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### **Costs Associated with the Incarceration of Elderly Inmates**

Whether an elderly individual is out in public or in prison, they will incur high medical expenses costs. However, when the person is locked up, that cost is on the criminal justice system. Such individuals need medical aid and external support to continue living. The increasing population of incarcerated elderly has made it difficult for the criminal justice system and the public healthcare systems to cope because their rising numbers are a financial strain.

Also, elderly inmates have dementia and cannot follow simple rules or remember why they are locked up. In addition to that, many elderly inmates with diminished cognitive capacities are mistaken to be disobedient and are subjected to punishments like solitary confinement (Cipriani et al., 2017). It is worth noting that prisons were not designed as care homes for the elderly, and keeping such inmates locked up comes at a high cost to the taxpayer. Apart from the medical costs, there are costs associated with housing the elderly inmates. For instance, these are individuals who eat special diets; the doorways and staircases in such facilities must be modified to fit their movements. Nurses must be employed to assist them in waking up and going to sleep because many suffer from physiological issues (Chiu, 2016). At the same time, once released these inmates are unlikely to be employed or have a home because their families were fragmented. In the end, they live in shelter homes or on the streets, where resources must be used to make them live comfortable lives.

In short, there is a viable method to managing the increasing cost of detaining elderly persons. The living conditions in such facilities should improve to avoid unnecessary injuries to the elderly. Also, the release mechanisms should be expanded for the elderly inmates because they are unlikely to engage in crime once released at an advanced age. Besides, there must be a

radical shift in the thinking behind jailing the elderly because locking up someone whose mind and body are failing is costly and inhumane.

## References

- Chiu, T. (2016). It's About Time: Aging Prisoners, Increasing Costs, and Geriatric Release.
- Cipriani, G., Danti, S., Carlesi, C., & Di Fiorino, M. (2017). Old and Dangerous: Prison and Dementia. *Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine*, 51, 40-44.

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