

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

BMJ Open publishes all reviews undertaken for accepted manuscripts. Reviewers are asked to complete a checklist review form (<http://bmjopen.bmj.com/site/about/resources/checklist.pdf>) and are provided with free text boxes to elaborate on their assessment. These free text comments are reproduced below.

ARTICLE DETAILS

TITLE (PROVISIONAL)	A scoping review of mental health in prisons through the COVID-19 pandemic
AUTHORS	Johnson, Luke; Guttridge, Kerry; Parkes, Julie; Roy, Anjana; Plugge, Emma

VERSION 1 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	Dr Ben Beaglehole University of Otago, Christchurch New Zealand
REVIEW RETURNED	16-Nov-2020

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>Dear Authors</p> <p>You have titled your paper a systematic scoping review but I think this creates some confusion of intent for yourselves and meaning for the reader. In my view, 'scoping review' is sufficient, and if it is well done it will be systematic.</p> <p>For the paper overall, my principal concern is that you purport to complete a scoping review but it reads more like a systematic review. Although there is some overlap between these reviews, I think the balance lies too far on the systematic review side. I would have preferred more of a focus on the nature of the evidence on this topic (and the need to collect primary data), rather than the findings from an extremely limited evidence base.</p> <p>The purposes of scoping reviews are to: "To identify the types of available evidence in a given field, To clarify key concepts/ definitions in the literature, To examine how research is conducted on a certain topic or field, To identify key characteristics or factors related to a concept, As a precursor to a systematic review, To identify and analyse knowledge gaps".</p> <p>You have briefly discussed the sources of information identified but most of your results and discussion sections are focussed on the findings of the identified literature rather than scoping the state of the literature.</p> <p>To assist in shifting the focus of the paper, please provide the completed PRISMA scoping review checklist as an addended item. This will help any revision be appropriately focussed to a scoping review. I think the results and conclusion of the abstract also need to be rewritten with the purpose of a scoping review in mind.</p> <p>For example, I have a number of questions: was there a protocol registered? How were data and themes identified and by whom?</p>
-------------------------	---

	Should any conclusions be drawn based on the limitations to the evidence base?
--	--

REVIEWER	Thomas FOVET Univ. Lille, Inserm, CHU Lille, U1172 - LilNCog - Lille Neuroscience & Cognition, F-59000 Lille, France
REVIEW RETURNED	26-Nov-2020

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>General comments</p> <p>Thank you for giving me the opportunity to read and comment the manuscript “A systematic scoping review of mental health in prisons through the COVID-19 pandemic”.</p> <p>In this article, the authors examined the extent, nature and quality of literature on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of imprisoned people and prison staff by performing a scoping review.</p> <p>The work reported here has clinical relevance and has potential important implications for the management of the COVID-19 pandemic in correctional and detention settings. One of the strengths of this paper is also that it did not include language restriction criteria for the selection of studies included in the scoping review.</p> <p>I have only a few comments and suggestions which I would like to see addressed before publication. They are listed below in order of appearance in the text.</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>The third paragraph of the introduction should be clarified. Particularly, Page 5 / Lines 20-21: “These factors are likely to result in significant stress and anxiety.” It is unclear which factors the authors refer to in this sentence. Please clarify.</p> <p>Methodology</p> <p>The date the research was conducted should be given. Page 5 / Line 52: there is a typo “miuse”</p> <p>Results</p> <p>Figure 1: The main reasons for the exclusion of the 77 full-text articles should be provided in the flow-chart. Table 1: Page 25 / Line 31-32, there is a typo “decarceration” Page 7 / Line 31: Isolation and solitary confinement should be clearly defined here. Page 8 / Line 10-12: Importantly, this has led to a large number of forced withdrawals, which have been particularly difficult to manage for health care workers in detention. This should be mentioned. Page 8 / Line 31-50: The delivery of psychotropic drugs and the changes that occurred as a result of the pandemic should be addressed. Page 8 / Lines 50-52: Decarceration has also been implemented in France where the prison population decreased by 10,000, as a result of early releases and reduced incarceration (1)</p>
-------------------------	---

	<p>Some interesting papers such as (2) could be added in the result section. Moreover, as there are very few articles on the situation in low and middle income countries, it could be interesting to add some papers dealing with this issue (see for example (3)).</p> <p>Abstract</p> <p>As stated in the paper, I think that the abstract should mention that “the poor quality of articles included means that the findings are not conclusive.” And that “more research is urgently needed not only to gain an in-depth understanding of the mental health impact in prisons but also to identify effective interventions”.</p> <p>1. Fovet T, Thibaut F, Thomas P, Lancelevée C. French forensic mental health system during the COVID-19 pandemic. <i>Forensic Sci Int Mind Law</i>. 1 nov 2020;1:100034.</p> <p>2. di Giacomo E, de Girolamo G, Peschi G, Fazel S, Clerici M. Italian Prisons During the COVID-19 Outbreak. <i>Am J Public Health</i>. 7 oct 2020;110(11):1646-7.</p> <p>3. Ogunwale A, Majekodunmi OE, Ajayi SO, Abdulmalik J. Forensic mental health service implications of COVID-19 infection in Nigeria. <i>Forensic Sci Int Mind Law</i>. 1 nov 2020;1:100026.</p>
--	---

VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Reviewer: 1

Dr. Ben Beaglehole, University of Otago

Dear Authors

1. You have titled your paper a systematic scoping review but I think this creates some confusion of intent for yourselves and meaning for the reader. In my view, 'scoping review' is sufficient, and if it is well done it will be systematic.

Thank you, this has been removed.

For the paper overall, my principal concern is that you purport to complete a scoping review but it reads more like a systematic review. Although there is some overlap between these reviews, I think the balance lies too far on the systematic review side. I would have preferred more of a focus on the nature of the evidence on this topic (and the need to collect primary data), rather than the findings from an extremely limited evidence base.

The purposes of scoping reviews are to:

"To identify the types of available evidence in a given field, To clarify key concepts/ definitions in the literature, To examine how research is conducted on a certain topic or field, To identify key characteristics or factors related to a concept, As a precursor to a systematic review, To identify and analyse knowledge gaps".

Thank you for your comment. Scoping reviews can have many purposes (see Arksey and O'Malley, 2005). We have stated that in this case it is to examine 'the extent, nature and quality of the literature on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of prisoners and prison staff.' We have now made clear that in addition we have summarised the evidence.

You have briefly discussed the sources of information identified but most of your results and discussion sections are focussed on the findings of the identified literature rather than scoping the state of the literature.

To assist in shifting the focus of the paper, please provide the completed PRISMA scoping review checklist as an addended item. This will help any revision be appropriately focussed to a scoping review. I think the results and conclusion of the abstract also need to be rewritten with the purpose of a scoping review in mind.

For example, I have a number of questions: was there a protocol registered? How were data and themes identified and by whom? Should any conclusions be drawn based on the limitations to the evidence base?

A scoping review checklist was included in the first submission, but has now been updated and reincluded with the revision. The protocol was not registered.

-

- The detail on the theme identification process has been added in the methodology section

- Paragraph 2 and 3 of the discussion section address the dearth and low quality of literature identified in the review and this has also now been added to the limitations of the review in the 'strengths and limitations' section accompanying the abstract.

- Conclusion of the paper has been modified

- Abstract – results and conclusions have been re-written to reflect the scoping review as requested.

- Kindly note that PROSPERO is not registering Scoping reviews.

“PROSPERO accepts registrations for systematic reviews, rapid reviews and umbrella reviews. PROSPERO does not accept scoping reviews or literature scans. Sibling PROSPERO sites registers systematic reviews of human studies and systematic reviews of animal studies.”. Website accessed on 6th April 2021 <https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/>”

Reviewer: 2

Dr. Thomas Fovet, University of Lille

General comments

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to read and comment the manuscript “A systematic scoping review of mental health in prisons through the COVID-19 pandemic”.

In this article, the authors examined the extent, nature and quality of literature on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of imprisoned people and prison staff by performing a scoping review.

The work reported here has clinical relevance and has potential important implications for the management of the COVID-19 pandemic in correctional and detention settings. One of the strengths of this paper is also that it did not include language restriction criteria for the selection of studies included in the scoping review.

I have only a few comments and suggestions which I would like to see addressed before before publication. They are listed below in order of appearance in the text.

Introduction

The third paragraph of the introduction should be clarified. Particularly, Page 5 / Lines 20-21: "These factors are likely to result in significant stress and anxiety." It is unclear which factors the authors refer to in this sentence. Please clarify.

This has now been clarified.

Methodology

The date the research was conducted should be given.
The date of database search is now included in methodology.

Page 5 / Line 52: there is a typo "miuse"
This has been rectified.

Results

Figure 1: The main reasons for the exclusion of the 77 full-text articles should be provided in the flow-chart.

The flow chart has now been updated with the relevant information.

Table 1: Page 25 / Line 31-32, there is a typo "decarceration"
This has been rectified.

Page 7 / Line 31: Isolation and solitary confinement should be clearly defined here.
This has been clarified.

Page 8 / Line 10-12: Importantly, this has led to a large number of forced withdrawals, which have been particularly difficult to manage for health care workers in detention. This should be mentioned.
Thank you, this has been added.

Page 8 / Line 31-50: The delivery of psychotropic drugs and the changes that occurred as a result of the pandemic should be addressed.
Thank you, this is an important point. The emerging evidence from our review suggests that there have been effective ways of delivering drugs used in the treatment of substance misuse in particular, and this is now included in our review.

Page 8 / Lines 50-52: Decarceration has also been implemented in France where the prison population decreased by 10,000, as a result of early releases and reduced incarceration (1)

Some interesting papers such as (2) could be added in the result section. Moreover, as there are very few articles on the situation in low and middle income countries, it could be interesting to add some papers dealing with this issue (see for example (3)).
These are now included in the review following the updated search. Thank you.

Abstract

As stated in the paper, I think that the abstract should mention that “the poor quality of articles included means that the findings are not conclusive.” And that “more research is urgently needed not only to gain an in-depth understanding of the mental health impact in prisons but also to identify effective interventions”.

This has now been added in.

1. Fovet T, Thibaut F, Thomas P, Lancelevée C. French forensic mental health system during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Forensic Sci Int Mind Law*. 1 nov 2020;1:100034.
2. di Giacomo E, de Girolamo G, Peschi G, Fazel S, Clerici M. Italian Prisons During the COVID-19 Outbreak. *Am J Public Health*. 7 oct 2020;110(11):1646 7.
3. Ogunwale A, Majekodunmi OE, Ajayi SO, Abdulmalik J. Forensic mental health service implications of COVID-19 infection in Nigeria. *Forensic Sci Int Mind Law*. 1 nov 2020;1:100026.

Reviewer: 1

Competing interests of Reviewer: None declared

Reviewer: 2

Competing interests of Reviewer: None declared

VERSION 2 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	Beaglehole, Ben University of Otago, Psychological Medicine
REVIEW RETURNED	15-Apr-2021

GENERAL COMMENTS	Hi. Thanks for the revision. The paper reads well.
-------------------------	--

REVIEWER	Fovet, Thomas University of Lille
REVIEW RETURNED	16-Apr-2021

GENERAL COMMENTS	I thank the authors (who are to be commended on such a well-conducted piece of work) for addressing all my comments. I also agree that this area is developing rapidly and that the review's key messages need to get into the public domain as soon as possible.
-------------------------	---