

International Drug Policy: Implications for Modern Corrections & Public Health

Dr Dominique de Andrade
Postdoctoral Research Fellow

Drug Policy

- frames drug use in society
- plays defining role in likelihood of individual drug use
- individual health & justice outcomes for drug users
 - incarceration
 - treatment access/harm reduction practices
 - health outcomes(e.g. premature death, disability, liver disease, BBVs)

US War on Drugs

- 1971 - Richard Nixon's war on drugs
- Prison numbers increased six-fold, with little corresponding decrease in crime / drug use
- Incarcerated individuals 7 times more likely than general population to have a substance abuse disorder
- impact on those already living in hardship, particularly African-American population
 - imprisonment rates
 - familial poverty
 - health problems
 - unemployment on release

The Dutch Model

- Balance between law enforcement and public health responses
- 10% convicted offenders sent prison
- Most receive community based order, suspended sentence or diversion
- Significant drop in prison pop over last decade
- Lowest rate of recent injecting drug users, lowest HIV incidence in Europe
- Decrease in related crime
- Success largely related to:
 - dynamic drug policy
 - harm reduction practices

Rank	Country	Prison rate /100,000	Harm reduction policies
1	United States	716	✓
10	Russian Federation	475	X
21	Thailand	398	✓
31	Ukraine	305	✓
36	South Africa	294	X
40	Iran	284	✓
47	Brazil	274	✓
63	Israel	223	✓
67	Mexico	210	✓
74	New Zealand	192	✓
80	Hungary	186	✓
82	Kyrgyzstan	181	✓
83	Turkey	179	✓
91	Romania	155	✓
102	England & Wales	148	✓
103	Argentina	147	✓
106	Spain	147	✓
107	Vietnam	145	✓
116	Malaysia	132	✓
119	Australia	130	✓
128	China	121	✓
133	Canada	118	✓
139	Greece	111	✓
146	Italy	106	✓
152	France	98	✓
162=	Switzerland	82	✓
162=	Netherlands	82	✓
165	Egypt	80	✓
168	Germany	79	✓
174	Denmark	73	✓
180	Sweden	67	✓
188	Indonesia	59	✓
214	India	30	✓

Rank	Country	Needle exchange	Opioid substitution	Drug consumption rooms
1	United States	✓	✓	✓
10	Russian Federation	✓	X	x
21	Thailand	✓	✓	x
31	Ukraine	✓	✓	x
36	South Africa	✓	✓	x
40	Iran	✓	✓	x
47	Brazil	✓	X	x
63	Israel	✓	✓	x
67	Mexico	✓	✓	x
74	New Zealand	✓	✓	x
80	Hungary	✓	✓	x
82	Kyrgyzstan	✓	✓	x
83	Turkey	x	✓	x
91	Romania	✓	✓	x
102	England & Wales	✓	✓	x
103	Argentina	✓	X	x
106	Spain	✓	✓	✓
107	Vietnam	✓	✓	x
116	Malaysia	✓	✓	x
119	Australia	✓	✓	✓
128	China	✓	✓	x
133	Canada	✓	✓	✓
139	Greece	✓	✓	x
146	Italy	✓	✓	x
152	France	✓	✓	x
162=	Switzerland	✓	✓	✓
162=	Netherlands	✓	✓	✓
165	Egypt	✓	X	x
168	Germany	✓	✓	✓
174	Denmark	✓	✓	✓
180	Sweden	✓	✓	x
188	Indonesia	✓	✓	x
214	India	✓	✓	x

Rank	Country	Annual prevalence drug use - prisoners	Prison harm reduction practices
1	United States	-	Very limited
10	Russian Federation	14.80%	No
21	Thailand	-	No
31	Ukraine	-	No
36	South Africa	-	Very limited
40	Iran	-	High
47	Brazil	-	No
63	Israel	51.80%	No
67	Mexico	-	No
74	New Zealand	5.50%	Moderate
80	Hungary	8.40%	Very limited
82	Kyrgyzstan	15.00%	High
83	Turkey	-	Very limited
91	Romania	2.00%	Very limited
102	England & Wales	-	Moderate
103	Argentina	64.40%	No
106	Spain	-	High
107	Vietnam	-	Very limited
116	Malaysia	39.00%	Limited
119	Australia	70.00%	Moderate
128	China	25.60%	Very limited
133	Canada	56.70%	Moderate
139	Greece	-	Very limited
146	Italy	23.80%	Limited
152	France	-	Limited
162=	Switzerland	-	High
162=	Netherlands	57.00%	Limited
165	Egypt	-	Very limited
168	Germany	33.00%	Moderate
174	Denmark	8.00%	Moderate
180	Sweden	42.00%	Limited
188	Indonesia	17.00%	Limited
214	India	-	Very limited

UN Nelson Mandela Rules

Rule 24:

“The provision of health care for prisoners is a State responsibility. 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. Health-care services should be organised in close relationship to the general public health administration and in a way that ensures continuity of treatment and care.”

Tobacco Control in Prisons

Emerging Public Health Strategy

- Over-representation of smokers amongst prisoners
- Complex health-related problems
- Tobacco control policy – US, Canada, NZ, Australia
- Evidence - Binswanger et al. (2014); de Andrade & Kinner (2016)
- Despite many having strong desire to quit, almost all smokers that enter a smoke-free prison will smoke on release
- Missed opportunity – in an environment where access to tobacco can be controlled
- Need for improved treatment, education & support efforts in prisons & post-release

Role of Public Health in Prisons

- Over-representation of drug-use in prisoner population
- Drug-related harms:
 - health
 - relationship/family breakdown
 - unemployment
 - homelessness
 - incarceration?
- Contact with this vulnerable population is unique opportunity to address chronic health needs & improve outcomes
- Need cohesive approach from prison systems & public health officials
- Commitment to providing same or better quality of care available in community in the prison setting