ANTENATAL CARE AND FOLLOW UP OF WOMEN WHO ARE INCARCERATED

KEYWORDS
Bandyup Prison, Boronia Prison, WANDAS, incarcerated, prison outreach program, antenatal care for incarcerated women.

AIM
To provide an outreach program for incarcerated women experiencing high risk pregnancies with a risk of poor outcomes.

BACKGROUND
The Australian Bureau of Statistics has revealed that as of June 2013, the national imprisonment rate was 170 prisoners per 100,000 adult populations. Of these, 8.4% were women with a median age of 34.5 years, the most common offence being drug related. Women prisoners have been described as often experiencing multiple social and economic disadvantages. Women in prison appear to be a group high in need of care, with many having poor physical and mental health and a significant number with a co-morbidity. Many women have children and some are pregnant.

Minimum standards for the treatment of pregnant incarcerated women all over the world have been recommended by the United Nations and great emphasis is placed on maternal-infant bonding and breastfeeding.

The Standard Guideline for Corrections in Australia states:

“2.45 Pre-natal and Post-natal treatment and accommodation should be made available to female prisoners, where practicable and
2.46 Arrangements are to be made for prisoners to give birth in a hospital outside the prison”

It has been well documented that pregnant prisoners have health care needs that are above the standard care measures met by the prison system. With many women experiencing high risk pregnancies with poor outcomes, King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women (KEMH), in collaboration with the Department of Corrective Services, provides an outreach program for pregnant offenders with fortnightly visits across the two prison settings.

The Women and Newborn Drug and Alcohol Service (WANDAS) at KEMH, is a specialist service which involves a multi-disciplinary team and includes:

• Obstetric Consultant
• Clinical Midwifery Consultant
• Midwives (including a Drug and Alcohol Specialist Midwife)
• Psychological Medical Service
• Dietician
• Social Worker
This team has an MOU to care for all pregnant women who are in prison to provide routine antenatal care including: routine ultrasound scans, blood borne virus screening, smears and swabs, dietician, social support, psychiatric support, midwifery support and referrals to appropriate services, including drug and alcohol treatment services and community support.

Bandyup Women’s Prison is a dedicated women's prison with a current capacity for approximately 285 women. Pregnant women in prison may be admitted while pregnant and follow the guidelines associated with corrective services. An outreach service is provided by the WANDAS CMC and AOD midwife. Antenatal and postnatal care is provided collaboratively by health centre staff and members of the WANDAS team at KEMH. Postnatal women are discharged back to prison five days post birthing at KEMH; babies can be accommodated for up to one year of age with their mother in prison. Antenatal education is provided on alternate weeks by health centre staff and WANDAS.

Boronia Pre Release Centre for Women’s Prison Health Centre is a dedicated centre for a community up to approximately 70 women. Children up to the age of four years can live full time at the centre.

**KEY POINTS**

1. All antenatal care shall be provided as per KEMH Clinical Guidelines. [Ante partum Care](#)

2. All women using WANDAS shall be specifically asked about their medical, physical, psychiatric, social, drug and alcohol use history.

3. At the booking visit the woman should be provided with additional verbal and / or written information regarding:
   - Drug and alcohol effects on the developing fetus and their management during pregnancy
   - Psychosocial support and community support groups
   - Nutrition and dietary requirements
   - Maternal and fetal health surveillance
   - Blood borne viruses and follow up management

4. Discharge planning and documentation shall commence at the first visit.

5. All women under the care of WANDAS should be advised of an expected minimum 5 day postnatal stay.

6. Consent must always be obtained from the woman prior to referral to any community drug and alcohol related services.

7. Women presenting to KEMH for unscheduled treatment shall be admitted for observation for 24 hours accompanied by prison security staff. Monday to Friday: WANDAS staff will liaise directly with prison personnel. If presentation occurs after hours, hospital staff are to contact the prison directly by telephoning the Bandyup Prison Health Centre on 9374 8794 or Boronia on 9212 3570.

8. No medications are to be provided directly to the women. Medications such as vitamin supplements are to be documented in the woman’s pregnancy health record and to be dispensed by Prison Health Care staff only. The provision of prenatal vitamins with folic acid is important because patients are often unable to obtain them on their own.

9. Due to security requirements of the corrective services provider, no appointment information is to be given to the woman directly. Appointment times are to be directly communicated with the correctional service staff.
REFERRAL TO WANDAS

Refer to Clinical Guideline Referral to the Women and Newborn Drug and Alcohol Service Booking a Visit to WANDAS

For antenatal Care provided at KEMH Subsequent visits to WANDAS

And Incarcerated Women Presenting in Early or Spurious Labour

REFERENCES


Do not keep printed versions of guidelines as currency of information cannot be guaranteed.
Access the current version from the WNHS website