

**PROSPECTS FOR A REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE PROGRAM IN THE
ILOILO REHABILITATION CENTER (IRC): WOMEN INMATES' AND IRC
OFFICIALS' PERCEPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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ABSTRACT

Alegre, Julie Anne B. and Amase, Jaisa Mhe A. (March 2005). **Prospects for a Reproductive Healthcare (RH) Program in the Iloilo Rehabilitation Center (IRC): Women Inmates' and IRC Officials' Perceptions and Recommendations.** A research project submitted to the Division of Social Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences, University of the Philippines in the Visayas, Miag-ao, Iloilo.

The study aimed to determine how women inmates and IRC officials understand the concept of reproductive health and what factors influenced such understanding. It likewise sought to find out the perceptions of women inmates with regards Prospective RH Program in the IRC and their recommendations for effective program implementation. It also sought to determine the IRC officials' views regarding a Prospective RH Program as well as their suggestions for an effective program implementation. Using purposive sampling, fourteen women inmates and six IRC officials were regarded as respondents of the study.

In- depth interview with the IRC officials and a focus group discussion with the women inmates were utilized to unearth respondents' idea of reproductive health and its components such as family planning, reproductive health- related diseases (STDs/ AIDS, breast cancers and ovary cancers) and sexual violence. Results of the study revealed that most of the women inmates and two IRC official respondents have not heard the term reproductive health but they have some knowledge on its components. Women inmates' idea of family planning pertained to the proper way of using contraceptive methods while IRC officials viewed it as an economic means to alleviate poverty. Women inmates regarded themselves as responsible for their own health to be free from STDs/ AIDS, breast and ovary cancers. According to the IRC officials, STDs/ AIDS were acquired through sexual intercourse; thus, women must refrain from engaging in sexual activities with different men. On the issue of sexual violence, women inmates believed that it occurs among couples with lack of communication. The IRC officials held the notion of patriarchal belief as the reason for the continuing occurrence of sexual violence. The traditional roles of male as being biologically aggressive and female as submissive tied both groups of respondents' idea on sexual violence. These beliefs validated the occurrence of sexual violence in the society restricting women to resist violence acts. Results also showed both group of respondents' appreciation on the implementation of an RH Program in the IRC. They underscored the role of the government for the success of the program through substantial allocation of budget. Furthermore, IRC officials emphasized the cooperation of women inmates while women inmates stressed the participation of the IRC officials for effective program implementation. Presenting all the findings of the study, a program on reproductive health must therefore be implemented in the IRC. This program must focus on the concept of reproductive health laid down by the International Conference on Population and Development. The patriarchal belief must be extinguished empowering women and making them aware of the ideas that resisting violence and being free from reproductive health- related diseases are expressions of their reproductive rights. Government must see to it that marginalized women such as the women inmates must have easy access to reproductive healthcare services and programs.