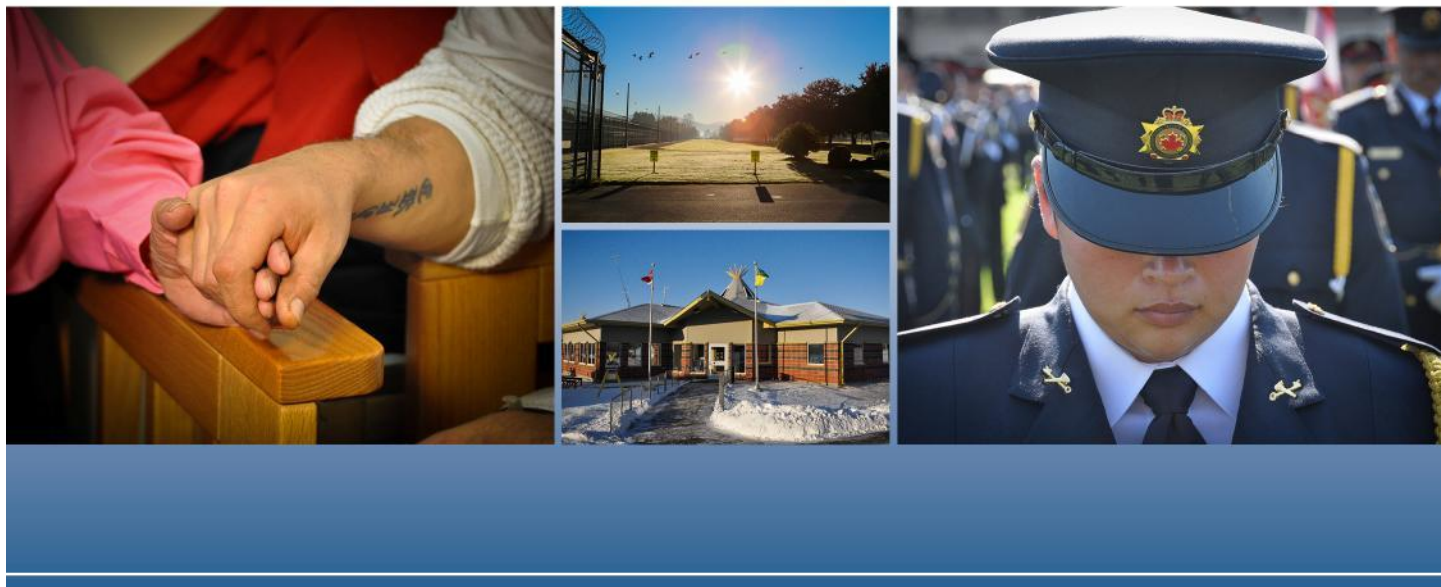


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RESEARCH REPORT

Reasons for parole waivers, postponements, and withdrawals: Examining indicators for low-risk offenders

2017 N° R-396

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Reasons for parole waivers, postponements, and withdrawals: Examining indicators for low-risk offenders

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Correctional Service of Canada

July 2017

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Executive Summary

Key words: *waiver, postponement, withdrawal, parole, conditional reasons, reasons for delaying or cancelling parole, rational for parole board decisions*

One of the Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC) strategic priorities is the safe transition of offenders from the institution to the community. Discretionary release provides offenders with a gradual and structured reintegration process for this transition. In addition, offenders on discretionary release, i.e. parole, are more likely to remain in the community than offenders who are released on statutory release (Public Safety Canada, 2015). For offenders who waive, postpone, or withdraw their parole application, the potential amount of time they have to reintegrate into society prior to the end of their sentence is shortened. This is particularly problematic for offenders deemed a low-risk to reoffend and who could be suitably managed and supported in the community (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Office of the Auditor General, 2015).

For this study, all parole reviews scheduled in FY2014-2015 for men and FY2014-2015 and FY2015-2016 for women were extracted. The main focus of this study was to examine parole review outcomes for low-risk offenders, i.e., offenders that were determined to be at a low-risk to reoffend based on actuarial measures. Overall, 8,476 parole reviews were scheduled for low-risk offenders during the study period, representing 3,663 offenders. Women accounted for 12% of the offenders in this study, 3% of which were Indigenous. Among men, 6% were Indigenous.

Of the parole reviews scheduled for low-risk offenders, 37% were waived, postponed, or withdrawn. Variations by type of delay/cancellation, gender, ethnicity and region were evident. Indigenous women and men had higher rates of parole delays and cancellations than non-Indigenous offenders. Rates were highest in the Ontario and Pacific regions. Postponements, however, were more common in the Quebec region.

Examination of the reasons provided by offenders for parole delays and cancellations showed that *avoid a negative decision*, *program non-completion*, and *other* were the most common. Additional analyses were conducted to determine if structured indicators (such as demographics, criminogenic factors, offender behaviour, and correctional interventions) collected by CSC supported the reasons provided by offenders. For instance, among offenders citing *program non-completion*, almost two-thirds were referred to programming. Among these offenders, many were either still in the program, waitlisted or had recently completed the program in relation to their scheduled review date. Furthermore, waiving, postponing, or withdrawing parole does not appear to negatively impact on the Parole Board of Canada's decisions at subsequent parole reviews.

This study builds on prior research examining the reasons that offenders choose to delay or cancel their parole reviews while also exploring the specific characteristics based on the reasons endorsed by offenders. Overall, these results provide CSC with targeted areas for intervention in order to support offenders at low-risk to reoffend reintegrate to the community in a timely and successful manner. Future research areas are also identified.

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Introduction

The Parole Board of Canada (PBC) is responsible for granting or denying parole to federal offenders in Canada. Parole, which includes both day and full parole,¹ is a type of discretionary release that allows offenders a gradual reintegration into society before the end of their sentence. The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), on the other hand, is responsible for assisting offenders to safely transition from federal incarceration back to the community. Delaying or cancelling their parole application means offenders remain in custody longer and may not benefit from the gradual and structured nature of discretionary release.

Offenders on day parole and full parole are less likely to return to custody, with or without a new offence, than offenders on statutory release, a non-discretionary conditional release that is mandated for offenders who have served two-thirds of a fixed or determinate sentence (PBC, 2016a; Public Safety Canada, 2016).² Between 2010-2011 and 2014-2015, the number of eligible offenders for parole who delayed or cancelled (i.e., waived,³ postponed,⁴ or withdrew⁵) their parole applications has increased by 9% (PBC, 2011; 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015a); overall, although postponements have seen a slight decrease, with year to year fluctuation, both the number of waivers and withdrawals have increased by over one-quarter each.⁶ Parole delays or cancellations occur in other jurisdictions as well; Ostermann (2010) found that 40% of offenders in New Jersey waived parole while Massachusetts offenders had waived or postponed parole at an increasing rate, from 45% in 2010 to 53% in 2014 (Massachusetts Parole Board, 2010; 2014).

Understanding the reasons that offenders choose to delay or cancel parole reviews, as well as the characteristics of these offenders, may assist CSC to better support these offenders as they prepare to return to the community. Offenders may perceive benefits to waiving,

¹ Full parole eligibility is legislated and reviews must occur after offenders serve one-third of their sentence or seven years, whichever is earliest. Day parole, for which most offenders are eligible six months prior to their scheduled full parole review, requires the offender to apply and allows the offender to participate in employment, education, etc. during the day but to reside at a pre-determined location, typically a community correction centre or residential facility.

² Offenders serving an indeterminate sentence, such as offenders serving a life sentence, are not eligible for statutory release.

³ Waiver: A written request by an offender advising the PBC that they do not want to be considered for a full parole review and/or do not want a hearing.

⁴ Postponement: A written request from an offender to the PBC to delay a day or full parole review.

⁵ Withdrawal: A written request by an offender to the PBC to cancel the review of their day or full parole.

⁶ Calculations are based on raw PBC numbers, as PBC percentages include provincial offenders.

postponing, or cancelling their parole. For instance, perhaps they consider a denial of release to be worse than a delay or cancellation (PBC, 2016a) or are motivated by the requirement to wait a year before reapplying for full parole, which would negatively impact offenders serving shorter sentences. This is of particular importance for offenders who have been determined to be a low-risk to reoffend once released and who could be safely managed in the community (Office of the Auditor General, 2015).

Past Research on Waivers, Postponements, and Withdrawals

Initial research into parole delays and cancellations in the Canadian federal system, based on interviews with 104 federal offenders and undertaken by Cabana, Beauchamp, Emeno, and Bottos (2009), discovered that offenders were most likely to waive, postpone, or withdraw parole due to program non-completion, the belief that they did not have the support of their parole officer, and poor institutional behaviour or past non-compliance on release. A subsequent study by Cabana and Ruddell (2010) found that the reasons for delaying or cancelling parole reviews in their study were the result of on-going issues, i.e., not being able to find housing in a community facility for day parole; incomplete correctional programming; lack of submission for psychological and other important reports; or a pending court decision, especially for outstanding charges. In 2015, Cabana, Wilton, and Stewart conducted an in-depth examination of reviews where program non-completion was provided as the rationale for delaying or cancelling the review. They found that although almost one-fifth of delays or cancellations were due to program non-completion, these program-related delays were a result of administrative or operational issues (such as waitlists) or offender-related reasons (such as offender refusal to participate or poor behaviour in the program).

In 2015, a comprehensive study by Keown, Farrell MacDonald, and Gobeil was conducted to further explore the reasons provided by Canadian federal offenders for parole delays and cancellations. Examining the outcomes for all parole reviews in 2013-2014, the study focused on the reasons that minimum security offenders waive, postpone, or withdraw their parole applications. Overall, they found that about one-third of day parole and half of full parole reviews were delayed or cancelled for the total offender population while a quarter of minimum security offenders delayed or cancelled day parole and over one-third did so for full parole. Most often, offenders indicated that they wanted to avoid a negative decision or needed to complete programming, although 19% of minimum security offenders in the study did not provide a

reason. For the minimum security offenders who identified program non-completion, about one-third of offenders were not eligible for correctional programs. The authors suggested that there was a need for enhanced education concerning correctional program referral criteria to ensure that offenders who were ineligible for programming were aware of this. As well, the authors noted that enhancing data collection with respect to offenders' reasons would further contribute to a more thorough understanding of waivers, postponements, and withdrawals. International research in this area highlights some additional factors that impact on offenders' decisions to delay or cancel parole reviews. For example, Best and colleagues (2014) conducted in-depth interviews with 25 men offenders from Wyoming, finding that offenders waived their parole review based on advice from correctional staff, other offenders, and/or friends and family; that the offenders did not want to attend the hearing for fear of a denial or negative experience; that these offenders preferred to remain in-custody versus be paroled; and that they were reluctant to return to the community due to barriers to reintegration, stigma, lack of community connections, or to being institutionalized.

Offender characteristics. Cabana and colleagues (2009) identified certain characteristics of offenders who waived, postponed, or withdrew their parole application. They tended to be: men, Indigenous offenders, rated as high risk and/or high need, and serving longer sentences. Cabana and Ruddell (2010) examined the characteristics of offenders who were considered *high volume users* of waivers, postponements, and/or withdrawals – offenders who had at least four parole decisions delayed or cancelled during the two-year study period. These offenders accounted for 9% of all offenders who waived, postponed, or withdrew an application but represented over one-quarter of all delays and cancellations. They found that both *low volume* and *high volume users* were similar in many ways, including gender, sentence length, offence type, and institutional behaviour. However, offenders who were high risk and high need in the *high volume users* group were more likely to request a cancellation of their review (withdrawal) than a delay (waiver or postponement). Interestingly, *high volume users* were also more likely to be from the Quebec or Pacific regions. An exploration of offender characteristics, and whether those characteristics change based on the reason provided for the delay or cancellation, would further clarify which offenders are choosing to remain in-custody longer.

Low-Risk Federal Offenders

In 2009, CSC introduced a new policy framework to identify offenders who were

considered to be a low-risk to reoffend⁷ and who therefore would not require institutional correctional programming (Sapers, Power, Wilton, & Stewart, 2014). This policy change was based on the Risk-Need-Responsivity framework (Andrews & Bonta, 2010), which specifies that low-risk offenders can be managed and supported without formal programming to address their criminogenic factors and that treatment is ineffective, at best, and may even have a detrimental impact on the reintegration of these offenders (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Sapers, Power, Wilton, & Stewart, 2014).^{8,9} For offenders deemed to be a low-risk to reoffend, who are ineligible for correctional programs while incarcerated, and who are not bound by programming schedules, the delaying or cancelling of parole opportunities seems counter-productive to their rehabilitation. As pointed out by Keown et al (2015), previous research has indicated that low-risk offenders are more likely to be granted day or full parole and that they tend to successfully return to the community.

Parole Board of Canada (PBC) Decision-Making Process

Full parole reviews are automatically scheduled within six months of an offender's eligibility date. To be considered for day parole, on the other hand, an offender must make a formal application to the parole board. There are two main outcomes of a parole review: the offender would be approved for parole, with or without special conditions such as avoid drinking or using drugs or to reside at a specific location; or the parole can be denied. According to the PBC (2016a), a previous parole denial will not impact on the decision for a subsequent parole review but the reasons identified for the denial provide the offender with specific target areas to address. For full parole, an offender has to wait one year after a denial to resubmit an application.

PBC decision-making is based on the risk presented by the offender to reoffend and the potential impact on public safety (PBC, 2015b). As such, three major factors are assessed during a parole review: 1) the offender's criminal history; 2) the offender's progress while incarcerated to address their criminogenic factors, as well as institutional behaviour and prior success with conditional release; and 3) the adequacy of the offender's release plan (PBC, 2016a; 2016b).

⁷ CSC defines low-risk based on the Revised-Statistical Information on Recidivism scale (SIR-R1) for non-Indigenous men and the Custody Rating Scale (CRS) for women and Indigenous men. As well, the Static-99R is used to identify the risk level of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous men sex offenders.

⁸ The definition of low-risk in the literature is relative and there is the argument that federal offenders identified as low-risk may be a higher risk than individuals considered low-risk by Andrews and Bonta.

⁹ For a comprehensive overview of the literature concerning low-risk offenders, please refer to Nolan & Stewart (in press).

Purpose of the Current Study

As delays and cancellations of parole continue to increase (PBC, 2011; 2015a; Auditor General of Canada, 2015), programming non-completion continues to be linked to this increase (Cabana, et al., 2009; Cabana & Ruddell, 2010; Cabana, et al, 2015, Keown, et al., 2015), and concerns are raised by external stakeholders such as Auditor General of Canada about the increase in delays and cancellations, a focused examination of the reasons provided by offenders who were ineligible for correctional programming is necessary. Therefore, this study will examine the reasons for waivers, postponements, and withdrawals among low-risk offenders (i.e., offenders considered ineligible for correctional programs). Building on the research of Keown and colleagues (2015), this study will also endeavor to identify characteristics of offenders who delay or cancel their review based on the reason provided. Specifically, this research will answer the following questions:

1. What proportion of day parole and full parole hearings result in waivers, postponements, and withdrawals for low-risk offenders?
2. What are the subjective reasons for parole delays and cancellations provided by low-risk offenders?
3. Do the subjective reasons cited by low-risk offenders correlate with objective, structured indicators (for example, engagement with their correctional plan)?
4. In cases where low-risk offenders previously delayed or cancelled parole, what is the rationale provided by the PBC when the decision is made to deny subsequent parole? Do these reasons differ from low risk offenders who did not delay parole and were denied by the PBC?

Method

Parole Reviews

All parole reviews. For this study, all parole reviews scheduled in FY2014-2015 for men and FY2014-2015 and FY2015-2016 for women were examined.¹⁰ In total, 19,506 reviews for federal offenders were identified, which included 6,911 scheduled day parole reviews and 12,595 scheduled full parole reviews for 9,257 individual offenders during the study period.¹¹ Although 66% of offenders had only one hearing date scheduled during the study period (some day parole and full parole hearings were scheduled on the same date), 33% had two hearing dates, and the remaining 1% had three or more hearings.¹² A greater proportion of day parole reviews were withdrawn when compared to full parole reviews (11% versus 1%), while comparable proportions of both day and full parole reviews were postponed (23% and 21%, respectively). Waiving of day parole reviews was rare, as reviews are only scheduled by application; however, 37% of full parole reviews were waived.

Parole reviews for low-risk offenders. The main focus of this study was to examine parole review outcomes for low-risk offenders.

Low-risk. Low-risk was defined in accordance with CSC's program referral guidelines using the Revised-Statistical Information on Recidivism scale (SIR-R1) for non-Indigenous men and the Custody Rating Scale (CRS) for women and Indigenous men. As well, the Static-99R was included to properly classify the risk level of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous men sex offenders (CSC, 2015).

The SIR-R1 is a 15-item actuarial tool for predicting the risk of general reoffending among non-Indigenous federal men offenders within three years of release from federal custody and is administered during the Offender Intake Assessment (OIA) process (CSC, 2014b; Nafekh & Motiuk, 2002). The CRS is used in conjunction with an offender's assessed level of institutional adjustment, escape risk, and threat to public safety to identify the initial security

¹⁰ Two years of data were extracted for women offenders so that a sufficient sample size could be collected to allow for comparisons between Indigenous and non-Indigenous women.

¹¹ Reviews scheduled for provincial offenders were excluded from this study. In addition, reviews were also removed from the study if the review was "cancelled" or "entered in error", if the decision was "rescheduled", "pending", or "recalculated" (i.e., parole eligibility dates were recalculated), or if the review dates were indicative of a data entry error (e.g., the offender's warrant expiry date was before the review date). In total, 3,730 reviews were excluded from this study.

¹² Several consecutive parole hearings may be due to multiple short-term postponements.

classification of an offender (CSC, 2014c).

The CRS, administered during the OIA, consists of two sub-scales that measure Institutional Adjustment (5 items) and Security Risk (7 items; Luciani, Motiuk, & Nafekh, 1996). Cut-off scores for each sub-scale are used to classify offenders into three security levels, *minimum*, *medium*, or *maximum*, with higher scores on the sub-scales indicating a higher security level (CSC, 2014c; Swain, et al., 2012).

The Static-99R is an actuarial tool used to determine the risk for sexual and violent re-offending for men offenders during the Specialized Sex Offender Assessment (SSOA) process (CSC, 2014a; Swain, et al., 2012). The Static-99R is also administered during the OIA and identifies three risk levels: *low*, *moderate*, or *high*. Certain types of sex offenders cannot be assessed using the Static-99R (for example, offenders convicted of possession or distribution of child pornography, offenders under 18 years of age, or those who had more than 10 years in the community without a sexual offence; Swain, et al., 2012). In these instances, the Static-99R is deemed to be not applicable and other assessment tools may be used to refer these men sex offenders to treatment.

CSC uses the SIR-R1, the CRS, and the Static-99R (for men sex offenders only) to identify the treatment level for correctional programming (CSC, 2015, Swain, et al, 2012). Indigenous non-sex offender men and all women offenders with a *minimum* security classification on the CRS were identified as low-risk offenders. For Indigenous men sex offenders, those with a *minimum* on the CRS and a Static-99R level of *low* or *not applicable* were classified as low-risk. Non-Indigenous men who were not identified as sex offenders were classified as low-risk using the SIR-R1¹³ while sex offenders had to also have a *low* or *not applicable* on the Static-99R. Eight percent of low-risk men offenders had a Static-99R level of *low* or *not applicable*.

Low-risk parole review characteristics. Overall, 8,476 parole reviews were scheduled for low-risk offenders during the study period, representing 3,663 low-risk federal offenders. 3,168 reviews were for day parole and 5,308 were for full parole. Due to the small number of offenders who waived day parole ($n = 2$) or withdrew full parole ($n = 46$), analyses by gender, ethnicity,

¹³ During the study period, two cut-offs for low-risk for the SIR-R1 were used. In regions that had a traditional cadre of correctional programs, a SIR-R1 score of 1 or higher was considered as low-risk. For the regions who had implemented the Integrated Correctional Program Model (ICPM), a score of 6 or higher was used. All SIR-R1 cut-offs were adjusted for the ICPM implementation dates in each region.

and region were not examined by parole type. Overall, 61% of offenders had one scheduled review during the study period, 37% had two scheduled reviews, and 2% had three or more.

Of the 3,663 offenders included in this study, 3% were Indigenous women and 9% were non-Indigenous women while 6% were Indigenous men, and 82% were non-Indigenous men; overall, 12% were women and 9% were Indigenous. On average, offenders were 41 years of age at their first parole review during the study period. Over a third of offenders were serving a sentence of less than three years while another third were serving three to less than six years. Ten percent were serving six to less than 10 years and the remaining 18% were serving 10 years or more. Eight-nine percent of the offenders were serving their first federal sentence and 93% were on the first term of their sentence. The largest proportion (34%) of offenders was convicted of drug offences, followed by homicide-related offences (19%), and other non-violent offences (10%).¹⁴

Reasons for waivers, postponements, or withdrawals. The reasons provided by low-risk offenders who waived, postponed, or withdrew their first review during the study period ($N = 1,761$) were examined. Offenders and their case management team (CMT) complete one of three PBC forms in order to waive, postpone, or delay their parole review. These forms contain the reason response options. During the study period, there are 14 possible reasons for waiving, postponing, or withdrawing parole that could be selected by offenders. Once the form is completed, the information is then entered into CSC's Offender Management System (OMS), which was the data source for this project. For these analyses, these reasons were collapsed into eight categories with similar response options combined, such as *programs not completed* and *refuses program/intervention* (see Appendix A). An *unknown* category was also used when a reason was not provided. Table A1 in Appendix A also provides a brief explanation of each collapsed reason type.

Exploratory analyses of structured indicators (including, but not limited to, demographics, offence and sentence information, case management information, OIA information, institutional behaviour, etc.) were conducted to determine if the subjective reasons provided by offenders to delay or cancel parole were supported. These indicators were then used to identify potential areas for case management intervention or support in order to decrease the

¹⁴ Offenders convicted of homicide-related offences are often disproportionately represented within in-custody cohort studies due to the length of their sentences.

proportion of offenders who delay or cancel their parole reviews. *Information/assistant unavailable* ($N = 17$), *no CRF/community support* ($N = 15$), and *pending appeal/transfer* ($N = 29$) accounted for 3% of reasons provided, in total. Therefore, due to the small number and heterogeneity of the responses, these reasons were not included in the structured indicators analyses.

Rationale for denying subsequent parole requests. Manual coding of PBC decision documents was undertaken to examine whether the rationale for denying parole was impacted by review delays or cancellations. Four groups were identified for coding: 1) offenders denied at first application (denied group); 2) offenders who waived their first parole review and were subsequently denied (waived then denied group); 3) offenders who postponed their first parole review and were subsequently denied (postponed then denied group), 4) offenders who withdrew their first parole review and were subsequently denied (withdrawn then denied group). In total, 416 offenders were either denied parole at their initial review or at their subsequent review following a delay or cancellation: 144 offenders (11%) were denied parole at their initial hearing, 71 (13%) of the 551 who waived their initial parole were denied at their subsequent hearing while 37% of those postponed (195 of 521 offenders) and 10% of those who withdrew (6 of 63 offenders) were denied at their subsequent hearing. Nine percent of the offenders identified were women and 12% were Indigenous. Offenders in the denied and postponed then denied groups were most likely from the Quebec or Prairie regions, while offenders in the waived then denied group were most likely from the Ontario and Prairie regions. Four of the six offenders in the withdrawn then denied group were from the Prairies.

Of the offenders identified, 81 were randomly selected for manual coding: 25 from each of the denied, waived, and postponed groups as well as the six from the withdrawn group to examine PBC's rationale for the denials. PBC decision sheets were examined to identify the rationale for the denial. Denial outcomes were categorized into the following: day parole and/or full parole denied (DP/FP denied), depending on the type of review; day parole granted but full parole denied (DP granted/FP denied); both day and full parole denied but conditions for statutory release were imposed (DP/FP denied – SR conditions imposed). PBC decision sheets provide a review of the offender's criminal history and current offence as well as any progress the offender has made towards his/her correctional plan or issues the offender has had while incarcerated. The rationales provided in these decision sheets were then thematically coded.

Data

All data for this study was obtained from the Offender Management System, CSC's administrative and operational computerized system that manages all offender records. Parole review outcomes and reasons for waiving, postponing, or withdrawing parole were extracted for hearings scheduled during the study period. Other data obtained includes: demographic information, sentence and offence information, OIA information including static factor rating, dynamic factor rating, motivation level, reintegration potential, accountability level, responsiveness and engagement indicators, measures of institutional behaviour (e.g., charges, segregation placements, and random urinalysis testing), correctional program information (completions, non-completions, and waitlisted programs), involvement in other interventions (such as visits, temporary absences and work releases, etc.) and indicators of previous involvement with the criminal justice system or previous failures on release.

Analytic Approach

All analyses were descriptive in nature as data related to all scheduled hearings, rather than a sample, were examined. Cross-tabulations and frequency tables were used to identify patterns in the data.

Results

Parole Review Outcomes

Table 1 presents the outcomes of the parole reviews scheduled for low-risk offenders, by type of review. Over one-third (37%) of all parole reviews were waived, postponed, or withdrawn: 42% of full parole reviews were delayed or cancelled versus 28% of day parole reviews. Comparison information for moderate/high risk offenders indicated that 60% of all reviews were waived, postponed, or withdrawn: 70% of full parole and 41% of day parole. Day parole reviews were more likely to be postponed (19%) while full parole reviews were more likely to be waived (24%).

Table 1.

Outcomes of Parole Reviews Scheduled for Low Risk Offenders

Outcome	Review Type (%)		
	Day Parole (N = 3,168)	Full Parole (N = 5,308)	All Parole (N = 8,476)
Decision recorded	69	56	61
Adjournment	3	2	2
Postponement	19	17	18
Waiver	1	24	15
Withdrawal	8	1	4

Note. An adjournment is a delay initiated by the parole board due to missing information while a decision recorded includes granted and denied reviews.

Outcomes for low-risk men and women, by Indigenous ancestry, as well as regional comparisons are presented in Appendix B. Both Indigenous women and men were more likely to delay or cancel their parole review when compared to either non-Indigenous women or men (50% and 46% versus 36%, respectively, see Table B1). Indigenous women were most likely to postpone or waive their parole review.

Offenders in the Ontario region were most likely to waive parole compared to the other regions (24% versus a range from 7% to 19%, see Table B2). Offenders in the Quebec region were most likely to postpone their review (25% compared to a range from 10% to 18%). Rates of withdrawals were similar across regions (2% to 5%).

Reasons for Parole Review Delays or Cancellations

Reasons for waivers, postponements and withdrawals provided by low-risk offenders were examined for all parole reviews during the study period (see Table 2). The main reason provided by offenders for both waivers and withdrawals was to avoid a negative decision (28% and 20%, respectively), although one-fifth of waivers and one-third of withdrawals did not have a reason provided. In addition, 83% of postponements did not have a reason provided by the offender.

Table 2.

Reasons Provided by Low Risk Offenders for Waiving, Postponing, or Withdrawing Their Parole Reviews

Reason	Percentage		
	Waiver (<i>N</i> = 1,263)	Postponement (<i>N</i> = 1,527)	Withdrawal (<i>N</i> = 311)
Alternative release plan	18	1	10
Avoid negative decision	28	3	20
Information / assistant unavailable	< 1	3	< 1
No CRF / community support	< 1	< 1	8
Not interested	5	0	5
Other	12	4	14
Pending appeal / transfer	3	< 1	3
Program non-completion	13	5	7
Unknown – no reason provided	20	83	33

Due to the high proportion of unknown responses for postponements, only the reasons provided by offenders for waivers and withdrawals are presented by gender, ethnicity, and region (see Tables C1 and C2, Appendix C). Uniquely, Indigenous men were most likely to identify *program non-completion* as the main reason for waiving or withdrawing parole, while for non-Indigenous men, Indigenous women, and non-Indigenous women, *avoiding a negative decision* was most common. However, a large proportion of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous women did not provide a reason for waiving or withdrawing parole (35% and 32%, respectively).

Regional analyses of the reasons for waiving or withdrawing parole indicate that *avoiding*

a negative decision was the highest rated reason for all the regions (20% to 31%) except Pacific, where *alternative release plan* (28%) was the main reason provided. It is important to note that the Prairie, Quebec, and Pacific regions had the highest proportion of *unknown* responses (40%, 26%, and 23%, respectively).

Examination of Structured Indicators

In order to explore the impact of the structured indicators examined, the reasons provided for waiving, postponing, or withdrawing the first parole review scheduled during the study period was examined ($N = 1,761$). Due to small numbers of endorsements, the categories of *information/assistant unavailable* ($n = 17$), *no CRF/community support* ($n = 15$), and *pending appeal/transfer* ($n = 29$) were excluded from these analyses. Although all indicators were examined for each reason provided (see Table D1, Appendix D), only the characteristics that provide an explanation for the reason provided by the offenders are described. Reasons are presented in Table 3 based on the proportion of offenders who endorsed them.

Table 3.

Characteristics of Low Risk Offenders by Type of Reasons Provided for Delaying or Cancelling their Parole Review

Reason Type	Percentage (N)	Type of Delay/ Cancellation	Characteristics of Offenders	Correctional Program Referral and Completion Status
No Reason Provided	47 (836)	78% postponed 17% waived 5% withdrawn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women 11% • 14% Indigenous offenders • Region: 40% Quebec, 26% Prairies, 22% Ontario • Almost three-quarters serving less than six years • 47% were classified as <i>minimum</i> security at the time of the review • 29% committed drug offences • 11% had undergone specialized sex offender assessment while 10% were currently convicted of a sex-related offence • Intake assessment information was similar to most groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 65% rated with moderate accountability • 79% engaged in their correctional plan • 70% with a moderate motivation, • 51% with a high dynamic factor rating (need) • 49% with a moderate static factor rating (risk) • 85% with a moderate-high reintegration potential • Associates (62%), attitudes (65%), and personal/emotional orientation (64%) were the top three dynamic need areas identified. • Half had at least one instance of problematic institutional behaviour (segregation placements, disciplinary charges, or positive/refused urinalysis result). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% had been assigned to correctional programming • 60% of these offenders completing programs.

(Table continues)

Reason Type	Percentage (N)	Type of Delay/ Cancellation	Characteristics of Offenders	Correctional Program Referral and Completion Status
No Reason Provided (continued)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three-quarters (76%) had the same security classification at the time of the scheduled hearing as they did for their initial security placement. • 7% were an active security threat group (STG) member. • 67% had participated in visits while incarcerated, with one-quarter participating in private family visits. 	
Avoid Negative Decision	17 (303)	85% waived 11% withdrawn 4% postponed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women 9% • 7% Indigenous offenders • 66 serving less than six years • A little over one-third were classified as <i>minimum</i> security while 9% were classified as <i>maximum</i>. • 13% of the offenders in the group had undergone specialized sex offender assessment, although 9% had committed a sex offence for the index offence. • Intake assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23% had a low accountability level • 24% were not engaged in their correctional plan, • 51% had a high dynamic factor rating • 74% were considered motivated to address their risk factors • 78% had a moderate-high reintegration potential • 63% had prior issues with institutional behaviour: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 57% had at least one disciplinary charge • 40% had previous placements in segregation • 16% had decreased their security classification by the review date from their initial placement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 49% had been assigned to correctional programming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 64% of these offenders completing programs.

(Table continues)

Reason Type	Percentage (N)	Type of Delay/ Cancellation	Characteristics of Offenders	Correctional Program Referral and Completion Status
Avoid Negative Decision (continued)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23% had outstanding charges at admission to federal custody • 10% had ties to a STG while 7% were currently an active STG member. 	
Program Non- Completion	10 (173)	75% waived 16% postponed 9% withdrawn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women 20% • 20% Indigenous offenders • 97% were on the first term of their sentence • 89% serving first federal sentence • 85% were serving sentences of less than six years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 49% were serving less than three years • Half had unstable housing or little community attachment prior to their sentence. • 23% were classified as <i>minimum</i> security prior to the parole review • 16% had completed a specialized sex offender assessment • 51% had a moderate to high severity substance use problem. • Intake Assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25% had responsivity issues • 62% had a high dynamic factor rating • only group that had substance abuse (67%) identified in the top three dynamic need areas • 80% had a moderate-high reintegration potential • 70% had a moderate motivation level • 63% had a moderate accountability level • 29% had an outstanding charge upon admission • 13% participated in a temporary absence or work release. • 52% participated in visits and only 9% had completed a private family visit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 64% had been assigned to correctional programming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of these offenders, 59% were still in the program, had recently finished the program (within 30 days), or were waitlisted at the time of their scheduled parole review. • 12% did not complete programming due to offender (11%) or administrative (1%) reasons.

(Table continues)

Reason Type	Percentage (N)	Type of Delay/ Cancellation	Characteristics of Offenders	Correctional Program Referral and Completion Status
Other	9 (160)	71% waived 17% postponed 12% withdrawn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women 15% • 6% Indigenous offenders. • 62% were serving a sentence of less than six years while 31% were serving ten years or more. • 40% were classified as <i>minimum</i> security prior to the review. • Intake Assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66% were rated with a moderate accountability level • 83% were engaged in their correctional plan • 21% had responsivity issues • 70% had a moderate motivation level • 83% had a moderate-high reintegration potential. • 63% had at least one instance of problematic institutional behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40% having at least one prior placement in segregation • 54% being found guilty of disciplinary charges. • 29% had decreased their security classification from their initial placement to their final rating before the scheduled review date • 29% participated in a temporary absence or work release • 13% had a deportation order 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 59% had been assigned to correctional programming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66% of these offenders completed programs.
Alternative Release Plan	9 (158)	90% waived 8% withdrawn 2% postponed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women 13% • 8% Indigenous offenders • 54%) were serving a sentence of less than six years • 22% were on their second or later federal sentence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 59% had been assigned to correctional programming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 71% of these offenders completed programs

(Table continues)

Reason Type	Percentage (N)	Type of Delay/ Cancellation	Characteristics of Offenders	Correctional Program Referral and Completion Status
Alternative Release Plan (continued)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 61% were classified as <i>minimum</i> security at the time of the scheduled review • Intake Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% was engaged in their correctional plan • 69% had a moderate rating for accountability • 70% had a moderate motivation level • 82% had a moderate-high reintegration potential • 24% had an identified responsivity issue • 36% had decreased their security classification from their initial placement when compared to their current classification while 67% had no change. • 21% were identified with mental health concerns, as measured by previous admission to a regional treatment centre or a completed mental health needs assessment. • 46% had participated in a temporary absence or work release prior to their scheduled review date. 	
Not Interested	4 (70)	86% waived 14% withdrawn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women 11% • 7% Indigenous offenders • 49% were serving a sentence of ten years or more • 71% were classified as <i>medium</i> security prior to the hearing. • Intake Assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32% were not engaged in their correctional plan. • 30% had a low accountability level • 58% had a high static factor rating • 62% had a high dynamic factor level • 29% had a low reintegration potential • 73% had a moderate motivation level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 67% had been assigned to correctional programming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 55% of these offenders completing programs.

(Table continues)

Reason Type	Percentage (N)	Type of Delay/ Cancellation	Characteristics of Offenders	Correctional Program Referral and Completion Status
Not Interested (continued)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 74% had instances of problematic institutional behaviour • 67% had guilty disciplinary charges • 54% had previous segregation placements • 31% had refused to provide urinalysis samples • 9% had an increase in their security classification when comparing their initial and current designation. • 33% had participated in a temporary absence or work release • 67% participated in visits while 33% had participated in private family visits. • 86% were on the first term of their sentence • 24% had appealed their current sentence or conviction • 6% were actively participating in a STG. 	

Rational for Denial of Parole

The rationale for a negative parole decisions was explored for 81 offenders: 25 offenders denied at first application (denied group), 25 offenders who waived their first parole review and were subsequently denied (waived then denied group), 25 offenders who postponed their first parole review and were subsequently denied (postponed then denied group), and six offenders who withdrew their first parole review and were subsequently denied (withdrawn then denied group). For the majority of the file reviews, both day and full parole reviews were conducted at the same hearing.

Table 4 presents the outcomes of these hearings: day parole granted/full parole denied (with or without statutory release conditions imposed), both day and full parole denied and statutory release conditions imposed, or both day and/or full parole denied. Overall, offenders in the waived then denied group were more likely to be granted day parole at their subsequent review or when compared to those in the denied group.

Table 4.

Parole Outcomes for Subgroups of Offenders Who Were Denied Parole

Parole Outcome	Outcome Groups (%)			
	Denied Group (<i>N</i> = 25)	Waived then Denied Group (<i>N</i> = 25)	Postponed then Denied Group (<i>N</i> = 25)	Withdrawn then Denied Group (<i>N</i> = 6)
DP/FP Denied	92	24	68	33
DP Granted/FP Denied	8	52	24	50
DP/FP Denied-SR Conditions Imposed	0	24	8	17

Note. DP = day parole, FP = full parole, SR = statutory release.

The majority of postponed then denied offenders had a decision from the Parole Board confirming the postponement prior to the decision document of their subsequent review. Regardless, the PBC decision documents for the subsequent reviews for those who waived, postponed, or withdrew their initial application and were then denied did not mention the delay or cancellation. Evidently, this was not considered by the PBC in their decision-making concerning release.

Overall, based on the decisions reviewed, the factors considered by the PBC in making

the decision to grant parole or not were uniform across the four groups examined. These include:

- prior criminal history, particularly if it was extensive or had the same types of offences committed as the current conviction;
- past compliance issues such as release suspensions/revocations or violation of bail conditions;
- criminal associations, particularly if the offender was affiliated with a STG;
- accountability and motivation to change;
- lack of remorse or minimization of offending, and victim empathy;
- insight into criminal offence cycle and criminogenic risk factors; and
- progress with respect to the offenders' correctional plan.

Interestingly, although program participation and involvement in education, employment, and other interventions were considered, they typically were not weighed as heavily as the offenders' behaviour and gains, or lack thereof, while in the community, whether on a past release or prior to the current sentence. It is important to note that although all offenders examined were classified as low-risk based on actuarial scale information used by CSC to determine program eligibility, the PBC would often reference other sources of information, such as psychological assessments or professional judgement from parole officers to indicate whether the offender was in fact a higher risk to reoffend.

Discussion

For offenders who waive, postpone, or withdraw their parole application, the potential amount of time they have to reintegrate into society prior to the end of their sentence is shortened. This is particularly problematic for offenders deemed a low-risk to reoffend and who could be suitably managed and supported in the community (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Office of the Auditor General, 2015). Therefore, this study further explores the reasons provided by low-risk offenders for waiving, postponing, or withdrawing parole, thereby building on previous research conducted by CSC in this area (Cabana, et al, 2009; Cabana & Ruddell, 2010; Cabana, et al., 2015, Keown et al, 2015).

Overall, 37% of the parole reviews examined for low-risk offenders resulted in a waiver, postponement, or withdrawal. This rate is slightly higher than for *minimum* security offenders (32%; Keown, et al., 2015), but considerably lower than the rate for moderate/high risk offenders (60%) who had parole reviews during this study period. The proportions found in this study, overall, are also less than those reported in two US jurisdictions, New Jersey and Massachusetts, although these data were not limited to low-risk offenders (Massachusetts Parole Board, 2010; 2014; Ostermann, 2010).

Examining the reasons that offenders provided for choosing to delay or cancel their parole indicated that offenders who waived their parole were most likely to do so to *avoid a negative decision*, to follow an *alternative release plan*, or due to *program non-completion*. Offenders who withdrew their application did so, in most cases, to *avoid a negative decision*, for *other* reasons, or to follow an *alternative release plan*. The reasons offenders postponed release could not be examined as over four-fifths did not provide a reason. *Unknown* reasons were also an issue for one-fifth of offenders who waived and one-third of offenders who withdrew their parole. Greater proportions of Indigenous men and women indicated *program non-completion*, which may speak to the unique programming needs of these offenders. Also, although the *program non-completion* reasons reflects main correctional programming, other “programs” such as education, employment training, social programs, cultural programs, and other such interventions may be considered programming by offenders (Keown, et al., 2015). While Cabana and colleagues (2009) found that of the offenders they interviewed, most offenders indicated incomplete programming, lack of support from their case management team, and negative

institutional behaviour as the main reasons to delay or cancel their parole, Keown and colleagues (2015) found that offenders' reasons were often more complex than a single reason. Although CSC's data capture system in OMS only allows for the identification of one reason, coding the comments provided in the data capture screen reflected many of the other reason types as well. Enhancing the waivers, postponements, and withdrawals screen in OMS to require a reason to be provided would decrease the number of *unknown* reasons. In addition, allowing the selection of up to three reason types would provide a more in-depth examination of offender reasons for delaying or cancelling parole. Also requiring staff to confirm or verify the reasons provided by offenders in relation to the offenders correctional or release plan would further enhance the quality of these data. Currently, CSC does create a weekly list for front-line staff of all offenders who are presently incarcerated and who have waived, postponed, or withdrawn their parole, as well as the reasons provided. This list allows staff to monitor offenders who delay or cancel their parole reviews, with the aim to enhancing quality assurance and to provide a system of accountability.

The structured indicators analyses for each reason type provided some interesting areas for training or intervention. For instance, offenders who did not provide a reason, the *unknown* category, were most likely to be from the Quebec and Prairie regions. Additional training of staff, particularly in these two regions, to accurately record the reason provided by offenders in OMS would decrease the amount of missing information. It is also possible that since over three-quarters of these cases were postponements, that staff and offenders within CSC may not see the value in recording the reasons for these temporary delays, whereas waivers and withdrawals may be considered more serious types of delays and cancellations, and therefore reasons would need to be recorded. Another consideration is that the response options may not adequately capture the potential reasons provided by offenders. Further clarification to staff on the overall importance of this information may be needed, as well as consultation with front-line staff to enhance the available response options.

The largest proportions of offenders with problematic institutional behaviour endorsed *avoid a negative decision*, *not interested*, or *other*. Among these offenders, those who were serving shorter sentences endorsed *avoid a negative decision* or *other*, while those serving longer sentences, especially ten years or more, were simply *not interested*, and were also less engaged in their correctional plan. For the offenders *not interested* in parole, they were also less likely to

participate in other release types, such as temporary absences and work releases, or in private family visits. As risk levels for program referral are based on initial assessments of the SIR, CRS, and/or Static-99R, other measures of risk such as security reclassification or reintegration potential assist in understanding this group. For instance, they had one of the highest proportions of offenders classified as *medium* security prior to the hearing and were more likely than the other groups to have a low reintegration potential or low accountability. Overall, these offenders may require additional counseling from their case management team to conform to expectations of institutional behaviour, to become more engaged in their correctional plan, and to participate in other activities which would encourage successful reintegration. Offenders in the *avoid a negative decision* or *other* categories may also benefit from additional case management counseling prior to their parole eligibility to encourage these offenders not to delay or cancel their review. Offenders in the *avoid a negative decision* group were more likely to have outstanding charges at admission than every group except those in the *program non-completion* group while those in the *other* group were most likely to have deportation orders. As well, slightly more than one-quarter of offenders in either of these two groups participated in temporary absences or work releases. Interventions that would motivate these offenders to abstain from problematic behaviours and aid in preparing them for release should be prioritized.

Offenders identifying *program non-completion* reflect a group that included more women and Indigenous offenders, were serving shorter sentences, had unstable housing or few community ties prior to incarceration, and were more likely to have an identified substance abuse need (over half were assessed with a moderate to severe substance use problem). In addition, they were most likely to have outstanding charges at admission and were least likely to participate in interventions such as temporary absences, work releases, or private family visits. Although all reason groups had a proportion of offenders referred to correctional program (50% to 67%), this group had the largest proportion whose programs were in progress, recently completed or waitlisted and the lowest proportion with completed correctional programming. This indicates that more than half of the offenders who waived, postponed, or withdrew their parole review in this study met override criteria for correctional programs even though they were deemed a low risk to reoffend (see sections 48-57 and 74-79, CSC, 2015). Previous research affirms that the majority of low-risk offenders referred to programming do in fact meet the override criteria established in policy (Sapers, Power, Wilton, & Stewart, 2014). Two concerns

are important to take into consideration. First, CSC's Integrated Correctional Program Model (ICPM) was not implemented in all regions during this study period; therefore, some of the delays in completing programs may no longer be an issue with the streamlined ICPM model. Second, the PBC forms to apply for waivers, postponements, or withdrawals do not differentiate between correctional programs (as was examined in this study), social or cultural programming, or educational/vocational programming. For some offenders who endorse this reason, program non-completion may refer to non-correctional programs. Enhancing the PBC forms to differentiate between correctional programming to address criminogenic risk factors and other forms of programming offered while incarcerated is needed. Additionally, low-risk offenders may be assigned to programming if they meet certain criteria that would necessitate correctional programming (CSC, 2015) – OMS now tracks these cases, but the Identification of Needs for Correctional Programs screen was not implemented until the end of the study period examined. In the future, this additional information would further categorize low-risk offenders into those who met the criteria for program referral, even if they were considered low-risk, and those who do not.

Finally, offenders in the *alternative release plan* group were less likely to be on their first federal sentence but were most likely to be classified as *minimum* security prior to their review. They were least likely to have issues with institutional behaviour and had the highest proportion of offenders who had completed main correctional programming. They were most likely to have an identified mental health concern, although their overall dynamic and static factor ratings were similar to the offenders in the other groups. They were most likely to participate in temporary absences and work releases. This participation and their previous periods of federal incarceration may make them more inclined to delay or cancel parole for this reason. It is interesting to note that offenders participating in temporary absences and work releases are more likely to be released on discretionary release and less likely to return to custody than those who do not (Helmus & Ternes, 2015). Perhaps these offenders realize that they require additional reintegration strategies to ensure successful reintegration. As such, offenders should be encouraged by their CMT to participate in temporary absences and work releases as soon as they are eligible. Most offenders are eligible for escorted temporary absences as soon as they are admitted to custody.

Do these delays or cancellations have potential impacts on these offenders' ability to be

released from custody? Although in-depth file reviews were only conducted for about one-fifth of the offenders identified as having been denied release by the PBC, these findings showed that there was no apparent negative impact of the delay or cancellation. The waiver, postponement, or withdrawal was not mentioned in the decision rationale provided by the PBC, and in fact, fewer of those who waived, postponed, or withdrew their review had both day and full parole denied than those offenders who had not requested any delay. Although there does not appear to be a detrimental impact of delaying or cancelling parole on PBC decision making, it is difficult to determine whether these offenders would have been granted day parole had they not delayed or cancelled their initial parole review. As well, the additional time in the institution increases the economic impact of housing these offenders for longer than perhaps would be necessary and increases the likelihood that they will be released on statutory release instead of parole. A greater proportion of offenders remain in the community on parole than on statutory release (Public Safety Canada, 2015).

Overall, this study suggests that offenders' reasons seem supported by the structured indicators; however, future research is needed. For instance, rate of delays and cancellations was highest among Indigenous women, followed by Indigenous men. Comparisons by gender and ethnicity undertaken by Keown, et al., also indicated that Indigenous offenders were more likely to delay or cancel parole reviews. This is further supported by Cabana and colleagues (2009) who indicated that Indigenous offenders were more likely to waive, postpone, or withdraw their review. Therefore, an examination the reasons provided by women and Indigenous men who waive, postpone, or withdraw their reviews and structured indicators specific for these offenders, using at least five years of data, would allow for an in-depth overview of why women and Indigenous men delay or cancel their reviews. As well, the offenders' perceived benefit of delaying or cancelling parole should be examined, not just the reasons why they made that decision. This type of study, which would require in-depth interviews or focus groups, may be able to identify mechanisms that CSC can leverage to decrease the proportion of offenders, particularly low-risk offenders, who waive, postpone, or withdraw their application. Furthermore, a study to examine the post-release success of those who delay or cancel their parole review but who are still released on discretionary release compared to those who do not would offer further insight into this issue. If these offenders are not ready for release once eligible, does the extra time in the institution benefit or hinder their later discretionary release?

Finally, although the PBC identifies the main factors considered during a parole review as 1) the offender's criminal history; 2) the offender's progress while incarcerated to address their criminogenic factors, as well as institutional behaviour and prior success with conditional release; and 3) the adequacy of the offender's release plan (PBC, 2016a; 2016b), in-depth examination of PBC rationales for denying parole suggest that many other factors are also considered, even when some of these indicators such as lack of empathy and minimizing impact of offences do not predict criminal reoffending (Stewart, et al., 2017). An additional area of particular interest for further research with respect to PBC decision-making would be to confirm the definition of risk used by the PBC and how that aligns with the actuarial risk measures used by CSC.

All research, including this study, has limitations. First, this study used an in-custody cohort, therefore, offenders who were convicted of homicide related offences and who were serving longer sentences (i.e., ten years or more or indeterminate sentences) were disproportionately represented. By comparison, offenders who committed homicide offences accounted for seven percent of all new federal admissions in 2014-2015 and those serving ten years or more (including indeterminate sentences) accounted for 5% (Keown, Wardrop, & Cousineau, 2015). This may have inflated the importance of sentence length for those offenders who were *not interested* in parole. Second, the analyses examining the structured indicators associated with reasons for parole delays and cancellations may be impacted by the large proportion of offenders who did not provide a reason, although Keown, et al. (2015) did not find any additional reason categories in file reviews for these offenders. Third, comparisons between offenders who were denied parole at their initial hearing and those who delayed or cancelled and were then denied may overestimate the perceived benefit to those who delayed or cancelled. These offenders were in-custody for a longer period of time and this may have allowed them to participate in programming or interventions (e.g., education or employment) that had a positive impact on the PBC's decision. Finally, information available in OMS was the only data source used for this project. Examination of PBC documentation or qualitative interviews with staff may have provided additional information on this topic.

Conclusions

This study builds on prior research examining the reasons that offenders choose to delay or cancel their parole reviews while also exploring the specific characteristics based on the

reasons endorsed by those offenders. Although this study focused on offenders considered ineligible for correctional programming based on CSC policy who waived, postponed, or withdrew their parole applications, over half were referred to a nationally recognized correction program. Offenders provided many reasons for choosing to delay or cancel their review, which are supported for structured indicators collected by CSC's OMS. Overall, these results will provide CSC with targeted areas for intervention in order to support offenders who are at low-risk to reoffend to reintegrate to the community in a timely and successful way.

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Appendix A: Coding of Reasons for Waivers, Postponements, and Withdrawals

Table A1.

Coding of Reasons Provided by Offenders for Waiving, Postponing, or Waiving their Parole Review

Reason Provided by the Offender	Collapsed Reason Category	Description of Collapsed Reason Category
Applied for alternative form of release Other release plan	Alternative release plan	Offender is pursuing alternative release options such as temporary absences, work release, or statutory release.
Avoid a negative recommendation or decision	Avoid negative decision	Offender perceives that their parole will be denied and therefore delays or cancels their review to a later time.
Information missing Assistant not available Case preparation incomplete	Information/assistant unavailable	Missing or incomplete case information or the offender's representative (assistant) is not available on the scheduled date.
No CRF/community support	No CRF/community support	Offender has not been accepted for residency by a Community Residential Facility or Community Correctional Centre for release. In addition, this response could be used when the offender has limited pro-social support in the community (i.e., family, friends, employment, etc.)
Not interested in release	Not interested	Offender has indicated that he/she is not interested in pursuing day or full parole.
Other	Other	Broad category to encompass all other potential response options.
Pending court/appeal decision International transfer/sentence reduction Transfer application pending	Pending appeal/transfer	Offenders is waiting for one of the following: appeal decision, court decision for outstanding charge, or a transfer
Refuses program/intervention Programs not completed	Program non-completion	Correctional programming identified for the offender has not been completed.
No response given	Unknown	Reason for waiver, postponement or withdrawal not provided

Appendix B: Parole Review Outcomes by Gender, Ethnicity, and Region

Table B1.

Outcomes of Parole Reviews for Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Low Risk Offenders by Gender and Ethnicity

Outcome	Men (%)		Women (%)	
	Indigenous (N = 516)	Non-Indigenous (N = 6,748)	Indigenous (N = 260)	Non-Indigenous (N = 952)
Decision recorded	50	62	49	63
Adjournment	4	2	1	1
Postponement	22	18	24	17
Waiver	18	15	19	15
Withdrawal	6	3	7	4

Table B2.

Outcomes of Parole Reviews for Low Risk Offenders by Region

Outcome	Region (%)				
	Atlantic (N = 826)	Quebec (N = 2,453)	Ontario (N = 2,245)	Prairies (N = 2,193)	Pacific (N = 759)
Decision recorded	70	64	51	65	60
Adjournment	2	2	2	3	2
Postponement	10	25	18	15	16
Waiver	14	7	24	13	19
Withdrawal	4	2	5	4	3

Appendix C: Reasons for Waivers and Withdrawals, by Gender, Ethnicity, and Region

Table C1.

Reasons Provided by Offenders for Waivers and Withdrawals among Low Risk Offenders by Gender and Ethnicity

Reason	Men (%)		Women (%)	
	Indigenous (N = 121)	Non-Indigenous (N = 1,208)	Indigenous (N = 68)	Non-Indigenous (N = 177)
Alternative release plan	8	17	15	15
Avoid negative decision	23	28	20	16
Information/assistant unavailable	0	1	0	< 1
No CRF/community support	4	2	0	6
Not interested	3	6	3	3
Other	10	13	6	15
Pending appeal/transfer	3	3	3	1
Program non-completion	24	10	18	11
Unknown – no reason provided	25	20	35	32

Note. Due to the high proportion of postponements with no reason provided (83%), those cases were not included in this analysis.

Table C2.

Reasons Provided by Offenders for Waivers and Withdrawals among Low Risk Offenders by Region

Reason	Region (%)				
	Atlantic (N = 153)	Quebec (N = 226)	Ontario (N = 658)	Prairies (N = 367)	Pacific (N = 170)
Alternative release plan	21	4	20	9	28
Avoid negative decision	29	30	31	20	12
Information/assistant unavailable	0	< 1	1	0	2
No CRF/community support	8	< 1	3	0	2
Not interested	1	11	6	3	3
Other	17	13	13	10	13
Pending appeal/transfer	2	2	2	4	4
Program non-completion	10	13	10	14	13
Unknown – no reason provided	12	26	14	40	23

Note. Due to the high proportion of postponements with no reason provided (83%), those cases were not included in this analysis.

Appendix D: Comparison of Structured Indicators and Reasons for Parole Delays or Cancellations

Table D1.

Comparison of Structured Indicators and Reasons for Waiving, Postponing, or Withdrawing a Parole Review

Indicator	Reason for Waiving, Postponing, or Withdrawing Parole Review (%) ^a						Cramer's V^b
	Alternative release plan (<i>N</i> = 158)	Avoid negative decision (<i>N</i> = 303)	Not interested (<i>N</i> = 70)	Other (<i>N</i> = 160)	Program non-completion (<i>N</i> = 173)	Unknown – no reason provided (<i>N</i> = 836)	
Type of Delay or Cancellation							0.51
<i>Waiver</i>	90	85	86	71	75	17	
<i>Postponement</i>	2	4	0	17	16	78	
<i>Withdrawal</i>	8	11	14	12	9	5	
Women	13	9	11	15	20	11	0.09
Indigenous	8	7	7	6	20	14	0.13
Region of Parole Review							0.20
<i>Atlantic</i>	13	10	1	14	7	4	
<i>Quebec</i>	4	16	26	12	18	39	
<i>Ontario</i>	49	52	50	44	37	22	
<i>Prairies</i>	16	17	14	16	26	26	
<i>Pacific</i>	18	5	9	14	12	9	

(Table continues)

Indicator	Reason for Waiving, Postponing, or Withdrawing Parole Review (%) ^a						<i>Cramer's</i> <i>V</i> ^b
	Alternative release plan (<i>N</i> = 158)	Avoid negative decision (<i>N</i> = 303)	Not interested (<i>N</i> = 70)	Other (<i>N</i> = 160)	Program non- completion (<i>N</i> = 173)	Unknown – no reason provided (<i>N</i> = 836)	
First Term of Sentence	88	87	86	90	97	92	0.10
First Federal Sentence	78	86	83	88	89	87	0.07
Sentence Length							0.14
<i>Less than 3 years</i>	22	36	19	27	49	33	
<i>3 to less than 6 years</i>	32	30	17	34	36	40	
<i>6 to less than 10 years</i>	14	11	15	8	3	9	
<i>10 years or more</i>	32	23	49	31	12	18	
Street Instability^c	39	35	41	38	50	38	0.08
Security Classification prior to Review							0.15
<i>Minimum</i>	61	35	25	44	23	47	
<i>Medium</i>	35	56	71	51	72	51	
<i>Maximum</i>	4	9	4	5	5	2	
Referred for Specialized Sex Offender Assessment	6	13	10	4	16	11	0.10
Violent Offence	64	60	77	63	61	56	0.09

(Table continues)

Indicator	Reason for Waiving, Postponing, or Withdrawing Parole Review (%) ^a						Cramer's V ^b
	Alternative release plan (N = 158)	Avoid negative decision (N = 303)	Not interested (N = 70)	Other (N = 160)	Program non- completion (N = 173)	Unknown – no reason provided (N = 836)	
Offence Type							0.09
<i>Sex Related</i>	5	9	4	3	10	10	
<i>Drug Related</i>	20	24	10	19	22	29	
<i>Other Violent</i>	59	51	73	60	51	46	
<i>Other Non-Violent</i>	16	16	13	18	17	15	
Accountability							0.07
<i>Low</i>	11	23	30	16	21	19	
<i>Moderate</i>	69	62	54	66	63	65	
<i>High</i>	20	15	16	18	16	16	
Engagement	90	76	68	83	78	79	0.11
Responsivity^d	24	22	22	21	25	18	0.06
Overall Static Factor Rating							0.09
<i>Low</i>	17	14	12	18	15	18	
<i>Moderate</i>	44	41	30	41	49	49	
<i>High</i>	39	45	58	41	36	33	

(Table continues)

Indicator	Reason for Waiving, Postponing, or Withdrawing Parole Review (%) ^a						Cramer's <i>V</i> ^b
	Alternative release plan (<i>N</i> = 158)	Avoid negative decision (<i>N</i> = 303)	Not interested (<i>N</i> = 70)	Other (<i>N</i> = 160)	Program non- completion (<i>N</i> = 173)	Unknown – no reason provided (<i>N</i> = 836)	
Overall Dynamic Factor Rating							0.09
<i>Low</i>	7	6	2	4	3	8	
<i>Moderate</i>	51	43	36	46	35	41	
<i>High</i>	42	51	62	50	62	51	
Motivation							0.07
<i>Low</i>	9	10	17	8	9	10	
<i>Moderate</i>	70	76	73	70	75	70	
<i>High</i>	21	14	10	22	16	20	
Reintegration Potential							0.09
<i>Low</i>	18	22	29	17	20	15	
<i>Moderate</i>	48	45	54	51	60	52	
<i>High</i>	34	33	17	32	20	33	
Moderate-High Need in Dynamic Factor Areas							
<i>Employment/Education</i>	45	48	48	40	53	47	0.06
<i>Marital/Family</i>	24	26	46	32	42	28	0.12

(Table continues)

Indicator	Reason for Waiving, Postponing, or Withdrawing Parole Review (%) ^a						Cramer's V ^b
	Alternative release plan (N = 158)	Avoid negative decision (N = 303)	Not interested (N = 70)	Other (N = 160)	Program non- completion (N = 173)	Unknown – no reason provided (N = 836)	
<i>Associates</i>	65	63	65	61	57	62	0.04
<i>Substance Abuse</i>	38	42	43	42	67	48	0.16
<i>Community Functioning</i>	18	15	38	15	24	16	0.12
<i>Personal/ Emotional Orientation</i>	64	73	87	65	75	67	0.11
<i>Attitudes</i>	71	75	80	69	67	65	0.09
Problematic Institutional Behaviour	48	63	74	63	53	50	0.15
<i>Segregation Placements</i>	31	40	54	41	35	28	0.14
<i>Positive Urinalysis^e</i>	16	20	16	14	14	14	0.07
<i>Urinalysis Refusal^e</i>	13	16	31	13	9	10	0.15
<i>Disciplinary Charges</i>	46	57	67	54	43	42	0.14
Appeal	22	18	24	23	9	17	0.10
Comparing First Offender Security Classification to Most Recent Security Classification							0.14
<i>Down</i>	39	16	24	29	11	19	
<i>No Change</i>	67	76	67	66	84	76	
<i>Up</i>	4	8	9	5	5	5	

(Table continues)

Indicator	Reason for Waiving, Postponing, or Withdrawing Parole Review (%) ^a						<i>Cramer's</i> <i>V</i> ^b
	Alternative release plan (<i>N</i> = 158)	Avoid negative decision (<i>N</i> = 303)	Not interested (<i>N</i> = 70)	Other (<i>N</i> = 160)	Program non- completion (<i>N</i> = 173)	Unknown – no reason provided (<i>N</i> = 836)	
Outstanding Charges at Admission	17	23	21	20	29	28	0.10
Mental Health Concern	21	16	17	19	14	11	0.10
Participated in a Temporary Absence or Work Release	46	29	33	29	13	27	0.17
<i>Escorted Temporary Absence</i>	46	27	33	29	13	26	0.17
<i>Unescorted Temporary Absence</i>	6	7	11	7	1	8	0.08
<i>Work Release</i>	17	10	10	9	2	7	0.13
Ever Involved with a Security Threat Group (STG)	5	10	9	8	8	8	0.04
STG – Currently Active	3	7	6	5	5	7	0.05
Had Any Visits	68	66	67	68	52	67	0.09
Had Private Family Visits	28	25	33	25	9	25	0.12
Deportation Order	3	3	11	13	2	4	0.15
Any Return to Custody (RTC)	12	13	14	10	3	8	0.10
Any RTC with a New Offence	5	5	4	1	0	3	0.10

(Table continues)

Indicator	Reason for Waiving, Postponing, or Withdrawing Parole Review (%) ^a						Cramer's V ^b
	Alternative release plan (N = 158)	Avoid negative decision (N = 303)	Not interested (N = 70)	Other (N = 160)	Program non-completion (N = 173)	Unknown – no reason provided (N = 836)	
Moderate-High Severity Substance Use Problem	27	30	27	37	51	35	0.13
Crime/Substance Use Link	39	40	44	45	53	44	0.08
Assigned to a Main Correctional Program	59	49	67	59	64	50	0.12
Assigned to a Maintenance Correctional Program	42	22	30	31	10	21	0.19
Most Recent Program Outcome, for those Assigned to a Main Correctional Program (N = 936)							0.15
<i>In progress</i>	10	15	9	10	46	18	
<i>Finished - 30 days prior to hearing</i>	3	5	2	6	11	6	
<i>Incomplete – offender reasons</i>	10	9	26	10	11	10	
<i>Incomplete – administrative reasons</i>	6	4	4	7	1	5	
<i>Waitlisted</i>	0	3	4	1	2	1	
<i>Completed</i>	71	64	55	66	29	60	

Note. ^aCategories of *information/assistant unavailable*, *no CRF/community support*, and *pending appeal/transfer* were excluded from the analysis due to small numbers.

^bCramer's V is a measure to determine the strength of the relationship between two variables. ^cAn offender was considered to have street instability if he/she had no community connections or unstable accommodation prior to incarceration. ^dResponsivity types were not examined as only six percent of those with an identified responsivity issue had this type of information. ^eRandom urinalysis data was available for 72% of offenders in the study.