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Condoms in Prisons

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Condoms in Prisons

Just like ordinary citizens, prisoners have the right to protect themselves against sexually transmitted diseases. That is why condoms should be available to inmates incarcerated. Furthermore, the management of infectious diseases is not just a matter of public health but also a human rights imperative. Given the large number of HIV infections among prisoners, the availability of condoms is an effective and inexpensive way that correctional facilities can adopt to limit the spread of disease.

Although most of the inmates infected with HIV and HBV acquire the diseases outside the prison, the transmission of these infections within the prison setup is well documented (Human Rights Watch, 2007). However, targeted interventions like the provision of condoms to limit the risk of transmissions have proven effective in preventing HIV transmission within the prisons, just as these measures get adopted outside the prison system. Moreover, the WHO, UNAIDS) and the UNODC champion "harm reduction" methods among inmates, including the provision of condoms, among other measures.

Regardless of the rules and regulations therein, both coerced and consensual sex is common in prisons. In addition to that, sexual activities among inmates have been discussed extensively not only in academics and human rights entities like Human Rights Watch but among correctional facilities themselves. A recent study found that 13% of inmates in America face sex assault in custody, and called for research to determine the prevalence and patterns (Human Rights Watch, 2007).

Opponents argue that sex in prison defies the rules, but the truth of the matter is that sex in prison is no news as prisoners engage in the act without protection (Martin, 2007). Joe Orlando, the spokesperson for CDCR in California, claims that 90% of those incarcerated will

eventually return home to their families. It is essential to make it safe for their families once they get home (Watson, 2016). Besides, treating these infections is not cheap because the government must cater to the inmate's medical bills. Despite the perceived benefits, the provision of condoms in US jails remain limited. Opponents argue that sex in prisons is against the rules, but the reality is that infection among inmates will continue to increase unless prevention measures like availing condoms are adopted.

References

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