

# Dilemmas in the treatment of HIV and Hepatitis C in Canadian prisons

# Prevalence

## HIV

- 1.66% of all federal prisoners known HIV positive
- Provincial rates vary by province- 1.8-2.1%
- Seroprevalence levels 10 times higher than in the general population.

# Hepatitis C

- estimated 30% of federal inmates are infected with HCV
- Cross provincial rates unknown but as high as 52% in some institutions
- HCV prevalence increasing in prisons
- Gender difference in infection rates
- HCV transmitted much more easily than HIV

# Transmission in Prison

- Sharing needles
- Tattoos
- Sexual contact

# Prevention in Prison

- Condoms have been readily available since 1992
- Bleach has been available since 1994 at Federal institutions.
  - varied availability in provincial facilities
- Needle exchange programs
- Methadone

# Treatment in Prison

## HIV- HAART

- many inmates miss doses
- receive incorrect dosing
- meds not reordered
- lock down
- stigma

# HCV

Decision to treat is complicated

- Federal vs provincial

- Acute vs Chronic

- Stage of disease

- Cost

- Side Effects

# References

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