



*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 next newsletter, please do not hesitate to let us know.*



### Conference and network meeting 2007, Slovakia

On 18 and 19 October, the annual HIPP conference and network meeting took place in Trenčín, Slovakia. During the conference, the draft Status Paper on Prisons and Mental Health was discussed. The paper is now being adapted and the final version will be published early 2008.

During the network meeting a lot of information was exchanged within the network. Some countries gave a presentation about their national situation and the HIPP informed the network members about the activities, the action plan 2007-2011 and especially the prison health database. The possibilities of the database were presented online, while stressing its importance.

Ms Ingrid Lycke Ellingsen from the Prison Health Expert Group, Northern Dimension gave a presentation about prisons and women's health, the topic for the annual HIPP conference 2008. Both the conference and network meet-

### Mental health in prisons: action needed!

A large audience, with nearly 30 countries of Europe represented, were unanimous in calling for urgent action to start improving the care of those prisoners who have a mental health problem. During the WHO HIPP conference 2007 this problem was addressed. The facts presented were alarming and painted a picture of grossly unmet needs. One of the keynote speakers, Dr Matt Muijen (Regional Adviser Mental Health, WHO Regional Office for Europe) stated that the current level and quality of mental health services in prisons were largely unsatisfactory. The most vulnerable people often receive inadequate care in very poor settings, contributing to mental illness rather than supporting recovery. These challenges are recognized in the WHO Helsinki Mental Health Declaration.

Dr Lars Møller (Project Manager of HIPP) indicated the determination of WHO HIPP to work closely with all organizations including NGOs to replace the present shamefully inadequate care with services working within the standards of human care called for by internationally agreed conditions of human rights. The next stage would be the dissemination of the challenging Executive Summary, as a call for wider recognition by all those concerned with mental health and prisons. This Summary could act as a checklist for governments wanting to do a quick look to check the current services adequacy and to see broadly where further action would be possible.

*'We will have to look again at this most difficult issue, but we hope that the work already done and the report will be the first step in making changes and improvements in the care of so many whose mental health needs are undoubtedly neglected at the moment.'*

ing were a great success. Once again many thanks to the local organizers, in particular Dr Ladislav Getlík and Ms Petra Mrvová, to the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health and to the WHO Collaborating Centre and the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health!

### Steering Group

The Steering Group of the HIPP had a short meeting in Slovakia.

It was pointed out that the conference had been very successful, with interesting and useful presentations and valuable discussions regarding the Status Paper on Prisons and Mental Health. Also the network meeting was seen as a great success and especially the group session was considered as something to be kept in the programme for 2008.

It was generally agreed we should try to avoid having the conference and network meeting on two different locations next year. A special day for individual training/ consultation about the database should also be included.

Further practical issues regarding the conference and network meeting 2008 were also discussed.

It is not clear yet which country will

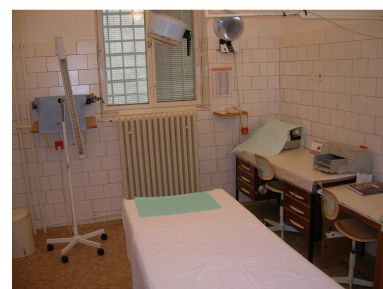
host the event.

The next meeting of the Steering Group will be held in Lisbon in March 2008 (hosted by EMCDDA).

### Visit Prison Hospital Trenčín

On 20 October, a visit to the prison hospital of Slovakia, located in Trenčín, was organized for the network members. The hospital provides continuous ambulatory and institutional medical care for accused persons and sentenced prisoners. It also provides the medical and social care of prison employees. It has capacity for 380 persons.

The visit gave a very good impression of the hospital and was highly appreciated by the visitors.





## Prison Health Guide

The publication 'Health in Prisons: A WHO guide to the essentials in prison health' has been widely distributed\*. At the moment, it is also being translated into Russian. Soon it will be translated into Farsi, Chinese, Polish and Italian as well.

## Prison Health Database

The Prison Health Database is being filled out gradually. However, there is still a lot of data missing. We urgently ask country representatives to fill out the questions in the database. Please contact us in case you have difficulties entering the data.

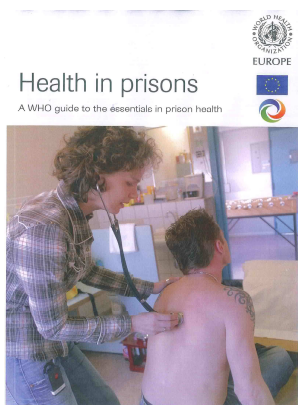
In December 2007 a report about the database will be written for the European Commission, who is partly funding the project. In the report we will inform about the progress of the data availability and make individual country recommendations.

## Conference 2008 Prisons and Women's Health

The topic of the HIPP conference 2008 will be 'Prisons and Women's Health'. Because women prisoners are just a small minority of the prison population, their needs are often either ignored or hidden in the historically and present male oriented prison system. This is no longer acceptable. During the HIPP conference 2008 the special (health) needs of women in prison will be addressed.

In December 2007 HIPP and WHO Collaborating Centre will meet in Copenhagen to discuss the first outlines and plans for next year. A meeting with other units within WHO-EURO related to the topic (e.g. violence, gender-specific health, mental health) will also be organized.

\* Additional copies from the guide can be ordered from the Health in Prisons Project.



Network meeting 2007, Slovakia

## Best Practice Awards

During the network dinner, the following prisons received a Best Practice Award:

- Lantin Prison, Belgium
- HMP Moorland Closed, England
- Correctional Institutions of the Criminal Correction System in the city of Almaty and the Almaty Region, Kazakhstan
- P.I. Utrecht, location Nieuwersluis, The Netherlands
- HMP & I Cornton Vale, Scotland
- HMP Full Sutton, England
- Tartu Prison, Estonia
- Detention Centre Zeist, The Netherlands
- Centro Penitenciario Madrid-IV (Navalcarnero), Spain
- Jamioux Prison, Belgium
- HMP YOI Swinfen Hall, England
- PI Zuid Oost, location Maashegge Overloon, The Netherlands
- Tver Regional Directorate of Corrections, Russian Federation
- Women's Prison of Alcalá de Guadaíra, Spain

*Congratulations to all these prisons!*

More information about the Best Practice Awards can be found by following the link: [http://www.uclan.ac.uk/facs/health/hsdu/settings/who\\_awards\\_2007.html](http://www.uclan.ac.uk/facs/health/hsdu/settings/who_awards_2007.html)



Network meeting dinner 2007



Best Practice Awards The Netherlands



Best Practice Awards The Netherlands

## Best Practice Awards The Netherlands

On 22 November the Dutch Agency of Correctional Institutions organized a special occasion during which the Best Practice Awards were handed over to the Dutch award winners. The general director, Mr Gijs Wouters, forwarded the awards. Ms Lenie Kooistra, Director International Affairs represented the Ministry of Health. It was very motivating to see that the awards really meant a lot to the awards winners and the prisons!





## SIG

SIG is a Special Interest Group about working with sexual violence and trauma within custodial settings. On the right, you will find an article about the SIG, which has been sent by Peter Jones, Chair of the group.

### Contact HIPP:

In case you have any questions or suggestions regarding this newsletter, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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Network meeting 2007, Slovakia



Network meeting 2007, Slovakia



Meeting with Self-Governing Region of Trenčín

## Working with sexual violence and trauma within custodial settings A way forward

In June 2007 a special interest Group (SIG) was launched. The WHO Collaborating Centre for Health and Prisons DH London facilitates it. Its Vision is to pool expertise and best practice to identify research agendas and develop excellence in working with sexual violence and trauma in the custodial setting.

It is not uncommon for imprisoned victims of sexual violence and trauma to acquire various mental health problems and challenging behaviours, simply in order to survive within a very challenging and problematic environment. Both the prison staff and the victim find themselves in a 'no win' situation. The victim can be unclear as to how and to who disclose, and is often left with a deteriorating mental health problem. This may include depression, withdrawal from relationships and finding themselves increasingly isolated within the system.

I am keen to develop a strategy that empowers both victims and staff alike to engage manage and treat victims more effectively within the custodial environment. It is the work of the SIG within WHO HIPP to begin this process.

A key aim of this strategy is to begin to raise awareness of the complex psychological, emotional issues faced by the male victim of sexual abuse within the institutional setting, to provide an understanding of these issues to the professionals working in this arena, and to provide a bridge that reduces re-victimization and facilitates empowerment. The aim is to begin to create a more constructive and therapeutic culture that promotes both psychological growth of the victim, and develops healthy relationships between staff and inmates.

A key outcome of this strategy is to begin to reduce the mental health problems experienced by victims of sexual violence and trauma, and also the stress on staff in managing these victims. The strategy involves tackling the issue on three fronts.

- Raising the awareness of staff and deepening their understanding of victims of sexual violence and trauma, making engagement more effective, and reducing barriers between staff and victim.
- Creating a healthier regime within which victims can disclose their abuse to Officers on the landing, and within the prison as a whole, and thereby reduce the time between suffering as a victim and getting help.
- Identify appropriate care pathways for victims of sexual abuse both inside and outside the prison in order to support the victim in their treatment and recovery.

A central premise of this approach is to see the victim in the context of their environment and peer relationships, and therefore begin to promote health in both the individual and the staff. Working with this group of people will always be challenging, and it is important that we begin to address the needs of this marginalized group of people. The work of the strategy group seeks to understand and work with both the victim and staff in breaking down barriers in order for the victim to work through their past history of abuse, and thereby reduce associated mental health problems.

I am keen to develop a national and international network with a view to developing best practice and a research base around this important area.

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