

# FREE TO LIVE WELL WITH HIV IN PRISON

## Stakeholders



### Italian Society of Penitentiary Medicine and Healthcare

**Leader** of the project. Will coordinate the project and have a main role in delivering the **healthcare part** of the project



### Network of people living with HIV

Partner, main role in delivering the **peer-educational** part of the project



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia

### Cà Foscari University, Venice

Partner, main role in **data collection, elaboration and results publication**



Supported the project with an unrestricted grant

# FREE TO LIVE WELL WITH HIV IN PRISON FLEW HIV

## Patronages

- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Justice





# Living with HIV in Italian prisons

Le carceri italiane non idonee a garantire i diritti dei detenuti  
La maglia nera va alla Puglia, dove i detenuti sono 3.114 a dispetto di 2.374 posti disponibili



Italian prisons are not adequate in guaranteeing prisoners' rights

- ❖ HIV prevalence is estimated to be **3,5% raising up to 20%** among PWID and **coinfection** with Hepatitis C is extremely high.
- ❖ **HIV testing is not routinely offered** to prisoners on entrance in prison
- ❖ 1 out of 3 HIV+ prisoners are **not aware of his/her status**
- ❖ Prisoners and prison police have **little to no knowledge of HIV related issues and risks**
- ❖ **High risk practices** like piercing and tattooing are very common among prisoners often sharing needles and other tools
- ❖ **Sex in prison is usually unprotected.** Prison authorities deny that sex takes place in prison and therefore not available in implementing prevention programmes such as provision of condoms
- ❖ **Drug use** is common but denied by prison authorities, provision of sterile syringes is not allowed
- ❖ **Stigma** around LGBT and HIV+ prisoners is extremely high
- ❖ **Treatment** for HIV+ prisoners is reported to **not be always optimal** and adherence is reported to be low
- ❖ Over 50% of prisoners spend a short time in prison and enter the prison more than once. Therefore, **transmission is easily transferred from the prison to the outside community and the other way round**
- ❖ **No estimate of the HIV treatment cascade** in prison settings is available

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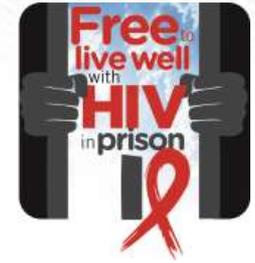
## Objectives



- ❖ Contribute to **improve HIV prevention, treatment and care** in Italian prisons
- ❖ **Reduce HIV transmission** from prison to outside community and the other way round
- ❖ **Fight stigma and discrimination**
- ❖ **Improve quality of life** of HIV+ prisoners
- ❖ **Measure HIV treatment cascade** in prison settings
- ❖ Induce a change in HIV management in prison with **positive long term effects after the conclusion of the project**
- ❖ Create a best practice example that can **be adopted by other prisons in Italy**
- ❖ Strengthen **engagement and collaboration with Ministry of Justice, Local Health Care systems and NGOs** operating within prisons to **raise awareness to HIV in prison** and favor the long term achievements of the project

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## Who is impacted



\*1 female prison  
1 prison for minors <18  
years

- ❖ **3135 prisoners** are a potential target of the project
  - ✓3042 male
  - ✓93 female
  - ✓65 below 18 years
  - ✓900 foreigners
- ❖ **10 prisons in 7 regions** are involved
  - ✓4 are mixed prisons (male and female)
  - ✓1 dedicated to prisoners <18 years
- ❖ **Selection criteria for prisons and regions** were
  - ✓high density of prisoners
  - ✓majors lacks in the prison health care system
  - ✓presence of women, youth <18 years, different nationality
  - ✓expected streamlined implementation of activities and administrative

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## Main steps



### 1. EDUCATION

- ✓ Prisoners
- ✓ Prison police
- ✓ Healthcare staff
- ✓ Other staff (i.e NGOs)

### 2. PREVENTION ACTIVITIES - after completion of educational step

### 2. HIV TESTING CAMPAIGN

### 3. HIV+ PRISONERS TREATMENT AND MONITORING

### 4. DATA COLLECTION AND RESULTS COMMUNICATION/SHARING (Workshop)

### 5. EXTENDING ACHIEVEMENTS BEYOND PROJECT END

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- With the patronage of the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Justice
- 10 prisons involved
- Prisoners, prison police, prison staff and other staff involved

**Survey**  
to test level of  
existing  
knowledge  
on HIV

**Education  
delivered**

**HIV testing &  
linkage to care  
offered**

**Data collection,  
elaboration and  
reporting**

**Workshop  
for sharing of  
project  
outcomes**

## **Future plans**

- **Video about the project (with English subtitles)**
- **Full paper for International publication**
- **Italian publication with full project data**

# FREE TO LIVE WELL WITH HIV IN PRISON

## Project main steps description



### EDUCATION

#### ❖ Prisoners - Education provided by previously trained peers (former prisoners)

- ✓ Medical aspects and benefits of HIV prevention, diagnosis, early and continued treatment
- ✓ Fighting stigma and discrimination
- ✓ Special effort to involve women, young people <18 years, migrants
- ✓ New educators identified among attendees to maintain education after the project end

#### ❖ Prison police, sanitary staff, other staff (i.e NGOs)

- ✓ HIV risk and treatment, raise awareness about HIV related needs and the importance and benefits of addressing them
- ✓ Promote importance of promoting HIV testing upon entrance to every prisoner,
- ✓ Fight stigma and discrimination
- ✓ Build on creating a positive relationship between prison police, healthcare staff and prisoners

### PREVENTION ACTIVITIES - after completion of educational step

- ✓ Provide battery shavers and 1000 disposable tattoo sets (if allowed by prison management) .
- ✓ Promote the creation of hair cut service managed by appropriate trained personnel in the prison .
- ✓ Every effort made to raise awareness among prison authorities, that deny the possibility of sex and drug use in prison, about the occurrence and the related risks

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## Project main steps description (continued)



### **HIV TESTING CAMPAIGN** in collaboration and supporting the prison health care system

- ✓ saliva rapid HIV test offered to all prisoners involved in the educational step and to others if willing

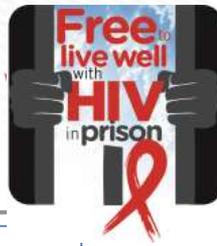
### **HIV + PRISONERS TREATMENT AND MONITORING-** in collaboration and supporting the prison health care system

- ✓ HIV+ prisoners offered treatment and followed up with the aim of achieving virological suppression
- ✓ On exit from the prison, the HIV+ will be linked to an outside ID clinic for treatment and retention in care

### **DATA COLLECTION AND COMMUNICATION/DISSEMINATION**

- ✓ Treatment cascade data collected before and after the project
- ✓ Project results and output shared and communicated (web sites and newsletters of project partners, publication at HIV national congress considered) ,
- ✓ A specific workshop organised to present and debate project results and experience gained. Managers and staff of the prisons involved in the project as well as of prisons not participating in the project, Id physicians, health care authorities will be invited. Media coverage of the initiative will be granted.

# Very good Educational material developed an example



## Which sexual behaviours are at risk?

All of the following are at risk if you're not using a condom:

- **anal sex**, due to the fragility of the rectal mucosa which may easily cause lesions;
- **vaginal sex**;
- **oral sex** (fellatio, cunnilingus, anilingus), when the seminal, vaginal or anal fluids enter in contact with cuts and sores in the mouth.

## Why should I worry about something that won't affect me in the near future but only many years from now?

Even if in most cases the progression of infection is very slow and there are usually no immediate serious consequences for your health, HIV starts damaging the immune system immediately after entering the body and without adequate treatment may lead to serious life-threatening infections or diseases.

It's important to know that the damage to the immune system is not always connected to specific symptoms; a person may feel perfectly well and have a strongly damaged immune system at the same time. The problem is that if you discover having HIV too late, then antiretroviral therapy may help you restore your immune system but this does not mean it is always possible to cure the diseases which HIV has caused, such as cancer or serious infections.

On the contrary, if you discover having HIV at an early stage, with the therapies currently available it is possible to block viral replication and avoid the emergence of complications due to a damaged immune system, therefore allowing you to live a long and healthy life like everybody else.

## How is living with HIV today?

Today it's possible to live a fulfilling life even if you're living with HIV. It is still considered a serious infection, but if diagnosed early and if treated correctly with antiretrovirals, people living with HIV can live a normal life for decades.



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## Extending achievements beyond project end



- ✓ Prisons involved in the project **encouraged to continue education , HiV testing and treatment** after the end of the project
- ✓ Connection established within the project between the HIV + prisoners leaving prison and the **outside ID clinic** for treatment and continuation of HIV status monitoring
- ✓ **Other prisons** encouraged to adopt suggested approach by sharing results
- ✓ Capitalise from **engagement and collaboration with Ministry of Justice, Local Health Care systems and NGOs** operating within the prisons to **raise awareness to HIV in prison** to favor the long term maintainance of project positive achievements

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## What has been achieved



### ➤ **New data generated**

- Knowledge/ perception/attitude towards HIV in the prison setting (not available before)
- proposed new model of HIV management in prison.

### ➤ **Scientific communications**

- Data collected informed national HIV guidelines (Case Finding section, with reference to the project )
- Posters at ICAR 2017
- Posters at EACS 2017
- Presentation at Agorà Peniteziaria 2017
- Poster at ICAR 2018
- Presentation at Agorà Penitenziaria 2018
- Poster at Adherence 2018 (International congress)

Mentioned in ECDC's "Public health guidance on active case finding of communicable diseases in prison setting" (pag 27 e 28)

### ➤ **Communication to PLWHIV/community at large**

- Following the presentation workshop the project results were further reported by around 40 newspapers and many national TVs



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**THANK YOU**



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