

Global Health and Vulnerability Factors of Minors in Police Custody: A Prospective Cohort Study

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There is currently no data available regarding overall health and vulnerability factors for minors (i.e. those aged under 18) who have been placed in police custody in France. The purpose of this study was to define the sociodemographic characteristics of this population. We hypothesized that most of these teenagers can be deemed as being abused or neglected.

We carried out a prospective study that included minors of 13 to 18 years of age who had been placed in custody at the Central Police Station of Nantes (France), from October 2012 to May 2013. The sociodemographic characteristics, scores for quality of life, and the data collected from the social and judiciary services were analysed to identify abused or neglected teenagers.

Ninety-nine cases were included. The identified population was mostly comprised of males, most commonly 16 years of age, who had been placed in custody for robbery. Their scores for quality of life were not

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Included were minors placed in custody at the Central Police Station of Nantes, aged from 13 up to (but not including) 18 years of age.

Exclusion criteria were: minors placed in custody beyond the defined geographic area, minors under the age of 13, individuals aged 18 years and over, unable to understand French, refusal to take part, custody extension examinations, or multiple medical consultations by the same minor within the inclusion period.

Data collection

In Nantes, a medical examination is systematically carried out on every minor in police custody who is less than 18 years of age. At the doctor's request, and prior to the medical examination, every minor completed a non-refusal disclaimer sheet. During the examination of each minor, the doctor on-call completed a questionnaire that was devised by a multi-disciplinary team of paediatricians, forensic doctors, addictologists, jurists, and sociologists. Answers to the questionnaire were self-reported.

Data analysis

The first part of the analysis consisted of a description of the population:

General features Age, sex, Criminal record, Height, Mustody, q, qM, io

Previous notes of concern, report or protective measures by social services (%)[95% CI]	50 [40-60]
Normal medical examination (%)[95% CI]	93 [88-98]
Regular use of toxic substances (%)[95% CI]	45[35-55]
95% CI : 95% confidence interval	

