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Abstract: With some selected elderly inmates (n=93) from two prisons in Nigeria, this study critically examined the problems of the aged inmates in the Nigerian Prisons. Convenience and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the two-prisons studied and the aged inmates (n=93) that were questioned, respectively. Questionnaire was the only research instrument employed in the study and frequency and simple percentage were the methods of data analysis. The study discovered that poor bedding and clothing, inadequate food and poor diet, poor health care delivery, lack of psychological support and poor recreational facilities were the major problems which made life in prison more terrible for the elderly inmates in Nigeria. The recommendations made in this paper would go a long way in sanitizing the poor prison system in Nigeria, especially as it affected the aged inmates, provided they were judiciously implemented by the prison stakeholders in Nigeria.

Keywords: elderly inmates, prisoners, bedding, food/nutrition, health care delivery, psychological

Introduction
The prison is a formal organization which involves the interaction of people from different technical and professional skills operating to attain the organizational goals. As a formal organization, it is bureaucratic in its structure and operation, while its goals of reformation, rehabilitation and deterrence are clearly spelt out in its blue print. Its effective performance of these goals are the main criteria of determining its success or otherwise.

Indeed, the prison as the last rendezvous for the criminal is a total institution which is a formal organization and in a part a residential community. It is designed to ensure restraint and custody of convicts. The prison is a penal dust bin (Obioha, 2002). It is the primary function of the police to sweep the streets of the most readily identifiable and vulnerable offenders, then the function of the prison system is repeatedly to contain them. Obioha( 2002) expressed the opinion that prison must have three basic characteristics which are: Lack of escape routes, rigid hierarchy and extreme authoritarianism. As part of the punishment, Atere (1993) argued that the prison term represents about 80% of the whole punitive measures and gives criminals the second chance to prove they could be better people.

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There are various categories of people within prison walls but age, sex, religion and social class separate these people. However, there is within the prison walls the dependent population who are the aged. The aged is the category of people who are no longer biologically capable of carrying out demanding tasks. According to submission of wheeler et al. (1995), in any normal society, the aged people require five basic types of care: Medical care (which could be done by skilled nurses through rehabilitative therapy), personal or custodial care, companion or respite care, care related to living arrangements i.e. home care and of course, the life care.

Davies (2011), posits that the elderly population has received relatively very little attention in the criminal justice system across a number of levels. This is despite a rapidly increasing elderly prison population which is contributing to an already overcrowded prison system. This poses a number of challenges for the prison service, since older people in prison experience a host of unique problems which differ from those of younger prisoners.

It is very important to mention the categories of elderly prisoners at this juncture. Neely (1997) presented three categories of aged inmates: the first time offenders, career or habitual criminals (prison recidivists) and inmates who have grown old in the prison. However, Davies (2011) identified five main sub-groups of elderly prisoners: firstly the old offenders who have been imprisoned after committing an offence for the first time (aged 55 or older), secondly, old timers who are imprisoned before the age of 55 and have served over 20 years of their prison sentence, thirdly, career criminals (recidivists), who committed their first offence before 55 and have spent their lives in and out of prison. Fourthly, young short term first offenders that were incarcerated before 55 and have served less than 20 years in prison. Finally, the fifth group might be identified in the form of an “historic offender who has committed a crime in their youth but has only been convicted in old age (due to some new admission of evidence in the case). Hence, Davies (2011) argued that, it would therefore, be naïve to assume that elderly prisoners all share the same experience in prison but many of the problems that these different types of elderly prisoners encounter do overlap.

This research work was conducted to know the problems being faced by the aged or elderly prisoners in Nigeria. The age for our study was 50 years and above. The scope of the study only covered two prisons in Ogun State, Nigeria, because of the limitation imposed on the study by time, money and other resources.

Most studies conducted on imprisonment have been on the adjustment patterns of prisoners behind the walls (Atere, 1993), the legal systems among prison inmates in Nigeria (Adeola, 1997), the plights of women inmates (Dimkpa, 2011; Ojo, 2002) etc. However, researches addressing the problems of the aged or elderly prisoners within the Nigerian context are very scarce. Little has been written on
the treatment of the aged inmates as some of the writers only mentioned them in the passing. An adequate study on the treatment of the aged inmates therefore is a necessity.

Arising from the problem stated above, the objectives of this study are:

(1) To evaluate the social relationship between the aged inmates in Ogun State Prisons and young inmates and the staff.

(2) To access the treatment of the aged inmates in Ogun State prisons.

This study is important because it is geared at bringing into limelight the treatment of the aged in prisons and the general welfare programmes available for them. It will add to existing knowledge in the area of penology and will also serve as a tool in the hands of social policy makers as regard the treatment of the aged in prisons.

Literature Review

Prisons conditions, as argued by International Bar Association (2010), throughout the world, often ranged from poor to extremely harsh and life threatening. Abuse by prison guards, poor medical care, severe overcrowding, brutal treatment of prisoners, harsh or dangerous working conditions, official negligence, poor sanitary conditions and abuse and mistreatment by guards among others are the common problems facing prisons worldwide.

Most of these problems were attributed to inadequate human and institutional capacities within the prisons and lack of cooperation among stakeholders in the justice sector (Robins, 2009) and one of the main reasons for some of these problems is lack of resources – both financial and professional (Y Care International, 2007). Corruption within the prison system also plays important role. There was extensive administrative corruption in some of the prisons in many countries of the world (Meskell, 1999) and little regards for inmates’ concerns also play important role, especially that this has been recorded as a major cause of the prison riots (Henderson, et al., 2000). Lack of data and information that are adequate on prisons also plays a significant role. The lack of both information and data production is shockingly high in sphere of the judicial and prison systems. Production of these data is fundamental for the state to be able to develop new public policies and to evaluate their results implementation (Joint submission by Relevant Stakeholders, 2011).

This study will take time to review some of the problems challenging the effectiveness and result oriented prison systems in the world, so that we can have a clear picture of the problems that this study aims to address.
Overcrowding and Congestion

Prison overcrowding and congestion, perhaps, is the greatest challenge confronting the fruitful management of prison system in all the countries of the world. Robins (2009) on his submissions over prison policy in Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Zambia posited that the prison services continue to face major challenge of lack of accommodation. At the root of this challenge faced by all three prisons systems is the issue of overcrowding. Prison congestion, according to him, puts pressure not only on accommodation facilities but also on the ability to ensure appropriate nutrition, sanitation, exercise and medical care. It puts greater demands on prison staff that are often too few, poorly trained and badly paid.

In Brazil, International Bar Association (2010) observed that severe overcrowding in prisons contributes to inmate unrest and the inability of guards to effectively prevent weapons and cell phones from being brought into prisons. In comparing the population of inmates in Scandinavian countries with England, New Zealand and Australia, Pratt and Eriksson (2011) observed that England, New Zealand and Australia have two or three times as many people in prisons per head of population than the Scandinavian countries. For instance, they cited that while the rate of imprisonment in New Zealand is 203 per 100,000 of population, that of Finland is 60. Hence, managing prison systems in Scandinavian countries was a bit easier than managing prison system in England, New Zealand and Australia.

In Nigeria, most prison yards are overcrowded beyond the designed population. This manifest in most of the prisons holding more population of inmates than they were originally planned to accommodate, which in turn overstretches available infrastructure beyond their limits of function due to human pressure (Obioha, 2011). Adeola and Atere (2003) argued in the same line, that Nigerian Prisons are congested and filled to the brim. Those persons awaiting trial largely cause the overcrowding. It is not uncommon for the persons awaiting trail to wait indefinitely for periods far exceeding the periods of imprisonment, if they actually convicted of offences for which they are being held. Overcrowding, therefore, permeates the entire life of the prison population. Hence, every prison in Nigeria is a slum where men (and women too) literally live on top of each other and the available statistics indicate that the Nigerian prisons have an overcrowding rate of between 10% and 58% [Okunola et al., 2002].

From all indications, it is glaring that overcrowding and congestion is a prominent factor which makes prison management very difficult, virtually in all the countries of the world.

Bedding and Sleeping Conditions

Very similar to the problem of overcrowding and congestion, which poses a great challenge to the good management of prison system, is bedding and sleeping conditions in most of the prisons. Robins (2009) argued, of the Zambia prisons, that there was lack of sleep as a result of overcrowding.
and this has emerged the biggest problem facing prisoners, with some prisoners sleeping while standing.

Beddings, in the form of mattresses and blankets are still in short supply in most prisons. In some prisons, natural light in the cells is often insufficient. A dim light is never turned off during the night. Cells tend to be very stuffy during the dry season and very cold during the rainy season or harmattan (Human Rights Watch, 1995).

In Nigeria, Obioha (2011) argued that the rooms and cells are not good for human habitation, while the beddings are, in most cases, absent as many prison inmates in Nigeria sleep on bare floor. Okunola et al. (2002) reported that in Nigerian prisons, prisoners sleep in batches and that there are three to five batches. When it is time to sleep, every other batch makes space for the first batch. They stand at one end of the cell, or sit. Some sleep while standing, but do not lie down. Only the first batch lies down. After four hours, they get up and the next batch lies down to sleep until the shift is completed. While convicts sleep on beds without mattresses; the awaiting trials only rest on old blankets on the bare floor where the congestion allows stretching of the body, otherwise he sleeps by learning against the wall. A more horrible situation was presented by Dimkpa, (2011), who argued that in Port Harcourt, 905 inmates who were yet to face trials for their alleged crimes slept in unimaginable conditions even to the extent of sleeping amongst their own faeces, with no medical attention when ill.


It has been argued that prison congestion has led to poor and inadequate nutrition of prisoners. Food is inadequate both in quality and quantity. Prisoners, in most prisons, are undernourished and in poor health, due to inadequate food and non-availability of drinkable water in many prisons (Robins, 2009). With the explosion in the prison population, feeding the prisoners adequately has become task impossible for the prison authorities. Menu in prison is predominantly carbohydrate blend with some protein contents. The menu chart is largely dominated by starch, and this can, not by any standard, be regarded as balanced diet. The food given to the average prisoner is qualitatively inadequate for an average human being and, at best could, only be described as starvation diet (Okunola et al., 2002). Survey revealed diet and nutrition to be one of the most prevalent issues of concern among inmates. Those on special diets do encounter problems receiving their special diets. Most foods being served were unpalatable and at worst not fit for human consumption (Williams et al., 2009).


Williams et al. (2009) discovered that the majority of women and men in prisons have at least one chronic health condition and that the issue of right to health for prisoners is grossly being violated. Prisoners suffer serious illness due to lack of exercises (Robins, 2009). Obioha (2011), argued that
the problem of congestion in the Nigerian prisons is discovered to be the major cause of some killer diseases such as air borne infections. The deplorable health conditions have led to infectious diseases, such as skin scabies and bilharzias. To worsen the situation, there are no standard hospitals, drugs and qualified medical personnel to take care of the sick inmates. Even when there is a need to take a sick inmate out of prison yard for treatment in a hospital, there are no motor vehicles to do that.

According to Okunola et al. (2002), the health conditions of inmates can be a function of the prison population. They observed that most prisoners, particularly awaiting trial persons, look emanciated, skeletal with bones almost visible from the skin, curved back and often decorated (adorned with rashes all over the body).

Adelola and Atere (2003) argued that until 1971, the Nigerian prisons did not establish its own clinics and other medical facilities manned by its own staff. Up till then, it depended on the services rendered by helper – nurses from the General Hospitals. To make the matter worse, the prison clinics were opened not only to prisoners but also to staff and staff’s family dependants.

Elderly inmates face more critical problem when it comes to health provision in prisons. Davies (2011) cited a range of physiological challenges that are experienced by elderly populations in prisons, ranging from respiratory conditions through to cardiovascular and musco-skeletal issues. Davies (2011) argued further that the severe health problems experienced by many such prisoners meant that they had become dependent upon both formal and informal health care provided in prison. Furthermore, upon release, the elderly prisoner might not be so readily welcomed by the family as he brings with him not only his criminal past, but also problems with physical and mental health.

Good recreational facilities are not available in most prisons. Obioha (2011) observed that there are no good recreational facilities and other amenities in most prisons in Nigeria. The Nigerian prison environments, with regard to amenities have been characterized as ‘uncheerful’, ‘dehumanizing and’ ‘a hell’ – This lack of social amenities and recreational facilities accounts for the culture of fragility and explosive social violence that is recurrent and descriptive of Nigerian prison community over the years.

Next to problem of lack of recreational facilities are poor environmental conditions of the prisons. Okunola et al. (2002) argued that the facilities for personal hygiene are in a terrible a state as those of environmental hygiene. Adelola and Atere (2003) elaborated on the environmental hygienic conditions of most of the Nigerian prisons. They observed that the walls of the cells are coloured with faeces, scurry water and littered with holes and with cobwebs and fat spiders to complement it. Bed bugs and lice are steady companions of the prisoners and mosquitoes are not left out – they all feed fat on their
non-resisting victims who often do not have more than tattered blankets as shields against attack. Dimkpa (2011) when studying women inmates in Rivers State, Nigeria, observed that the prisoners were kept in unhealthy environment. This unhealthy environment and poor sanitation of the prisons were majorly caused by prison congestion and inadequate resources (Robbins, 2009).

[5] **Violence and Brutality of the Prison Staff and Other Inmates.**

The most widespread problems in prisons have to do with the extreme rigidity of the system and with absence of the concept that prisoners have any rights at all (Human Rights Watch, 1995). Almost all the prisons have the history of chronic abuse of prisoners (Meskell, 1999). Wacquant (2012) observed that deterrence goal of prisons has turned out to be a glaring failure, hence they finally turned to retribution of “make a prisoner smell like a prisoner” that is the new slogan of correctional administrations. They humiliate, lock up to inflict pain and punish for punishment sake. Robins (2009) testified that beating and ill treatment by the prisons staff is a common occurrence in most of the prisons.

Apart from the violence and abuse from the prisons staff, there is the abuse from the older inmates too. Robins (2009) added that abuse of the young by the older inmates is also a common phenomenon in most of the prison. Viano (2008) also argued in the same direction, observing that weaker inmates and those who have committed especially heinous crimes were often victimized by other inmates who were hardened criminals and that as a result of this, policies and guidelines for handling aggressive inmates should be specific and strictly followed by all staff.

International Bar Association (2010) also noted the same problem; the association said inmate-on-inmate violence is a serious problem. In the most dangerous prisons, powerful inmates kill others with impunity, while even in relatively secure prisons, extortion and other lesser forms of mistreatment are common.

[6] **Restriction on Social Contact and Interaction.**

It has been observed that prisons are in the habit of restricting contacts between prisoners and the outside world, including legal representation in some cases. Some prisoners were placed in solitary confinement to fulfill this (Human Rights Watch, 1995). No man is an Island. Every man or woman needs the company of others in the society. Such law of friendship and companionship can not be erased, even by the prisons. Human beings naturally seek the company of others in trouble situations – such as imprisonment (Davies, 2011). However, Davies (2011) argued that the opportunities to make intimate friendships are limited within the prison setting, arguably even more so for the elderly. There is limited potential for elderly prisoners to be friend other inmates. Prisoners have extremely limited contact, not only with the outside world, but with each other as well. In practice, prisoners are allowed to talk with their fellow inmates only on rare and specified occasions. Furthermore, those
living in single cells seldom have any contact with anybody other than their guards (Human Rights Watch, 1995). Communication between prisoners and the outside world is strictly controlled. Virtually, all visits were through a glass partition with a guard in attendance (Human Rights Watch, 1995). In either case no physical or intimate contact between prisoners and their visitors is allowed. All visits are carefully monitored.

All mail correspondence is read and often censored, sometimes in part through blacking out portions of letters or sometimes through refusal to deliver a letter. The letters must be written in a language understood by the censors (Human Rights Watch, 1995).

Controlling and monitoring the interactions and contacts between prisoners and the outside world, and among the prisoners living in the prisons is a gross violation of the rights of the prisoners and this makes the prisons a "hell" for the inmates. The family members who visited inmates were usually subjected to humiliating searches.

This practice extends the suspicion of criminal guilt to family members of prisoners and institutionalizes a prejudiced behaviour, according to which any prisoner relative or friend must also be considered suspicious (Joint Submission by Relevant Stakeholders, 2011).

[7] **Lack of Support for Psychological, Intellectual Disability and Suicide Problems.**

Davies (2011) was of the opinion that prison experience is a psychologically damaging event which mirrors the ordeal of a survivor of a disaster, particularly for the life – sentenced prisoner. Prison gives a process of retrospective evaluating of the failures and achievements that have accumulated over the course of one's life. A negative inspection can lead to fear, apprehension and depression which create serious psychological problems.

Sondenaa et al. (2010) observed that prisoners with intellectual disability may be exposed to bullying and intimidation from other prisoners. They may also be tricked out of their money by other prisoners when striving to be accepted within the prison culture and resorting to exploitative behaviour in order to fit in. prisoners with intellectual disability have no prisoner rehabilitation programmes that can help them to adjust and to receive support from the authorities. Lack of participation in such helpful programmes reduces the chances of their improvement.

Hanser (2002) observed that suicide among the inmates prison population occurs at a rate much higher than that of the civilian population. According to Hanser (2002), studies show that suicide is a leading cause of death among inmates throughout the United States. Relatives of inmates who successfully commit suicide frequently bring suit against custodian staff, administrators, doctors or government officials.
According to Viano (2008), hanging used to be the most common suicide method used in jails and prisons. Prisons have invested money and time to reduce the number of suicides. Staff members have been trained and procedures have changed in curtailing the incidences of suicides in prison. Institutions must be able to demonstrate that they followed adequate policies and procedures wisely to defend themselves against liability (Hanser, 2002).

[8] Insensitivity to Prisoners Needs and Staff Misconduct.
Insensitivity to the needs of the prisoners by the prison staff is another well known problem confronting the management of the prison system. Little regards for inmate concerns has been cited as a cause for riots in prison, and of course, paying more attention to inmates concerns from the start could have prevented such riot (Henderson, 2000).

Robins (2009) argued that in most prisons in Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Zambia the needs of female prisoners are neglected. Davies (2011) protested that prison staff appeared to be inadequately equipped to deal with the specific requirements of the elderly and demonstrated unwillingness to assist them. Finally, Trulson et al. (2011) protested that assaultive institutional misconduct may be a potentially important barometer of post release outcomes. Studies have shown that some institutional misconduct by prisons staff could have relative relationship to recidivism. Therefore, the indicators of institutional misconduct should receive continued attention from the stakeholders.

All the problems explained in this review affect all the categories of the prisoners be it in age, sex, colour, literacy level, socio-economic background etc. However, this research work will apply these problems on the aged or elderly prisoners to unravel whatever problems they are encountering in the course of serving their terms of imprisonment.

Methodology
This was a survey research which involves the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to question (Schutt, 2004). The study areas were Abeokuta and Ijebu-Ode in Ogun State, Nigeria.

For our study population, we considered the elderly inmates from 50 years and above who have been convicted for crime and those awaiting trials. By the time this study was being conducted, Ijebu-Ode prison population was one thousand, eight hundred and thirty – three (1833) inmates, while that of Abeokuta (the state capital) was five hundred and thirty-two (532) inmates.
Convenience sampling technique was used in the selection of the two prisons. They are the ones that were readily accessible to us and therefore convenient for us (Adler and Clark, 1999). In the selection of the elderly inmates, purposive or judgmental sampling was used because they were selected with specific purpose of gathering information and data only from the aged inmates. They are unique cases that were especially informative based on the topic of our research (Neuman, 2003). For the sampling size, one hundred elderly inmates were targeted but we eventually ended up sampling ninety three (93) elderly inmates. All of them were men; we did not find any elderly women inmates in both prisons at the time of our study.

Questionnaire was the data collection instrument used. The questionnaires were distributed to obtain information about behaviour, feelings and attitudes of the elderly inmates in the two prisons selected. Those that were illiterates were asked to respond to the questions verbally. Having translated the questions to them in indigenous Yoruba language, their responses were later translated and transcribed. However, those that were literate enough to read and write were allowed to fill the questionnaires themselves. All the data used were primary data.

We painstakingly followed the ethics of research in this study. We sought the approval of the prison authorities before the research was conducted. The consents of the elderly inmates were sought before we commence the survey. The questionnaires did not carry anything that will reveal the identities of these elderly inmates. All the data collected were interpreted in aggregate and did not make reference(s) to any particular inmates. Hence, anonymity was strictly followed. The information was truly used for the purpose of this study only and we kept the confidentiality of the information supplied.

Data analysis was done using simple percentage. We converted the cell frequencies into percentages and both univariate and bivariate variables were subjected to percentage analyses (Scutt, 2004). For the interpretation, we interpreted the data within the Nigerian socio-cultural setting societal belief system of prison and prison life.

**Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion**

This section deals with the presentations and analyses of all facts and information that were gathered from the field. The analyses involve the quantitative data derived primarily from the questionnaires distributed.

Our data shows that all our respondents were men. We did not find any women who fell within our age range. All the women were young, therefore were excluded. Hence, all the 93 respondents (100%) were elderly men.
For the age distribution, 61 respondents (65.59%) were between 50-55 years and of course they were the highest. 13 respondents (13.98%) fell within the age range of 56-60 years. 61 – 65 years recorded 16 respondents (17.20% and finally, only 3 respondents (3.23%) were 66 years and above. Age distribution between 50-60 years recorded the highest, followed by 61-65 years, 56-60 years and 60 years above respectively.

Religion was another variable that was considered in our research work. After the analysis, we discovered that 51 respondents were Christians (54.8%), 33 respondents were Muslims(35.5%), 8 respondents (8.6%) were adherents of traditional religion and 1 respondent (1.1%) was a believer of other religion not specified.

Ethnic group as a variable was incorporated into our research instrument. Majority of our respondents were Yoruba, 52 of them (55.9%) came from this ethnic group. They were the highest. The reason for this was that the two prisons investigated are located in the south western part of Nigeria which is predominantly occupied by Yoruba natives. 23 respondents (24.7%) were Igbo natives and 9 respondents (9.7%) were Hausa natives and 9 (9.7%) were natives of other ethnic groups in Nigeria.

We considered the marital statuses (as a variable) of our respondents. Our data revealed that 11 of our respondents (11.8%) were single. 68 respondents (73.1%) were married, 9 of them (9.7%) were separated from their spouses, 4 of them (4.3%) were divorced and finally, 1 respondent (1.07%) was a widower.

Finally, we considered the educational qualifications of our respondent. A breakdown shows that 18 respondents (19.35%) did not attend any school whatsoever. 49 respondents (52.70%) were primary school leavers, 16 respondents (17.20%) were secondary school leavers, 8 respondents (8.60%) had post secondary school certificate. Finally, 2 respondents (2.15%) had other educational qualifications i.e. Arabic Certificates.

Running a quick analysis, we discovered that majority of our respondents were not adequately educated. A total of 72.05% of them were below secondary school qualification, while the remaining 2 respondents (2.15%) cannot be said to have acquired western education. This accounted for the reason why most of our questionnaires were translated and transcribed during the field work.

We considered the offences committed by the elderly inmates category by category, their frequencies and percentages. The analyses show that offences related to homicide were 20 offences (27.96%) of the entire offences. This category includes capital murder 7 (7.53%), attempted murder 11 (11.83%), conspiracy to commit murder 2 (2.15%) and man slaughter 6 (6.45%). For the property/person related offences; we had 26 offences (27.96%) of the total offences committed. Under this category, we had
20 cases of robbery (both armed robbery and ordinary robbery). This accounted for (21.51%) of the entire offences and attempted robbery were 6 cases (6.45%) of the whole offences.

Financial related crime also featured in our collated data. We had 20 cases of financial related offences. This accounted for 21.51% of the total percentage of all the offences. Duping (419) cases were 5 (5.38%), cheques forgery were 6 cases (6.45%), embezzlement recorded 5 cases (5.38%) and finally forceful monetary extortion were 4 cases (4.30%). Sexually related crimes reflected in our data. We had 10 cases of this, which was (10.74%) of the total percentage of all the offences. Under this, sexual assault had 7 cases (7.52%) and attempted sexual assault 3 cases (3.22%) offences. There were 11 cases of these (11.83%) of the entire offences.

Physical assault featured also. There were 5 cases (5.38%) of this offence. This was followed by aggravated assault or assault with weapons, 4 cases (4.3%) and finally kidnapping, 2 cases (2.15%).

The overall indication shows that homicide related offences and crime against property/persons were the leading categories of crime or offence. Both had 27.96% each. Homicide and crime against property/persons were not uncommon in the Nigerian society. There were cases of murder, manslaughter, and robbery, financial related crime followed them (21.51%). Duping (419) is a popular crime in Nigeria, financial crime i.e. cheque forgery, forceful monetary extortion and embezzlement are very prominent offences too. Financial related crimes were very common in Nigeria, to the extent that the government had to set up under the law, commissions to tackle the crimes related to finance and economy. There are Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practice Commission (ICPC).

Other offences followed financial related offences, 11 cases (11.83%) were recorded. These other offences included physical assaults (with weapons) and kidnapping. These were offences which come under violence. Of course, assaults were common in Nigeria and of recent, cases of kidnapping which falls under the category of violent crime. Lastly, sexual related offences recorded the least cases. We had 10 cases (10.74%). Rape, attempted rape and other forms of sexual abuse, especially child sexual abuses, are not new in Nigeria. There have been cases of child sexual abuses both in the urban and rural areas of Nigeria. There were cases of child rape, child marriage, sexual indecencies with children etc. within the Nigeria communities. Most of the offenders were the people that were far older than the victims.

We tried to find out the years in imprisonment for the offences committed and the likely ones for those standing the trials for the offences suspected of them. The findings show that 48 inmates (51.61%) were sentenced or likely to be sentenced to 0-5 years. 30 inmates (32.26%) had taken or would likely take between 6 years – 10 years. 9 inmates (9.68%) received or would likely receive imprisonment
within the range of 11-15 years and finally, 6 inmates (6.45%) were sentenced or likely to be sentenced for 16 years and above. The imprisonment years were determined by the years written in the criminal code for the offences committed.

One of the objectives of this study was to determine the social contact and interaction between the aged inmates and the young inmates and between the aged inmates and the prison staff. From our data, 72 elderly inmates interacted smoothly with the young inmates in the prison. This accounted for 77.42%. 16 elderly inmates (17.20%) did not interact with the young inmates, while 5 of the elderly inmates (5.38%) cannot determine whether they had cordial relationship or interaction with young inmates or not.

Moreover, 70 elderly inmates (75.27%) interacted regularly with the prison staff. 13 of them (13.98%) interacted occasionally, while 10 of them (10.75%) did not interact at all with the prison staff.

The results show that majority of the elderly inmates had a good social interaction or relationship with the young inmates (77.42%) and with the prison staff (75.27%). Although Davies (2011) argued that the opportunities to make inmates friendships are limited within the prison setting, even more so for the elderly, and difficulties in forming friendships might be due to the age gap that exist between the elderly prisoners and the young ones. This, according Davies (2011), is due to lack of respect for the elderly population.

However, the above assertion is applicable to the western world. In all African societies, age is respected. The aged are the custodians of wisdom, knowledge and understanding. Therefore, ‘the grey hairs’ (which is the symbol of old age) were revered among this people. The cordial interactions, the elderly enjoyed from the younger inmates and the prison staff was due to their old age. The results of our findings show that even, terrible prison conditions did not strip off the elderly inmates the respect and cordial relationships with the younger prison occupants. Therefore, age was the factor which bestowed such cordial interactions and relationships on the elderly inmates.

Our second objective was to determine the treatments being given to the aged or elderly inmates in the two selected prisons. The first treatment we considered was in area of beddings/sleeping and clothing. 79 of them (84.9%) said that their bedding and clothing were not changed regularly or when due. Just 14 of them (15.1%) said otherwise. Beddings and clothing were one of the major challenges facing prison system in Nigeria. Okunola et al. (2012) argued that prisoners in Nigeria sleep on beds without mattresses and that is obvious that there can be no suitable bedding where there are no beds, mattresses and blankets. The same thing is applicable to clothing. Okunola et al. (2002) observed that only 10% of inmates of any prison in Nigeria is fixed adequately in clean and strong clothes. Close to 80% is either always half-naked or clothed in worn and torn clothes. While they are generally...
better clad than their male counterparts, female prisoners also have to make their own dresses at their own expenses.

Good beddings and clothing are prerequisites for the elderly. This will keep them warm and protect them against harsh weather. Exposing elderly inmates to bad weather (especially, during the harmattan), as a result of poor beddings and clothing, can cause a severe impairment to their health.

The next factor considered was adequate and nutritious food. 89 elderly inmates (95.7%) complained that the food being served to them was not adequate and nutritious, while only 4 elderly inmates (4.3%) affirmed the adequacy and nutritious of the foods being served. The majority who signified that the food was not adequate and nutritious clearly shows that truly the food being served to them were not adequate and nutritious. Okunola et al. (2002) affirmed that food being served to Nigerian Prisoners were not adequate and nutritious. For instance, the meal chart was heavily dominated by carbohydrates and insufficient protein.

Inmates normally eat meat or fish once a day and this is often limited to 3 days in a week. It had been reported that there were sharp practices of food contractors and the quantity and quality of food available is rendered even more inadequate by the warders who generously help themselves to prisoners’ food supplies.

Health care was another factor we considered in one of the treatments being received by the elderly inmates. 75.3% (70 inmates) were not satisfied with the health care delivery of the prison. Only 23 inmates (24.7%) concurred to the good health care delivery. However, previous studies have shown that health care delivery of the prisons in Nigeria was not good at all. Okunola et al. (2002) found that in prisons, most treatments were limited to administration of drugs such as panadol and that there are occasions when the prisoners have to procure the drugs through outside sources. Adelola and Atere (2003) observed that Nigerian prisons’ clinics did not exist until 1971 and that those clinics were overburden by the staff and staff dependants. In addition to this medical infrastructure remained a figment of imagination. The prisons were clearly poorly equipped, medically. There was, of course, shortage of medical personnel in these prisons. A significant number of elderly inmates encounter a myriad of health related issues in the prison setting (Davies, 2011). Hence, it raises questions about the ability of the prison service to cope with the abundance of health related issues amongst the elderly population. However, it has been discovered that Nigeria prisons were unable to meet the general challenges not to talk of special health challenges of the elderly inmates who were more demanding in all forms.

Running through our data, we discovered that 25 inmates (26.9%) had Typhoid fever, 18 inmates (19.4%) had Tuberculosis, 7 inmates (7.5%) had Arthritis, 30 inmates (32.3%) had hypertension and
heart related diseases, 3 inmates (3.2%) had epilepsy and 9 inmates (9.7%) had one health challenge or the other. 1 inmate (1.1%), however did not record any health challenge.

Our respondents’ psychological statuses were also questioned. 80 inmates (86.0%) complained of depression, while 13 inmates (14.0%) did not feel depressed. Depression is a critical psychological problem. Imprisonment is a traumatic event which can cause serious depression. However, from all indications, there were no concrete and reliable means of helping elderly inmates that have psychological problems. It is only some non-governmental organizations which occasionally offer counseling and religious activities to the inmates through which their hopes of the future can be raised (Dimkpa, 2011).

No officially established counseling units in all the Nigerian prisons to assist the depressed inmates.

Recreational life of the elderly inmates was also looked into. 80 inmates (86.0%) agreed that there are some recreational facilities in the prisons (though to them, were not enough and thrilling). 13 inmates (14.0%) however, said no recreational facilities.

However, an observation made showed that there were some facilities which were neither in good shapes nor adequate for the use of the inmates. We asked our elderly inmates to signify whether they make use of these recreational facilities or not. Our analyses show that 84 elderly inmates did not make use of the facilities. This accounted for 90.3% of the entire population. Only 9 inmates actively made use of the facilities, this accounted for 9.7%. From the experience, 90.3% who did not make use of the facilities might be as a result of their psychological depression or the obsolete nature of the facilities. This, of course, may have impact on their health i.e. recreation and exercise can improve their health statuses if they are made available, and functional

**Summary of the Findings**

Our findings in this study complement the previous findings on treatment of the prison inmates in Nigeria. We discovered that the problems being faced by the inmates still remain unsolved and is even getting worse. Our findings reveal that all the categories of inmates are facing the same problems, including the elderly inmates that were our primary focus in this research work. Whereas, the experience shows that older people in prison have unique problems which differ from those of younger inmates (Davies, 2011), yet those problems are not being addressed specially by the government of the country. The studies had shown that prison staff may not take special interest in working and assisting the older prisoners, because of the nature of their crimes and because working with them represents a challenge to their working status (Davies 2011).
The sum of these problems is that elderly inmates cost the prison service significantly more to manage and support than the rest of the prison population. Hence, the elderly population in the prisons are neglected, receiving little or no care. Whereas, this population of the elderly inmates needs special care and attention more than the other categories of the inmates i.e. females, our study revealed that beddings, sleeping conditions and clothing of the aged inmates were not adequate. Beddings and clothing were not regularly changed when needed. This, of course, will tell on their sleeping conditions. When the beddings are not adequate, sleeping soundly cannot be expected. From experience, this will affect the health statutes of these elderly inmates. 84.9% complained of poor beddings and clothing which clearly shows that it is a major problem.

The study also discovered that the aged inmates are being poorly fed by the prison authorities. There was no adequate and nutritious food for the elderly inmates. 95.7% told tales of inadequate and poor diet. Medically, the older population needs some special foods and nutrition to keep up with their age. It was glaring that these special food and diets were not available to these elderly inmates. When food is not adequate we cannot talk of good nutrition or special diets for any category of the prison population. Moreover, those placed on special diets as a result of their health statuses cannot have their needs satisfied.

Poor Health care delivery is another discovery we made in this study. Majority of these older inmates (75.3%) protested the poor health care delivery in the prison, and only 1 inmate (1.1%) was free from any health challenge. Elderly people need adequate and constant medical attention. With every passing year, the organs of the body become weaker, and more medical attentions are needed.

We equally made a discovery that the psychological needs of the elderly inmates were not met at all. 80 inmates out of total number of 93 inmates confessed that they were depressed. Depression is a psychological problem which needs prompt actions and assistances of specialists. We discovered that there were no counseling units in these prisons that can assist these aged inmates in getting over their problem of depression. Davies (2011) argued that the imprisonment statuses of the elderly inmates give them a pessimistic outlook which leads to traumatic events. Prison itself gives a psychological damage. Finally, we made a discovery on recreational facilities. Majority of our elderly inmates did not make use of the recreational facilities because of their conditions. Whereas, making use of recreational activities judiciously can alleviate the problem of depression. Playing games and being involved in sporting activities can be an antidote to depression. Hence, lack of good and attractive recreational facilities might be what compounded the problem of depression among these elderly inmates.
Conclusion
We conclude this study on the argument that government and non-governmental organization still have a lot to offer in solving the problems confronting the Nigerian prison. Although, the government and non-governmental organizations are trying their best, however, the best being offered is not yet visible to wipe away the torrent of problems challenging the good management of the prisons in Nigeria. We observed that elderly inmates were neglected in our prisons more than any category of the prison population. Although, the aged inmates might not be many like the female category, in all honesty, they deserve more care and attention from the authority than any other group in the population. The care and attention are what we solicit for in this study.

Recommendation
Despite the efforts of the government and the civil society towards a better prison life, much still needs to be done to satisfy the needs of the inmate population. (Linonge, 2010). It is our personal opinion too; that much still need to be done in solving the inmates’ problems, especially, the elderly inmates who were the focus of this study. Therefore we make recommendations as follows to improve the management of the aged inmates in all Nigerian prisons.

In the first place, we recommend that the elderly inmates be separated from the general population of the prison. We solicit that they should have separate prison cells. Over crowing and congestion of the prison can lead to spreading of diseases in the prisons. The medical findings that ‘with age, immune system becomes weaker and the aged are more susceptible to diseases’ is enough to justify that separating the elderly inmates from the overcrowded and congested prisons will improve their health.

Secondly, we plead with the prison authorities to provide adequate and appropriate beddings and clothing for the aged inmates. With age, the level of the body system to adapt to temperature is altered. Therefore, adequate clothing and bedding will keep the elderly inmates warm, especially during the harsh weathers. Good beddings (mattresses, blankets, bedcovers etc.) and good clothing which are changed regularly will both improve the elderly inmates sleeping conditions and protect them from harsh weather.

Like other societies in the world, African societies considered food to be indispensable to healthy living. Among the Nigerians, food and good diet is the root of life. We advocate that feeding and diets of the elderly inmates be looked into. Adequate food (balanced diets and special diets for those placed on it) must be identified and catered for. We call the federal government to set up committees that will oversee the welfare of the inmates in all Nigerian prisons to ensure the compliance to the demands of the international standards in this regard.
For the health care delivery, standard clinics must be established in all the Nigerian prisons. Furthermore, general hospitals must be equally established at the zonal headquarters of the Nigeria Prison Service. Drugs, medical facilities and medical equipment must be supplied regularly. Medical doctors, nurses and other medical personnel must be employed to work in these health clinics and hospitals. Such personnel must be placed under good working conditions. We advise that a gerontologist must be employed in at least each of the health clinics.

Moreover, the existing health facilities are required to be renovated and updated to the required standards internationally. Psychological needs of the elderly inmates must be met. Depression is one of the psychological problems confronting the elderly inmates. Therefore, we recommend the establishment of counseling unit in each of the Nigerian prisons. Adequate and competent counselors must be employed to counsel and help the depressed elderly inmates. The counselors so employed must be adequately remunerated. In conjunction with this, we advise the government to employ psychiatrists to work hand in hand with them.

Making the elderly inmates happy and lively can alleviate their problems and challenges. Recreational facilities serve as one of the ways to actualize this. Adequate and standard recreational facilities must be provided; the old ones must be renovated. Adequate leisure time must be allowed for the elderly inmates. We advise that local games be included among the recreational facilities for those who can not make use of the modern ones. Sporting activities must be encouraged and competitions should be organized to lift the depressed spirits of the inmates.

Although, the elderly inmates testified to good relationships and social interactions with the younger inmates and the prison staff, yet we advocate that such should be encouraged and supported. Younger inmates must be encouraged to interact and assist the elderly inmates. Younger inmates need to be friends of the elderly ones without considering the age gap. Younger inmates when doing this will give succor to the elderly inmates, and the same time the younger inmates will learn one or two life experiences from the elderly inmates.

Prison staff must be taught specially, how to attend to the needs of the elderly inmates. Seminars and workshops must be organized on this. The experts from Nigeria and abroad must be periodically invited to give talks that will prepare and equip the prison staff to meet the challenges of treatment of the elderly inmates. Moreover, they must be encouraged to be willing to do it.

One of the greatest problems surrounding the release of elderly prisoners is connected with the huge uncertainty that governs resettlement (Davies 2011). Hence, we recommend that a post release monitoring committee be setup to oversee and monitor the post release life of the elderly inmates. Elderly inmates are usually apprehensive about how they would cope without any support for their
health considerations after leaving prison. Therefore, support must be given to them in area of health and feeding after release.

Housing is another central concern for older prisoners which might be restricted by the terms of the sentence and the nature of the crime committed (Davies, 2011). For those who have uncertainties of post release housing, the government must be ready to assist by providing accommodation that will relief these uncertainties at least for some time.

Davies (2011) was of the opinion that elderly prisoners might not be so readily welcomed back by their families. We recommend therefore, in the spirit of love and necessity that prison service must organize a reconciliation meeting between the released elderly inmates and their families and their communities. This comes under the paradigm of restorative justice. The fundamental premise of the restorative justice paradigm is that crime is a violation of people and relationships rather than merely a violation of law. Under this justice system, those affected by crime (the victim, the offender and the community) must be given opportunity to come together to discuss the event and attempt to arrive at some type of understanding about what can be done to provide appropriate reparation (Latimer et al., 2005). We recommend restorative justice that will assist the elderly inmates in accepting them back both by the families and the communities they have wronged.

Finally, we plead with the federal government to re-visit the Nigeria Criminal Justice System (The Police, Courts and Prisons). The three arms of criminal justice system are interrelated and the operations of the one will affect the others in the system. We advocate for the continuous restructuring and repositioning of the police, courts and especially the prison which is the ‘dust bin’ of the criminal justice system, to meet the required international standards. The full implementation of the mentioned recommendations in this paper would definitely earn Nigeria a ‘pat on the back’ from the international community.

References


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