



School of Public Health and Community Medicine

# Research Project

## **Do prisoners who are released to the community maintain their abstinence following a smoking ban in NSW prisons?**

I am offering a **12UOC** or **18 UOC** (Extension) **research project** to any Masters student enrolled in the School of Public Health and Community Medicine to be completed over 2 or 3 terms.

The aim of the study is to examine relapse to smoking among prisoners following release from a smokefree prison after having been offered up to 8 weeks of nicotine replacement therapy whilst in prison. When all prisons in NSW became smokefree, prison inmates who smoked were offered up to 8 weeks of nicotine replacement therapy in the form of the nicotine patch. This study will examine prisoners' maintenance of abstinence from smoking following release from a non-smoking prison facility.

The study design is an observation study of relapse to tobacco use on release from prison at time points: 2 weeks and 3 months.

Ex-prisoners will be recruited from community corrections offices in metropolitan Sydney and in regional centres of NSW. Many prisoners are required to regularly attend a community corrections office following their release from prison as part of their post-release conditions.

This will be the first evaluation of relapse to tobacco use that has been conducted in Australia and internationally following ex-prisoners recent release from a prison where a total prison smoking ban was in place and where they have received an offer of nicotine replacement therapy.

The significance of the study is that the results from the 3 stages of the proposed research program may impact on the future delivery of tobacco treatments in healthcare services for newly released ex-prisoners.

Professor Tony Butler and I have carried out research in the prison system and among ex-prisoners for over 20 years. We conducted the first randomised controlled trial in the world among male prisoners residing in 32 prisons in New South Wales and Queensland.

This is an opportunity for you to experience research among a significantly marginalised group in the Australian population. You will be involved in all aspects of the research, from ethics approvals, study advertising and promoting, recruiting participants, data collection, entry and analysis to writing up of the study. At least one paper will be submitted for publication as a result of the research work carried out.

Contact: **Professor Robyn Richmond**, [r.richmond@unsw.edu.au](mailto:r.richmond@unsw.edu.au)