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The Impact of Incarceration On Prisoners' Mental Health: Results of a One-year Research On Italian Penal Institutions.

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Introduction. One in three people detained in Italian Penal Institutions suffer from mental disease. The rate of suicide among prisons' population is higher than among general population. The high prevalence of mental disturbs and the comorbidity with infectious diseases and drug addiction is well recognized. The conditions of Judicial Psychiatric Hospitals, institutions for criminals judged social dangerous and unable to understand and act, are even more critical. Therefore, the Right to Health in jails is constantly questioned.

Aim. The aim of this work is to analyse Italian penitentiary situation in order to understand the causes of these inequalities in Health, with the perspective to promote mental health and to ensure the Right to Health.

Methods. This paper is the result of the first step of the International Project 'Caught From Inside - The Other Side Of Life": a one-year research led by the Research Group of SISM - Segretariato Italiano Studenti in Medicina, Italian Member of IFMSA (International Federation of Medical Students' Association), starting from a bibliography provided by Academic Supervisors.

Results. It results that mental health and illness, as well as health and illness in general, are determined by multiple social, biological and psychological factors. In order to obtain significant gains in prisoners' mental well-being may be useful to forge interdisciplinary collaborations between those working in socio-political and health domains.

Conclusions. Virtuous examples are those Countries where Penitentiary System is not merely custodialistic and the Institutions are closer to inmates, much more customised, targeted, linked to outside healthcare facilities, preventive.