



Solitary Confinement and
Effects on Prisoners
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Abstract*

This paper discusses the effects that solitary confinement has on prisoners. The use of solitary confinement is one of the most controversial steps correctional facilities take in the current world. The common justifications for confining inmates in solitude are that some are unmanageable in normal environments, being used for discipline, protecting the individual inmate, and administrative purposes. Nonetheless, there are various negative consequences of confining prisoners. These include psychological distortion, which causes perceptual changes, distortions, disturbed affection, disrupted thought contents, and impulse control challenges. The paper establishes a position that solitary confinement should be abolished. To facilitate this, society should use artificial intelligence (AI), increase mental health resources, seek legal and legislative reforms, and collaborate with other professional organizations. Future research is recommended to investigate why the use of solitary cells increased in the 1860s after its earlier decline and the possible positive effects of this method on individuals and the correction facilities at large.

Introduction

Solitary confinement has been an issue of concern among various professionals. The issue's intensity is weightier in the United States (US) than in any other country. For instance, the US incarcerates its citizens more than any country (Hagan et al., 2018). Research also indicates that there have been increased cases of mental and

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other chronic health conditions among prisoners (Hagan et al., 2018). Such health conditions can be attributed to the solitary confinement in which most incarcerated individuals find themselves. Indeed, Ahalt et al. (2017) reported that the US holds almost 25% of incarcerated people globally. The country is also considered a leader in the number of solitary confined individuals globally. The implication is that as the number of prisoners increases in the country, many prisoners put in solitary confinement also increase. The importance of the issue of solitary confinement in the field of study is that it has various health implications associated with it. Thus, it is an issue that threatens human rights.

An understanding of the significance of the topic comes from its definition. Solitary confinement can mean various environments, such as special housing units, restrictive housing, supermax, administrative segregation, or correctional facilities (Hagan et al., 2018). It can generally be defined as isolation units for retaining inmates for between 22 and 24 hours a day with minimal contact with the other prisoners (Cloud et al., 2021; Hagan et al., 2018). Putting the inmates in these isolation cells restricts them from accessing and using personal belongings, correctional programs, or any other time outside the cell for personal hygiene. Placing some inmates in solitary confinement is to intensify their punishment, perhaps because they are problematic when kept with other prisoners. Data indicates that every year, 18% and 20% of jail inmates and prisons experience solitary confinement in the US (Hagan et al., 2018). Thus, there is a considerable number of inmates who end up being in these confined cells, thereby posing concerns about their welfare and well-being when in correctional facilities.

The use of solitary confinement is an emulation of the past. Prison is an example of the institutions in society that have retained

their similarity from the 19th century (Haney, 2003). Most of the prisoners have been housed in facilities built more than half a century ago, which implies that they are likely confined in the way they used to be in the past. The practice of solitary confinement in the US started in the early 19th century, specifically in the 1820s (Cockrell, 2013). Initially, there were only two prisons, one in New York and another in Pennsylvania. Although isolating prisoners became widely used in Europe and America, it quickly became old-fashioned. In the early times, solitary confinement was considered cruel to the inmates (Cockrell, 2013). There started to be a sharp decline in the use of these solitary cells by the 1860s, and it would be expected to vanish in Europe and the US (Cockrell, 2013). Nonetheless, a new phase of solitary cells emerged in the 1980s, with approximately 60 solitary prisons that hold almost 20 000 prisoners in the US (Cockrell, 2013). This confirms that the currently witnessed solitary confinement in the US originates from the early 19th century.

Despite the increasing use of confinement cells, it remains detrimental to the health and welfare of the prisoners. According to Ahalt et al. (2017), inmates sleep, eat, and use the toilet inside the cells. Additionally, these confinements usually do not receive natural light. They are equipped with a bed, toilet, sink, and all the other possessions of the inmate (Ahalt et al., 2017). It is deducible from this description that solitary confinements deprive an individual of social interactions and an open space. The confinement cells are usually used for temporarily holding refractory or violent prisoners under the authorization of the controller, governor, or the officer in charge (Coid et al., 2003). Initially, the purpose of solitary cells in the US was to rehabilitate the inmates (Shen, 2019). The cells offered the best services

through which the prisoners could maintain silence and restrain them from being tempered by their fellows.

Other reasons also exist for the continued use of isolation cells in the US. The first purpose of these confinements was disciplinary segregation. Disciplinary segregation was used when inmates violated rules guiding prisons (Shen, 2019). Nonetheless, there are legal limitations to the kind of discipline that prisons administer to the inmates. For example, most prisons are required to give due process rights to inmates who are charged with misconduct (Shen, 2019). Prisoners can also be subjected to disciplinary segregation when they become disruptive to deprive them of social interaction for a considerable time (Haney et al., 2020). In the 1790s, prison officials were required to seek approval from a board of external oversight to administer solitary confinement for more than two days (Vines, 2022). Another justification for the use of isolation cells was for protective custody. This is where the inmates are confined to give them safety, especially those believed to be under threat from the prison's general population (Shen, 2019). Lastly, the confinement was also for administrative purposes. This is where a prisoner could be removed from the overall population because their presence threatened self, property, staff, and other inmates (Shen, 2019). Most commonly, the prisoners who witnessed the administrative segregation are those with mental illness who find it challenging to conform to the prison's regulations (Andersen et al., 2000). However, an issue arises when mentally ill prisoners are disproportionately put into solitary confinement because of their conditions rather than finding help.

Amid the justifications for its use, solitary confinement has faced various oppositions. Various legal challenges have been put against the isolation cells because they pose a psychological threat

to the inmates (Grassian, 1983). Sometimes, the prisons do not have sufficient mental health facilities, forcing them to use isolation cells as rehabilitation centers for inmates with mental issues (Coid et al., 2003). The challenges that prisoners faced in these confinements started in the 19th century. For example, various cases of physical mortality and morbidity in the isolation cells were reported in the 1830s (Grassian, 1983). Therefore, the continued persistence of those cases makes the confinements inappropriate for the health and well-being of the prisoners. Indeed, the constitution also does not allow unusual and cruel punishment of inmates (Vines, 2022). Reports indicate that solitary confinement is disruptive and too violent for prisoners (Mears et al., 2021). Evidently, it is imperative to investigate the topic of solitary confinement to ensure that prisoners also have their human rights preserved. The purpose of this paper is to explore the effects that solitary confinement has on prisoners and what society can do to minimize the intensity of its effects.

Effects of Solitary Confinement on Prisoners

An investigation of the solitary confinement effects on prisoners presents various commonalities, differences, and nuances across the various publications. The commonality across the articles indicates that solitary confinement interferes with the social connectedness of the prisoners, which is one of the basic human rights. Evolutionarily, humans differ from other species since they depend on social living (Shen, 2019). Through social interaction, individuals can learn by observation, navigate complex hierarchies, experience effective cultural development, and attain social norms. Furthermore, Ahalt et al. (2017) stated that when individuals are isolated from social interaction, they tend to develop negative attitudes and hypersensitivity, withdraw from others, and

experience depression and emotional breakdowns. From this commonality in literature, it is deducible that putting prisoners in solitary cells deprives them of their social lives, derailing them from achieving the purpose for which they were taken to prison – for correction and rehabilitation.

The nuances that emerge from the literature is that the social segregation of prisoners in isolation cells develops other psychological conditions. Andersen et al. (2000) reported that psychiatric disorders among prisoners in solitary cells were 28%, while those in non-solitary confinement were 15%. Apparently, confining the inmates in solitary cells deprives them of social interactions, hence the increased psychiatric issues. Similarly, an interview with inmates in Massachusetts solitary confinement in 1983 revealed that most of them experienced paranoid ideation, perceptual distortions, and difficulties with memory (Hagan et al., 2018). These psychological effects of confining the prisoners in isolation also advance into other serious physical conditions. Halvorsen (2017), for example, reported that inmates in solitary confinement experience stimuli oversensitivity, severe headaches, and weight loss. It is then possible to state that various studies complement each other regarding how people experience different challenges in various solitary confinements.

Common differences also emerge in the literature on how confining inmates in solitude affects their well-being. According to Shen (2019), many relationships on the effect sizes of solitary cells exist depending on the populations. An example is the finding that stronger social interactions can decrease mortality risks by 50% in prisons (Shen, 2019). Apparently, social isolation promotes glucocorticoid hormone secretions that further cause changes in the concentration of cortisol. As a result, humans experiencing such changes risk experiencing psychological and physiological

impacts. However, another study presents a different viewpoint on social isolation's effect on individuals. Specifically, Hagan et al. (2018) found that 40% of individuals linked to primary mental care had a history of being in solitary confinement during their most recent incarceration. Albeit the difference in the approach to explaining the effects of solitary isolation on the prisoners, some similarity still exists. There is an indisputable relationship between being in isolation cells and developing mental health issues.

Thematic Analysis

The research question that guides this thematic analysis is: What are the consequences of solitary confinement on prisoners?

Overall Psychiatric Effects of Solitary Confinement

There is a unanimous agreement in the literature that solitary confinement psychologically impacts prisoners. Through a national survey, Vines (2022) revealed that a combination of uninterrupted solitary confinement and capital punishment imposes deep psychological trauma on prisoners. Another survey by Coid et al. (2003) indicated that women and men in confinement cells had been admitted for psychiatric treatment. These two sources conclude that putting an individual in isolation cells significantly impacts the prisoners' development and advancement of psychological issues.

Explanations exist for the development of psychological trauma for those in solitary confinement. Bennion (2015) reported that specialized cells expose inmates to prolonged stress. Such individuals stand a risk of developing psychiatric deterioration. Coid et al. (2003)'s survey further showed that prisoners who have been put in solitary cell conditions reported suicidal tendencies, mental disorders, and histories of deliberate self-injury. For

instance, a third of patients with schizophrenia reported that they had been put under solitary confinement (Coid et al., 2003). This shows some correlation between isolation in solitude and the development of mental health issues. Furthermore, Knowles (2004) presented an authentic example of Sam Mandez, who, in 1996, developed psychiatric issues after being incarcerated in Colorado. At age nineteen, Mandez was mentally sound before being subjected to a controversial conviction, where jurors later confirmed that he might have been innocent. After sixteen years of solitary isolation, Mandez developed various mental issues such as schizoaffective disorder, schizophrenia, and depression (Andersen et al., 2000). What might have advanced Mandez's condition is that he could be innocent when convicted and later put into solitary isolation.

Once someone is in isolation, they are disconnected from social interaction. Therefore, Mandez might have been willing to share his plight with anyone but could not because of solitary confinement. The depressive environment that the isolation subjected him to could have been responsible for developing the various psychological issues. Mandez's experience in solitary confinement can further be explained using results from a longitudinal study by Chadick et al. (2018). According to Chadick et al. (2018), segregated inmates have higher risks of developing depression, anxiety, somatoform complaints, and post-traumatic disorder. It is then explicable that once someone is confined in solitude, they become exposed to a depressive environment from where they undergo or experience other psychiatric conditions.

Perceptual Changes

Perceptual changes are a common theme that emerges as an effect of solitary confinement on prisoners. The change in perceptions is

a psychological problem that emerges as someone gets confined and is characterized by hyperresponsivity to stimuli from the external environment (Grassian, 1983). Perceptual changes can also manifest when someone becomes highly sensitive to noise or water rushing through the pipes, complaining that such movements are so loud (Grassian, 1983). When such individuals get out of the correctional facilities, the situation worsens, and how they interact with the people around them also becomes different.

Essentially, the use of confinement in solitude is aimed at making correctional facilities to be safer. Nonetheless, their excessive use can cause high levels of disorder, especially when there is no counseling for individuals after coming out of the cells (Ahalt et al., 2017). Prisoners in most US states can be released from solitary confinement in dire situations directly to society (Ahalt et al., 2017). In the absence of transitional programming, the released individual is likely to have developed worsened perceptual changes that will also change how they operate in the community. Thus, the confinement cells affect the prisoners and society at large.

Perceptual Distortions

Similar to perceptual changes, this theme also emerges as a deeper impact of solitary confinement. Research shows that most prisoners in restricted cells tend to develop distortions in their perceptions characterized by experiences of derealization and hallucination (Grassian, 1983). Some prisoners who were under confinement in the study by Grassian (1983) commented that they could hear voices in the form of whispers. Such voices often whispered frightening things to them while alone in the confinement cells. Grassian (1983) further elaborated that perceptual distortions in the form of hallucinations were common within the visual sphere, with reports that the walls of the cells were wavering. Likewise, Winters

(2018) also stated that people confined to small cells could persevere in an environment where their sensory experiences were completely distorted. Sometimes, those confinement cells were lined in a row and composed of metals, making them have extreme temperatures such as being too hot or cold. Such adverse environmental changes within the cells could have fueled and created an opportunity for the perceptual distortions to intensify.

The perceptual distortions also interfere with how the prisoners get managed in correctional facilities. For example, there is always minimal to no variation in smell and human touch (Winters, 2018). Therefore, whenever the prisoners are taken to restrained escorts, when there is an introduction of any smell, they feel overwhelmed and develop a sense of fear. In some instances, inmates develop powerful illusions that make the distorted perceptions more complex and personalized. (Grassian, 1983). An example is when the prisoners can come out with four trays for breakfast during their break time or do things that are weird than what is expected of them. Apparently, inmates must feel a sense of distress and pain over any form of symptom before complaining about it. In most instances, however, the prisoners will lose awareness of what is happening because of distorted perceptions (Haney, 2003). Thus, they become unable to express any discomfort or challenge during the time they interact with the prison officials or others during the breaks. Thus, distorted perceptions also prevent prison officials from identifying issues among prisoners.

Disturbed Affection

Disturbed affection is another common issue with prisoners placed in confined cells. Grassian (1983) indicated that most prisoners from the confinements of solitude report free-floating anxiety in

addition to recurrent diaphoresis, panic, tachycardia, and dread of impending death episodes. This kind of ordeal interferes with the affections of the individuals. Other common psychological conditions in solitary isolation that affect particular affection include mood and personality disorders (Halvorsen, 2017). With interfered personalities and moods, the inmates in solitary cells find it challenging to converse with their loved ones seamlessly. They lose the affection that they might have preserved for people they have been considering to be close to them.

Another explanation for the interrupted affection is that when someone is isolated for a long time, they tend to be socially withdrawn (Haney, 2003). Likewise, Ahalt et al. (2017) further demonstrated that the derivation of reasonable social interaction and contact could result in trauma. In such instances, they become more attached to themselves than others, hence the feeling of no need to be affectionate to anyone. Sometimes, the isolation is so intense that some inmates feel detached from their family members. The solitary confinements have strict rules regarding visits, the use of phones, and other privileges (Winters, 2018). Such restrictions continue to distance individuals from those who can offer them social support. When they get used to the situation, it becomes challenging for the prisoners to regain their affection.

Disturbances in Thought Content

Solitary cells also affect prisoners by making their thought contents disturbed. Grassian (1983) reported that some prisoners in solitude experience primitive fantasies of aggression, such as torture, revenge, and mutilation of the prison wardens or guards. Some of those fantasies are uncontrollable and so intense. Coid et al. (2003) further explained that spatial restrictions in solitary cells relate to victimization in their daily lives. A prisoner commented, “I have

lost my trust in people” (Tayer et al., 2021). Under normal circumstances, people always have one person whom they can trust. However, they find it challenging to reunite with others when they are put in confinement. This makes them have their thought contents changed. Indeed, research shows that almost all prisoners in solitary cells have experienced at least intrusive thoughts or ruminations, which is also an extensive hypersensitivity to the stimuli coming from the external environment (Haney, 2003). Therefore, how such individuals think has changed, and there is nothing much that can be done to change them.

Impulse Control Challenges

Cases of impulse control have been reported among prisoners in solitary confinement. Grassian (1983) reported that prisoners in confinement cells have admitted that they have experienced instances of inability to control their impulses during random violence. It is also reported that even in those corrective facilities where there are programs for impulse control, prisoners did not show any improvement (Campagna et al., 2019). The challenge is that in case of violence involving a prisoner, there are chances that they also participated in creating that tussle. Therefore, it becomes challenging for them to control themselves (Haney, 2003). Some of the prisoners also demonstrate extreme levels of anger where they feel like they want to destroy the legal system, which they deem unfair (Tayer et al., 2021). Interestingly, such extreme emotions are retainable, and the prisoners can still experience them even months after they are released. Halvorsen (2017) presented a case study with the story of Nikko Jenkins, a mentally challenged inmate in Nebraska. The individual has most of his sentence time in solitary confinement. Weeks after his release, Nikko gruesomely committed four murders (Halvorsen, 2017). It is then justifiable

that an individual can experience impulse control challenges even several times after they have come out of the solitary cells.

Physical Harm

In addition to the psychological effects of solitary confinement on prisoners, cases of physical harm are also common. For example, Beebe et al. (2020) reported that prolonged stay in confinement cells could cause physical harm to someone's body. This can be an escalation of psychiatric conditions that advance into self-harm or other physical conditions, such as headaches emanating from the condition of the cells. Additionally, evidence indicates that prisoners tend to involve themselves in self-harming and dangerous activities that can be fatal (Kaba et al., 2014). It is deduced from this finding that if an individual develops ideations of self-harm and is confined, it can be easy for them to achieve their acts because there is no person to share their disturbances with. In 2019, cases of death were recorded in Virginia, where the Fourth Circuit addressed the issue of confining inmates for more than 23 hours a day with no reasonable breaks (Vines, 2022). Albeit the unclarity on the possible cause of the death, it is concludable that it might have resulted from cases of self-harm or other conditions in the cells. Cockrell (2013) reported many instances where inmates in solitary confinement get severe headaches. In some cases, such as in Kansas, hidden criminal justice systems within the prison come up with more punitive measures for handling their inmates (Sakoda & Simes, 2021). Thus, getting help becomes challenging in extreme headaches since there is no concern for the prisoner's well-being.

There are also other health complications that inmates in solitary cells can develop. The confinement cells create a situation where persistent hypertension can develop (Williams et al., 2019).

Prolonged stay in solitary confinements also causes other neurological complications (Bennion, 2015). If the punitive measures are heightened, watching what happens with the inmates will be impossible, hence the chances of physical harm.

Topic Analysis

After exploring the effects solitary confinement has on prisoners, the position is that it should be abolished. Evidently, solitary confinement only has negative mental and physical health implications for the inmates. Thus, there are various ways society can respond to the issue of solitary confinement.

It is necessary to abolish solitary confinement, but society can also ensure that there is artificial intelligence (AI) to monitor the lives of inmates. Evidence indicates that some secret legal systems in prisons heighten the kind of punishment the inmates receive beyond what the law requires (Tayer et al., 2021). Therefore, the best way to ensure that solitary confinement is completely abolished and never used is to install AI to monitor prisoners' activities. Indeed, Shen (2019) stated that solitary confinement creates an opportunity to embrace the use of AI. Various activities in the corrective facilities require keen monitoring to ensure that human rights are equally preserved, even in incarcerated people.

A probable reason for putting inmates in confinement is mental health issues, which might make them hostile to the other prison population. Nonetheless, such psychiatric conditions advance with time, and early monitoring can help prevent the worsening of the situation. Cloud et al. (2021) revealed that increased clinical services could be used to prevent the escalations of mental health issues among prisoners. Paradoxically, the proportion of individuals with mental health issues is higher among

those in solitary confinements than among the general population (Mears et al., 2021). This justifies the proposition that it is possible to abolish solitary cells and establish an effective monitoring system, AI, to help identify those with conditions earlier and subject them to earlier clinical interventions.

Society can also consider legal reforms to eliminate solitary confinement and find better ways of managing prisoners. Part of the US Constitution's Eighth Amendment condemns excessive and cruel punishments for anyone (Shen, 2019). Confinement violates the Eighth Amendment as it imposes cruel punishment on prisoners. To justify this, the Fourth Circuit, in May 2019, was the first court of appeal to prove that solitary confinement violates the Eighth Amendment (Beebe et al., 2020). Nonetheless, this only followed the death row in those confinement cells. The real situation in these cells is that inmates are housed in small rooms for more than 22 hours daily with limited social contact and access (Andersen et al., 2000). During confinement, the inmates cannot access medical or psychiatric care.

They are protecting prisoners from cruel punishments proceeds from the need to show everyone decency and maturity within society (Vines, 2022). This is something that solitary cells highly violate. Another instance was in 2005 when a group of prisoners in Ohio complained that solitary confinement violates the Eighth and the Fourteenth Amendments (Shen, 2019). Currently, the US is trying to get away from solitary confinement due to the increasing number of cases of deaths in the cells (Vines, 2022). However, the effectiveness of these legal reforms is questionable. There has been a decline in the use of solitary confinement since the 1860s (Cockrell, 2013). Therefore, even if some states drop the use of such confinement cells, there is a possibility that they will later be used in the future. Thus, an effective legal reform should

completely and unanimously abolish solitary confinement across all states.

Additionally, legislative and policy changes can help effectively abolish solitary confinement. The legislatures have been unconcerned with the condition of prisoners in solitary confinements until very recently. Specifically, the oversight of legislatures over confinement cells has almost been non-existent (Shen, 2019). It was only in 2018 when President Trump signed the “First Step Act,” which sought to prohibit solitary confinement of juveniles (Shen, 2019). Between 2015 and 2019, the legislatures in Dakota also sought to limit their overreliance on solitary confinement (Cloud et al., 2021). These advances create opportunities legislators can use to fight to abolish such cruel punishments. Ahalt et al. (2017) recommend using an evidence-based approach in making legislative reforms for the use of solitary cells. The evidence to be used in such justifications is the data on the psychological and physical harm that confinement in solitude has caused to the prisoners and society at large.

Establishing an extensive mental health resource in corrective institutions seeking legal and legislative reforms is also imperative. The units for solitary confinement should be held accountable for presenting extensive mental health care targeted at addressing the psychological pains inmates undergo (Haney, 2003). This calls for the establishment of the step-down and de-escalation programs earlier enough before their release. It will ensure that there is a healthy transition from the correctional facilities to society without having to cause any form of harm to the individual and the community. Evidence indicates that solitary cells create an environment in which an individual gets mental distortion and can easily develop psychotic conditions (Cockrell, 2013). The implication is that releasing individuals directly into the

community without proper psychotherapy is likely to destroy further that person's life (Winters, 2018). Thus, it is necessary to have proper screening services for every individual before being released (Cloud et al., 2021). Achieving all these requires the effective involvement of mental health professionals who clears the prisoners under the condition that they are mentally sound and fit to get into society.

Partnering with professional organizations can also help get the required facts to facilitate the abolition of solitary cells. The American Psychological Association, as a professional organization, has rejected using solitary cells, terming them useless (Vines, 2022). Legal, mental health, corrections, and human rights organizations have also presented their recommendations on the reforms that need to be made regarding solitary confinement (Haney et al., 2020). The “North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation” (ND DOCR) 2015 recruited staff that was well versed in helping the prisoners prepare for reentry into the community (Cloud et al., 2021). Another professional group that can be involved in seeking to make reforms in the legal system is neuroscience. The involvement of neuroscience can help diagnose and test every incarcerated individual's mental status (Lobel & Akil, 2018). Such diagnosis can help identify individuals with mental health, giving them specialized services before being put in solitary cells (Chadick et al., 2018). Thus, employing professionals is necessary to control how prisoners get handled before implementing the reforms to eliminate solitary confinement.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is necessary to abolish solitary confinement. This follows from the adverse effects that it has on the prisoners. The available literature indicates how solitary cells emerged in the early

19th century, after which they were phased out and later returned in the 1860s. The same complaints have persisted over the years, but their use seems to intensify. This means that it is necessary to compare and contrast the effects of the punitive measure on the inmates and how the lack of using the confinement method affects the management of prisons. There are many similarities, nuances, and differences across the literature trying to explain some of the effects of solitary confinement on prisoners.

Despite the different ways the available publications present their facts, it is easy to deduce that they all agree that solitary confinement has adverse effects on prisoners. For instance, solitary cells act as a cruel punishment, which further heightens the development of trauma among prisoners. Other effects of the punitive measure in incarceration centers include perceptual changes, distortions of perceptions, disturbed affection, disturbed thought content, and challenges with controlling impulses. The nature of solitary confinement is that an individual gets put in a very small room that rarely receives natural light for an average of 22 hours a day. When such happens, the inmates tend to develop all these psychological complications. Interestingly, the advancement of these conditions happens at high rates since no one is readily available for consultation or to share their challenges. The broken social contact intensifies the severity of the psychological effects that the prisoners get in the correction centers through the confinements.

Analysis of the available literature also confirms that solitary confinement can cause physical harm to inmates. In most cases, the psychological conditions advance to the physical manifestation. For example, individuals with poor impulse control can easily cause harm to themselves while in confinement or to others when released to society. Once an individual commits

murder after getting released from the correctional centers, there are chances that the public will be angered and might harm them. Nonetheless, the conditions in the solitary cells are also detrimental to the overall physical health of the inmates. There have been cases of extreme headaches or self-harm in confinement cells. All these challenges create an opportunity through which society can get involved in addressing the challenges that affect prisoners and the overall community in terms of abolishing solitary confinement.

The topical analysis of solitary confinement's effects on prisoners creates an opportunity for society to get involved. Society can consider creating AI to monitor the overall mental health of the inmates, have legal and legislative reforms, increase the mental health resources accessible by the prisoners, and collaborate with professional organizations. Essentially, the aim is to abolish solitary confinement. Nonetheless, it is a process to achieve zero use of solitary cells. Hence society must contribute and ensure that there are no adverse cases of prisoners dying in confinement cells. All these recommendations from the literature are feasible.

An evaluation of the literature used in this paper indicates that the facts presented herein are valid and dependable. The strength of the research articles used in the paper is that they can sufficiently answer the research question. Specifically, all the sources could contribute to the facts that explain solitary confinement's effects on prisoners. Additionally, the sources complemented each other. For example, an article could present information, then another elaborates on it to help further understand the point. Furthermore, all the articles used presented their facts based on research. Most of these publications were based on primary research, which means that the information contained therein is first-hand.

Nonetheless, the only weakness in the articles is that they tend to look only at the negative sides of solitary confinement without looking at its positive side. The publication that tried to address the necessity of solitary cells only stated that it helps manage prisons effectively. This is because some inmates with mental issues are uncontrollable and might not interact peacefully with others, hence have to be confined. Another case was to save the inmates from harm by another fellow. Nonetheless, there was an argument that despite the positive effects of solitary confinement on correctional facilities, it is highly detrimental to individual prisoners. However, there was no analysis of the possible reasons for an individual finding themselves in prisons. Understanding such information could be necessary for determining the process the prisoners should undergo before being taken to solitary cells.

There were various points of divergence and disagreement among the scholars. The most common disagreement is on the actual cause of the effects that confinement causes the individuals. Some scholars believe that social isolation escalates the psychological conditions among inmates, while others believe that preexisting conditions advance inmates' ordeals in the cells.

What is unknown about the research topic is the ability to confirm that an individual is guilty before being incarcerated and put in the confinement of solitude. There have been instances where the jury admits that the prisoner was innocent, but they are already in custody. The challenging thing is that there is no mention of when such cases have been retrieved. Inmates falsely prosecuted can develop psychological complications; hence putting them into solitary cells only worsens their situation. Perhaps, transitional programs when such prisoners are released could be necessary to ensure they do not retain lasting trauma.

The gap in the available literature explains why solitary confinement gained popularity and use in the 1860s. The available research explains that the US started to use solitary cells in the early 19th century then there was a decline in such systems. Later, solitary cells regained their use, and professionals and researchers again advocated for their abolition. Researching why the US regained its use of solitary confinement could help avoid situations where people have to return to the same system that is so detrimental to the prisoners.

The recommended next step in the research is investigating the positive effects of solitary confinement. This will help achieve an objective approach to whether solitary cells should be abolished or retained. It is also necessary to investigate why solitary cell use regained popularity in the 1860s after the earlier decline almost immediately after their adoption.

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