

ART INSIDE: ENGAGING PRISONERS IN VIRAL HEPATITIS

STEVEN TAYLOR, SIONE CRAWFORD
HEPATITIS VICTORIA & JUSTICE HEALTH



Acknowledgements:

- Justice Health and Corrections Victoria for their funding and access support.
- The Programs and Health Promotion staff, Recreational Officers and Correctional Officers who facilitated our work with the prisoners at Barwon Prison, Dame Phyllis Frost Centre, Marngoneet Prison – Kareenga Annexe, Melbourne Remand Centre, Loddon Prison, Middleton Prison and Dhurringile Prison.
- Nurses from St Vincent's administering the State-wide Hepatitis Program, and Sione Crawford who co-facilitated the sessions.
- We would most especially like to thank all of the inmates who attended sessions and provided us with their wonderful art.

Disclosures:

- *Hepatitis Victoria was fully funded by Corrections Victoria's Justice Health Branch for this project.*

Join the Conversation @ASHMMEDIA  #VH18

BACKGROUND/AIMS & METHODS:

❖ **Background:** Hepatitis Victoria is the peak not for profit body for viral hepatitis within Victoria. Historically Justice Health has supported a number of Hepatitis Victoria projects in prisons within Victoria. Examples of previous prison specific projects undertaken by Hepatitis Victoria include posters, magazines, and the previous *Art Inside the West* initiative in 2015. A hallmark of these projects is the participation of prisoners in the creation of prison specific resources.

❖ **Relevance:** The high prevalence of viral hepatitis within prison populations globally, which requires Prison-specific resources. To be meaningful to the unique experience of people in custody, prison specific resources are required. Previously the most successful Hepatitis Victoria prison projects are those which enabled people in custody to actively contribute to the creation of resources benefiting themselves.

❖ **Aims:** Increase awareness / health literacy of inmates within prison facilities, peer learning and engagement, artistic expression opportunities for that population.

❖ **Project design / population:** The *Art Inside* program facilitated workshops with a total of 160 prisoners across , educated across 7 prisons, across 11 separate sessions. 45 entries were received from 22 different prisoners, with 5 winning entries selected by a panel. Promotional material emphasised the art workshop component and free art materials for all attendees to maximise attendance and reduce the stigma associated with attendance.

❖ **Study assessments:** Hepatitis C is associated with injecting drug use and sessions focused on hepatitis C invite scrutiny and stigma from both officers and other prisoners and deters attendance. *Art Inside* shifts the frame of reference from the hepatitis education component to that of an art contest and participation in designing a health resource.

❖ **Project endpoint:** Producing a printed resource for distribution to prison population, comprised of inmates output/submitted works .

Join the Conversation @ASHMMEDIA  #VH18

RESULTS:

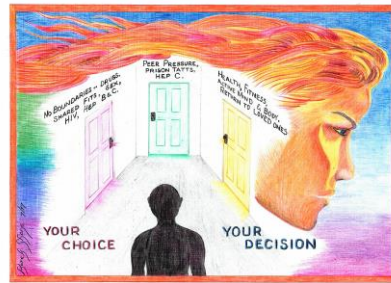
www.hepatitis.org.au

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS:

- Successful engagement with prison inmates across many sessions produced artworks reflective of hepatitis and health literacy awareness within their environmental context, if limited in scope and output.
- Feedback from prisoners highlighted the inclusion of an additional facilitator, focused on artistic expression, who was able to offer insight into translating emotion and memory into illustration, as well as providing a lived experience presentation.
- Quality and quantity of entries markedly improved over the 2015 program, with the majority of sessions resulting in artworks being submitted and used in final resource (attributed to above).
- Having lived experience speakers and valuing the lived experience of prisoner attendees builds trust and honesty in the group.

FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- More artistic material needed for activity session
- More time needed during sessions
- More consistent promotion to/within prison population
- Follow up sessions with more focused project work would benefit artistic output and health promotion.



THE BIG PICTURE

Join the Conversation @ASHMMEDIA #VH18

CONCLUSIONS/IMPLICATIONS:

www.hepatitis.org.au

SUMMARY OF POSITIVE IMPACTS:

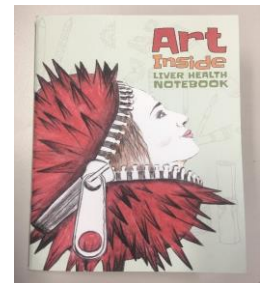
- Offering prisoners items which they value for personal use increases attendance and shows an understanding of their situation.
- Encouraging leadership was shown by several inmates who can act as peer educators within the prisons.

“Drawing with pencils has helped my mental health more than I ever expected. I was suffering from depression, but drawing gives me mindfulness.... It’s a release. The creativity comes out naturally and I put the ideas and themes [from the hepatitis education session,] into my art.”

- Prisoner participant, Art Inside 2017, Kareenga



"INSIDE"



Join the Conversation @ASHMMEDIA #VH18