Dilemmas in the treatment of HIV and Hepatitis C in Canadian prisons
Prevalence

HIV

• 1.66% of all federal prisoners known HIV positive

• Provincial rates vary by province- 1.8-2.1%

• Seroprevalence levels 10 times higher than in the general population.
Hepatitis C

- estimated 30% of federal inmates are infected with HCV
- Cross provincial rates unknown but as high as 52% in some institutions
- HCV prevalence increasing in prisons
- Gender difference in infection rates
- HCV transmitted much more easily than HIV
Transmission in Prison
- Sharing needles
- Tattoos
- Sexual contact
Prevention in Prison

- Condoms have been readily available since 1992
- Bleach has been available since 1994 at Federal institutions.
  - varied availability in provincial facilities
- Needle exchange programs
- Methadone
Treatment in Prison

HIV- HAART

- many inmates miss doses
- receive incorrect dosing
- meds not reordered
- lock down
- stigma
HCV

Decision to treat is complicated
Federal vs provincial
Acute vs Chronic
Stage of disease
Cost
Side Effects

