

BASCD 2023 Abstract #01**Co-producing a film showcasing the dental experiences of community returners (ex-offenders)**

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Background:

The oral health of over 90,000 individuals in UK prisons is four times worse than the general population. A recent scoping review on the oral health of prisoners inside the justice system highlighted the lack of research about what happens when they transition out of prison to become community returners.

Objectives:

To co-produce a film to showcase the dental experiences of community returners to stimulate conversation, change perceptions and inform oral health research priorities.

Methods:

Five community returners, recruited through third sector organisations, attended virtual workshops. The first workshop designed the storyboard; community returners incorporated their own stories into fictional characters to portray their lived experiences. They developed the character stories and wrote the script in the second workshop. A community film production company used professional actors who had contact with the justice system to produce the film. Following Health Research Authority guidance, this stakeholder involvement project did not require Research Ethics Approval.

Results:

The final film, titled “My Story, My Words, My Mouth” explored themes such as self-care oral health behaviours, dental care provision in prison, access to healthcare, stigmatisation, disclosure and improving oral health to support societal reintegration. The film will be aired at a screening event for stakeholders collating feedback from filmed interviews. The feedback and content of the film will be used to set research priorities for this population.

Conclusion:

Co-production can be an empowering platform to hear the voices of community returners. The film is an oral health promotion tool to provoke discussion and actively involve people in research that impacts their lives. Understanding the oral health needs and experiences of community returners is fundamental to developing strategies, to set priorities and improve the oral health of this underrepresented group. This aligns with the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, strengthening community action.

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