

Syracuse University

SURFACE at Syracuse University

International Programs

International Programs

Summer 2020

Harm Reduction In Prison Settings: A Relevant Approach To Reduce HIV Transmission?

Amine Ghrabi

Follow this and additional works at: <https://surface.syr.edu/eli>



Part of the [Health Policy Commons](#), [Public Health Commons](#), and the [Substance Abuse and Addiction Commons](#)

The views expressed in these works are entirely those of their authors and do not represent the views of the Fulbright Program, the U.S. Department of State, or any of its partner organizations.

Recommended Citation

Ghrabi, Amine, "Harm Reduction In Prison Settings: A Relevant Approach To Reduce HIV Transmission?" (2020). *International Programs*. 43.
<https://surface.syr.edu/eli/43>

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the International Programs at SURFACE at Syracuse University. It has been accepted for inclusion in International Programs by an authorized administrator of SURFACE at Syracuse University. For more information, please contact surface@syr.edu.

Harm reduction in prison settings: A relevant approach to reduce HIV transmission?

Poster presented by: Amine Ghrabi (Tunisia) - English Language Institute, Syracuse University – August 7th, 2020

ABSTRACT

Harm reduction defines a set of policies and interventions aiming to address the adverse health consequences associated with drug use. Compared to the general population, prisoners are disproportionately affected by HIV. Thanks to its strong emphasis on public health and human rights principles, harm reduction can effectively reduce transmission of HIV inside prison settings.

INTRODUCTION

• Harm reduction ?

- A set of policies, services, and, interventions aiming to reduce adverse health consequences associated with drug use and/or sexual behaviors, whether legal or illegal (Harm Reduction International, 2020)
- Based on human rights and public health principles
- Examples include testing and counselling, treatment and care, syringe distribution programs, opioid substitution therapy,...
- Is harm reduction a relevant approach to reduce HIV transmission inside prisons?

1. Prisoners are disproportionately affected by HIV

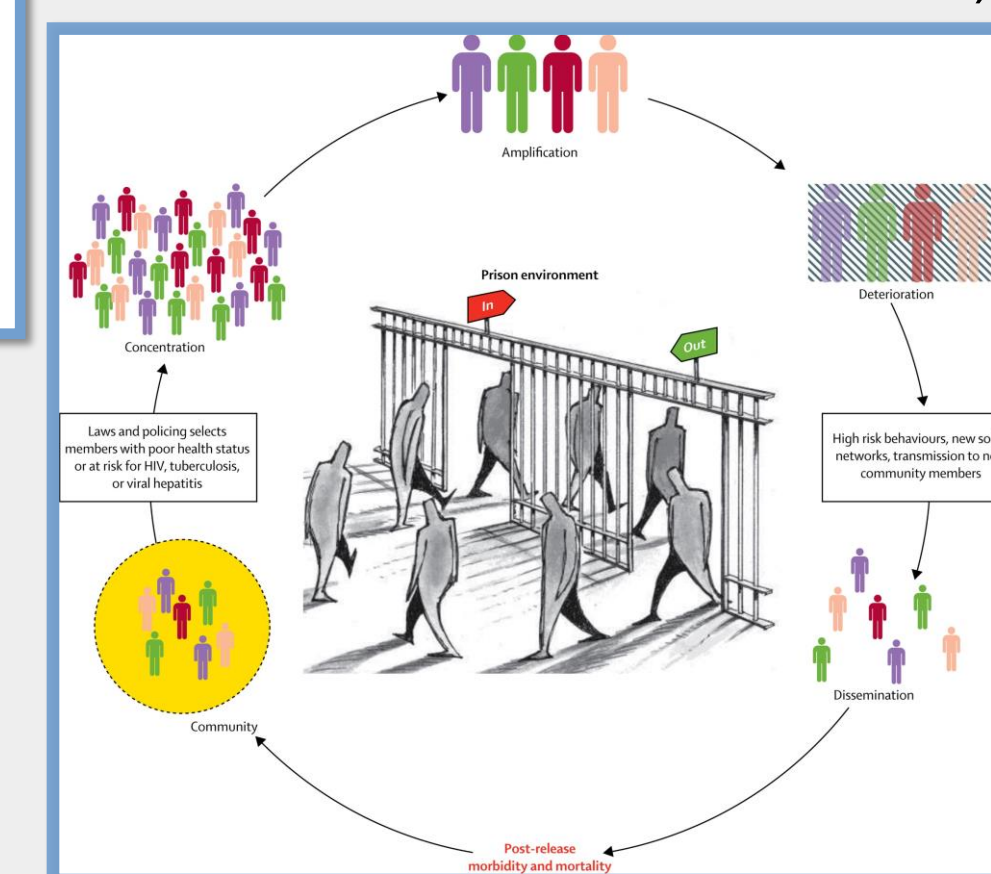
- Global prison population (2018): 10.7 M (Roy Walmsley, 2018)
- Global HIV prevalence (2017): 3.4% (Sayyah et al., 2019)

2. Prison health is a major concern for public health

- Usually temporary stay with return to community (general population)
- 60% of people who inject drugs had a history of incarceration globally (Degenhardt et al., 2017)
- OST available in 54 countries (Sander et al., 2019)
- Syringe distribution in 10/86 countries (Sander et al., 2019)



Figure 3: Relations between prison health and public health, adapted from (Kamarulzaman et al., 2016)



3. Access to health services is a fundamental human right

- **Principle of equivalence** of healthcare (N. Mandela rules)
 - Rule 24: “Prisoners should enjoy the same standards of health care that are available in the community and should have access to necessary health-care services free of charge without discrimination on the grounds of their legal status.” (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2015)
- A right mentioned in the international law and conventions and recognized by medical ethics regulations (World Health Organisation, 2013)
- Syringe distribution in Spanish prisons: HIV prevalence decreased to 8.5% (21% initially) without increasing drug abuse behaviors (Ferrer-Castro et al., 2012)

CONCLUSIONS

- From a public health and human rights perspective, harm reduction is a relevant approach to address the HIV problem in prison settings.
- One major challenge would be the implementation of some harm reduction interventions given the high variability in regulations and political will across countries.

References:

- Degenhardt, L., Peacock, A., Colledge, S., Leung, J., Grebely, J., Vickerman, P., Stone, J., Cunningham, E. B., Trickey, A., Dumchev, K., Lynskey, M., Griffiths, P., Mattick, R. P., Hickman, M., & Larney, S. (2017). Global prevalence of injecting drug use and sociodemographic characteristics and prevalence of HIV, HBV, and HCV in people who inject drugs: A multistage systematic review. *The Lancet Global Health*, 5(12), e1192–e1207. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(17\)30375-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(17)30375-3)
- Ferrer-Castro, V., Crespo-Leiro, M. R., García-Marcos, L. S., Pérez-Rivas, M., Alonso-Conde, A., García-Fernández, I., Lorenzo-Guisado, A., Sánchez-Fernández, J. L., Seara-Selas, M., & Sanjosé-Vallejo, R. (2012). [Evaluation of needle exchange program at Pereiro de Aguiar prison (Ourense, Spain): Ten years of experience]. *Revista Espanola De Sanidad Penitenciaria*, 14(1), 3–11. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1575-06202012000100002>
- Harm Reduction International. (2019). *Global State of Harm Reduction: 2019 updates*.
- Harm Reduction International. <https://www.hri.global/global-state-of-harm-reduction-2019> Harm Reduction International. (2020). *What is harm reduction?* Harm Reduction International. <https://www.hri.global/what-is-harm-reduction>
- Kamarulzaman, A., Reid, S. E., Schwitters, A., Wiessing, L., El-Bassel, N., Dolan, K., Moazen, B., Wirtz, A. L., Verster, A., & Altice, F. L. (2016). Prevention of transmission of HIV, hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus, and tuberculosis in prisoners. *The Lancet*, 388(10049), 1115–1126. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(16\)30769-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(16)30769-3)
- Sander, G., Shirley-Beavan, S., & Stone, K. (2019). The Global State of Harm Reduction in Prisons. *Journal of Correctional Health Care*, 25(2), 105–120. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1078345819837909>
- Sayyah, M., Rahim, F., Kayedani, G. A., Shirbandi, K., & Saki-Melahi, A. (2019). Global View of HIV Prevalence in Prisons: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Iranian Journal of Public Health*, 48(2), 217–226.
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2015). *The United Nations standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules)*.
- Walmsley, Roy. (2018). *World prison population list* (p. 19). Institute for Criminal Policy Research. https://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/wppl_12.pdf
- World Health Organisation. (2013). *WHO | HIV prevention, treatment and care in prisons and other closed settings: WHO; World Health Organization*. https://www.who.int/hiv/pub/prisons/interventions_package/en/