

## BASCD 2023 ABSTRACT #07

### The oral health of Irish prisoners: Dublin prison pilot casenote review

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#### **Background:**

Dental care is available through the Irish Prison Service (IPS) with equivalence to the dental offer available in the Irish state funded community dental scheme.

#### **Objectives:**

To determine the mean DMFT and prevalence of active dental caries amongst Irish prisoners, to describe the reasons for initial presentation and patterns of dental service use, and to describe medical and social factors that may impact oral health.

#### **Methods:**

Ethical approval was received from the IPS and Trinity College Dublin Research Ethics committee. An initial pilot casenote review of 102 charts from Dublin prisons of patients who attended the dental services in 2015-2020 was conducted in 2021. The primary outcomes were DMFT and presence of active decay, and secondary outcomes included reasons for initial presentation and pattern of service use.

#### **Results:**

Over 50% of prisoners had active dental decay on first presentation to the dental service, however DMFT was not routinely recorded. Over 90% of prisoner's first accessed dental care as an emergency patient, presenting with pain, trauma or infection. This pilot cohort of 102 prisoners attended 1077 dental appointments in total, with 286 failed or cancelled appointments. Reasons for failed appointments included patient refusal, no dentist or prison officer available and court appearances. Over 1/3 of this population had a diagnosed mental illness, over 1/3 were taking methadone and the average age of leaving school was 15.1 years old. The proportion of prisoners recorded as active smokers was 63.7%.

#### **Conclusion:**

Within the limitations of a casenote review, these preliminary data suggest that people committed to prison in Ireland have a high prevalence of active untreated decay, which is sufficiently advanced on incarceration that it requires urgent care from the prison dental service. A full oral health assessment at committal is desirable.

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