

Health Care Needs and Services among Female Inmates of Misamis Oriental Provincial Jail and Rehabilitation Center

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ABSTRACT

This study which was conducted to determine the health care needs and services and health condition of 21 female inmates in Misamis Oriental Provincial Jail and Rehabilitation Center were emphasized in this study. Considered as health care needs and services were food services, water services, sleeping condition, jail facilities, environment, medical services, and love and belongingness. The health status was resolved by determining the health condition of the respondents at the present as well as the subjective and objective assessment of health status. The method used was descriptive and sampling was universal. Data were carefully tabulated and subjected to appropriate statistical tools. Respondents' evaluation of the health needs and services in Misamis Oriental Provincial Jail and Rehabilitation Center showed that they were undecided on the quality of food services, water services, jail facilities, environment, and medical services. They also disagreed that sleeping condition was satisfactory. In terms of love and belongingness, the respondents were able to receive them. Health problems were noted in the detention facility such as kidney infection, backpain, impaired vision, cough, ulcer, DOB, pregnancy, chest pain, visual changes, smoking, recent change in weight/appetite, alcohol, itching, and pain, too. The respondents do not have glasses, rashes, and wounds. There is no significant relationship between health needs and services among female inmates in Misamis Oriental Provincial Jail and Rehabilitation Center. Health care needs and services in the provincial jail were below the standards set by the UN Standard Minimum Requirements. Illnesses of respondents on the other hand were occurring at a very low rate.

Keywords: Health Care Needs, Female inmates

INTRODUCTION

Inmates of Misamis Oriental Provincial Jail and Rehabilitation Center are persons confined in prison, jails, and other correctional facilities. Even the most chronic or hardened inmates have basic rights that are protected (<http://www.uslegalforms.com/legaldefinitions/inmates.php>).

Some of the rights of the inmates include: the right to be free, under the 8th Amendment, from inhumane conditions because those conditions constitute "cruel and

unusual" punishment. The right to complain about prison conditions and voice their concerns about the treatment they receive. They also have a right of access to the courts to air these complaints. Gamble (1976) added that prisoners have a constitutional right to health equal in quality to that available in the outside community.

The Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) is one of the five pillars of the Criminal System. It was created to address growing concern of jail management and penology problem. Primarily, its clients are accused before a court who are temporarily combined in such jails while undergoing investigation, waiting final judgment and those who are serving sentence promulgated by the court, as cited by Jaudian, et. al (2005).

The government has for its thrusts under the Bureau of Jail management and Penology to upgrade the living condition of inmates, provide for the basic needs such as food, water and health services, and intensify conduct of rehabilitation and treatment programs for inmates. All of these are anchored in its mission, which is to enhance public safety by providing quality jail management services through an efficient and humane safekeeping and the rehabilitation for inmates, as cited by Jaudian, et. al (2005).

Hence, this study was conducted to target interventions and improve the delivery of health services in correctional facilities being rendered by the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology to the inmates of Misamis Oriental Provincial Jail and Rehabilitation Center situated at Corner, Corrales Avenue and Antonio Luna Street, Cagayan de Oro City. These basic health services include basic living requirements, such as food services, water services, sleeping conditions and personal hygiene of inmates and medical services that includes the availability of free medicine for sick inmates and health team/members during emergency.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in order to determine the basic health care needs and services provided to the female inmates of Misamis Oriental Provincial Jail and Rehabilitation Center by the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology. Health status of the female inmates was also determined in the present study.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed the descriptive design that will study the conditions that have occurred or still exist, to find out "what is" as cited by Aquino (1992). The study involved hypothesis formulation and testing.

The study was conducted in Misamis Oriental Provincial Jail and Rehabilitation Center located at Corrales Street, Cagayan de Oro City. It has 334 inmates, seven cells,

and two towers to guard the inmates. The Bureau seeks to professionalize all jail services and enhance reformation/rehabilitation of inmates to prepare them for eventual reintegration into mainstream society upon their release making them productive persons who are law-abiding.

The respondents of the study were the female inmates of the Misamis Oriental Provincial Jail and Rehabilitation Center. The sampling procedure was universal sampling which means that the entire populations of 21 female inmates were to participate in the study. The respondents were asked to answer the instrument, which served as the data gathering device used in the study.

The researchers utilized the questionnaire used in the study of Juadian et al. (2005) for data collection. The questionnaire consisted of information on the personal circumstances of the respondents in terms of food, water services, sleeping condition, availability of health care team, and its health status/ condition by basic needs, jail facilities, and medical services render to the inmates of Misamis Oriental Provincial Jail and Rehabilitation Center. Love and belongingness was also included in the questionnaire.

A letter of request to conduct the survey was made and addressed to the Jail Warden of Misamis Oriental Provincial Jail and Rehabilitation Center requesting permission to conduct a survey among services rendered to the female inmates.

Upon approval of the letter, the researchers made an appointment and personally administer the questionnaires.

Assessment of inmates' health condition was done both subjectively and objectively.

By subjective assessment, the researchers asked the respondents whether or not they have had kidney infection, back pain, impaired vision, cough, ulcer, DOB, pregnant, chest pain, visual changes, smoking history, recent changes in weight or appetite, constipation, alcohol consumption, itching, leg pain and wound.

Impaired vision was assessed objectively using the Snellen's Chart. The inmates were asked to stand 20 feet away from the chart, then they would be asked to read the letters from the chart. Acuity is represented as a fraction, with the distance at which you are standing being the numerator (top part of fraction), and the normal maximum legible viewing distance ("Distance" on the chart above) as the denominator (bottom of fraction). For cough, the researchers observed the respondents if they have nonproductive cough. In terms of DOB, the researchers measured the respiratory rate of the female inmates. If respiratory rate is greater than 30 cpm, the inmate has DOB. For constipation, the researchers asked the length of time the inmates were not able to defecate; if the inmates

had not defecated for three days, then the inmate had constipation. Signs of itching and wound were also checked. For leg pain, the respondents were asked to rate the level of pain on a scale of 1 to 10.

To analyze and interpret data collected from the respondents, the following statistical techniques were employed:

1. Weighted means. This type was used to describe the quality of health care needs and services provided by the facility.
2. Percentages occurrence of health conditions among the sampled inmates was computed both from the subjective and objective assessments.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Article 20(1) of the UN Standard Minimum Rules outlines the basic requirements for prison food service: "Every prisoner shall be provided by the administration at the usual hours with food of nutritional value adequate for the health and strength, of wholesome quality and well prepared and served." The Correctional Services Act, 1998 (Act 111 of 1998) provided for prisoners' right to adequate meals three times a day, with meals served four-and-a-half hours apart during the day, and that only fourteen hours must pass between the last meal and breakfast. The nutritional needs of prisoners were determined by compliance with the recommended daily allowances prescribed by the World Health Organization.

The data suggests that food services in Misamis Oriental Provincial Jail and Rehabilitation Center was moderately needed. This is so because of quality of food served affect their moods and energy levels so that they would not feel exhausted. Some of these complaints from various correctional facilities included severely cold food, soggy food, distasteful and disgusting food.

The prisoners needed clean water, adequate and accessible water supply. In terms of water safety, it is less needed because water in the facility is already safe to drink.

The Standard Minimum Rules require that sanitary installations be "adequate to enable every prisoner to comply with the needs of nature when necessary and in a clean and decent manner"; that "adequate bathing and shower installations shall be provided" to enable every prisoner to bathe "at a temperature suitable to the climate, as frequently as necessary for general hygiene. . . but at least once a week"; and that all areas normally used by prisoners be "kept scrupulously clean at all times." Based on the results of the study, water services should be more decent.

The U.N. Standard Minimum Rules require that each inmate be assigned a "separate bed" and be provided with "separate and sufficient bedding which shall be clean when issued, kept in good order and changed often enough to ensure its cleanliness."

The female inmates moderately needed enough mats, blankets, pillows, and mosquito needs while adequate space for sleep and rest and sanitation of sleeping paraphernalia were highly needed.

Article 15 of the Standard Minimum Rules requires that inmates keep their persons clean and imposes on prison authorities the obligation of providing inmates "such toilet articles as necessary for health and cleanliness."

Based on the responses, they moderately needed toilet or bathroom per cell, highly needed sound toilets, moderately needed sports facilities and kitchen facilities.

There was a moderate need for clean jail surroundings, well ventilated jail, and a NO SMOKING sign inside the jail buildings.

Jail facilities should be conducive for rehabilitation and reform. It was therefore imperative that the jail facilities should be restorative in the sense that it promotes higher self worth and esteem. Since Cagayan de Oro City enjoys a warm climate, most of its prisons were not sealed; instead the cells or corridors have barred windows that allow in light and air. When these areas are overcrowded, they become noxious with a lack of air and an abundance of vile smells.

In the research conducted, inmates needed provision of medical services. In recognition of the seriousness of health concerns among prisoners, the Standard Minimum Rules included a number of provisions requiring that prisoners should be provided basic medical care and, in particular, that sick inmates must be visited daily by a doctor. The failure of the prison authorities to provide such care was one of the primary sources of inmate complaints the world over. Prison cells in developing countries have the following deficiencies: a) inadequate physical space, which is incompatible with the practices required for the exercise of medical-social activities; b) inadequate distribution of nurses and their assistants, who lack basic training for the exercise of some duties, particularly the care and treatment of inmates' mental health; c) nonexistence of monthly funding causing a lack of basic medications, which results in damage to patients' health; d) absence of technical equipment to facilitate attention to basic emergencies.

Maintaining contact with their families was a critical issue for incarcerated women. Some women prisoners have had children, as well as husbands or boyfriends, other relatives and friends. These women worry that they will lose their children, that

their partners will abandon them, and that their families and friends will forget them. Imprisoned women face serious obstacles to preserving their social connections. To begin with, because of the traditional stigma attaching to the incarceration of women, some women inmates were ostracized by their families and receive few or no visits. The study revealed encouraging results since love and belongingness was felt by the female inmates.

Interviews with the female inmates showed that they needed the following: sanitary napkins, toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, katol, beddings, clothes, slippers, towels, hairbrush, and face towels.

In the subjective assessment, one had kidney infection, nine had backpain, six have impaired vision, five had cough, two had ulcer, two had difficulty of breathing, two were pregnant, one had chest pain, four had visual changes, 11 had smoking history, one experienced recent changes in weight, constipation, eight were alcoholic, four were itching, two had leg pain while one had wound.

Health conditions were also observed objectively. It showed that six had impaired vision based on the Snellen's Chart, five had non productive cough, two were breathing at a rate higher than 30 cpm, two were pregnant, four had visual changes, nine were found smoking at the time of the interview, one had not been defecating for three days, three had rashes, two had pain in the leg area, and one had a wound. Kidney infection, backpain, ulcer, chest pain, recent changes in weight or appetite and alcohol were not verified through the objective assessment.

CONCLUSIONS

Health care needs and services in the provincial jail were below the standards set by the UN Standard Minimum Requirements. Illnesses of respondents on the other hand were occurring at a very low rate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings and conclusions, the following are recommended: Food services, water services, sleeping condition, jail facilities, environment, medical services, and love and belongingness should conform with the minimum requirements of UN; The sick inmates should be referred to the doctor or hospital so that their health condition would improve; and Mental health of female inmates should be studied further since the emphasis on the health condition was more on the physical aspect.

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