

# Dementia and cognitive disorder identified at a forensic psychiatric examination - a study from Sweden

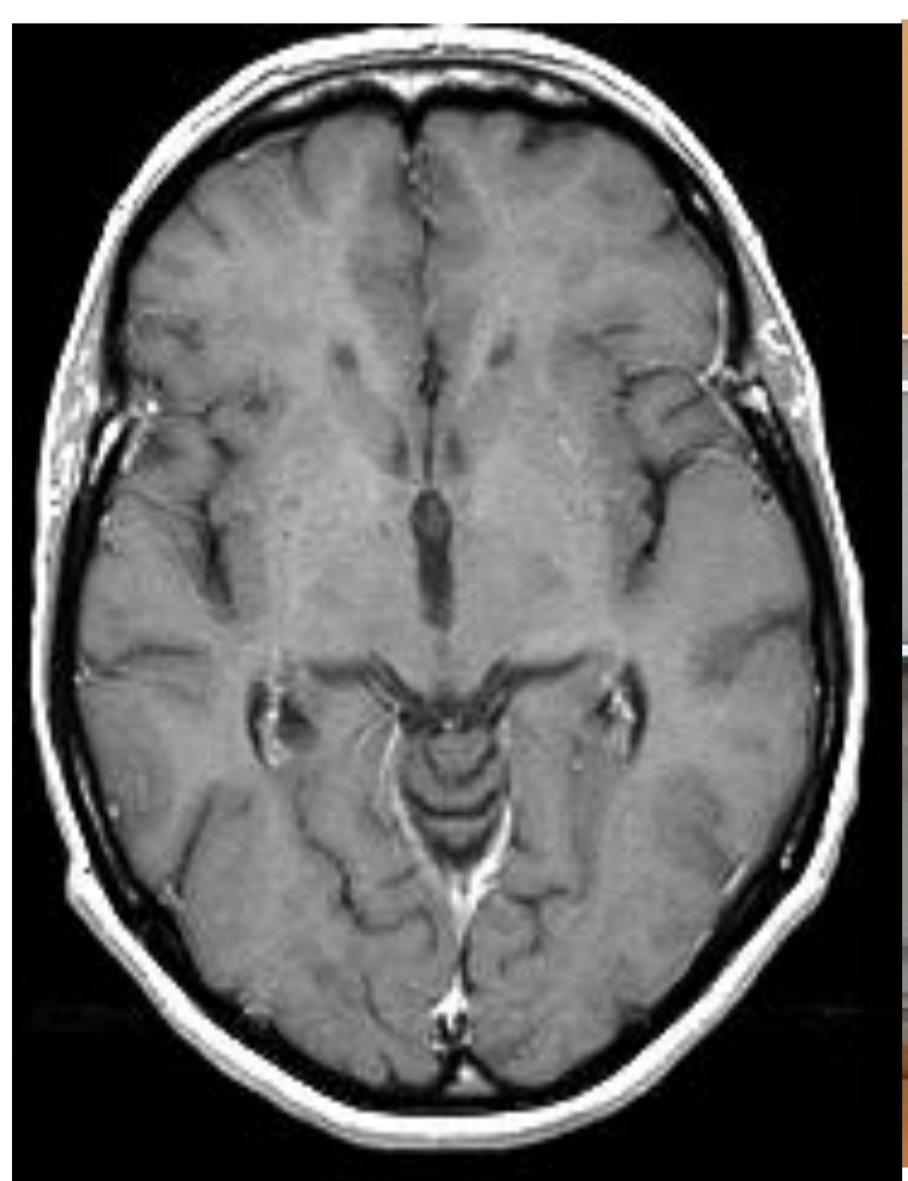
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## CONCLUSIONS

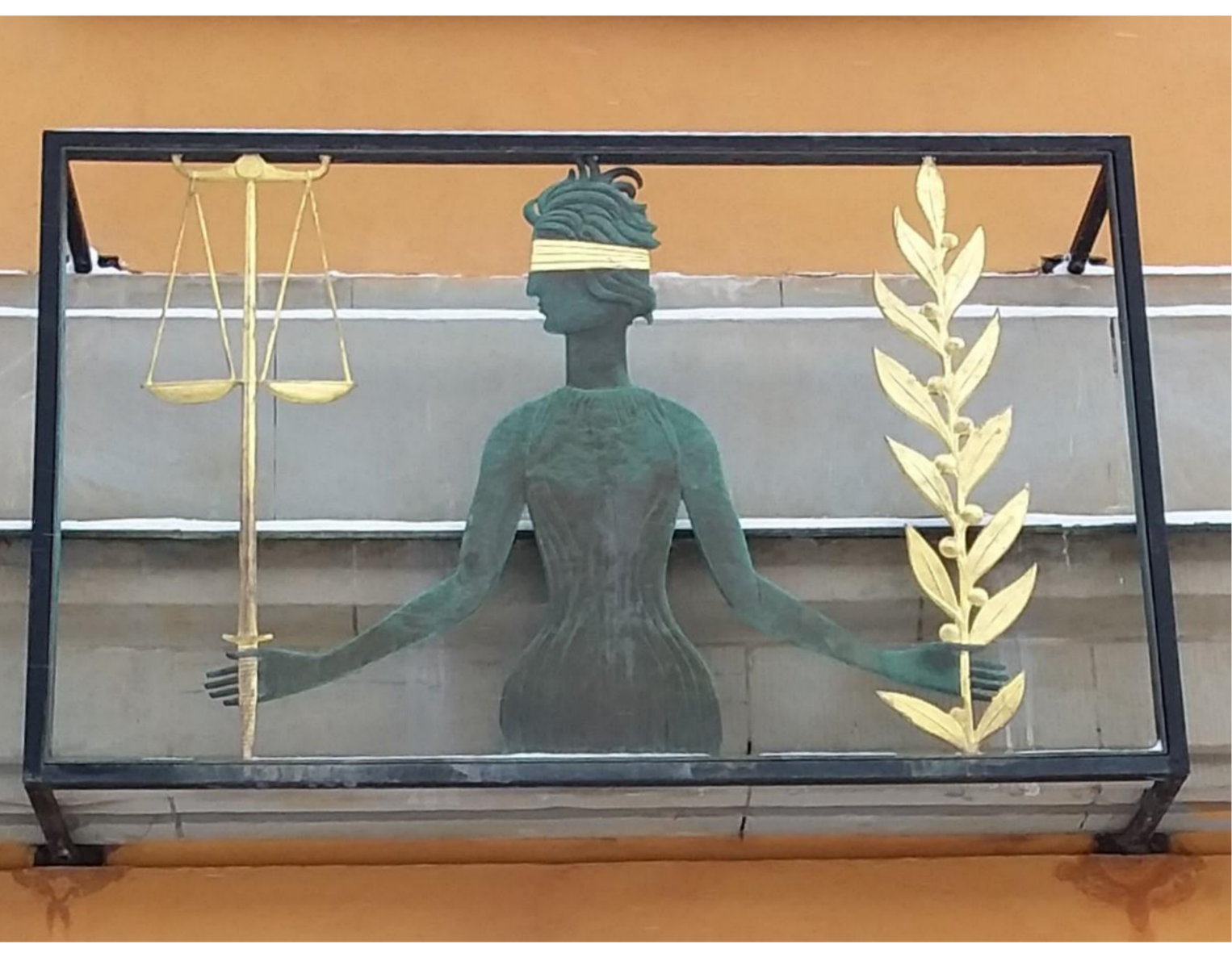
Persons with dementia undergoing forensic psychiatric examination in Sweden is a group of medically and psychiatrically very ill and vulnerable persons, who mostly suffer from vascular, traumatic and alcohol brain damage, and rarely from Alzheimer's disease only.

**OBJECTIVES** Since little is known about persons with dementia committing severe crimes, we wanted to assess the characteristics of this group from a clinical point of view.

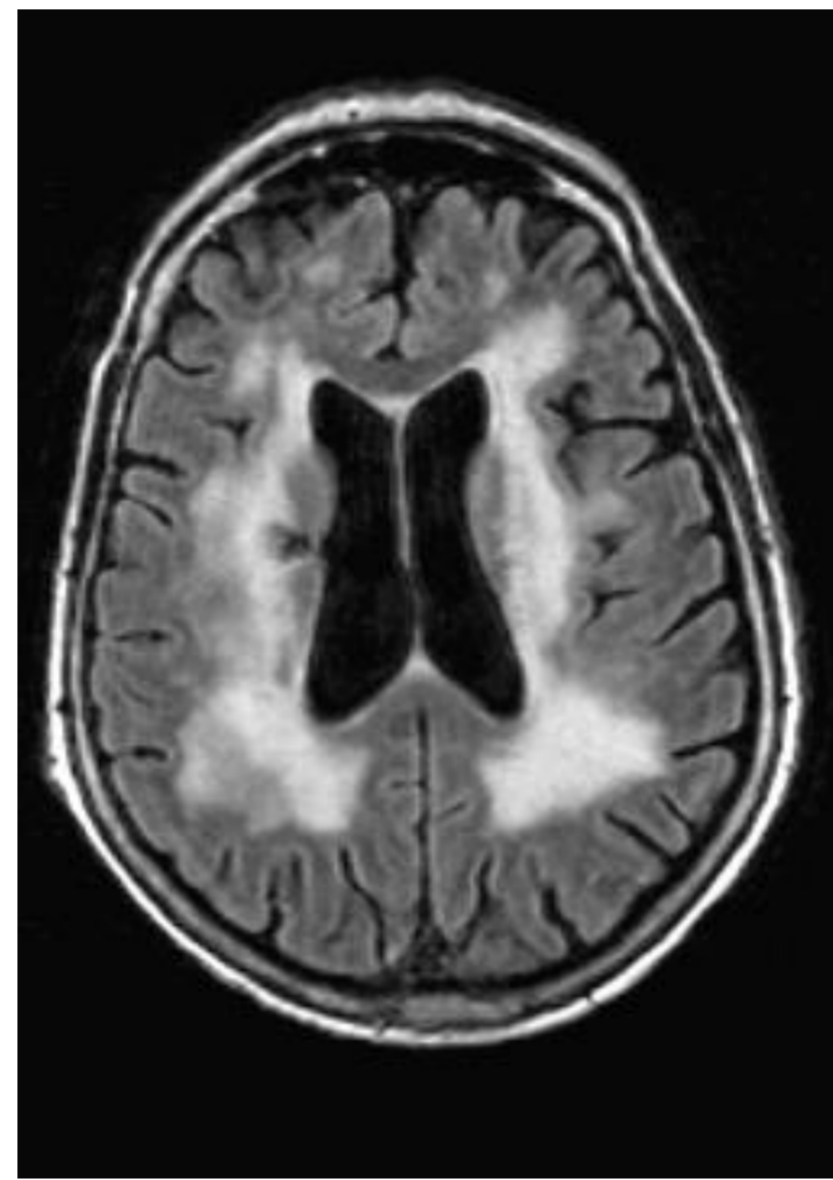
**METHODS** All cases of dementia or cognitive disorder were selected from all forensic psychiatric examinations (n=1471) performed in Sweden from 2008 to 2010. We found 54 cases (<4%). Case files were scrutinized and 17 cases of dementia and 4 cases of cognitive disorder likely to get a dementia diagnosis in a clinical setting were identified, and analysed in detail.



Normal brain



Justitia



Brain scan showing extensive white matter lesions

## SUBJECTS

- 18 men and 3 women (n=21)
- Age 35-77 (Median 66) years of age
- Previous criminal records: 11 men
- Present crimes committed: n=38

## DEMENTIA (N=17) CAUSED BY

Cerebrovascular disorder (n=4)  
Alcohol or substance abuse (n=3)  
Cerebral haemorrhage and alcohol (n=1)  
Head trauma and alcohol (n=2)  
Alzheimer's disease (n=2),  
Parkinson's disease (n=1)  
Herpes encephalitis (n=1)  
Unspecified (3)

## COGNITIVE DISORDER (n=4)

Previous or ongoing alcohol abuse (n=13)  
Earlier or ongoing abuse of illegal drugs (n=3)

## THE CRIMES

38 crimes committed by the 21 subject, as e.g. impulsive violent crimes, arson, attempted homicides, sexual assaults against adults and children. No premeditated crimes.

## READ IT

Ekström, A, Kristiansson, M, Björkstén, KS:  
Dementia and cognitive disorder identified at a forensic psychiatric examination - a study from Sweden. BMC Geriatrics, 2017, 17:219

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The study was approved by the Regional Ethical Review Board, Stockholm, Sweden, EPN 2011/186–31/1.

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