

## DETENTION AND MENTAL HEALTH OF TORTURE SURVIVORS - WHAT DO WE KNOW AND WHAT DO WE DO?

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**Introduction:** Torture survivors often present a complex clinical picture with mental and physical symptoms and illness in addition to social incapacities. Torture survivors can be subjected to deprivation of liberty in a variety of situations. Detention might remind the torture survivor of former torture experiences and thus add further to the strain of being detained.

**Objective:** To evaluate and discuss the present knowledge of mental health consequences of detention of torture survivors and to present and discuss practices relating to detention.

**Aim:** To focus attention on existing evidence and problematic practices in relation to this.

**Methods:** Results from key publications within the field will be resumed and discussed and implications outlined.

**Results:** Research on the impact of detention on torture survivors is almost non-existent. A negative impact of detention on mental health of torture survivors can however be deducted mainly from the existing evidence on asylum seekers. Whether screening for torture experiences and following systematic monitoring of mental health are going on worldwide remains obscure, but from a Danish perspective it is likely that torture survivors are not identified.

**Conclusion:** Torture survivors constitute a vulnerable group mentally, physically and socially. A negative impact of detention on mental health can be deducted mainly from studies on asylum seekers. Identification of torture survivors is necessary before decision on detention is taken. Scientific evidence on the subject is missing. Research initiatives and monitoring of practices are necessary.