

Human society gets stupider every day doesn't it? Really, the whole thing is a total madhouse and nobody with any authority will come out and admit it publicly; right? And nobody on the planet can understand what the hell is actually going on – it's a ridiculous out of control fiasco posing as civilisation; a massive appalling failure smothered in deceptions and idiotic ideas. Right?

- Yes
 No

Vote

[View results](#)

Poll closes in 2 days.



Leung