

Japan’s prisons are a haven for elderly women

<p>Notes & Cues:</p>	<p>Article:</p> <p>Every aging society faces distinct challenges. But Japan, with the world’s oldest population (27.3 percent of its citizens are 65 or older, almost twice the share in the U.S.), has been dealing with one it didn’t foresee: senior crime.</p> <p>Complaints and arrests involving elderly people, and women in particular, are taking place at rates above those of any other demographic group. Almost 1 in 5 women in Japanese prisons is a senior. Their crimes are usually minor—9 in 10 senior women who’ve been convicted were found guilty of shoplifting.</p> <p>Why have so many otherwise law-abiding elderly women resorted to petty theft? Some say they have no one to turn to when they need help. They are also often economically vulnerable—nearly half of those 65 or older who live alone also live in poverty relative to the broader population, for example, compared with 29 percent of men.</p> <p>Neither the government nor the private sector has established an effective rehabilitation program for seniors, and the costs to keep them in prison are rising fast. In 2016, Japan’s parliament passed a law aiming to ensure that recidivist seniors get support from the country’s welfare and social-service systems. Since then, prosecutor’s offices and prisons have worked closely with government agencies to get senior offenders the assistance they need. But the problems that lead these women to seek the relative comfort of jail lie beyond the system’s reach.</p>
<p>Summary:</p>	