



Prisoner Health is Community Health: Outcomes of a Prison-Based Peer Education Project In New Mexico Prisons

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Disclosures

- There are no financial disclosures to address.

Background

- In 2009, over 7.2 million adults were under some form of correctional supervision in the United States
- Prisoners have high rates of communicable diseases
- Most prisoners are incarcerated for relatively short periods of time
- 95% of prisoners are released back into their communities

1. US Department of Justice: Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2010. "Correctional Populations in the United States, 2009". (<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpus09.pdf>)
2. RAND Research Brief, 2003. Based on: Davis L, Pacchiana S. Health Profile of the State Prison Population and Returning Offenders: Public Health Challenges. Journal of Correctional Health Care, 2003. (http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB6013.html)
3. US Department of Justice: Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2010. "Prisoners in 2009". (<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/p09.pdf>)
4. Beck AJ, Mumola CJ. Prisoners in 1998. NCJ 175687. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs; 1999.

Background

- Prisons are high risk environments for the transmission of bloodborne viruses
- Prevalence of HCV antibody positivity in the New Mexico Corrections Department upon entry - 40%
- Persons released from the criminal justice system account for 29% to 43% of all persons infected with HCV in the United States
- Health education in prisons offers an opportunity to establish disease control in the outside community



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The New Mexico Peer Education Project



What does the NM PEP include? (Peer Educators)



- 40-hour intensive training
- Peer-led 10-hour training to general population
- Peer-led 3-hour training to all incoming incarcerated persons
- Monthly site visit with Project ECHO™ staff to increase skills and knowledge
- 1 ½-hour monthly teleECHO clinic
- Continuing education credits from UNM/Project ECHO™



NM PEP Statistics (since July 2009)

- 51 – 40 hour training sessions
- 521 peer educators trained
- 3,983 inmates attended 10-hour health classes led by peer educators
- 5,288 recently incarcerated individuals received the 3-hour class led by peer educators



Evaluation

- Formal evaluation is underway
- Questionnaires measuring knowledge, self-efficacy and behavioral intention are given pre / post 40 hour training
- Knowledge Questionnaires administered pre / post 10 hour classes led by peer educators.
- Qualitative data - focus groups and individual interviews



Pre/Post Training Evaluation

Peer Educators (N=93)	Pre-Training Mean		Post-Trainings	Paired Difference (SD) (p-value)	Effect Size for the Change(d)+
Knowledge	Test Score (20 points possible)	11.9	16.3	2.92	1.50
	Percent Score (100% Possible)	59%	81.6%	14.6%	1.50
Self-Efficacy	Overall Rating (7 Possible)	5.63	6.17	0.93	0.58
	Percent Rating (100% Possible)	80.5%	88.2%	13.3%	0.58
Students	Pre-Training Mean (N=1113)		Post-Trainings (N=949)	Difference of Means	Effect Size for the Change(d)+
Knowledge	Test Score (10 points possible)	5.00	7.13	2.13	1.02
	Percent Score (100% Possible)	50%	71.3%	21.3%	1.02

Focus Group Common Themes

- Myths and misconceptions were dispelled.
- They developed better listening/focus skills, general confidence in public speaking, mediation skills, good health practices.
- Other inmates see them as positive role models, reliable sources of health information; this training has encouraged communication between themselves and their peers.
- They plan on sharing their knowledge with their peers, families, friends, and communities.

Conclusion

- NM PEP is an innovative way to provide high quality health education to a large number of inmates in a short period of time.
- Peer educators have a unique capacity to deliver factual, relevant information to their peers.
- Prisons provide a rare opportunity to reach an at-risk, underserved population and improve public health.

Questions?

