Support for Global Prison Health Survey

I write on behalf of the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) and the World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA) to offer support for the Global Prison Health Survey.

There is currently an opportunity to enable countries and researchers to access useable, directly comparable data on prison health governance, systems and administration. This is an opportunity that ought not be missed.

During 2016 and 2017 WHO (Europe) regional office provided the questionnaire to WHO national contact points in member countries in the Europe region. So far 38 of these member countries have completed the survey, in consultation with their prison health authorities, via a Qualtrics system for on-line data entry. My understanding is that the results will be published this December 2017.

The next stage is to expand this questionnaire to other WHO regions. A coalition is forming to undertake this work and make the minimum dataset truly global, with an initial focus on Asia Pacific countries.

The idea of the project is to adapt, administer and analyse data from the survey for Asia Pacific countries, encompassing all or part of the SEARO and WPRO WHO regions. The project is being developed in collaboration with the WHO (Europe) Health in Prisons Program, which will host the results on the existing platform.

The purpose of the Global Prison Health Survey is to establish a body of knowledge and evidence on prison and juvenile detention health systems, comparable across countries and globally, through collection and analysis of system-level data.

My understanding of the expected outcomes of the project are to provide a basis for the development of evidence-informed policies regarding prison health systems and services, including the relationship with broader policies relating to health equity and expanding universal health coverage. The project also has the potential to increase the capacity for collaborations and capacity building relating to prison health systems within and across regions as well as identifying target areas for the strengthening of health information systems and prison health services.

This project has the opportunity to assist in improving public health outcomes and deserves support.

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