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Deputy director-general of Spanish Prisons, responsible for Prison Health
Results from the Spanish experience:
Communicable diseases in Spanish prisons
Work developed by prison services

- Returning healthier people to the society – both socially and from a medical point of view

- The society must know that part of its safety depends on the success of our management.

- To ensure that its users – inmates - are provided in prison with health care with the same quality standards

Results from the Spanish experience: Communicable diseases in Spanish prisons
Early detection and appropriate treatment

-Harm reduction measures and any other measure related to health promotion are available

-Substance abuse and marginalization have caused among inmates before their imprisonment many diseases which are regularly found

-Improve health among those communities which inmates come from and to which they return once they serve their sentence.
Health action in prisons as extraordinarily valuable tool
Opportunity to change unhealthy lifestyles

- At a meeting held in Madrid, Spain during 29-30 October 2009 with representatives from 65 countries worldwide, a high number of national and international agencies and experts in prison health and public health issues, including WHO Regional Office for Europe, and The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, accepted The MR

- Is a step more towards universal acknowledgement of prison health services as a powerful tool in the fight against social inequalities related to health care.
Medical care within prisons is the gateway to the rest of public assistance
A limited group of highly dedicated professionals

- Our prison health care system is based on the work of health units set in every prison still dependent on the Spanish Home Office.

- These units count upon physicians and nursing staff to provide primary health care and transfer inmates in need of specialized assistance to specialized services and hospitals dependent on health care services of each autonomous community.
Drug treatment in prison system

Therapeutic Units are available, the aims are:

1- Prevention of drug use
2- Reduction of risk factors of drug use
3- Health care in diseases associated to drug use
4- Detoxification and treatment for drug dependency
5- Rehabilitation
In the 1980s, one of the highest European prison infection rates regarding Viral Hepatitis or HIV were found in Spain.
The first Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases program

Results throughout the years have proved very appropriate, as infection rates have decreased year after year, from 24% in 1992 to 7% in 2009.

Results from the Spanish experience: Communicable diseases in Spanish prisons
Based on the WHO recommendations

- Antibody detection tests available for all inmates
- Voluntary test taking, confidentiality regarding results,
- No-segregation based on the results,
- Free distribution of condoms and lubricant,
- Access to Syringe Exchange Programs (SEPs)
- Health education and information on HIV/AIDS and other infectious agents by means of health agents
- Access to free treatment equivalent to the one provided outside prison
- Access to parole for inmates suffering from terminal illnesses when the penitentiary surveillance judge agrees
Methadone maintenance program

- One of the main tools in rescuing inmates from harm reduction programs and transferring them to other rehabilitation programs which will enable their social reintegration.

Results from the Spanish experience: Communicable diseases in Spanish prisons
Results from the Spanish experience: 
A comprehensive approach to HIV and HCV in prisons

Since 1997 the Syringe Exchange Program
- Was aimed from the beginning at reducing the risk of transmission of those diseases which are transmitted by the exchange of syringes,
Success in controlling common communicable diseases within prison environment
Reduction of Blood borne infections

- To be precise, HIV infection in Spanish prisons is currently 4 times lower and AIDS today is 25 times less frequent than in 1989.

Results and conclusions
Reduction of Blood borne infections

- Seroconversions to HIV and HCV in prison have dramatically gone down since 2000, first year in which there was evidence of this data.

Results from the Spanish experience: Communicable diseases in Spanish prisons
We also need a change of mentality of all those authorities concerned
Thank you very much

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