



WHO Health in Prisons Project

Newsletter November 2009



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.

Breaking news...

In November 2009, the temporary adviser to the WHO Health in Prisons Project, Dr Alex Gatherer, was presented the prestigious American Public Health Association (APHA) Presidential Citation Award for 2009. In the fifty years or so of these awards, this is the first time this award has been given linked to a WHO project. It is a great international recognition of all the efforts of all those involved in the Health in Prisons Project, the team in WHO/Europe, the WHO Collaborating Centre for Prison and Health in London and the Members of the Project: the member states representatives and the partner organizations. The Award was announced at the same time that the WHO Health in Prisons Project was shortlisted for the European Health Forum's Gastein Award. Although it did not win the Award, this certainly added European recognition of the work of the Project.

Prison Health Protection: experts from around the world agree in Madrid on what needs to be done

During 29-31 October 2009, an international conference on Prison Health Protection was held in the Ministry of Health and Social Policy in Madrid, Spain. The conference was organized by the WHO Health in Prisons Project (HIPP) in collaboration with a number of key partner organizations* and was held in conjunction with the HIPP Network Meeting which took place on 28 October 2009. HIPP would like to express its great thanks to the Spanish government for hosting the events!

Over 340 policy makers, prison staff, criminal justice staff, health care staff, researchers, and NGO representatives from 65 countries worldwide attended the conference and shared their national experiences and best practices. Main outcome of the conference is the **Madrid Recommendation**, recognizing the urgent need in prisons for a set of measures, programmes and guidelines aiming to prevent and control major communicable diseases in prison.

Prisons are extreme high-risk environments for transmission of communicable diseases such as HIV, Tuberculosis and Hepatitis, due to overcrowding, poor nutrition, limited access to health care, continued illicit drug use and unsafe injecting practices, unprotected sex and tattooing. The prevalence of these diseases is many times higher than in the community. If prisons are not to become a breeding ground for communicable diseases, prevention and treatment must be an integral part of the penal system and links with the public health sector must be established and strengthened. Health protection and promotion measures must be in place, addressing the right of prisoners to equivalent health care as available in the community and recognizing the prison environment as a unique opportunity for interventions.

The Madrid Recommendation, presented and discussed at the end of the conference, recognizes the need and availability in prisons for the following concrete measures:

- treatment programmes for infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C and TB
- treatment programmes for drug users, including opioid substitution therapy
- harm reduction measures, including needle/syringe exchange programmes
- guidelines on hygienic requirements
- guaranteed throughcare for prisoners upon entry and after release from prison, in close collaboration with stakeholders
- mental health support to prisoners suffering from communicable diseases
- training of all prison staff on prevention, treatment and control of communicable diseases

The Madrid Recommendation will be widely promoted and disseminated throughout the WHO European Region and will be used as a set of guiding principles to develop and strengthen prison health in Europe as well as in other regions of the world.

* Co-organizers of the conference were the Spanish Ministry of Health and Social Policy, Spanish Ministry of Interior, Sociedad Española de Sanidad Penitenciaria, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, Council of Europe's Pompidou Group, Aids Foundation East-West, KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation and Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health and with support from the International Journal of Prisoner Health and the Revista Española de Sanidad.



Opening of the conference by Dr Trinidad Jiménez García, Minister of Health and Social Policy, Spain



Plenary room, conference 29 October 2009



Keynote presentation on "Prisons, human rights and the need for harm reduction" by Mrs Sandra Elisabeth Roelofs, First Lady of Georgia, CCM Chairperson, Stop TB Ambassador, 30 October 2009



Keynote speech by Dr Marc Danzon, Regional Director WHO Regional Office for Europe during conference dinner, 29 October 2009



Conference dinner, 29 October 2009



HIPP Network Meeting 2009

On 28 October 2009 the HIPP Network Meeting took place in the Ministry of Health and Social Policy - Madrid, Spain. The main aim of the network meeting was to share information between HIPP and its Network Members and among the Network Members themselves. During the meeting, HIPP and the Collaborating Centre for Prison and Health updated the network on their activities and achievements, followed by a presentation about the development of a WHO framework for the assessment of prison health (see more on the right). After that, the network was split into groups to discuss a number of questions. The main feedback from the groups included:

- Organizing small specific interest group meetings more times a year may be a good option.
- There is an overwhelming support for 2-day HIPP Network meetings with a conference only every 2-3 years.
- The idea of 'regional' meetings is not broadly supported
- There is a strong support for the idea to develop a WHO framework for the assessment of prison health, which needs to be a flexible tool which takes into account differences between countries.
- HIPP publications are extremely useful in sharing good practices and as a lever when trying to get extra resources for health services in prisons.

In the afternoon KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation presented the new International Guidelines for Control of Tuberculosis in Prisons. The updated guidelines expand on the problems of TB-HIV co-infection and multidrug resistant TB (MDR-TB) in prisons and contains updated information on diagnostic and treatment approaches. KNCV's presentation was followed by 5 country presentations (Switzerland, Belgium, Slovenia, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia) about their national situation regarding prison health.

In the evening of 28 October 2009 a dinner for all network members was organized, during which the Best Practice Awards 2009 were given out.

Best Practice Awards 2009

The WHO Collaborating Centre for Prison and Health organizes every second year the WHO HIPP's award scheme, established with the aim of identifying, acknowledging and disseminating best national practices concerning prison health among the HIPP Member States. This year, 13 applicants have won the Best Practice Award. For more information about the Award winners, please visit our website: www.euro.who.int/prisons



Women's health in Prison

The Declaration on Women's health in Prison, which is the result of the conference on the topic in November 2008 in Kiev, Ukraine, will soon be followed up by practical checklists and guidance notes. The checklists will be aimed at 1. Ministers and senior policy makers; 2. Prison governors and senior prison management. There are expected to be available on the HIPP website www.euro.who.int/prisons early 2010.

WHO Framework for the assessment of prison health

HIPP presented the idea to develop a WHO Framework for the assessment of prison health to its network members during the Network Meeting in Madrid. The idea was broadly supported. The purpose of a prison health assessment is to obtain a clear overview of the current health of prisoners in its broadest sense and of the health services available to them. A WHO Framework would allow for consistency in data collected between prisons, countries and over time and would imply quality assurance and increased influence. The assessment will consist of two components: 1. prisoners' health problems and 2. health services provided to them. Indicators as currently included in the WHO Prison Health Database will be carefully considered.

HIPP will start by drafting a detailed project plan for this project. Member States and partner organizations that would like to be involved in the project, are invited to contact Ms Brenda van den Bergh, HIPP.

Post-release document

During the conference in Madrid, HIPP presented its draft recommendations on the prevention of overdose death upon release from prison during a plenary panel discussion. The document will be finalized and published early next year and will be presented at the International Harm Reduction Conference, taking place in Liverpool during 25-29 April 2010. Any comments on the draft recommendations could be sent to Dr Lars Moller, HIPP.

Contact HIPP:

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

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