ESTIMATING THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN PRISONS WITH LIFETIME INJECTION DRUG USE IN SEVEN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Authors: Sypsa V1, Mravčík V2, Llorens-Aleixandre N3, Carapinha L4, Sieroslawski J5, Isajeva L6, Jurgelaitiene L7, Kvaternik I8, Méndez-Hermida F3, Grohmannová K2, Royuela L9, Montanari L9

1 Department of Hygiene, Epidemiology and Medical Statistics, Medical School, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece
2 National Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Addiction, Office of the Government, Czech Republic
3 Government Delegation for the National Plan on Drugs, Ministry of Health and Social Policy, Madrid, Spain
4 SICAD (General-Directorate for Intervention on Addictive Behaviours and Dependencies), Lisbon, Portugal
5 Institute of Psychiatry and Neurology, Warsaw, Poland
6 Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, Latvia
7 Drug, Tobacco and Alcohol Control Department, Lithuania
8 National Institute of Public Health, Ljubljana, Slovenia
9 European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, Lisbon Portugal

Background: Prisons constitute important settings for harm reduction and for the prevention of infectious diseases among PWID. Aim of this analysis is to estimate the number of people in prison (PIP) with lifetime injection drug use (IDU) and with HCV infection in seven European countries.

Methods: Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia implemented surveys in prisons using the European Questionnaire on Drug Use Among People in Prison (2014-2018). Data from Spain was obtained from the Spanish survey on health and drug use among prisoners (2016). Participants provided information on lifetime IDU. For each country, the total number of PIP with lifetime IDU was obtained by multiplying the total number of PIP (from official data for 2019-2019) by the proportion of PIP with lifetime IDU. The number of HCV infections in prisons was estimated by applying existing HCV prevalence estimates among PWID to the number of PIP with lifetime IDU. Linear regression was used to model the association between the prevalence of lifetime IDU in the general population (Degenhardt et al, 2017) and in prison per country.

Results: The proportion of PIP with lifetime IDU ranged between 3.5%-15.62% in Slovenia/Spain/Portugal/ Poland and 25.3%-35.2% in Lithuania/Latvia/Czech Republic, representing approximately 280-9,200 PIP with lifetime IDU and 100-6,500 with HCV per country (total: 178,000 PIP, 23,560 lifetime IDU, 13,130 anti-HCV(+)). There was a positive linear association between the prevalence of lifetime IDU in prison and in the general population (slope[95% CI]: 2.41[-0.29,5.11] per 0.1% increase, p=0.070).

Conclusion: The prevalence of lifetime IDU among PIP exhibits heterogeneity per country reflecting differences in patterns of drug use and prevalence of injecting in the general population. The linear regression equation may be used to estimate the proportion of PIP with lifetime IDU in other countries with available data on lifetime IDU in the general population.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:
The authors do not have any conflict of interest related to the current work.