

ABSTRACT

Background: Healthcare issues of probationers and parolees, particularly in rural areas, have received little attention.

Objectives: Identify barriers to positive health behaviors in one probation and parole population upon reintegration into the community in order to guide recommendations towards improving their health outcomes.

Methods: A health-risk assessment questionnaire was administered to probationers and parolees, evaluating population demographics, health-related needs, and health habits. Results were analyzed and interventions proposed.

Results: Of 122 responders, 63.9 % reported current smoking and 66.4 % reported history of mental health diagnosis. Respondents' concerns included smoking, stress, drug use, and lack of treatment for mental health issues.

Conclusions: Five main areas were identified that could be targeted to improve health and welfare of this population: smoking cessation interventions; treatment for mental illness; education about safe sex practices; improved access to health insurance; education about exercise and nutrition.