

TABLE 2. WHO Recommendations for the Management of HIV Infected Prisoners

Guidelines were established by the World Health Organization (WHO) to provide standards which corrections officials should strive to achieve in their efforts to prevent HIV transmission and provide HIV care within correctional settings.

The WHO recommendations are summarized as follows. The complete guidelines can be found at <http://www.who.org>.

- Inmates should be given the same access to and quality of HIV care that is available in the local community. The general principles adopted by the national AIDS programs should apply equally to prisoners and to the community.
- All inmates and correctional staff and officers should be provided with education concerning transmission, prevention, treatment, and management of HIV infection. For inmates, this information should be provided at intake and updated regularly thereafter. HIV education should be part of correctional staff orientation, and should be updated regularly thereafter.
- In each country, specific policies for the prevention of HIV/AIDS in prisons and for the care of HIV-infected inmates should be defined. These strategies should be incorporated into a wider program of promoting health among inmates.
- Compulsory testing of inmates for HIV is unethical and ineffective, and should be prohibited.
- Voluntary testing for HIV should be available in prisons when available in the community, along with pre- and post-test counseling.
- Since segregation, isolation, and restriction on occupational activities, sports, and recreation are not considered useful or relevant in the case of HIV-infected people in the community, the same attitude should be adopted towards HIV-infected inmates. Decisions on isolation for health conditions should be taken by medical staff only, and on the same grounds as for the general public, in accordance with public health standards and regulations.
- Information on the health status and medical treatment of inmates is confidential and should be recorded in files available only to health personnel. If the patient consents, health personnel may provide prison managers or judicial authorities with information that will assist in the treatment and care of the patient.
- Inmates should have access to information on treatment options and the same right to refuse treatment as exists in the community.
- Correctional officials and public health administrators should work together to ensure medical and psychological follow-up of HIV-infected inmates after their release.
- Special attention should be given to the needs of women inmates. Staff dealing with detained women should be trained to deal with the psychosocial and medical problems associated with HIV infection in women.
- The role of condoms in preventing HIV transmission should also be explained to inmates and staff. Since penetrative sexual intercourse occurs in prison, even when prohibited, condoms should be made available to inmates throughout their period of detention and prior to any form of leave or release.