Prisons Dental Academic Unit

The Role of Research in Improving Prison Dental Health

Martin Tickle
Research Director
Oral Health Unit - National Primary Care R&D Centre

Manchester University Dental School
Structure

• Why do we need Prison Dental Academic Unit?
• What is the structure of the National Prison Health Research Programme?
• What will the Prison Dental Academic Unit do?
• How to get involved in research?
Why do we need a Prison Dental Academic Unit?
Challenges for PCTs

- PCTs inexperience in commissioning prison services
- How can PCTs improve oral health of prisoners?
- How can PCTs provide equivalent care in a restricted environment with restricted resources?
- How do PCTs provide care for two different populations
  - Convicted, long stay
  - Remand/short stay
Challenges for prison dental services

• Prisons inexperienced working with PCTs
• Part-time service but high need population
• Developing clinical governance
• Professional isolation
• Workforce
  – Recruitment and retention
  – Skillmix
Contribution from research

- Provides knowledge
  - To inform commissioning decisions
  - To inform clinical care delivery
  - To inform development of clinical governance
Spin off benefits of research

- Reduces professional isolation and supports professional development
- Improves quality
- Supports recruitment and retention
Structure of the National Prison Health Research Programme
Prisons research programme

• Partnership between
  – Mental Health Dr Jenny Shaw
  – Primary Care Prof. Bonnie Sibbald
  – Drugs and alcohol Dr Michael Farrell
  – Dental Prof. Martin Tickle

• Jane Senior – programme manager
• Formal launch – *Sharing Good Practice Conference, York 4-5th May 2005*
Composition of programme

• Network of research supportive prisons
• Network of research active individuals working in prisons
• Scoping exercise
• Small demonstration projects in each area

• National Steering Group
Network of research supportive prisons

• List in process of being produced

• Profile of all prisons

• To be posted on web site
  http://www.phrn.nhs.uk/
Network of individuals

- Web site: http://www.phrn.nhs.uk/
- Registration and chat rooms
- Workshops and conferences
- Funding opportunities
- Outcomes of research
- Support material
  - ‘Go Directly to Jail’
Scoping exercise

- Systematic reviews
- Listening exercise
  - Workshops
  - Interviews
- Identify and prioritise research needs
- Feed into DH research commissioning frameworks
Demonstration projects

• Identify problems of undertaking research in prisons and how to overcome them

• Build research capacity and support the networks

• Produce new knowledge – to improve health or services
What will the Prison Dental Academic Unit do?
Dental Team

• Professor Martin Tickle
• Dr Keith Milsom
• Professor Andy Blinkhorn
• Dr Ziad Al-Ani
• Katie Buchanan
  katie.buchanan@manchester.ac.uk
• Dr Liana Zoitopoulos
• Dr Alan Pau & Professor Ray Croucher
Contribution to scoping exercise

- Systematic review of literature
- Only 14 relevant papers!
- All descriptive epidemiology
- No information about effectiveness of interventions
Outcomes of May Workshops

• Research priorities
  – Improving dental health
  – Improving dental services
Research priorities: improving dental health

• What interventions are effective in preventing tooth decay?
• Which is the best way to present dental health information?
• Who can most effectively promote oral health?
• How can promotion of healthy eating/smoking cessation be supported?
Research priorities: improving dental services

• How can the surgery down time be minimised?

• Is screening of prisoners upon entry effective?

• How can skill-mix be used to improve services?
Evaluation of recent policy changes in prison dentistry
Evaluation background

• Requirement of CDO’s office

• Strategy for Modernising Dental Services for Prisoners in England – April 2003
  – Standards for service delivery

• Over £4.5M injected into prison dental services

• Has strategy\additional funding improved prison dental services?
Evaluation plan

• Build on OPM report
• Collect data by questionnaire and telephone interviews from:
  – PHC managers
  – Prison dental team
  – Prisoners
  – PCTs
• Shelf data from DH, DPB
• Report in New Year
Demonstration project

Developing and testing a Standardised Dental Assessment of Prisoners
Background

- Recently admitted prisoners have severe dental problems
- Remand and short stay prisoners have difficulty keeping appointments
- Most services run part time
- On admission all prisoners have 24 hour, then 48 hour assessment
- No standardised system of dental assessment
Elements of demonstration project

• Development of standardised assessment tool

• Test validity and reliability

• Understanding the impact of widespread introduction
Development of standardised assessment tool

• Collaboration with Queen Mary’s and GKT
• Dental Pain Questionnaire (DePaQ)
• 2 page questionnaire
• Categorises into patients with pain into three groups
  – Identifies those in urgent need of care
• Successfully tested in NHS
Methods- testing the instrument

- Pilot questionnaire – literacy issues
- To be administered by nurses who deliver 48 hour assessment
- Results compared against clinical examinations
- N=200 patients attending dental service in Brixton and Belmarsh
Analysis

• Compare results of questionnaire with clinical examinations

• Compare to values obtained in NHS

• Reduced performance due to over-elaboration?
Understanding the impact

- Qualitative approach
- Interviews with:
  - 4 prison health care managers
  - 4 prison dentists
  - 4 prison officers
  - 4 prisoners
- Working in all types of prisons
Potential benefits

• Prioritise need

• Support efficient management of dental booking

• Results could be transferred with the prisoner

• Requires flexibility to deal with urgent cases
How to get involved in research?
Building research capacity

- Increase numbers involved in research
- Develop research skills
- Develop supporting infrastructure
Building networks

- Supportive and committed clinicians
- Supportive prisons
- Supportive PCTs
- Academic partner
- Educational programme
Support for network building

- Support from PHRN - http://www.phrn.nhs.uk/
- Local prison research networks
- Teaching & Learning PCTs
- Post graduate deaneries
- Regional research support units
- Academic partner
- OHU – NPCRDC – http://www.ohu.ac.uk/
- Local primary care research networks
Successful partnerships

• Trusting relationships
• A strategic perspective
• A focus on outcomes
• A willingness to act
The importance of projects

• Starts the process

• Act as a focus for partnership

• Builds infrastructure, skills, relationships and trust

• Produces a tangible outcome
Initial project

- Need to produce quick demonstrable outcome – ‘little victory’
- Inexpensive
- Relevant to the Prison\PCT
- Relevant to clinicians
- Simple methodology
- Simple outcomes
- Impact on the service
In Conclusion

- Prison dentistry needs a research base

- The Prison Dental Academic Unit is a first step

- Progress depends on the enthusiasm of all parties to get involved and develop partnerships