

## METHODOLOGY

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Much of this monograph is drawn from research undertaken for a Masters thesis in Political Science at the University of Natal, Durban. The documentary evidence examined for this research included legislation and policy memoranda, as well as statistics and publications produced by the Department of Correctional Services and the Office of the Judicial Inspectorate. In addition to documentary evidence, interviews were conducted with DCS officials and employees, former and current prisoners, and academics and researchers in relevant fields. The DCS employees selected for interviews included health care staff, social workers, psychologists, and administrators. These interviews were semi-structured, with the intention of allowing the interviewee to answer open-ended questions in order to gain the most information possible.

As part of the thesis research, a one page survey was administered to a sample of 274 prisoners at Westville Medium B, a men's maximum security prison in KwaZulu-Natal. Westville Medium B (WMB) is the largest prison for sentenced prisoners in KwaZulu-Natal, and the prison hospital at WMB serves as the hospital for all prisons in the province. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and this fact was communicated to each prisoner at the start of the interview. Structured interview questionnaires were used in order to gain quantifiable data on high risk behaviours and the impact of HIV/AIDS policy amongst the prisoner population. For each question, an option was always given of "Refuse to answer", in order to allow participants to skip questions with which they were uncomfortable. Zulu-speaking research assistants were trained to administer the questionnaire in order to obtain reliable and accurate responses.

The fieldwork for this research was conducted from October 2000 through April 2001. Official permission to conduct the fieldwork for this dissertation was obtained after six months of repeated phone calls and faxes which began with the Head of Prison and culminated with the Judicial Inspectorate and a Chief Deputy Commissioner (both national level government officials). Because of the difficulties experienced in obtaining permission to conduct this research, it became apparent that DCS staff would be more willing to discuss

the issues candidly provided that confidentiality was assured. All interviewees at WMB, both staff and prisoners, were granted confidentiality prior to the commencement of the interview. Although all interviewees were extremely co-operative and helpful, in order to protect them from negative repercussions within the Department, it was decided to not list their names or include direct quotes.

While most of the data was collected from Westville Medium B, information was also obtained through brief research visits to Pollsmoor Prison, outside of Cape Town, and Manguang Prison, in Bloemfontein. Plans to visit several other prisons and conduct more extensive research were thwarted when SABC TV's Special Assignment expose at Grootvlei brought the Department of Correctional Services a spate of bad publicity, and all prison research was temporarily discontinued. To date, there has never been a nationwide study conducted in South Africa's prisons. Prisons vary considerably in size, structural design, and management protocols and the HIV/AIDS pandemic has been shown to vary considerably between and even within provinces. Clearly, the need for a nationwide extensive study of prison health issues is an increasingly important area for future research.