



Research in Brief

Age Structure of Federal Indigenous and Non-indigenous Offender Populations

Federal Indigenous offenders are substantially younger relative to their Non-indigenous counterparts.

Why we did this study

Aside from the custodial population size, the most important demographic characteristic of an incarcerated population is its age structure or the proportion of inmates at each age grouping. The age structure determines potential for future growth of specific age groups, as well as the total in-custody population. For these reasons, the age structure has significant policy and operational implications. A population of younger inmates require a sufficient number of correctional, educational and vocational programs and, later, upon release into the community enough jobs and supervision to safely manage them. Correctional systems with a large proportion of older inmates must develop accommodation systems and treatment facilities to serve them.

What we did

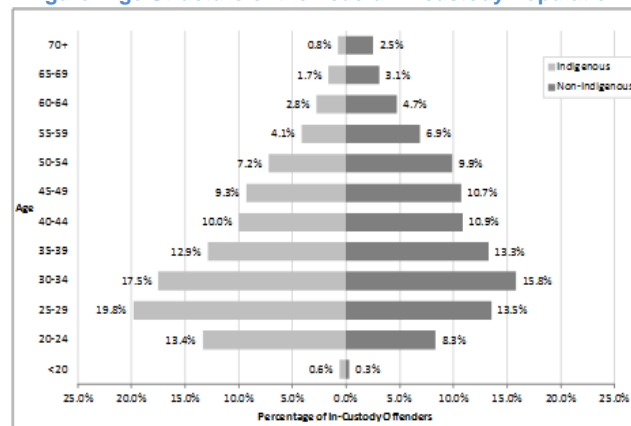
Age structure data reflected in Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC) Offender Management System were extracted at mid-year 2016-17 for both Indigenous (3,802) and Non-indigenous (10,342) inmates. Data were drawn for 12 age bands (<20, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, and 70+).

What we found

While results show that Indigenous inmates proportionately represent 26.5% of the federal in-custody population, they present a higher representation across the younger age bands of under 20 years of age (0.6%), 20-24 (13.4%), 25-29 (19.8%), and 30-34 (17.5%) than Non-indigenous inmates for the same age groupings of under 20 (0.3%), 20-24 (8.4%), 25-29 (13.5%), and 30-34 (15.8%). On the other hand, within the older age bands Indigenous inmates show a lower representation for 55-59 years of age (4.1%), 60-64 (2.8%), 65-69 (1.7%), and 70+ (0.8%) than Non-indigenous inmates for the same age groupings representation for 55-59 years of age (6.9%), 60-64 (4.7%), 65-69 (3.1%), and 70+ (2.5%).

A review of the age pyramid below reveals some important information about the federal in-custody population. The triangular shape and broad base of the age pyramid reflects the relatively younger (under 35) proportion of Indigenous inmates (51.3%) relative to Non-indigenous (37.9%). Moreover, the narrower top for the Indigenous side of the age pyramid shows a smaller number of elderly inmates. The steepness of the age pyramid for the Indigenous inmates suggests rapid growth whereas for Non-indigenous slow growth in the future.

Figure: Age Structure of the Federal In-custody Population



What it means

Albeit the disproportionate representation of Indigenous people in federal custody may partly be attributed to proportional disparity of younger inmates, continued efforts are still required to safely and securely reintegrate offenders into the community.

For more information

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

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