



BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

Prison initiatives to support older prisoners and those with dementia: the prisoner's lived experience

Professor Joanne Brooke
Director of C-SCHaRR and IDCC



BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

Aim

- To explore prisoner's lived experience of attending an initiative exclusively designed for older prisoners and those with dementia.





Changing prison populations

- The world's prison population is aging
- Older prisoners are the fastest growing group in prisons across the UK, Australia and the United States of America
 - (House of Commons, 2018; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2016)
- The health and social care needs of older prisoners are complex as they develop long term conditions, such as dementia, at an earlier age than expected
 - (Sharupski et al. 2018)



Poor health of prisoners

- Factors that contribute to the poor health of prisoners include:
 - unhealthy lifestyles
 - poor engagement with healthcare
 - low educational attainment
 - higher rates of a mental health illness and traumatic brain injuries
 - poor nutrition
 - lack of exercise
 - (Maschi et al. 2012)



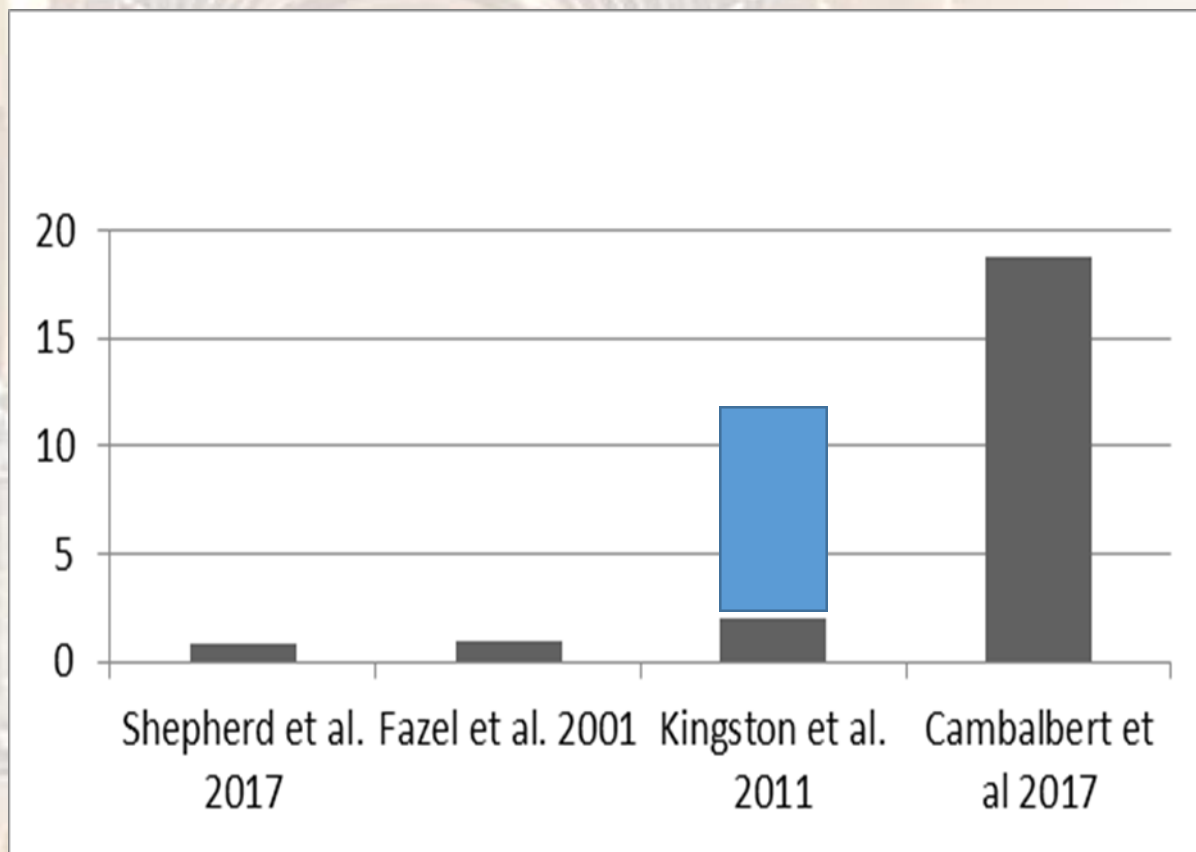
Dementia in Prison

- Prisoners with dementia present unique challenges
- Prison staff report a lack of education and training to develop their skills to identify and support prisoners with dementia
 - (Dillon et al. 2018)
- Traditionally, training of staff has focused on self-harm and suicide, with a limited focus on dementia
 - (Masters et al. 2016; Bedard et al. 2016)



Dementia in prison

- Recent systematic review (Brooke et al. 2018)





BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

Aim

- To explore prisoner's lived experience of attending an initiative exclusively designed for older prisoners and those with dementia.





Methods

Design:

- phenomenological inductive study

Methods:

- focus groups
- audio recorded
- transcribed verbatim

Analysis

- Thematic analysis of data as described by Braun and Clarke (2006)



BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

Methods

- Setting
 - a category C male prison in the South of England
 - first opened in 1800s
 - currently holding 640 men
 - majority sex offenders
 - majority older prisoners





Participants

- Participants recruited from two initiatives for older prisoners over the age of 55, and those with dementia, including a work group and a social group

	Date	No	Prison initiative
1 – focus group	06/12/2017	3	Social group
2 – focus group	06/12/2017	3	Social group
3 – focus group	07/12/2017	3	Work group
4 - interview	07/12/2017	2	Work group



Findings

- Data were collected in 2017 through focus groups (n=4) with prisoners (n=11) attending the work group (n=2) and social group (n=2)
- The participants from the social group were older and more physically and cognitively impaired than those attending the work group
- Three themes emerged across both group:
 - the need to feel safe
 - being provided with a purpose
 - prison initiatives should not be aged defined



The need to feel safe

- attending these initiatives provided older prisoners with a safe haven away from boisterous and unsettled youngsters

“I meant people of our age, we just want to come in and have a quiet life, have a quiet read you know, and feel safe walking about the prison, I feel safe attending this group.”



Being provided with a purpose

- the need to have a purpose and belong to a group, which motivated older prisoners to complete activities

“I just find it very interesting and very motivational and you have the social aspect you know, they are all friendly and all sorts of odd bods.”



Prison initiatives should not be age defined

- the need to feel included and not excluded, to support this all initiatives should be open to older prisoners

“It is alright, I didn’t want to come because I heard it was all old men, and you just want to keep your head down and keep going, but when you get here, they are alright.”



Discussion

- Prisoners experienced the support and safety of attending groups created and designed for older prisoners and those with dementia, however also expressed the need to be integrated into wider prison initiatives.
- Both the social and work group supported prisoners with dementia to be active in the prison setting and not be unduly locked in their cells. The impact of these initiatives beyond prisoner's experiences needs to be further explored.



BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

THANK YOU

Any questions?

Twitter: @DrJoBrooke

Email: joanne.brooke@bcu.ac.uk

Website: <https://idcc.org.uk/>