

March 2009  
FINAL REPORT, BCM06-0119 (UBC ORS 20R42660)

**FINAL REPORT**  
**B.C. Medical Services Foundation**  
**BCM06-0119**  
**(UBC ORS 20R42660)**

***Community-Based  
Participatory Action Research –  
Collaborating with Women in Prison to  
Improve their Health***

**March 2009**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This project would not have been possible without the financial support for the BC Medical Services Foundation of the Vancouver Foundation.

### **Women in Prison:**

All women in Alouette Correctional Centre for Women were invited to be involved in the participatory health research project, either as members of the prison participatory research team or as attendees of prison health research forums. Almost 200 incarcerated women became research team members, over 23 months, 2005-7. This report names only women who co-authored publications, co-presented at conferences and/or gave media interviews.

### **Principal Investigator:**

- Ruth Elwood Martin. Clinical Professor, UBC, Faculty of Medicine/Family Practice

**Academic Co-investigators:**

- Marla Buchanan. Associate Professor, UBC Faculty of Education/Counseling Psychology.
- Jane Buxton. Assistant Professor, UBC Faculty of Medicine/School of Population and Public Health.
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- Trevor Corneil. Clinical Associate Professor, UBC Faculty of Medicine/Family Practice.
- Lynn Fels. Assistant Professor, SFU Faculty of Education.
- Greg Hislop. Clinical Professor, Faculty of Medicine/School of Population Health.
- Patti Janssen. Assistant Professor, UBC Faculty of Medicine/School of Population Health.
- Carl Leggo. Professor, UBC Faculty of Education/Language & Literacy.
- Ann Macaulay. Professor, University of McGill Faculty of Medicine/Family Practice.
- Karen Meyer. Associate Professor, UBC Faculty of Education/Curriculum Studies.
- Gina Ogilvie. Associate Professor, UBC Faculty of Medicine/Family Practice.
- Vivian Ramsden. Associate Professor, University of Saskatchewan, Faculty of Medicine/Family Practice.

**Collaborators:**

- Alison Granger-Brown, Recreation Therapist, Alouette Correctional Centre for Women (2004-2007)
- Brenda Tole, Warden, Alouette Correctional Centre for Women (2004-2007)

**Community and Government Organizations:**

Members of organizations attended prison participatory research forums, provided encouragement to the women and wrote letters of support for funding applications and other causes (see Letters, in Appendix). The following is a partial list of organizations:

- Women's Health Research Network

- The Status of Women, Canada
- BC Centre for Excellence for Women's Health
- Members of the National Parole Board and the Chair of the Provincial Parole Board
- Kim Pate, National Elizabeth Fry Society
- UBC Community Medicine Residency Program
- Regional Aboriginal Health Coordinator, Fraser Health Authority
- Bowman Employment Services, Inc
- Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows Newspaper
- Holy Trinity Anglican church
- The Salvation Army, Correctional and Justice Services
- M2W2
- Program Manager, North Fraser Wage Subsidy in Action
- Fraser Health Authority
- Executive Director, Ridge Meadows Women's Centre
- Coordinator, Justice for Girls
- LINKS
- Chief of health services, Fraser Valley Women's institution
- All Nations College (Nicola Valley Institute of Technology)
- BC Persons With AIDS
- Research Coordinator, MAKKA project
- Aboriginal Mother Society
- BC Centre for Disease Control
- Pacific Women's Services
- Director, Stopping the Violence Branch
- PEERS
- Strength in Sisterhood
- WISH drop in Centre
- PASAN
- Vancouver Coastal Health
- Canadian Women's Health Network
- Cathexis Consulting
- Helping Spirit Lodge Society
- Elizabeth Fry society & Housing Society, Prince George and District

## **I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

### **The processes undertaken**

We began with the research question, "How to evaluate and support a community-based participatory action research project, which involves women in a Canadian provincial prison and aims to improve health and education?"

Our overall goal for this funding was to develop and implement a participatory evaluation framework for the Alouette Correctional Centre for Women participatory action research

(PAR) project based on a narrative approach to logic models and participatory and community engagement of women in prison and the ACCW prison staff.

We outlined 5 objectives:

1. To collaborate with women in ACCW in their PAR project to improve their health and education.
2. To develop an evaluation framework that is community-prison-based and participatory.
3. To implement the evaluation framework.
4. To disseminate the evaluation findings.
5. To advocate for policy changes that are congruent with the evaluation findings.

We anticipated that the project would undertake the following activities:

1. To engage an external consultant to assist in the development of an over-arching logic model to evaluate all the processes that are embedded in the activity of women in prison being involved in PAR. We planned to engage women in prison in the development of these logic models using narrative, artistic and creative means, and the involvement of UBC academic research team, members of community agencies and members of the prison community in the development of these logic models.
2. To involve women in prison and the ACCW prison community in the development of data gathering tools (quantitative and qualitative), the gathering of data (in depth interviews, transcription, analysis, etc) and the provision of research skill building opportunities for women in prison and the ACCW prison community.
3. To continue self-directed PAR activities by women in ACCW, such as grant writing, in-house proposals, self-directed health education, life story writing, developing PowerPoint presentations at monthly health research forums, collaborations with community agencies, school visits and presentations at health research conferences, etc.
4. To advocate for policy changes that are congruent with the evaluation findings.
5. To disseminate project findings, in ways that include the following:
  - a. The development of an ACCW Health Research Webpage.
  - b. Monthly ACCW health research forums – for the entire ACCW community and invited guests and community agencies, academic researchers, policy makers, etc.

- c. Presentations at local health research conferences by women in ACCW
- d. Continued involvement of women who wish to be involved when they are released to their local communities
- e. Publications: Newspaper interviews, magazine articles, written by women in ACCW; ACCW prison newspaper articles, written by women on the ACCW inmate health research team; Publications in peer-reviewed journals.
- f. Presentations by academic team members at national and international research and policy conferences
- g. Research reports for BCMSF and the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Corrections Branch

## **Results**

### *Development of participatory research processes*

Following an initial face-to-face prison meeting in October 2005, the incarcerated women who had assisted in writing the funding application asked the warden if 'participatory health research team' could become a prison work placement, because the work was so meaningful to them. The five shared values that had been expressed during the face-to-face meeting became guiding principles for the developing research processes. The five shared values were: transparency of all information; break the code of silence; respect for diversity – listen and be heard; build on strengths; all who wish to be involved in the research process may be involved. From November 2005 to December 2006, all incarcerated women who wished to join the health research team were invited to become prison peer researchers<sup>[1]</sup>. From January 2007 to August 2007, a program officer screened and selected women who requested to work on the research team. Up to 15 women worked each day as members of the prison research team, with a total of 190 women participating between November 2005 and August 2007. Incarcerated women peer researchers worked in collaboration with the academic research members.

Incarcerated women peer researchers developed an orientation package, which new members joining the research team were invited to complete. The orientation package was revised with minor iterations over several months as new women joined and shaped the group's processes. The final orientation package<sup>[2]</sup> included: a 'welcome to the women's health research team' work placement questionnaire including questions about a member's computer skills and skills they wish to acquire; a 'new member questionnaire' including a demographic self-survey and health-related questions; a 'paragraph of passion' exercise which asked women to write a response to 'what area do you want to learn more about in order to improve your health and the health of others?'; a drug of choice paragraph and survey which asked peer researchers to describe their illicit drug use; an optional life story exercise in which women were invited to write about meaningful life events; and finally, a peer researcher confidentiality agreement and consent form.

The prison peer research team developed a daily routine for themselves that included 'angel words' (each person in turn randomly selected an angel card<sup>[3]</sup> from a closed bag and shared with the group what the word meant to them that day) and a reading from a spiritual reflection book. These routines often led to discussions, related to their spiritual and emotional healing, which fostered an atmosphere of peer support within the research team. In addition, the prison peer research team developed organizational processes that provided opportunities for them to develop leadership within the group (e.g. administrative and organizational skills, public speaking, liaising with correctional staff, and peer mentoring in computer, language and writing skills).

#### *Research activity findings*

Five health concerns (categories) that had been identified during the exploratory phase of the project: addictions (alcohol and drugs) and mental health; HIV, hepatitis and infections; health care in prison; life-skills and re-entry into society, including housing; children, family and relationships.

Through the participatory research processes, nine health goals emerged from out of the five health concerns (categories). The prison peer researchers, in collaboration with author REM, conceptualized their nine health goals as a diagram, which they posted on the wall of the prison dining room in order to seek verbal and written feedback from the broader prison community. Feedback was incorporated into a finalized, 'Bubble Diagram' shown in Figure 1 (see Appendix). The nine health goals reflect the incarcerated women's desire for health not only inside prison, but also in the community after their release from prison. The arrows around the edge of each bubble represent iterative cyclical processes necessary for planning, conducting and evaluation of interventions to attain each health goal.

One-hundred and two incarcerated women from the prison research team completed the demographic survey and the results are shown in Table 1 (see Appendix). The demographics show that 61% were aged 30 or older and 31% were Aboriginal. The strong representation of Aboriginal women in the prison research team influenced the peer research team processes, so that they included Aboriginal methods of dialogue and models of holistic health and healing. For example, the peer research team often discussed topics in a talking circle, practicing a circular and equitable method of discussion. An object which represented a talking stick was often passed around the circle inviting everyone in turn to add their voice to the discussion without interruption. In addition, the four quadrants of the medicine wheel (physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health) were explored by the research team members, highlighting their holistic approach to health.

In addition, 117 incarcerated women completed the 'drug of choice' survey and the results are also shown in Table 1 (see Appendix). Seventy-nine women (74%) reported that drug use led to their incarceration. Of the 57 women who reported past use of cocaine/crack, 51 women (89%) reported that this use led to their incarceration; of the 35 women who reported past use of heroin, 33 (94%) reported that this use led to their incarceration; of the 17 women who reported past use of crystal meth, 13 (76%) reported that this use led to their incarceration. Nine women reported that 'other' drugs

had been their drug of choice, including prescription drugs, morphine, opiates (oxycontin, etc), tobacco, and gamma hydroxybutyric acid (GHB - date rape drug). Thirteen women (12%) did not list heroin, cocaine/crack or crystal meth as drug of choice; of these women, 4/13 stated that the misuse of alcohol led to their incarceration.

Table 2 (see Appendix) provides a summary of prison health and education activities (grouped according to health goal) that incarcerated women peer researchers and prison staff engaged in. These activities show that most of the anticipated outcomes were fulfilled for the BCMSF grant. For a full account, please see the project webpage<sup>[4]</sup>. Activities included education presentations created and given by incarcerated women peer researchers (including hosting prison health research forums with academic researchers, community agencies, funders and policy makers; developing a library of PowerPoint health education presentations; visiting a local high school to inform and share their stories about the harms of drug and alcohol use); surveys created and conducted by incarcerated women peer researchers; interventions initiated by incarcerated women peer researchers (including hosting participatory qualitative analysis workshops, writing workshops and research discussions with academic researchers; creating a webpage to communicate project findings and community resource information for women leaving prison) and interventions initiated by prison staff.

Table 3 (see Appendix) provides a summary of the lessons learned by academic researchers and prison peer researchers through the research processes. The lessons learned were confirmed by a thematic analysis of the qualitative data collected during the process of this participatory health research project, such that themes that repeated most often during analysis are illustrated by illuminating responses in section III of this report.

### **Challenges or opportunities that arose during the course of the project and their resolution**

After two years of the five-year project, BC Corrections Branch wrote a letter stating that they would no longer permit the prison participatory research project to continue. Factors contributing to this decision will be the subject of future writing.

A fortuitous outcome of the termination of participatory research processes inside prison was that the participatory research processes moved to the outside community. Women who were released from prison actively sought ways that they could continue their involvement with the project in their outside communities. Hence, we decided to use the funds that had been designated to hire an external evaluation consultant to, firstly, extend the employment of Nancy Espinoza Magana as the project Research Assistant and, secondly, to provide honoraria to women who were released from prison for part-time work as community-based researchers. The community extension of prison-based participatory health research was renamed *Women in2*

*Healing*. Please see sections V-VIII below for details of the community extension of the project.

As a result of the termination of the research agreement by BC Corrections Branch, we were not able to accomplish several of the planned activities under this grant. For example, we were not able to engage an external evaluation consultant within the prison setting. In addition, we were not able to communicate our research reports or findings to the BC Ministry for Public Safety and the Solicitor General, Corrections Branch.

In December 2008, several members of the BC Ministry for Public Safety and the Solicitor General, Corrections Branch, attended the Inaugural Canadian Collaborative Prison-academic-community conference that was organized by the Collaboration Centre (Division) of Prison Health and Education of the University of British Columbia, Nicola Valley Institute of Technology and Simon Fraser University. Several members of *Women in2 Healing* presented their community-based participatory research work at the conference, including some of their ACCW participatory research project findings. We hope that dialogue, which began during the conference, will continue and that, eventually, women will be able to reintroduce aspects of the participatory health project back into BC prisons.

## **II. FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

A final financial statement from UBC Office of Research Services will be forwarded to you under separate cover.

Table 5, (see Appendix), The Financial Summary, shows a comparison between the budgeted amounts for the BCMSF grant with the actual expenditures. The largest discrepancy occurred in the category '**Community Development Evaluation Consultant**': because the prison research project was terminated, it was not possible for us to hire an external evaluation consultant to come into the prison to meet with the inmate participatory research team. Hence these funds were used instead to extend the employment of Nancy Espinoza Magana, as project Research Assistant, in order to continue to engage women when they were released from prison in the participatory research processes, now based in outside communities.

## **III. IMPACT OF OUR RESEARCH ON HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE IN BC**

Thematic analysis of the qualitative data collected during the process of this participatory health research project identifies commonly identified themes, which are described here to show the impact of this research project on the health of women in prison.

The research process provided **a change of perspective and new hope** for many of the incarcerated women involved in the project. They reported increased hope and confidence that they could initiate changes to improve their health.

*"Being a part of this research team has changed my perspective on life and what is more relevant. Because, [it's] given me a deeper sense of learning to accomplish something with my life...It was good. I learned a lot. It was a different experience to me, you know, something you don't expect happening in jail."*

This theme of a **change of perspective and hope** was echoed in the observations from the prison staff.

*"I was really impressed with the way the girls put together such an informative program...maybe this research project has given them hope."*

Prison staff also emphasized the importance of **the development of skills** for the women peer researchers.

*"I saw a side of the girls that was hidden before. It was so well put together that you didn't realize that you have these skills before."*

The peer researchers asserted **the development of skills** as an important aspect of their growth within the research team.

*"And I'm just thrilled, the stimulation, the mind, the skills that I can use. I can just keep using the skills from the outside. So when I get back out there I'm still gonna be fresh, I'm still gonna be ready to go. I'm not losing, I'm not getting rusty, you know forgetting things...But I mean it's better than sitting around shoveling snow and learning nothing when you have the opportunity to learn what you are interested in."*

Incarcerated women who were involved in this project reported encouragement from a new-found **self-respect and self-esteem**. As a result, they reported that they felt motivation to continue down the road to recovery.

*"I let go of all the expectations and I have learned to love myself regardless to what I have done...And I'm gonna do it. I'm gonna make it."*

Another key theme that emerged from the women was the benefit of learning how to **communicate effectively and confidently**. The women on the research team learned to share their story and present it in an impacting way.

*"By presenting my life story, I've been reading it, rereading it and reading it aloud in research and everything and it got to the point where I felt that it was mundane and when I presented it, it felt like it was the first time I actually heard my own words and I looked up and saw those kids. They were listening, they were actually listening and hanging onto my every word and I felt that was great...I know my word had an effect. I honestly believed that so I am proud of it."*

*"When I was talking to the students at the school I got children at that same age and I wished my son or daughter was in there to hear what I had to say because being a crack head or used-to-be-crack head for years, I didn't know how to approach my kids or how to talk to them about drugs and being a hypocritical person, but now with the dry run and seeing their expressions, they were in awe of all the information we were giving them...You said I just learned something now I know and it's going to be much easier to talk to my kids about drugs and everything."*

By watching the process of the research project and the women that were involved, the prison staff observed the positive effects of allowing incarcerated women to be a part of something new and the theme of **independence** emerged. Prison staff reported that the independence the incarcerated women were given through this project contributed to the positive experience for most of the women involved.

*"I think they liked it because they had a lot of control over it as well; they take control of it themselves so it is not one of us standing up and teaching them a program and it is not us directing them how to do their workload...they are doing it on their own."*

As a result of this project, the incarcerated women who became involved repeatedly expressed their **passion** for their work on the project and their sense of a renewed **purpose**.

*"...it's being busy like this and doing research and doing the typing and seeing everybody's story, reading everybody's story, it's just kind of made me feel like I'm not as depressed as I was here before. Because it has sparked such an interest in me and I feel like I'm useful and doing something to help us while we're here, but also to help the other women that come to the prison in the future. And it just makes me excited that we can actually look forward and hopefully this all does go through to help people, especially the women in prison."*

The **passion and purpose** that the incarcerated women articulated was mirrored in the observations of the research academic team.

*"Because I see all of you engaged in doing something worthwhile and meaningful."*

#### **IV. PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**

Please see Appendix H for copies of abstracts marked (\*).

**Peer-reviewed publications** (Papers *in press* will be forwarded when published):

- Martin, Ruth Elwood. Torikka L. Chan R. Granger-Brown A. Ramsden VR. Healing Fostered by Research. *Can Fam Physician*, February 2008; 54: 244 – 245
- Martin, Ruth Elwood. Murphy, K. Chan, R. Ramsden, VR. Granger-Brown, A. Macaulay, AC. Kahlon, R. Ogilvie, G. Hislop, TG. Participatory health research in a Canadian women's prison: how it all began. *In press*. *Global Health Promotion* (expected Dec 2009)
- Martin, Ruth Elwood. Murphy, K. Hanson, D. Hemingway, C. Ramsden, VR. Buxton, J. Granger-Brown, A. Condello, L. Buchanan, M. Espinoza-Magana, N. Edworthy, G. Hislop, TG. The development of participatory health research among incarcerated women in a Canadian prison. *In press*. *International Journal of Prisoner Health*. (expected May 22, 2009)
- Meyer, K. & Fels, L. Breaking Out: Learning from 'The Women in Prison Project'. *In press*. *International Review of Inquiry* (Authorship is equally shared).
- Martin, Ruth Elwood. Hanson, D. McMillan, J. Hemingway, C. Ramsden, VR. Buxton, J. Corneil, T. Granger-Brown, A. Condello, L. Macaulay, AC. Espinoza-Magana, N. Janssen, P. Hislop, TG. Homelessness as viewed by incarcerated women engaged in participatory research. *In review*. *Family Practice*
- Fels, Lynn. Meyer, Karen. Martin, Ruth Elwood. Angel Words Within Prison Gates: Participatory Action Research as an Action of Restorative Justice. Book chapter. *In press*.

**Planned publications:**

- Ramsden, VR. McMillan, J. Hanson, D. Granger-Brown, A. Buxton, J. Condello, L. Macaulay, AC. Espinoza-Magana, N. Hislop, TG. Martin, RE. Latent Force & Transformation: A Qualitative Analysis of Paragraphs of Passion. *In revision*.
- Adamson, S. Madden, T. Wilson, C. Korchinski, M. Granger-Brown, A. Espinoza-Magana, N. Ramsden, VR. Buxton, J. Condello, L. Smith, M. Macaulay, AC. Hislop, TG. Martin, RE. Women inside prison develop a health promotion intervention: improving their own nutrition and exercise, *In revision*.
- Martin, RE. Murphy, K. Buchanan, M. Outside the box: transformed relationships emerge from prison participatory research. Book Chapter. UBC Women's Studies Centre (editor). *In revision*.

### **Non peer-reviewed publications:**

- The Medical Post. Involving inmates in improving health is a prison breakthrough. Ruth Martin. Health program empowered me to change my life. Lisa Torikka. January 23, 2007.
- Torikka L. (2006a). Forum: The Health of Women in ACCW. The Word is Out: Women's Community News Service, 2, Summer 2006, 1, 3-4.
- Torikka L. (2006b). ACCW - Participatory action research: Collaborating with women in prison to improve health - 1 Year Anniversary Forum. The Word is Out: Women's Community News Service, 3, Fall, 2006, 8-9.

### **Peer-reviewed conference proceedings:**

#### *International/national*

- Martin, RE. Hanson, Debra; McMillan, JJ. Ramsden, VR. Buxton, J. Granger-Brown, A. Espinoza-Magana, N. Janssen, P. Corneil, T. Hislop, GTC. Additional authors see <http://www.womenin2healing.org> *Participatory research by women in prison exploring housing to improve their health: "Where do we go from here?"* Family Medicine Forum 2008. Toronto. October 2008. Poster presentation. (\*)
- Kelly Murphy, Ruth Elwood Martin, Amy Salmon, Ann Macaulay, and other co-investigators of the research team at <http://www.womenin2healing.org> *Giving Voice to Prison Mothers*. Family Medicine Forum 2008. Toronto. October 2008. Oral presentation. (\*)
- J McMillan, D Hanson, V Ramsden, A Granger-Brown, J Buxton, N Espinoza-Magana, G Hislop, A Macaulay, RE Martin and other co-investigators of the

research team at <http://www.womenin2healing.org> *What Drives Women's Participatory Health Research in Prison? A Qualitative Analysis of Paragraphs of Passion*. Family Medicine Forum 2008. Toronto. October 2008. Oral presentation.(\*)

- VR Ramsden, J McMillan, D Hanson, A Granger-Brown, J Buxton, N Espinoza-Magana, G Hislop, A Macaulay, *RE Martin* and other members of Women in 2 Healing. *Latent Force & Possibility: A Qualitative Analysis of Paragraphs of Passion*. North American Primary Care Research Group, Nov 18, 2008. Puerto Rico. Oral presentation.(\*)
- *Participatory Health Research in a Canadian Women's Prison: Beginning with Exploratory Work*. *Martin, RE*. Murphy, K. Chan, R. Ramsden, VR. Granger-Brown, A. Macaulay, AC. Kahlon, R. Ogilvie, G. Hislop, TG and all co-investigators of the research team at <http://www.womenin2healing.org> North American Primary Care Research Group, Nov 18, 2008. Puerto Rico. Oral presentation.
- Condello, Lara-Lisa. *Indigenous educational initiatives in a Canadian women's prison*. Second annual Academic and Health Policy Conference on Correctional Health. University of Massachusetts, Boston, USA. April 2008. Educational workshop.
- Martin, RE. *Participatory research with women in prison to improve health*. Second annual Academic and Health Policy Conference on Correctional Health. University of Massachusetts, Boston, USA. April 2008. Educational workshop. (\*)
- Martin, RE. Salmon, Amy. *Supporting mothers and babies in a Canadian prison setting: health and social outcomes of participants in a provincial correctional centre pilot mother-baby program*. Second annual Academic and Health Policy Conference on Correctional Health. University of Massachusetts, Boston, USA. April 2008. Oral presentation.
- Martin, RE, Hislop, GT. Ogilvie, G. Wardman, D. Ramsden, VR. Macaulay, A. Janssen, P. Meyer, K. Fels, L. Leggo, C. Arvay, M. Calam, B. Corneil, T. Granger-Brown, A. Buxton, J. *Participatory Research with Women in Prison to Improve Health*. 19th IUHPE World Conference on Health Promotion and Health Education, Vancouver, June 18, 2007. Oral presentation(\*)
- Granger-Brown, Alison. *Teaching and learning methods in prison that invite and support women in prison in inquiry-based, self-directed learning*. ICOPA. London, UK, July 2008. Oral presentation.
- Onischik, A. Ramsden, VR. Martin, RE. *Participatory research by women in prison exploring housing to improve their health: Where do we go from here? 7th*

Western Departments of Family Medicine Research Conference, Edmonton, May 25th, 2007. Oral presentation.(\*)

- Amanda Onischik, Ruth Elwood Martin and Vivian Ramsden. *To describe ways that women in prison engage in participatory research to improve their health.* 7th Western Departments of Family Medicine Research Conference, Edmonton, May 25th, 2007. Oral presentation.(\*)
- Granger-Brown, Alison. *Teaching and learning methods in prison that invite and support women in prison in inquiry-based, self-directed learning.* 'What Works With Women Offenders.' Monash University, Prato, Italy, Sep 2007. Oral presentation.
- Granger-Brown, Alison. *Teaching and learning methods in prison that invite and support women in prison in inquiry-based, self-directed learning.* University of New South Wales, Australia. 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> July 2007. Oral presentation.
- Martin, Ruth, Betty Calam, Ogilvie Gina, Garry D Grams, T Gregory Hislop, Patti Janssen, Jane Buxton, Marla Buchanan, Brenda Tole and Alison Granger-Brown. *Community-based participatory action research to improve in a women's prison.* North American Primary Care Research Group. Arizona. (October 2006). *Oral presentation*
- Martin, Ruth; Ramsden, Vivian. *What happens when women in prison are invited to do action research using participatory methods?* Family Medicine Forum 2005, Vancouver, Dec, 2005. *Oral Presentation*

#### *Provincial/Local*

- Espinoza Magana, Nancy, Chowdrey, Reshmi, Green, Ann. *Participatory Research in Prison.* 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Indigenous Graduate Student Symposium. First Nations House of Learning, UBC, March 2007. *Poster Presentation*(\*)
- Thompson, J. Legge, R. *Women in prison: mother and child separation.* UBC Department of Family Practice, Residents' Research Day. June 22, 2007
- Martin, RE, Hislop, GT. Ogilvie, G. Wardman, D. Ramsden, VR. Macaulay, A. Janssen, P. Meyer, K. Fels, L. Leggo, C. Arvay, M. Calam, B. Corneil, T. Granger-Brown, A. Buxton, J. *Participatory Research with Women in Prison to Improve Health.* UBC Department of Family Practice, Faculty Research Day June 21, 2007 (\*)
- Women of ACCW. Tole, B. Granger-Brown, A. Martin, RE. *Participatory research with women in prison to improve health.* Annual Corrections Health Care Conference, Justice Institute, New Westminster, May 11, 2007. Oral presentation.(\*)

- Fehr, Shonna, Ruth Martin, Patricia Spittal, Mary Fayant, Amy Slater, Henry Smidstra, Brenda Tole, Jane Buxton, Alison Granger-Brown, Alison Granger-Brown and et al. *"Developing action research using participatory methods with women in prison to improve health"*. Women's Health Research Network, UBC Summer Institute. Vancouver. (June 2006). *Oral presentation*.
- Stephens, Ursula, Ruth Martin, Patricia Spittal, Mary Fayant, Alison Granger-Brown, Amy Slater, Henry Smidstra, Brenda Tole, Jane Buxton and et al. *Participatory action research: collaborating with women in prison who wish to improve their health and to re-enter society*. Women's Health Research Network, UBC Summer Institute. Vancouver. (June 2006). *Oral Presentation (\*)*
- Edworthy, Gillian. *ACCW - Participatory Action Research*. UBC Department of Family Practice post-graduate faculty scholarly work conference, June 22, 2006. *Oral Presentation (\*)*
- Kahlon, Roopjeet. *Developing action research using participatory methods with women in prison to improve health*. UBC Department of Family Practice post-graduate faculty scholarly work conference, June 22, 2006. *Oral Presentation*

**Invited presentations (no abstracts available):**

- Women from prison - Rene Chan and Alison Granger-Brown. Vulnerability in Prison, IHHS 402, COLLEGE OF HEALTH DISCIPLINES, UBC, June, 2008
- Women from prison – Stacey Bowie and Ruth Elwood Martin. Vulnerability in Prison, IHHS 402, COLLEGE OF HEALTH DISCIPLINES, UBC, June 27, 2007
- Women from prison - Ursula Stephens, Lisa Auch, Alison Granger-Brown and Ruth Elwood Martin. Vulnerability in Prison, IHHS 402, COLLEGE OF HEALTH DISCIPLINES, UBC, June 21, 2006
- Members of the ACCW participatory research team, presentation to Garibaldi Secondary School, grade 11 class, June 2006.
- Keynote address. Healing fostered by research: participatory research with women in prison. Ruth Elwood Martin. 2008 Research Forum, Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians, March 2008
- Jennifer McMillan and Ruth Elwood Martin. Lecture for UBC course, Community-based participatory research. Healing fostered by research. October, 2008.
- Ruth Elwood Martin and Jennifer McMillan, presentation entitled, Hepatitis and prisons. Invited by the BCCDC interdisciplinary hepatitis workshop, Sep 2008.

- Presentation to the UBC School of Midwifery by Kelly Murphy and Jennifer Smith. Fall 2008.
- The UBC/SFU/Nicola Valley Institute of Technology Inaugural Canadian Collaborative Prison-academic-community Health and Education conference, Dec 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008, UBC First Nations Longhouse. <http://www.familymed.ubc.ca/dph/Events/Conference.htm>
- Ruth Elwood Martin and Jennifer McMillan, presentation entitled, Bloodborne Infections and Public Health Promotion in Correctional Facilities. Invited by the BC Center for Disease Control, Public Health Grand Rounds, March 20, 2009.
- Mo Korchinski, Catherine Wilson, Carrie Smith. Presentations about alcohol and drug use. Invited by Maple Ridge high schools to speak to their students. March 2009 onwards.
- Kelly Murphy. Invited presentation entitled Hepatitis and prisons, to medical students and nurses at Vancouver Native Health. March 24, 2009.

**Invited advisory roles:**

- *Continuity of Care for Offenders*. Dr Richard Byng, GP Researcher, Peninsula Medical School, Plymouth. Advisor: Ruth Elwood Martin
- *Participatory Research Workshop, 'What's up Doc?'*. Presented To: Alberta Chapter of the College of Family Physicians. At: 52st Annual Scientific Assembly, Alberta College of Family Physicians, Banff. Date Presented: Feb, 2007. Co-presenters: Vivian Ramsden and Ruth Elwood Martin
- *Community Research Methods 101*. Presented To: Sooke community members, At: Sooke Community Research Meeting, Sooke, British Columbia, Canada. Date Presented: Feb, 2007. Facilitator: Ruth Elwood Martin
- *Community-Based Participatory Research with Women in Prison*. At: Clinical Research Methods 800.3, University of Saskatchewan, Regina, College of Medicine, Saskatchewan, Canada. Date Presented: Oct, 2006. Co-presenters: Vivian R Ramsden, Jackie Crowe, Ruth Elwood Martin
- *Participatory Research in Prison*. At: Environmental Health Studies 210, First Nations University of Canada, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. Date Presented: Oct, 2006. Co-presenters: Vivian R Ramsden, Ruth Elwood Martin
- *Women's Health Research Network, Primer on community-Based Participatory Research*. Consultant reviewer: Jennifer McMillan

## **V. OTHER DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES**

Dissemination activities continue to roll out for the findings/implications of participatory research in prison.

### **Internet:**

- Women in2 Healing Webpage <http://www.womenin2healing.org>
- Women in2 Healing Blog page <http://womenin2healing.blogspot.com>

### **Newsletters:**

- Newsletters of Women in2 Healing (See Appendix)

### **Newspaper and magazine articles:**

- Vancouver Sun. Female Inmates Fight to Keep their Babies. Lori Culbert. Interview with Jennifer Smith and baby Sierra. March 5, 2009.
- Vancouver Sun., Thursday Feb 21, 2008. 'Ex-cons give hope to those in need. Former prisoners join project to help others not make the same mistakes'. Lori Culbert. Article featuring Jennifer McMillan, Amber Christie and Ruth Elwood Martin.
- Vancouver Foundation magazine, interview with Kelly Murphy and Ruth Elwood Martin.
- Martin, Ruth Elwood. interview with UBC Reports, Lorraine Chan, Jan 3, 2008. Lorraine also interviewed Jennifer McMillan, member of Women into Healing. These interviews were compiled into a featured article in UBC Reports featuring the prison participatory research project, Feb/08.
- The Maple Ridge News. Women heal behind prison walls. Phil Melnychuk. Apr 26 2006

### **Radio and Audio interviews:**

- Women's Health Research Network, podcast interview. Giving voice to prison mothers. Kelly Murphy and Jennifer Smith. October 2008.
- Live interviews by Vancouver Co-op Radio at 102.7 FM, with various members of Women into Healing - Kelly Murphy, Jennifer McMillan, Lora Kwandibens, Christine Hemmingway, Jennifer Smith, Alison Granger-Brown - Mondays at 7PM; 2008-2009. Transcript of interviews posted to [www.prisonjustice.ca](http://www.prisonjustice.ca).
- Live interviews on CBC AM Radio, the Early Edition, with Rich Cluff, with various members of Women into Healing - Kelly Murphy, Jennifer Smith, Alison Granger-Brown. October 2008.

## **VI. ADVANCEMENT OF THE RESEARCH SKILLS OF THE INVESTIGATORS, PERSONNEL HIRED AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

During the participatory research project inside prison, women who were members of the research team sought to further their own education wherever they could, albeit within a prison setting, with no Internet access and limited access to computers (as described in the report above) by:

- Improving their own computer skills (e.g. transcription work; learning PowerPoint skills from a manual or mentored from each other)
- Accessing information from prison library books; and by asking staff to retrieve information from the Internet for them
- Increasing their knowledge about health and about research methods
- Increasing their ability to synthesize and process retrieved information
- Increasing their ability to communicate what they were learning with others through public speaking and PowerPoint presentations

Women following their release from prison, in their engagement with Women into Healing, have been relentless in their quest to further their own education, as follows:

1. Completing an introductory research methods course at Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (2)
2. Completing the on-line Tri-Council Policy tutorial and received their certificate (5)
3. Assisting with submitting UBC Research Ethics Review applications (4)
4. Developing survey tools (all members of Women into Healing)
5. Hired (or will be) as part-time research assistants and/or administrative assistants with the CIHR-funded project 'Doing Time'(6)
6. Enrolling in post-secondary education courses (several)
7. Enrolling in an on-line participatory research course with University of Victoria (1)
8. Engaging in the Vancouver Foundation Community Based Clinician Investigator (CBCI) research mentorship program (2)

9. Developing their computer skills, including writing and sending emails, Internet searches, and developing skills in Microsoft Office (Excel, Word, PowerPoint)
10. Taking media courses (3)
11. Giving media interviews (6)
12. Presenting their research work at conferences as posters, oral presentations and workshops (6)
13. Writing articles for publication and for the newsletter (several)
14. Developing and creating the Women into Healing newsletter
15. Assisting with writing grant applications (several)

The academic researchers in the team have developed skills working collaboratively in an interdisciplinary team and have become proficient in community-based participatory research (CBPR) methods. The majority of academics on this project had never before engaged in CBPR. All feel extremely privileged and humbled by working as research colleagues with women who are released from prison.

Three graduate students wrote dissertations for their Masters degrees that were based on the findings of this project.

1. Teaching and learning methods in prison that invite and support women inmates in inquiry-based, self-directed learning. Alison Granger Brown, MA, Royal Roads University, BC
1. Exploring health outcomes of a participatory research project in a Canadian women's prison. Gillian Edworthy, MPH, London College University, UK
2. Rationale, description and implications of a participatory health research project in a Canadian women's prison. Ruth Elwood Martin, MPH, University of Manchester, UK

The following research assistants, students and volunteers worked as members of the ACCW participatory research team:

1. Nancy Espinoza Magana, Research Assistant, Jan/07 onwards
2. Roopjeet Kahlon, Research Assistant, summer 2005 & summer 2006
3. Gillian Edworthy, Research Assistant, summer 2006
4. Reshmi Chowdrey, Research Assistant, May 2007 onwards

5. Ann Green, ACCW volunteer
6. Rene Summerfield, ACCW volunteer, creative writing facilitator
7. Afiya Moses, ACCW volunteer, summer student 2006
8. Sherry Yang, volunteer, UBC medical student
9. Ljiljana Kordic, FP resident (MRSA survey)
10. Rebecca Legge & Jeannine Thompson, FP residents (prison mothers and child separation)
11. Benjamin Martin, UBC summer student 2007
12. Margaret Lo, UBC summer student, 2007

## **VII. THE BEST STORY THAT CAME OUT OF OUR RESEARCH**

Many stories have emerged from this research and it is hard to choose one. Here are two:

1. Women who are released from prison have developed a network on Facebook entitled *ACCW Alumni* for the purpose of providing peer support for each other in their journey to reintegrate into society and to maintain their health. Using networks that formerly maintained their lives of crime, they are now using these peer-networks for improving their health and well being. Currently, over 90 women from prison belong to a private Facebook group, which seeks to support health and healing.
2. Debra Hanson turned to Ruth Elwood Martin, following their presentation at North American Primary Care Research Group, October 2007, with clarity dawning on her face, "Do you mean Dr Martin that no one has done this before? No one has asked women in prison for their ideas on how to improve their health? Why has no one done this before?"

And, then, the realization hit her that **she** had made the following history that day: It was the first time that women from prison had presented at an international research conference about how **they** had researched answers for their own health issues (homelessness).

## **VIII. ADDITIONAL RESEARCH THAT WILL BUILD ON THIS PROJECT**

Several current research projects build on this project, including:

1. Three-year 'Doing Time: participatory research to develop a health action strategy for incarcerated women'. The community-based participatory research

activities and evaluation of women after their release from prison in Women in2 Healing (With), formerly ACCW Alumni.

2. Building on the PowerPoint presentations that were developed by the prison participatory research project, the participatory development and evaluation of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder educational modules for youth and adults in prison.
3. An exploration of the impact of babies in prison upon the health and well being of all women who are incarcerated.
4. Participatory evaluation of the influence of peer-organized community exercise recreation programs on the health of women from prison.
5. Participatory development of a survey of women who don't access resources in Mission. Application for pilot NAMHR funding pending.

Related funding awards include:

1. UBC HERRO grant, to facilitate the development of CIHR operating grant application. \$5000 awarded May/07, for honoraria for women in the community to be involved as community researchers.
2. Vancouver Foundation: Community-Based Clinician Investigator Salary Award. For Ruth Elwood Martin. \$40,000/yr awarded for 3 years. Community co-partners are Fraser Health (\$10,000/yr for 3 years) and BC Women's Hospital and Women's Health Research Institute (\$10,000/yr for 3 years); Research Mentor, Dr James Frankish
3. UBC Faculty of Medicine Start-Up Funds. Participatory research among women in prison. \$10,000 awarded Spring/06, to hire Roopjeet Kahlon.
4. Canadian Institutes of Health Research - Interdisciplinary collaborative enhancement: Participatory action research to improve the health of drug dependent women in prison. (*Project Description:* Development grant was used to conduct exploratory work among women in prison regarding the feasibility of conducting participatory research in prison.) \$5,000 awarded Jan/05
5. PASAN: \$300 donation to support operating expenses, summer 2006
6. UBC Development Office: donation to employ 2006 summer research assistance. \$5000 awarded Summer/06.
7. Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Operating grant. Doing Time – participatory research to develop a health action strategy for incarcerated women. Co-PIs Ruth Elwood Martin and Patti Janssen. \$150,000/yr for 3 years.

8. Vancouver Foundation, community development grant awarded to Women into Healing, to support honoraria for, and activities of, women released from prison. \$50,000. July 2008.
9. Tula Foundation, community grant awarded to Women into Healing, to support exercise and nutrition health promotion. \$10,000. July 2008.
10. Fraser Health Authority, Health Promotion Branch, awarded to Women into Healing, to support health promotion activities. \$10,000. March 2008.
11. John Sims, from the estate of Gordon Anderson Hall, grant awarded to Women into Healing (to support the restoration of oak chairs donated by Drs Peter Richards and Kay Sutherland). \$10,000
12. BC College of Family Physicians, research grant awarded to Women into Healing, to support an economic evaluation of the engagement of women released from prison in participatory health research processes. \$5000. May, 2008.
13. BCMSF dissemination grant, awarded to Women into Healing (Jennifer McMillan, Alison Granger-Brown and Ruth Elwood Martin) for production and distribution of newsletters. August 2008. \$3,000.

## **Appendices**

- A. Community organizations' letters of support for funding applications – a sample  
*(Please note: Over 30 women inmates of ACCW signed their letter from "ACCW women concerned about health care. Their names have been removed for confidentiality purposes. Also, personal identifiers have been removed from any letter written by an inmate.)*
- B. Figure 1: Bubble Diagram
- C. Table 1: Demographic self-survey and drug of choice survey of incarcerated women who joined the prison participatory health research team (Feb/06 - July/07)
- D. Table 2: Activities of the prison participatory research team (Nov/05 – Jul/07)
- E. Table 3: Lessons learned from prison participatory research processes

F. Table 4: Financial summary

G. Newsletters of *Women in2 Healing*

H. Published abstracts

[1] Peer researcher – we define this as a woman who was/is incarcerated who is/was engaged in the participatory research project by learning/doing the following: 1) researcher activities 2) peer support activities, and 3) self-development activities.

[2] Orientation package – the complete orientation package is available at <[www.womenin2healing.org](http://www.womenin2healing.org)>

[3] 'Angel Words' are a package of individual cards of descriptive words and nouns. A single descriptor or noun is found per card. (For example, "passion" would be on one of the cards)

[4] <[www.womenin2healing.org](http://www.womenin2healing.org)>