

**Publication****Ageing prisoners' disease burden : Is being old a better predictor than time served in prison?****JournalArticle (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)****ID** 2581065**Author(s)** Wangmo, T.; Meyer, A.; Bretschneider, W.; Handtke, V.; Kressig, R. W.; Gravier, B.; Büla, C.; Elger, B. S.**Author(s) at UniBasel** [Meyer, Andrea Hans](#) ;**Year** 2015**Year: comment** (accepted)**Title** Ageing prisoners' disease burden : Is being old a better predictor than time served in prison?**Journal** Gerontology**Volume** 61**Number** 2**Pages / Article-Number** 116-23**Keywords** Ageing, Older prisoners, Disease burden, Health, Prison

Background: The number of older prisoners entering and ageing in prison has increased in the last few decades. Ageing prisoners pose unique challenges to the prison administration as they have differentiated social, custodial and healthcare needs than prisoners who are younger and relatively healthier. Objective: The goal of this study was to explore and compare the somatic disease burden of old and young prisoners, and to examine whether it can be explained by age group and/or time served in prison. Methods: Access to prisoner medical records was granted to extract disease and demographic information of older (>50 years) and younger (<= 49 years) prisoners in different Swiss prisons. Predictor variables included the age group and the time spent in prison. The dependent variable was the total number of somatic diseases as reported in the medical records. Results were analysed using descriptive statistics and a negative binomial model. Results: Data of 380 male prisoners from 13 different prisons in Switzerland reveal that the mean ages of older and younger prisoners were 58.78 and 34.26 years, respectively. On average, older prisoners have lived in prison for 5.17 years and younger prisoners for 2.49 years. The average total number of somatic diseases reported by older prisoners was 2.26 times higher than that of prisoners below 50 years of age (95% CI 1.77-2.87,  $p < 0.001$ ). Conclusion: This study is the first of its kind to capture national disease data of prisoners with a goal of comparing the disease burden of older and younger prisoners. Study findings indicate that older inmates suffer from more somatic diseases and that the number of diseases increases with age group. Results clearly illustrate the poorer health conditions of those who are older, their higher healthcare burden, and raises questions related to the provision of healthcare for inmates growing old in prison. (C) 2014 S. Karger AG, Basel

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