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Presentation title: Children and young adults in Swedish remand prisons – who are they and how can their time spent in remand prison be described?

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There are about 1 200 children and young adults (< 21 years of age) held in remand prisons yearly under the responsibility of the Swedish Prison and Probation Service (SPPS). The majority of them are legally restricted in their contact with others as well as their involvement with the outside world. Restrictions and the isolation that follows may pose psychological and physical harm, especially for children. Importantly, national and international organizations have repeatedly criticized Sweden for the undue isolation of children in remand prisons. The SPPS works proactively to mitigate the potential negative effects of isolation for remand prisoners; however, the knowledge needed to do so effectively is lacking. A first step to address this knowledge gap, and a principal aim of this study, is to describe the risks and needs of children and young adults in remand prisons – Who are they, what is their background and how can their time spent in remand prison be described? All children and young adults under the age of 21 years detained in Swedish remand prisons between September 2019 and August 2020 were included in the study. Data were retrieved from the SPPS's internal client registry. The results show that the detained children and young adults are a heterogeneous group with different backgrounds and experiences. Some common factors are that many have previously been prosecuted and that many have issues with drug abuse and mental illness. The mitigating measures focus on breaking the isolation, and some age and gender differences are observed. The presentation will further highlight some of the results of the study, with a particular focus on the reported psychological harm and misconduct during detention. Given that the study coincided with the covid-19 pandemic, the influence of the pandemic will also be discussed.