

Editorial: a changing name and an expanding direction for *The International Journal of Prison Health*

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Welcome to the second edition of the *International Journal of Prison Health*, 2024. Astute readers will have noticed a “small” change in the journal name, in the previous edition from Prisoner Health to Prison Health. From its inception in 2005, until 2023, this journal had “prisoner” in its title. Reflecting wider evolutions in the language of incarceration (Cox, 2020), the editors feel that the time is right for the *International Journal of Prison Health* (IJPH) to reflect a more person and lived experience perspective in this journal's title. Whilst the removal of two letters from the journal title might seem small, it in fact marks some substantive changes in this journal and its orientation.

Firstly, as Tran and colleagues highlighted in their 2018 paper, words matter and “Respectful language is a cornerstone of reducing harm and suffering” (Tran *et al.*, 2018). Additionally, Cox (2020) vividly illustrated, there has been evolution of the language around prisons and people in prison. A compelling argument in favour of person-centred language is that it generally destigmatizes people who previously bore the stigma of being labelled as “convicts” “offenders” “prisoners” etc . . . which has numerous negative effects politically, socially, and psychologically. The new guidance for this journal now resonates with such person-centred language, and through the editorial process we will encourage authors to adopt people in prison as opposed to prisoner or any of the other many terms associated with people in prison, whilst at the same time respecting jurisdictional nuance.

Secondly, the change in title represents a number of significant changes in the direction and running of the journal. The roles taken on so diligently for the past decade by Professor Morag McDonald and David Kane, have been replaced by a collaboration of editors from across the globe: Matthew Maycock (Australia), Rosemary Mhlanga-Gunda (Zimbabwe) and Emma Plugge (UK). Additionally, the increased diversification of the editorship of this journal is designed to catalyse more research input globally, so that this journal can be considered a truly an interdisciplinary international journal. We will also link more with other initiatives in the global prison health research space such as the Worldwide Prison Health Research and Engagement Network (Plugge *et al.*, 2017), and the numerous regional prison health networks around the world for example the Southern African Network of prisons that supports health and human rights of inmates and ex-inmates.

Thirdly, we also want to see a greater involvement of people with lived experience of imprisonment and those who work in correctional facilities, across all areas of this journal's activity. The journal would like to see and welcome a diversity of people with lived prison experience as members of the new and refreshed Editorial Advisory Committee and also as contributing authors and article reviewers. With these important and substantive changes not only to the title of the IJPH, we are keen to refresh the editorial board to reflect the new

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orientation of this journal. Therefore, we actively welcome expressions of interest from potential board members with lived experience of the prison system, as the editors firmly believe that this will greatly strengthen the journal.

Finally, the change in name will enable this journal to diversify its reach and remit significantly. For example, previously papers that analyse the health of prison staff were largely excluded through the focus on “prisoner” health. The new title opens up the possibilities for a widening of the analysis of the health implications of prison systems for those living, working and managing these systems internationally.

Building on a rich history of convict criminology (Ross and Richards, 2003; Earle, 2016), as the recent paper from a lived experience academic Dwayne Antojado (2023) suggests, penology necessarily must foreground the lived experience perspectives; “Nothing About Us Without Us”. Ultimately, penology as a discipline cannot continue in its previous form, and has lagged behind areas such as disability rights and mental health movements in centring people with lived experience within the academic discourses in these areas.

The journal will continue to focus on the health and imprisonment but as prison systems around the world become increasingly overcrowded (Fair and Walmsley, 2021), there is a pressing need to renew the focus on the health impacts of alternatives to imprisonment. In the UK for example, prison populations are at an all time high and a number of “emergency” measures such as an early release scheme, have been introduced to reduce the issue of overcrowding (House of Commons Library, 2023). At the same time, the UK Government and many others are increasing numbers of imprisoning non-violent protesters (Lakhani *et al.*, 2023). The need for effective alternatives to imprisonment is essential and these alternatives needs to be well evidenced, given the known facts that overcrowded prisons become fertile grounds and bridges particularly conducive to rapid spread of infectious diseases (commonly tuberculosis, HIV and now COVID for transmission not only among inmates but also correctional officers and into the generality of the population; Gadama *et al.*, 2020; Mhlanga-Gunda *et al.*, 2022; Van Hout, 2020). With the change of title and associated changes in the IJPH, we hope that this journal can make renewed and meaningful contribution to the evidence base across these areas.

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