



Research at a glance

An Examination of the Effectiveness of Tupiq: A Culturally Specific Program for Inuit Sex Offenders

KEY WORDS: Sex offender treatment outcome, culture specific programming, Inuit offenders

Why we did this study

There is a need to understand the contribution of correctional programs in meeting CSC's mandate and the specific impact of programs that add allowable innovations to meet the responsivity needs of cultural groups. The Tupiq program is a culturally specific, high intensity program for moderate to high risk Inuit sex offenders. It is designed to adhere to the principles of effective correctional programs and, additionally, provide teachings based on traditional Inuit knowledge and cultural ceremonies led by Inuit healers and facilitators. The study assessed whether participation in this specialized program improves key correctional outcomes.

What we did

This study examined the profile of all the participants in the Tupiq program over the last seven years and evaluated their program completion rates and outcomes on release relative to a matched comparison group of Inuit sex offenders who did not participate in Tupiq.

What we found

The profile of the Tupiq offenders confirms earlier findings that Tupiq participants cope with significant problems that contribute to criminal recidivism and pose barriers to reintegration. In addition to current and prior sex offences, the majority of the group also admits to high rates of intimate partner violence. Detention rates are significantly higher than those of other Aboriginal groups. A completion rate of 97% for the Tupiq program was higher than the 73% completion rate of the Inuit offenders in the comparison group who had attended alternative sex offender programs, and higher than the 63% of the national sex offender programs. An examination of the impact of Tupiq program on recidivism showed no differences in revocation rates but a significant 45% reduction in general criminal recidivism and a 48% reduction in violent recidivism. Although the sexual recidivism rate for the Tupiq participants was less

than half of that of the comparison group, this did not reach a level of significance because of reduced statistical power.

What it means

Overall, the present study provides evidence that the Tupiq program reduces general and violent recidivism among moderate to high-risk Inuit sex offenders and that it may also reduce sexual reoffending. Work should be launched that would examine the viability of an integrated program model for these Inuit offenders that will address their multiple criminogenic needs.

For more information

Stewart, L. A., Hamilton, E., Wilton, G., Cousineau, C. & Varrette, S. (2009) *An Examination of the Effectiveness of Tupiq: A Culturally Specific Program for Inuit Sex Offenders*. Research Report R-213-Ottawa: Correctional Service Canada.

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