

Preventing and controlling major communicable diseases in prisons – the Madrid Recommendation

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Issues

If prisons are not to become breeding grounds for communicable diseases, prevention and treatment must be an integral part of the penal system and links with the public health sector 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.

Description

The Madrid Recommendation, a main outcome of an International Conference on Prison Health Protection in October 2009 in Madrid, Spain, recognizes the urgent need for a set of health protection and promotion measures to prevent and control major communicable diseases in prison.

Lessons learned

At the conference, over 300 representatives from 65 countries worldwide agreed on the following set of measures, programmes and guidelines. These are outlined in the Madrid Recommendation:

- 1) measures to use alternatives to imprisonment where possible and to reduce overcrowding in prisons;
- 2) counselling, screening and treatment programmes for infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS, TB, hepatitis B and C and sexually transmitted infections;
- 3) treatment programmes for drug users, according to assessed needs, resources and national and international standards;
- 4) harm reduction measures, including opioid substitution therapy, needle and syringe exchange, provision of bleach and condom distribution;
- 5) availability of post exposure prophylaxis and prevention of mother-to-child transmission;
- 6) guidelines on the hygiene requirements necessary for the management of communicable diseases in prisons and other infections and prevention of nosocomial infections;
- 7) guaranteed through-care for prisoners, in close collaboration with stakeholders and local health services;
- 8) mental health support especially to prisoners suffering from communicable diseases and
- 9) training of all prison staff on prevention, treatment and control of communicable diseases

Next steps

The Madrid Recommendation will be used as a set of guiding principles to develop and strengthen prison health globally.




The Madrid Recommendation:
Health protection in prisons as an essential part of public health

La Recommendation de Madrid :
La protection de la santé pénitentiaire comme composante essentielle de la santé publique

Die Empfehlung von Madrid:
Gesundheitsschutz in Haftanstalten als integraler Bestandteil des Gesundheitswesens

Мадридская рекомендация:
Защита здоровья в местах лишения свободы как важный компонент общественного здравоохранения

