

## P02-49 - CORRECTIVE SECLUSION OR PUNITIVE INCARCERATION: AN OVERVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE NIGERIAN JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

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**Objectives:** To make a critical review of the history, structure, facilities and practices as well as the laws governing the Nigerian juvenile justice system with a view to determine how well it can currently serve its intended purpose.

**Methods:** Information on the history, structure and current practices and existing laws were obtained from review of relevant literature and on-site visits to a juvenile remand home in South-West Nigeria.

**Results:** The Nigerian juvenile system evolved during the British colonial era and was modeled after the British system. The few differences were mainly to accommodate local customs. However, over the years, the Nigerian juvenile justice system may have deviated beyond customary differences to include systematic ones. For instance record keeping is poor, and there are research evidence of widespread physical and emotional abuse of children while in custody. Also, a lot of young offenders are being processed in adult courts having being passed as adults by juvenile justice officers to avoid adhering to the legal requirements for their treatment. Furthermore, incarcerating forms of custodian care is the norm in Nigeria as non-incarcerating methods are not developed. The existing facilities are also in states of disrepair. Moreover The existing laws are obsolete and needs urgent review as some provisions runs contrary to children rights. Useful suggestions were offered.

**Conclusion:** The Nigerian juvenile system needs an urgent overhaul to be able to serve its intended purpose. The Government, Child mental health professionals and non-profit organizations all have a role to play.