

Identifying Research Priorities to Improve the Health of Incarcerated Populations: Results of Citizens' Juries in Australian Prisons

Simpson et al. (2021)
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For which topic were research priorities identified?

health of incarcerated populations

In which location was the research priority setting conducted?

Australia - Australia

Why was it conducted at all?

Many correctional systems in Australia publish priorities for research into people in prison but do not disclose whether their voices were considered. The involvement of incarcerated people in determining research directions takes on added importance given the past abuses of this population in medical and other experimentation. Therefore, it is important to involve people in prison in priority setting concerning research into their health.

What was the objective?

to identify priorities for research into the health of people in prison by consulting men and women in Australian prisons

What was the outcome?

a ranking list of 5 research topics

How long did the research prioritization take?

January 2019 - March 2019

Which methods were used to identify research priorities?

citizens' jury

How were the priorities for research identified exactly?

Step 1: six citizens' juries with seven to eleven participants conducted in six prisons (three men's and three women's prisons), citizens' juries typically lasted 7-8 h, format comprised two 3-4 h sessions: in the morning participants identified priorities, in the afternoon they identified the key ethical issues that should be considered when doing research involving people in prison, information was provided by showing three videos featuring experts in the field on the topics of defining health and health research, research into the health of people in prison, and changes in health as people enter and leave prison, a list of priorities for research into the health of people in prison as ranked by prison health service directors was also presented, participants were asked to reflect on the information they had seen and to identify all research topics that they thought were important, the remainder of the session involved deliberation among participants before a final list of five research priorities was agreed on, each participant was sent a report on the outcomes of the day to assess the report's accuracy in representing the views of their group

Which stakeholders took part?

50 incarcerated people, also including indigenous people and women.

How were stakeholders recruited?

Citizens' juries were held in six prisons in the Australian states of Queensland (one women's prison, one men's prison) and New South Wales (NSW; two women's prisons and two men's prisons) between January and May, 2019. A shortlist of prisons was chosen by the research team with input from a research reference group consisting of members of government organizations, university organizations, non-government incarcerated person support organizations, and peer organizations, as well as representatives of NSW corrective services. The six prisons were selected to ensure diversity of locations (regional and metropolitan), security levels, and gender, as well as to include sufficient numbers of Indigenous people (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people). Research liaison staff distributed expression of interest flyers in different ways: some targeted individuals or groups of people, whereas others posted the flyer in common areas.

Were stakeholders actively involved or did they just participate?

Stakeholders were mere participants of the research prioritization process; they were not actively involved in the process.