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What social and medical barriers do individuals returning home from prison face?

The need to get access to healthcare is among the constitutional rights if people returning home from prisons, as it is entrenched in the United States constitution. In most cases many of the incarcerated adults will be newly diagnosed with chronic disease when in prison. Despite having this right, the quality of social and medical conditions is often variable and it is often unmeasured and unregulated. This is often characterized by the widespread distrust between patients and the health care system which is intimately tied on the punitive criminal justice system (Wang et al., 2012). When the person is released from prison, the discontinuation of medical care becomes the norm if the continuity is established. This is usually hindered by discrimination, distrust, racism and lack of communication among people in the healthcare system. In addition, these prisoners often find it had to fit back to the society, which contributed so a lot of social and psychological challenges.

In most cases, healthcare professional are never well trained to ask those from prison about their incarceration history, this means that most people from the prison expect medical practitioners to have the skills to help them from prison and address their concerns including prioritizing their health goals. Also in most cases, the health care system does not understand the duties to broadly interface effectively between the patient that is returning to the community and the broad criminal justice system from which they have come from (Wang et al., 2012). It is important that before one is able to address these questions, the society needs to understand the

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social and economic barriers related to the health status of the individual, since both the social and psychological aspects will play in their healing and recovery.

How does this affect health? How does it affect the risk of recidivism?

Due to the lack of attention given to the individual, it is most likely that the person will feel isolated by the society they are supposed to live in. In most cases there ex-convicts may easily return to the life of crime as they would feel that they are understood better when they are with their fellow prisoners. Also it is often not right for the prisoner suffering from chronic illness to be denied free access to healthcare, when they do not have help from the community most of them do not last long in the outside society, their health condition might continue to deteriorate especially when they do not get social and psychological support from the people that they care about (Wang et al., 2012). It is so easy for these individuals to go back to the life of crime, just because they want to feel the belong somewhere.

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References

- Wang, E. A., Hong, C. S., Shavit, S., Sanders, R., Kessell, E., & Kushel, M. B. (2012). Engaging Individuals Recently Released From Prison Into Primary Care: A Randomized Trial. *American Journal of Public Health, 102*(9), e22-e29. doi:10.2105/ajph.2012.300894