



Research Snippet

A Brief Profile of Incarcerated Older Men Offenders

KEY WORDS: *older offenders, offender profile*

What it means

This profile of men aged 50 and older incarcerated in the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) demonstrated that they could be grouped into three primary categories: older first-time offenders, long-term first-time offenders, and recidivists. Recognizing differences among groups may inform correctional management and intervention practices. For instance, older offenders whose first conviction occurred after age 50 may act as stabilizing influences within correctional institutions given their low rates of misconduct within the institution. Older men offenders' higher rates of physical health conditions¹ may also require accommodations to facilitate participation in correctional interventions.

What we found

Offenders aged 50 and older presented higher levels of risk and were much more likely to be classified as Dangerous Offenders than those aged 30 and younger. Despite this, they presented lower levels of criminogenic need, including being less likely to abuse drugs, and were much less likely to be involved in institutional misconducts or placed in segregation in the preceding year. Proportionately, Quebec, Pacific, and Ontario regions had the highest representation of older offenders.

In keeping with previous research, three categories allowed for classification of 97% of the sample:

1. *Older first-time offenders* (28% of offenders) whose first conviction occurred after age 50. These offenders were more likely to be convicted of sex offences and had lower levels of substance abuse need and institutional misbehavior than younger offenders. Of the three categories, these offenders were least frequently designated as Dangerous Offenders.
2. *Long-term first-time offenders* (24% of offenders) whose first conviction, typically a homicide,

occurred prior to age 50 and who were serving sentences of 10 years or more.

3. *Recidivists* (45% of offenders) who had previously served at least one other federal sentence. These offenders' convictions included sex, drug, and property offences, as well as non-homicide violent offences such as robbery and assault. Of the three categories, these offenders presented the highest level of risk, were most likely to be involved in institutional misconducts, and to have had a placement in segregation. It should be noted, however, that their rates of involvement in misconducts or transfers to segregation were still only about a third of that of the younger offenders.

Why we did this study

Similar to the demographic changes in the broader Canadian population, the proportion of men offenders aged 50 and older has been increasing over the last decade. This study aimed to create an updated profile of this group.

What we did

A total of 3,030 men offenders aged 50 or over in CSC custody in April 2013 were compared to 4,323 counterparts aged 30 or younger on data available in CSC's administrative database. The age range for the comparison group was chosen because this is the largest age category of federal offenders.

For more information

Please e-mail the [Research Branch](#) or contact us by phone at (613) 995-3975.

You can also visit the website for a full list of research publications.

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¹ Stewart, L., Sapers, J., Nolan, A., & Power, J. (2013). *Self-reported physical health status of incoming federally-sentenced male offenders* (R-314). Ottawa, ON: CSC.