Abstract

In 2007, the rate of confirmed AIDS in U.S. state and federal prisons was twice the general population rate, pointing out the need for HIV-prevention research with correctional populations. Retaining high-risk populations in prevention research is difficult; however, participant retention is essential for study validity. Project START was an HIV-prevention study conducted in four U.S. states. The first phase was a tracing and retention study. Recommendations to address barriers to retention from service providers inside and outside the correctional system were compared for congruence with the Project START recruitment and retention manual. Records of tracing and retention activities and demographic data were analyzed. Recommendations for retention include flexibility in sites and times for study activities, increasing participant contacts over time, collecting a range of locator information and obtaining permission to contact family members for assistance in maintaining contact with participants.