

Fortnightly Digest by



(Digest 12)

Warm greetings!

We all are aware of the current pandemic situation. The Indian government has been issuing various advisories to follow in order to control the spread of the Covid-19 virus. But the prisoners have always been overlooked when it comes to health. The prisons are overcrowded and under-staffed, under-resourced and this a concern because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Prisons are potential hotspots for COVID-19 infections. As of October, 2020, a total of 18,157 prisoners and prison staff had tested positive and 17 had reportedly died due to the virus.

It is in this context, the Forum for Medical Ethics Society (FMES) and Jan Swasthya Abhiyan (JSA) initiated a petition which has been endorsed by 45 organizations and 187 professionals in health and allied sectors and concerned citizens from India and outside. We argue in the petition that the criteria employed for release on bail or parole by HPCs are based upon nature of offence and years of imprisonment; they DO NOT take into account the age, health status and associated vulnerabilities of prison in-mates to covid 19, and being differently abled. These vulnerabilities need to be central to determine the release of prison inmates, both because it is being done in response to the ravaging pandemic; and because the government is entrusted with upholding the rights of prisoners in alignment with Article 21 of the Constitution of India and other relevant international obligations, such as the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The petition with the aforementioned endorsements has been sent to Chief Justices of all Indian states and Union Territories (UTs), National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), State Legal Services Authorities (SLSA), State Prison Authorities and High-Powered Committees (HPCs) constituted as per the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India (SC) Orders (March 23, 2020) for releasing prisoners to reduce overcrowding in prisons as part of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

We shall keep updating you on this front as it evolves and a forthcoming webinar on the

theme.

Newsletter Spotlight

PRESS RELEASE

[Forum for Medical Ethics Society \(FMES\) and Jan Swasthya Abhiyan \(JSA\) | Petition by health care and public health professionals to Safeguard health and health rights of all prisoners during the Covid-19 pandemic](#)

[Social Research Ethics | UGC-SWAYAM MOOCS](#)

[HEaL Institute - IJME Blog](#)

[Blog 28 | HEaL Institute & IJME – Covid-19 Insights | June 23, 2021 | Safeguarding Prison Health during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic](#) | FMES and Oxfam India

[Blog 27 | HEaL Institute & IJME – Covid-19 Insights | June 10, 2021 | Oxfam India and Forum for Medical Ethics Society welcome PMs announcements for partial free vaccines; highlights need for more inclusive vaccine policy](#) | FMES and Oxfam India

[Blog 26 | HEaL Institute & IJME – Covid-19 Insights | June 7, 2021 | Open letter calling for a global ban on biometric recognition technologies that enable mass and discriminatory surveillance](#) | Access Now, Amnesty International, European Digital Rights (EDRi), Human Rights Watch, Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF), and Instituto Brasileiro de Defesa do Consumidor (IDEC).

[Read more](#)

[Online First from IJME](#)

June 28, 2021 | [Drug testing: Who pays? Who benefits?](#) | Nancy Olivieri

June 22, 2021 | [Reflective narratives during the Covid-19 pandemic: an outlet for medical students in uncertain times](#) | Manjulika Vaz

June 16, 2021 | [Examining the significance of ethics during Covid-19: Overview of the proceedings of the 8th National Bioethics Conference, 2020](#) | Jagriti Gangopadhyay, J Charles Davis, Shridevi Kalkoti, Farseen Khadeejath, Sre Ratha

June 14, 2021 | [Cosmetic surgical procedures on the vulva and vagina – an overview](#) | [Rajesh Panicker, Thunga Pandurangan](#) | Rajesh Panicker, Thunga Pandurangan

[Read more](#)

Forthcoming webinars
being hosted by local and global peer community

June 30, 2021 | WAITRO | Round Table on Intellectual Property: Vaccines and Patents

June 29, 2021 | TNI, ABIA, AEPF | Virtual Side Event: Big Pharma vs the people in the times of Covid: Ways to safeguard the right to health

[Read more](#)

HEaL Institute, IJME, FMES

O-18, Nav Bhavna Premises Co-operative Society Ltd.
422 Veer Savarkar Marg, Prabhadevi
Mumbai 400 025, India

E-mail: admin@fmesinstitute.org; ijmemumbai@gmail.com

The initiative is self-supported with no external funding support.