We thank XXX for their thoughtful letter in response to our review focused on the prevalence of mental health problems among adolescents in juvenile detention and correctional facilities. We agree with XXX that search strategies for systematic reviews should specifically look for low- and middle-income countries. In our systematic review we used the bibliographic index, Global Health, to address this.

XXX suggest that by using specific search terms (i.e. borstal) and databases more relevant to African-based studies, we would have identified two additional eligible studies.[1,2] However, these two studies were identified in our search strategy (as both journals are indexed in Global Health), but were excluded after a rigorous screening process.

The first study included 147 boys in a Nigerian youth correctional facility.[1] We noted that another article[3] provided additional information on the same sample of adolescents. However, we excluded these as they included a large proportion who had not committed crimes and placed in custody for other reasons. This meant that this population was not similar to all the other included studies, who included adolescents detained for criminality. It also meant that the Nigerian sample would have likely had different mental health needs. Specifically, the Children and Young Person's law (CYPL) in Nigeria stipulates children who are 'beyond parental control,' and those in need of care and protection can be placed within the juvenile justice system,[3] and these groups made up 41% of the study sample.

The second study[2] was excluded because psychotic illnesses were not assessed, which limits its comparability with other studies. This will likely lead to overestimation of other disorders as

primary diagnosis. For example, adolescents who meet the criteria for dual diagnosis of psychosis and depression would be classified under psychotic illnesses in most included studies, but in this one, they would be counted under depression.

XXX also raise a concern regarding the age range we utilized. We acknowledge that this is an area of current debate. We adopted the international consensus on what is adolescence,[4] i.e. 10-19 years old, which also reflects how prisons in many countries still operate. It is not the case that custodial settings for people under the age of 20 no longer operate in the UK and USA. In England and Wales, they are called secure training centres,[5] and in the US training schools. In the US, in 2017-18, 10,777 adolescents were held in long-term secure facilities, which include such training schools.[6]

We appreciate XXX bringing attention to adolescents who are detained and incarcerated and the unique structure of juvenile and young adult corrections in Africa.

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