HIV prevention in prisons -

Experience of Bulgaria

Eighth Meeting of the “HIV/AIDS Think Tank”
25 and 26 April 2007 Luxembourg, Jean Monnet building,

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**Country profile**

- **Area**: 111,000 km²
- **Population**: 7.6 millions (millions according to NSI, 2001 census)
  - Bulgarian 84.5%
  - Turkish 9.6%
  - Roma 4.1%
  - other and unspecified 1.8%
- **Municipalities**: 28
- **GDP**: 77 billions USD
- **GNI per capita**: 3,450 USD
- **Life expectancy**: 72.5 years
- **Population growth rate**: -0.837% (NSI, 2006)
- **Unemployment**: 9% (according to NSI, 2006)
- **Poverty Headcount ratio**: 6.4%

*Data from National Statistical Institute and World Bank*
State of HIV infection in Bulgaria (1)

Registered HIV cases - newly registered and cumulative number per year, Bulgaria, 1986-2006

Source: Ministry of Health, 2007
Modes of transmission of the HIV infection, Bulgaria, 1986-2006

- Sexual transmission: 87%
- Injecting drug use: 9%
- Infected blood and blood products*: 3%
- Mother-to-child transmission: 1%

* Last cases registered in 1996

Distribution of HIV cases by gender, Bulgaria, 1986-2005

- Male: 67.3%
- Female: 32.7%

Source: Ministry of Health, 2007
New registered HIV cases in 2006 – 91 cases

- **Diagnostic testing** - 16
- **Screening testing**
  - Blood donors - 7
  - Pregnant - 2
  - **IVDU** - 32
  - Prisoners - 3
  - Others (*manly from VCTs*) - 31

- *From them referred by VCTs* - 40
Penal Institutions

- MINISTRY OF JUSTICE
  - 12 prisons,
  - 1 correctional place for minors (16-18 years)

Map of prisons

Number of prisoners in Bulgaria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9102</td>
<td>9390</td>
<td>9888</td>
<td>11289</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
National HIV/AIDS Framework and basis for HIV prevention, testing, treatment and care in prisons

Target Groups of the National HIV/AIDS program 2001-2007

- Injecting drug users
- Sex workers
- Roma people
- Men having sex with men
- Prisoners
- Young people
- People living with HIV
- People living with TB
National HIV/AIDS Framework and basis for HIV prevention, testing, treatment and care in prisons


Program “Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS”

Prevention of HIV/AIDS among:
- Injecting Drug Users
- Roma community
- Commercial Sex Workers
- Young People

VCT Centers
- Operating
- Planned

Second Generation Sentinel Surveillance Units

Local AIDS Coordinating Offices

MAP OF ACTIVITIES
National HIV/AIDS Framework and basis for HIV prevention, testing, treatment and care in prisons


- **Regulation № 12 of the Ministry of Justice** for medical care for confined persons in effect from January 2007
Article 36.

- (2) HIV testing is offered at the time of imprisonment as screening.

- (3) Diagnostic HIV testing is offered during the of imprisonment.

- (4) Screening and diagnostic HIV testing are offered following the principles of confidentiality, informed consent and the right to refuse.
(5) Voluntary and anonymous HIV counseling and testing is ensured for all inmates.

(6) HIV positive people are guaranteed:
- confidentiality of their HIV status;
- medical examination, antiretroviral treatment and care.
HIV surveillance in prisons

- **Provider-initiating testing** *(screening and diagnostic)*—opt-in, with informed consent and right to refuse

- **Client-initiated testing**—anonymous voluntary counseling and testing *(VCT)*

- **2nd generation sentinel surveillance**—biological and behavioral data

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**Number of HIV+ prisoners by years**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>April 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cases</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HIV second generation sentinel surveillance in prisons

- Started in 2006 in 4 prisons
- 600 prisoners:
  - tested for HIV, HBV, HCV and Syphilis
  - collection of behavioral data
- Planed for 2007:
  - In 5 prisons
  - 750 prisoners
Biological data from SGSS- 2006 average for the country

Biological results of Inmates from SGSS 2006

- HIV: 0%
- HBV: 12%
- HCV: 14%
- Syphilis: 6%

n=600
Biological data from SGSS-2006 – by cities

N = 150
Per city

Sofia
Burgas
Pleven
Stara Zagora

HBV
HCV
Syphilis

N= 150
Per city
National HIV/AIDS Framework and basis for HIV prevention, testing, treatment and care in prisons


- **Regulation № 12 of the Ministry of Justice** for medical care for confined persons in effect from January 2007

- **Joint Order of the Minister of Health and the Minister of Justice**, regulating outreach activities of the VCT centres in prisons (2007 – 2008)
HIV voluntary counseling, testing and prevention in prisons

- Provided by the VCT centers
- Counseling and testing for HIV, HBV, HCV and Syphilis
- Distribution of information materials and condoms
- Scaling-up:
  - 2005 – in 2 prisons
  - 2006 - in 5 prisons
  - 2007 - in all prisons

Network for VCT services in prisons 2007
Performance results of VCT centers in prisons

Total number of prisoners counseled and tested (2005 – March 2007)

- for HIV 2,826
- For Syphilis 1,767
Number and percentage of cases positive for HIV and Syphilis

HIV cases among tested prisoners

- 2005: 1 case, 0.1%
- 2006: 2 cases, 0.1%
- March 2007: 5 cases, 0.7%

Syphilis cases among tested prisoners

- 2005: 26 cases, 13%
- 2006: 45 cases, 4.4%
- March 2007: 26 cases, 4.9%
New registered HIV cases in 2006 – 91 cases

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- Screening testing
  - Blood donors - 7
  - Pregnant - 2
  - IVDU - 32
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Treatment and care for HIV infected prisoners

- All HIV+ prisoners have access to treatment and care
- Follow-up and ART are provided by 4 AIDS treatment centers.
- Treatment protocol is consistent with the "European Guidelines for the Clinical Management and Treatment of HIV Infected Adults in Europe 2005"

Monitoring of patients:
  - Before ART - every 6 months
  - During ART:
    - Clinical examination – every month
    - CD4 and viral load – every 3-4 months
    - Resistance testing - in case of treatment failure
Treatment and care for HIV infected prisoners

Number of HIV+ prisoners receiving ART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>HIV+ cases</th>
<th>Receiving ART</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2007</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONCLUSIONS

POSITIVE ACHIEVEMENTS:

- All forms of HIV testing in prisons are voluntary.
- Confidentiality is guaranteed by regulation.
- All prisons are covered by anonymous VCT services.
- VCT staff distributes information materials and condoms.
- HIV 2\(^{nd}\) generation sentinel surveillance is introduced successfully in prisons.
- Methadone treatment is allowed from outside.
- All HIV+ prisoners have access to monitoring of disease and antiretroviral treatment according the National guidelines.
CONCLUSIONS

PROBLEMS TO BE RESOLVED:

- Training of medical staff in prisons for HIV counseling and testing.
- To make access to condoms easy.
- Distribution of clean injecting equipment for drug users is not allowed in prisons.
- The 2004 criminalization of the possession of a single dose of illegal drugs have increased the number of drug users in the prisons and impeded HIV prevention interventions among IDUs.
Thank you
National HIV/AIDS Framework and basis for HIV prevention, testing, treatment and care in prisons


- **Regulation № 12 of the Ministry of Justice** for medical care for confined persons in effect from January 2007

- **Joint Order of the Minister of Health and the Minister of Justice**, regulating outreach activities of the VCT centres in prisons (2007 – 2008)
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