

## CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

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# Anti-corruption Models and Elimination of Staff Involvement in Trafficking Contraband in Correctional Settings: Review of the Current Literature

*Experimental studies point to anti-corruption models that could reduce staff involvement in contraband in prison environments.*

## Why we did this study

In a 2017 survey of international correctional organizations conducted by the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) staff involvement in trafficking contraband was identified as a key operational challenge among organizations responding to the survey. A review of the current research literature on anti-corruption models used in public agencies and law enforcement, and specific strategies employed to address correctional staff involvement in trafficking in contraband was commissioned by CSC to assess best practices in addressing corruption and staff involvement in trafficking contraband.

## What we did

A comprehensive search of academic research databases including journals, reports and books and publicly accessible international, and Canadian federal and provincial government databases was undertaken, employing the search terms “corruption”, “anti-corruption” “corrections” “correctional system” “prisons”, “correctional staff” “prison staff”, “law enforcement” “police” “anti-corruption models” “anti-corruption policies”, “contraband” and various combinations of terms. Search filters were used to retrieve only articles in English or translated into English and published in 2000 or later.

## What we found

At the international, national and institutional level, there is little evidence that multipurpose or specialized anti-corruption models and agencies are effective in reducing the prevalence of corrupt behaviour in public institutions. Similarly, there is little evidence that specialized units within institutions, including police organizations and correctional systems, have been effective in significantly reducing staff involvement in corrupt behaviour.

Control of contraband in correctional settings is made especially challenging by the porous nature of correctional environments and the strong demand for banned goods by offenders. Trafficking in contraband is identified as among the most serious threats to the effective operation of correctional systems, contributing directly to increased dangerousness and violence, sexual exploitation, drug trafficking and ill health, escape, organized crime activity and loss of public confidence in the justice system. Ultimately, corruption among correctional staff

undermines efforts to rehabilitate prisoners and to improve public safety and security. It is important to note however that staff involvement in trafficking in contraband represents only a small proportion of the contraband market in correctional environments.

Experimental studies of corrupt behavior show that (1) paying staff fair salaries (2) rotating staff assignments on a regular basis, (3) increasing the probability of detection of corrupt behaviour, (4) imposing severe penalties for corrupt behaviour, (5) offering a reward for “whistleblowing”, and an independent, top-down, confidential investigation process can be effective in mitigating corruption, and (6) increasing transparency and monitoring of public funds are effective in reducing corrupt behaviour.

## What it means

In combination with evidenced-based behavioural strategies to prevent corrupt behavior, the institutional environment must elucidate a clear code of conduct for staff, tools for the detection, reporting, investigation and prosecution of corrupt behaviour, and effective means of oversight and transparency. Reducing the individual motivation to engage in corrupt behaviour and establishing effective guardianship of the environment through monitoring, detection, investigation and prosecution may significantly reduce the prevalence of corrupt behavior, including contraband trafficking.

## For more information

Brown, G., & Hoffman, R. (2018). *Anti-corruption models and elimination of staff involvement in trafficking contraband in correctional settings: Review of the current literature*. (Research Report R-415). Ottawa, Ontario: Correctional Service of Canada.

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