



With this newsletter we would like to give you updated information about the WHO Health in Prisons Project (HIPP) and its current activities. If you want some information to be included in our newsletters, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Launch of the Prison Health guide in Russian

The Russian version of the HIPP-publication “*Health in Prisons, a WHO guide to the essentials in prison health*” was launched during the international seminar “HIV prevention, treatment and care in prisons”. The seminar took place on 26 February in Moscow, Russia and was organized jointly by WHO/Europe, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

The Russian version has been published with additional financial support from the Royal Ministry of Health and Care Services, Norway and the AIDS Foundation East-West.

Copies of the guide can be ordered from the Health in Prisons Project.



Seminar 'HIV prevention, treatment and care in prisons'

Survey on Prisons and Women's Health

The Health in Prisons Project has developed, in collaboration with the UK Women's Offender Health Research Interest Group, a survey 'Women's Health and Health Care across the European Prison Estate'. The aim of the survey is to provide an overview of the health of female prisoners and the policy and practice concerning health care services provided for female prisoners within the WHO European Region. The results of the survey will be used as input for the draft declaration and background paper for the Annual Conference 2008.

Annual Conference

“Prisons and Women's Health” and Network Meeting 2008

This year's annual conference and network meeting will take place on **12-15 November 2008 in Kiev, Ukraine**

A major part of the work of the Health in Prisons Project (HIPP) so far has been influenced by the fact that the majority of prisoners in all European countries are men. However, it is evident that women prisoners have different and extra needs, which must be addressed. Because women prisoners are just a small minority of the prison population (on average 4-5%), their needs are often either ignored or hidden in the historically and present male oriented prison system. HIPP has recognized this and has chosen the topic for the annual HIPP Conference 2008 to be: ‘Prisons and Women's Health’.

To make a few comparisons with male prisoners, we see that the percentage of women prisoners being in prisons for a non-violent, property or drug offence is higher than among men. In addition, women prisoners' physical, mental and emotional needs differ from those of men, e.g. different needs relating to drug dependence, mental health, sexual abuse and hygiene.

Existing research indicates that women prisoners are more likely to be suffering from certain mental health diseases, drug dependence and self-harm than male prisoners. They have particular needs when pregnant in prison. Another important fact to realize is that the effects of women's imprisonment on their family are generally more severe than the effects of male imprisonment, especially when the woman is the sole carer of her children.

Based on literature review and a round-table session, a Declaration and background paper on ‘Prisons and Women's Health’ will be prepared for the Conference. HIPP also intends to submit several publications as part of the work to raise the attention for this important issue.

Within WHO EURO the following programmes are closely involved in the work on Prisons and Women's Health:

- Mental Health programme
- Violence and Injury Prevention Programme
- Gender and Health Programme

Prison Health Database

Over the coming months the database will be reviewed, in collaboration with main partner in the database project, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA). The database will be shortened and questions which cause confusion now, will be reformulated. We will of course keep all our network members informed during this process. If you have any suggestions for the review, please do not hesitate to contact us. Your input will be highly appreciated.

Link to the database: <http://data.euro.who.int/HIP>



Launch of Trenčín Statement 'Prisons and Mental Health' London, June 2008

The Trenčín Statement draws the attention of all countries in Europe to the essential need for greater focus on mental health problems among people in custodial settings. Of the nine million prisoners world-wide, at least one million suffer from a significant mental disorder, and even more suffer from common mental health problems such as depression and anxiety. There is often co-morbidity with conditions such as personality disorder, alcoholism and drug dependence.



The Statement is a product of the WHO Health in Prisons Project work during 2007 where the focus was on mental health in prisons across the European Region. The project organized a mental health conference in Trenčín, Slovakia in October 2007 where the Statement was adopted by the 28 European Member States that were present at the conference.

Call for action

The Statement highlights that without urgent and comprehensive action, prisons will move closer to becoming twenty-first Century asylums for the mentally ill, full of those who most require treatment and care but who are held in unsuitable places with limited help and treatment available.

The mental health of prisoners cannot be left as an issue only for prison authorities; it impacts on all of society. As a great majority of prisoners will at some point return to the community, it is in the best interest of society that a prisoner's health needs are met, that the prisoner is adequately prepared for resettlement and that the causes of re-offending are addressed.

Six key criteria for success are highlighted in the Statement, which would contribute significantly to the mental health and well-being of all prisoners and to the well-being of the community as a whole.

The launch

During the launch of the Trenčín Statement, the key criteria will be presented and it will be demonstrated how these criteria could be used by the countries of Europe. There will also be an opportunity for questions and discussion.

The event is organized by the WHO Health in Prisons Project, in collaboration with its Collaborating Centre, UK Department of Health and the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health.

A press note will be published on the website after the event.

Round Table on Prisons and Women's health

A Round Table with experts on women's health and prisons is planned for **25-26 June 2008**, in London, United Kingdom. The aim of the meeting is a discussion on a background paper on Prisons and Women's health and an agreement on an outline of a WHO Conference Declaration on the topic. The meeting will be hosted by the HIPP Collaborating Centre, Department of Health, London and is co-sponsored by the Quaker Council for European Affairs, Brussels.

Steering Group meeting

The Steering Group of the Health in Prisons project had its last meeting in Lisbon, Portugal on 13-14 March 2008 and was hosted by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA).

The action plan 2007-2010 was discussed in detail, as well as the conference and network meeting 2008.

Other important issues on the agenda of the meeting were: the new organizational structure of WHO EURO; the Trenčín Statement on Prisons and Mental Health; the Prison Health Database; an update of the Best Practice Award scheme and the Conference and network meeting 2009 and 2010.

The next Steering Group meeting will take place in Ukraine, just after the network meeting 2008.



Contact HIPP:

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