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## Sources of depression among prisoners in Okaka correction center, Yenagoa local government area of Bayelsa state

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### Abstract

The study investigated the sources of depression among prisoners in Okaka correction center, Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. The study adopted descriptive research design. The population of the study consists of 626 prisoners (11 females and 615 males). The sample of the study comprises of 300 despondence (290 males and 10 females) drawn using multistage sampling procedure. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.81 for Inmates Depression Questionnaire. Simple percentage and t test was used for data analysis. Result of the findings showed that poor prison environment, over-

crowdedness of the prison, low self-esteem of prisoners, fear of discrimination, fear of family and societal abandonment are sources of depression among prisoners in Okaka correction center, Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. And that the sources of depression among prisoners in Okaka correction center, Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State are based on gender, marital status, socio-economic status and age of the prisoner. Among others it was recommended that Prisoners should be involved in social activities in the prison yield these will help them to reduce depression by helping the depressed prisoner shift his/her attention from the depressive; situation.

**Keywords:** Okaka, correction center, Yenagoa, prisoners

### 1. Introduction

Prison is a place, where different type of people live, some of them have committed one crime or more, why some of them may be innocent of the change on them. Mental disorders occur frequently in the context of captivity. Related to this, is the fact that imprisonment may lead to the development of mental illness, especially depression (Jordan, Schlenger, Fairbank, and Caddell 2016). Choma (1995) stated that the prisons are meant to infuse discipline into the daily lives of offenders and thus predispose them to obedience to law as good citizens within the larger society.

However, in Nigeria, prisons are far from corrective centres. Being a prisoner is like been an “outcast” irrespective of the offence committed. Apart from deplorable prison conditions, the society tends to have negative perception of prisoners. The average Nigerian perceives a prisoner as worthless, undesirable, unclean, outcast and “devilish”. Uzoeshi (1993) observes in his study on sources of stress among prisoners in Nigeria, that even the immediate family members of the prisoners regard them as dubious and undesirable. These negative perceptions no doubt could constitute depression to prisoners. Also, poor prison conditions are sources of depression to Nigerian prisoners.

The prison environment neutralizes the formation and development of basic human values, contributes to stigmatization, alters the convict's conduct and leads to temporary or even irreversible psychic sequelae. Evidence suggests that imprisonment conditions can lead to anxiety, depression, self-harming or hetero aggressive behaviour, obsessions, psychoactive substance abuse and suicide. In addition to feelings of inadequacy, important feelings in prisoners are anticipated suffering in life outside of incarceration, fear of family abandonment, guilt

Depression is one of the inevitable variables most prominently experienced by humans irrespective of culture, socio-economic status, religious or personality trait. Globally depression is the second leading cause of disability, with slightly more than 4% of the world's population diagnosed with it. More than 5% of the population suffers from depression in the Middle East, North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe and the Caribbean. The most depressed country is Afghanistan, where more than 1 in 5 people suffer from the disorder. The least depressed is Japan, with a diagnosed rate of less than 2.5% (Dewey 2013).

*American Psychiatric Association stated that the risk factors associated with depression are a family history of a condition; major life changes, chronic health problems and substance abuse or misuse. To be sentenced to prison is among the most stressful depressive event in the prisoner's life. Also the possible cause of depression in the prison is, memorizing past illegal acts, the prisoner try to relieve the moments of his crime, and this makes him feel guilty and sorrow. Constantly having these thoughts may results in severe depression and prolonged stay in the prison may lead to intensive depression. In addition prisoners feel loneliness, as they are separated or isolated from their families loved once. Mostly life with other prisoners and prison environment by itself to be confined to restricted space also leads to depression.*

The world health organization estimates that about 350 million people affected by depression, with an increase of more than 18% between 2005 and 2015. The national institute for mental health (NIMH) estimates that in the United States, 16 million adults had at least one major depressive episode (MDE) in 2012. On the other hand, the prevalence of depression in Ethiopia was reported to be 5% according to the Ethiopian federal ministry of health report of 2012, and WHO survey in collaboration with Jimma University shows that the prevalence of depression in Ethiopia was 9.1% (Hailemariam2012). National survey of 2014 states the pooled prevalence of depression from 8 studies in Ethiopia was 11% (Teresa 2014).

A systematic review by Fazel and Danesh (2002) of 62 surveys in 12 countries prisons involving 22,790 inmates found that, among males, 26% were violent offenders, 3.7% had psychotic illnesses, 10% suffered from major depression and 65% had a personality disorder, of which 47% had antisocial and among female prisoners 4% had a psychotic illness, 12% had a major depression and 42% had a personality disorder, of which 21% has antisocial.

As observed by Morakinyo (2002) in his study carried out in Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital on the nature and diagnosis of depressive disorders in Africans. In developing countries such as Nigeria, the prevalence rates of depression are higher. This is so because environmental factors that contribute to the genesis of depressive disorders are more preponderant. These include high rates of poverty, a lack of social welfare and high rates of endemic infectious diseases. Gender differences exist with respect to effects of

incarceration on both male and female inmates. Mental health problems have been observed to be higher among incarcerated inmates compared to the general population and are a significant source of morbidity among prisoners.

In Nigeria, prevalence rates vary between 11-60% depending on the study setting. The World Health Organization (WHO) strengthened this fact when it stated that depression, which currently affects 5-10% of the population, is set to become the second largest cause of disease burden by 2020 and is the third most common reason for primary care consultation (Kadiri2014).

Recognition and treatment of depression often takes place in primary healthcare, secondary, and tertiary institutions with trained and qualified personnel (Ekers2010). However, Parkes, and Freshwater (2012) on his research on the journey from despair to hope noted that trained and qualified healthcare personnel are lacking among prison staff, hence, the obvious difficulty in the assessment and treatment of this category of people, requiring special care. This is made worse by the fact that the proportions of the prisoners with possible clinically diagnosable psychiatric morbidity and significant depressive symptoms are quite high.

Two major problems face prisons administration today in the world which is inadequate funding, and overcrowding. Nigeria inclusive. Nigeria is neither lacking in resources nor funds, but lacks appropriate funding and allocation policies, which leads to gross under funding of public institutions such as the prisons. Hence, the prisons staff, and inmates may suffer deprivation. In Nigeria, as in most countries, prison systems shoulder the burden of providing healthcare services. They are, however, ill-equipped to perform this responsibility, due to limited resources such as counselors, corruption and the ever-increasing number of inmates (Fatoye, Fatoye, Oyebanji, and Ogunro2006).

Prison establishments are struggling today in many countries to provide negligible mental health services to prisoners, and only a few have exposure to psychiatrists. The provisions for the mentally disordered prisoners have also been observed to be inadequate. Given the limited resources of most prisons, however, it seems doubtful whether most prisoners with these illnesses receive appropriate care. In a study conducted in Rwanda by Bolton, Neugebauer, and Ndogoni (2002) recommended that appropriate mental health interventions and care should be a priority for this population.

Results from other studies, indicate that gender and age are the most consistent demographic predictors of health status and medical care utilization. Females are reported to have higher morbidity and higher numbers of medical encounters. The experience of incarceration also appears to influence the physical

Available data from the study of Chisholm, Sanderson, Ayuso-Mateos, and Saxena (2004) indicate that imprisonment is severely stressful for many inmates. This may be because prisons were not set up to be corrective; rather they were punitive, in the criminal justice system. Prison environments, which are often characterized by gross infrastructural decay and poor amenities, are potentially damaging situations, and its negative psychological effects must be taken seriously, carefully evaluated, purposefully regulated and controlled. Ochoma (1995) noted in his study that Nigerian prisoners are confronted with problems such as isolation, lack of finance, societal negative attitude, poor accommodation, lack of good medical care and lack of access to education. However, this research is intended to investigate sources of depression among prisoners in Okaka correction center, Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

### Statement of Problem

So-many researchers' work have investigated sources of depression among teachers, politicians, adolescents, bankers, couple, undergraduate and students. Some scholars has made research on the sources of depression among inmates, some of the sources identified include inadequate funding, over-crowded prison, high rates of poverty, a lack of social welfare, high rates of endemic infectious diseases, poor prison administration, negligible mental health services to prisoners, (Ekers2010), and lack of guidance counselors. However, the researcher has observed that not much is known about sources of depression among inmates in Nigeria.

The problem of this study, therefore, is to investigate or find answer to the question: What are the sources of depression among prisoners in Okaka correction center, Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State? The researcher's quest to answer the above question informed the conduct of this study.

### Aim of the Study

The fundamental concentration of this study was to investigate the sources of depression among prisoners in Okaka correction center, Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

### Hypotheses

To further guide the study, the following research hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the sources of depression among prisoners in Okaka correction center, Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State based on single prisoners and married prisoners.
2. There is no significant difference in the sources of depression among prisoners in Okaka correction center, Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State based on male and female prisoners.
3. There is no significant difference in the sources of depression among prisoners in Okaka correction center, Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State based on prisoners with low socio-economic status and those with high socio-economic status.
4. There is no significant difference in the sources of depression among prisoners in Okaka correction center,

Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State based on younger and older prisoners.

**Research Design:** The descriptive survey research design was employed for this study.

**Population of the Study:** The population of the study consists of all the 626 prisoners (11 females and 615 males) in Okaka correction center, Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State (Okaka correction center, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, 2020).

**Sample and Sampling Technique:** The sample size of the study was 300 respondents (10 females and 290 males). A multistage sampling technique was adopted for the study.

**Instrument for Data Collection:** The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire and titled Inmates Depression Questionnaire.

**Reliability of the Instrument:** A reliability coefficient of 0.81 was attained by the instrument using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

**Method of Data Analysis:** Simple percentage and t-test were used for data analysis.

### Results

What are the sources of depression among prisoners in Okaka correction center, Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State?

**Table 1:** Simple percentage for sources of depression prisoners in Okaka correction center

| S/N | Source of Depression                              | Yes | %  | No | %  |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----|----|
| 1   | Is poor prison environment a source of depression | 248 | 83 | 52 | 17 |
| 2   | Is prison over-crowdedness a source of depression | 264 | 88 | 36 | 12 |
| 3   | Is low self-esteem a source of depression         | 229 | 76 | 71 | 24 |

center, Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State based on single prisoners and married prisoners.

**Table 2:** Summary of independent t-test for sources of depression among prisoners based on single prisoners and married prisoners

| Marital Status | N   | Mean | Std. Dev. | df  | t <sub>cal</sub> | t <sub>crit</sub> | Decision  |
|----------------|-----|------|-----------|-----|------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| Single         | 204 | 2.98 | 0.863     |     |                  |                   |           |
| Married        | 96  | 3.01 | 0.578     |     |                  |                   |           |
| Total          | 300 | 5.99 | 1.441     | 298 | 2.287            | 1.960             | Reject Ho |

Table 2 gives the summary of the t-test analysis for Summary of independent t-test for sources of depression among prisoners based on single prisoners and married prisoners. The calculated t-value is 2.287, at 298 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance, the critical t-value from table is 1.960. Since the  $t_{cal}$  is greater than the  $t_{crit}$ , the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant difference in the sources of depression among prisoners in Okaka correction center, Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State based on single prisoners and married prisoners.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant difference in the sources of depression among prisoners in Okaka correction

center, Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State based on male and female prisoners.

**Table 3:** Summary of t-test for sources of depression among prisoners based on male and female prisoners

| Gender          | N   | Mean | Std. Deviation | df  | t <sub>cal</sub> | t <sub>crit</sub> | Decision  |
|-----------------|-----|------|----------------|-----|------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| Male prisoner   | 290 | 2.99 | 0.866          |     |                  |                   |           |
| Female prisoner | 10  | 3.2  | 0.730          |     |                  |                   |           |
| Total           | 300 | 6.19 | 1.596          | 298 | 5.19             | 1.96              | Reject Ho |

Table 3 presents the summary of the t-test analysis for sources of depression among prisoners based on male and female prisoners. The calculated t-value is 5.19, at 298 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance, the critical t-value from the table is 1.96. Since the  $t_{cal}$  is greater than the  $t_{crit}$ , the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant difference in the sources of depression among prisoners in Okaka correction center, Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State based on male and female prisoners.

**Hypothesis Three:** There is no significant difference in the sources of depression among prisoners in Okaka correction center, Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State based on prisoners with low socio-economic status and those with high socio-economic status.

**Table 4:** Summary of Independent t-test for sources of depression among prisoners based on prisoners with low socio-economic status and those with high socio-economic status

| Socio-economic status      | N   | Mean | Std. Deviation | df  | t <sub>cal</sub> | t <sub>crit</sub> | Decision  |
|----------------------------|-----|------|----------------|-----|------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| Low socio-economic status  | 215 | 2.95 | 0.866          |     |                  |                   |           |
| High socio-economic status | 85  | 2.75 | 0.730          |     |                  |                   |           |
| Total                      | 300 | 5.7  | 1.596          | 298 | 5.19             | 1.96              | Reject Ho |

Table 4 gives the summary of the t-test analysis for sources of depression among prisoners based on prisoners with low socio-economic status and those with high socio-economic status. The calculated t-value is 2.287, at 298 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance, the critical t-value from the table is 1.960. Since the  $t_{cal}$  is greater than the  $t_{crit}$ , the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant difference in the sources of depression among prisoners in Okaka correction center, Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State based on prisoners with low socio-economic status and those with high socio-economic status.

**Hypothesis Four:** There is no significant difference in the sources of depression among prisoners in Okaka correction center, Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State based on younger and older prisoners.

Gedaso, and Tebikew (2018) who noted that marital status is related to depression among inmates. This finding supports the findings of Uzoeshi (1993) that there is a significant difference in the sources of depression among prisoners in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State. The finding is in variance with the views of Ogolo (2015) who acknowledges that marital status significantly influence prisoners' depression.

The findings in hypothesis two table 3 show that there is a significant difference in the sources of depression among prisoners in Okaka correction center, Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State based on male and female prisoners. This is in line with Oye (2014) who stated that female inmates are found with depression than male inmates. The study is also in support of Suleman (2013), who observed that male prisoners are diagnosed with depression than are females prisoners.

Findings in hypothesis three as shown in table 4 there is a significant difference in the sources of depression among prisoners in Okaka correction center, Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State based on low socio-economic status and high socio-economic status of prisoners. The findings is also in agreement with the findings of Samuel (2016) that when a parent is privileged educationally, socially and economically, promote a higher level of psychological health in their offspring in the prison. This submission is accepted by Ajuru (2012) who observed that when an inmate has no finance, the inmate finds it difficult to satisfy his essential needs such as feeding and clothing. This according to he subsequently tends to make the inmate frustrated and depressed.

Findings in hypothesis four as shown in table 5 reveal that there is a significant difference in the sources of depression among prisoners in Okaka correction center, Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State based on younger prisoners and older prisoners. This finding is in agreement with the views of Amadi (2009) who reported a significant difference between younger prisoners and older prisoners on their level of depression. This goes to agree with the findings of Trendel (2005) and Ukaegbu (2006) who all found out that older inmates are more depressed than younger once.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study it was concluded that poor prison environment, over- crowdedness of the prison, low self-esteem of prisoners, fear of discrimination, fear of family and societal abandonment are sources of depression among prisoners in Okaka correction center, Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. And that the sources of depression among prisoners in Okaka correction center, Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State are based on gender, marital status, socio-economic status and age of the prisoner.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are made;

1. Prisoners should be involved in social activities in the prison yield these will help them to reduce depression by helping the depressed prisoner shift his/her attention from the depressive; situation.
2. Prisoners should always think positively. This will help him/her become optimistic about life events.

3. Prisoners should always plan and use their time effectively. Too much work at little or no time could be depressive. Planning one's time to match one's activities is reduces depression.

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