Currently, prison populations in the U.S. are growing older rapidly[1]. Older prisoners age more rapidly such that 45% have chronic physical problems after the age of 50 and 83% after the age of 65[2]. U.S. prisons can expect a 20-fold increase in medical and long-term care requirements in prison settings over the next 10 years. To prepare for this explosion of resource requirements immediate, targeted personnel training in aging issues is re-quired as a first step in a decade long program to modify programming and facilities to better accommodate older prisoners. This program can serve as a paradigm for resource demands in the aging population globally. Database searches reveal only one current manual about older prisoners and one website. The American Corrections Association (ACA) website offers courses for correctional staff that are online text-based courses, not based on e-Learning technologies. The Prison Information Resource Library (PIRL) pro-gram is designed to be a platform to deliver training to corrections personnel in flexible, self-paced modules utilizing state-of-art technologies (AJAX, cascading style sheets, Flash audio and video, etc.). PIRL contains an administrative environment for trainers to deliver, monitor, teach, and evaluate training that is normally delivered in a classroom or lecture setting. The modules allow an individual to review and repeat material until they achieve criterion for passing tests following the learning portion of each module. The envi-ronment supports discussion with other corrections officers from around the country (and potentially internationally) to further enhance the exchange of ideas and to accelerate the dissemination of best practices. The research is sponsored by the National Institute on Aging. The objective is to present a useful categorization framework to prison staff and professionals to classify older prisoners and understand them in the context of the chal-lenges of biological, psychological, and social aging in a prison environment. The modules deliver 5 hours of training. **Methods** Two prisons in Ohio were selected for testing. One houses male prisoners (11% of inmates 50+) and the other is the only female prison in Ohio (3% 50+). The initial pilot consisted of presenting three modules. Each module re-quires 20 to 30 minutes to complete. Each has a 10 question pre-test and post-test and a set of reaction questions. Front-line staff including officers, guards, medical and mental health care staff were selected and asked to participate. Currently, 51 individuals have completed the training pilot. **Results and discussion** Paired t-tests show significant learning by staff (t (1,130)=7.3, p=.001). Staff indicate the material is interesting (X=3.6/5, s.d.=1.0) and relevant to their job (X=3.3/5, s.d.=1.0). Comments were overwhelmingly positive and indicate it will have substantial impact for older prisoners. It is the first step in a major revision of prison programming and facilities. Staff will complete all 10 modules by April, 2008. Results are expected to continue to improve with more applied material in later modules.

References

1. Rikard RV, Rosenberg E. Journal of Correctional Health Care 2007;13:150-162
2. Sterns A, Sed C, Keohane P. Correc-tions Today (In press).

Figure 1. Web-based training for prison staff