

Headline **Prisons as hotspots for AIDS pandemic**
Date **25 Jul 2010**
MediaTitle **Daily Express (KK)**
Section **Health**
Journalist **N/A**
Frequency **Daily (EM)**
Circ / Read **30,557 / 97,836**

Language **English**
Page No **15**
Article Size **57 cm²**
Color **Black/white**
ADValue **117**
PRValue **352**



Prisons as hotspots for AIDS pandemic

PRISONS are excellent breeding grounds for HIV, enabling the AIDS virus to propagate swiftly and stealthily, yet many options exist for tackling the problem, the world AIDS conference which just ended heard. Incidence of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) runs far higher among the 30 million people in the world's penitentiaries than in the general population, according to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Sex between inmates, injecting drug use and tattooing are the main triggers for the spread, helped by overcrowding, corruption and poor access to condoms and anti-HIV therapy, said specialists at the International AIDS Conference.

Katherine Todrys, who carried out a study for Human Rights Watch in six Zambian prisons, said that country did not even have a programme to test newly-admitted inmates for HIV.

"Currently there is no health screening whatsoever (for them)," she said. Only 14 healthcare workers were available for 15,300 prisoners in Zambia's 86 jails, and caring for this population was limited essentially to distributing paracetamol, a pain reliever and fever reducer, she said.

For those diagnosed with HIV, many fail to get treatment because of "security fears, lack of transport and the decision of non-medical officers and other inmates", according to the HRW report.