

Prevalence of mental disorders and deliberate self-harm in Greek male prisoners

M. Fotiadou^{a,*}, M. Livaditis^b, I. Manou^c, E. Kaniotou^d, K. Xenitidis^e

^a *Community Forensic Team, Lambeth Hospital, South London and the Maudsley NHS Trust, 108 Landor Road, London SW9 9NT, UK*

^b *Social Psychiatry, Demokriton University of Thrace, Alexandroupolis, Greece*

^c *General Hospital of Alexandroupolis and Democriton University of Thrace, 68100 Alexandroupolis, Greece*

^d *General Hospital of Alexandroupolis and Democriton University of Thrace, 68100 Alexandroupolis, Greece*

^e *South London and the Maudsley NHS Trust, UK*

Received 20 March 2003; received in revised form 26 April 2004; accepted 13 June 2004

Abstract

The aim of this survey was to determine the prevalence of current and lifetime mental disorder and deliberate self-harm among male prisoners in Greece. The subjects were 80 randomly selected remanded and sentenced prisoners in a Greek prison. They were assessed for mental disorder including suicidality and substance misuse using the Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview (MINI). We also collected information regarding contact with psychiatric services, previous deliberate self-harm as well as physical health and conducted a brief assessment of their intellectual functioning.

Mental disorder was diagnosed in 63 (78.7%) prisoners. The main diagnoses were: anxiety disorder, 30 (37.5%); major depression, 22 (27.5%); antisocial personality disorder, 30 (37.5%); alcohol dependence, 21 (26.3%) and opiate dependence 22 (27.5%) and schizophrenic or bipolar disorder 9 (11.2%). Deliberate self-harm prior to and during imprisonment was reported by 15% and 2.5% of prisoners, respectively, and 12 prisoners (15%) had IQ below 75.

This survey identified a significant level of need for specialist mental health services in prison. Further studies are required to assess the specific needs of those patients who are too unwell to remain in prison, the need for specific treatments for substance misuse and improved assessment/treatment of common psychiatric disorders.

© 2005 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Prisoners; Mental disorder; MINI; Deliberate self-harm; Drug and alcohol abuse/dependence; IQ

1. Introduction

Despite the difficulties in epidemiological research of mental disorder in prison populations (Teplin, 1990), a number of studies in western countries (e.g. Fazel & Danesh, 2002) have demonstrated a high prevalence of serious mental disorder in prisoners. A significant proportion of prisoners have a degree of intellectual disability (Coid, 1984) with some studies identifying a considerable number of prisoners with a mean full-scale intelligence quotient (IQ) of 67 (Brooke, Taylor, Gunn, & Maden, 1996; Coid, 1998; Gunn, Maden, & Swinton, 1991). Over the last decades, the

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +44 2074116451.

E-mail address: Maria.Fotiadou@slam.nhs.uk (M. Fotiadou).

prison population has been steadily rising resulting in a growing number of mentally disordered prisoners (Chelala, 1999; Fryers, Brugha, Grounds, & Melzer, 1998).

Compared to the general population, prisoners are more likely to have more frequent suicide attempts. In North American prisoners, the leading cause of death has been found to be suicide (Burch & Erickson, 1979). There is also evidence that deliberate self-harm is a common behaviour in prisoners (Leibling, 1992) and that a considerable proportion of those who commit suicide in prison have a history of psychiatric inpatient care prior to imprisonment (Dooley, 1990). Studies in the United States of America (Bland, Newman, Dyck, & Orn, 1990), United Kingdom (Leibling & Kraup, 1993) and elsewhere have identified a number of vulnerability factors that lead to increased risk for deliberate self-harm. Those include being male, young, absence of supportive relationships outside the prison (Beigel & Russell, 1972; Hankoff, 1980) and a history of alcohol/drug misuse or dependence (Bland et al., 1990).

In Greece, similarly with other European countries, the prison population is increasing and comprises of a high proportion of immigrants. Immigrants comprise 10% of the population in Greece but 45.7% of the prison inmates in Greece are immigrants (Ministry of Justice, 2000). Suicide is a relatively uncommon event in the general population in Greece (Lonnquist, 2000). The reported rate is 3 suicides/100,000/year, which is the lowest in comparison with other European countries, for example 9.4/100,000/year in the UK (WHO, 2000). There is no recent research on the prevalence of mental disorder and deliberate self-harm in Greek prisoners.

Prison surveys can be a useful guide to service demand and unmet needs. This paper presents the findings of a prison survey that examines the lifetime and current prevalence of psychiatric disorder, previous contact with psychiatric services and the prevalence of deliberate self-harm in a male prison population in Greece. Details regarding assessment of drug and alcohol misuse will only be discussed briefly as they have been reported in detail elsewhere (Fotiadou et al., 2004).

2. Method

2.1. Setting

There are 27 prisons in Greece. The most recent available data shows a total of 8038 prisoners, 2306 of those remanded and 5732 are convicted (Ministry of Justice, 2000). Of the prisoners 374 (6.5%) are women and 590 (7.3%) are below 18 years old and hence are in young offenders institutions. Although the proportion of prisoners to the general population in Greece is one of the lowest in Europe, there has been a gradual increase of immigrants in prison. Immigrants currently constitute almost half of the prison population (3,832 (47.5%)) and have been imprisoned for a variety of offences (Ministry of Justice, 2000). Dangerous prisoners are in high security prisons while the rest are detained in ordinary prisons. Prison staff have no formal training in recognising mental disorder and there is no regular psychiatric input. Prisoners who are judged by the prison authorities as needing inpatient assessment/care are transferred to the psychiatric wing of “Koridallos” prison in Athens.

The Komotini prison, where this survey was conducted, is a male remand and sentence prison located in Northern Greece with a capacity for 200 prisoners. Prisoners have been convicted for a wide range of offences and the sentences range from a few months to life imprisonment. Prisoners may be transferred there, as in any other Greek prison, from any geographical area in Greece. Thus, the demographic characteristics of our sample are similar to those of other Greek prisons with the same level of security.

2.2. Subjects and sampling method

The total population of this prison at the time of the study was 180 prisoners, of which we selected every third name on the prison list. Inability to speak Greek was the only exclusion criterion. In the event of a prisoner being excluded or refusing to participate, the next name on the list was selected. Thus, 54 potential subjects were excluded, as they did not speak Greek well enough to allow them to complete the relevant questionnaires and to be interviewed without an interpreter. Prisoners were informed about the aims of the project and the confidential nature of the interview by the researcher who also explained that the researchers were independent of the prison system. A total of 80 (40 remanded and 40 sentenced) prisoners agreed to be interviewed and 14 declined participation.

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات