

Abstract

Prisons are a risk environment in terms of presence of injecting drug use and infectious diseases. Prisoners should be able to access harm reduction programs. Within the framework of the prevention of the spread of infectious diseases among prisoners, a pilot project (HA-REACT) was implemented during which there were condom vending machines installed in 2 randomly selected departments of Prague-Pankrác Prison. I was able to get involved in the project implementation.

The aim of my research was to determine the incidence rate of infectious diseases and risk behaviour among prisoners in the Prague-Pankrác prison. The investigated risk behaviour concerned the injecting drug use, sharing equipment for injecting drug use, practising of sex and the use of condoms. Interest was also paid to using and evaluating the condom vending machines at the end of the 1 month period during which they were available to the prisoners.

Within the framework of the evaluation of the pilot distribution of condoms, the NMS conducted a questionnaire survey at 2 prisons, the evaluation of which was provided to me. The respondents of the questionnaire were prisoners who had a condom vending machine available for 1 month. I divided the respondents into 3 age groups, picked out questions from the questionnaire which I had available along with the resulting data and used them for my research. I evaluated the results using a data matrix, expressed them in percentage values and displayed them in graphs.

Among the prisoners the incidence of infectious diseases was recorded in all 3 age groups. The group of prisoners under the age of 34 behaves most risky, in terms of intravenous drug use. The most sexually active group, during their stay in prison, is group of prisoners aged 35-44. They also bought a condom most often, while a condom vending machine was available, but no prisoner in this age group used the condom during that period. The evaluation from the prisoners varied, with regards to the access to the condom vending machines, their accessibility and discretion in their acquisition. A significant number of prisoners were reluctant and disapproving to the proposed condom distribution, but a large number of prisoners accepted the measures positively.

The condom vending machines should be available to prisoners in the other departments of Prague-Pankrác Prison, as well as in other prisons, to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.