

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

CHANGING LIVES. PROTECTING CANADIANS.

Comparison of Release Conditions for Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Federal Men Offenders

Conditions to abstain from alcohol and/or drugs are associated with poorer post-release outcomes for Indigenous and non-Indigenous men.

Why we did this study

Prior research indicated that the number of special conditions imposed on federal offenders on conditional release increased from 2000 to 2011, which was associated with a small increase in the rate of suspensions and returns to custody for Indigenous men¹. What is more, the impact of specific conditions had either a positive or negative impact on their rates of returns to custody depending on the type of condition². The current study examined the pattern of conditions imposed for federal Indigenous and non-Indigenous men offenders and their impact on release outcomes.

What we did

Men on their first conditional release between April 2013 and March 2017 were included in this study. Overall, 17,952 men were released; 21% ($n = 3,849$) were Indigenous (14% First Nations, 6% Métis, and 1% Inuit). Release conditions imposed within 90 days prior to release were examined. Patterns of conditions and their impact on suspensions and returns to custody were explored.

What we found

Most men had release conditions (99%).³ Indigenous men were more likely to have an abstain from alcohol/drugs, follow treatment/programming plan, or a residency condition while non-Indigenous men were more likely to have an “other”⁴ condition imposed. On average, men had five conditions. Indigenous men were more likely to have five or more conditions than non-Indigenous men (61% versus 40%).⁵ Indigenous men had a higher risk profile at release and were more likely to be on statutory release.

Suspensions. Overall, 70% of Indigenous and 46% of non-Indigenous men with release conditions were suspended. Controlling for time at risk and other factors,⁶ alcohol/drug

related conditions were the only condition type that was associated with the rate of suspensions for Indigenous men; alcohol/drug, avoid certain persons, treatment/programming, and residency conditions were associated with suspensions for non-Indigenous men.

Returns to Custody. Over half (53%) of Indigenous and 30% of non-Indigenous men with conditions returned to custody. Analysis controlling for time at risk and other factors⁵ demonstrated that alcohol/ drug conditions were associated with returns for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous men while residency conditions and the number of conditions were associated for non-Indigenous offenders only.

What it means

Almost all men had special release conditions. Imposition of conditions related to abstaining from substance use was associated with poorer post-release outcomes for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous men. These findings demonstrate that substance misuse has a particular impact on offenders' post-release success. Given that relapse episodes for those with substance misuse issues are common, ensuring offenders are connected to substance use related interventions and other supports that address their substance use issues on release may enhance the Correctional Service of Canada's risk management practices and thereby reduce post release returns to custody.

For more information

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

You can also visit the [Research Publications](#) section for a full list of reports and one-page summaries.

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¹ Ritchie, M., Saddleback, C., & Gobeil, R. (2014). *Special conditions and post-release outcomes over time* (RS 14-17). Ottawa, ON: CSC.

² Thompson, J., Forrester, T.K., & Stewart, L.A. (2015). Factors related to community supervision outcomes: Revocations (R-304). Ottawa, ON: CSC.

³ Seventy-five men did not have release conditions.

⁴ Other conditions include reporting to police, abstaining from driving, avoid gambling/gambling establishments, reporting relationships, financial restrictions, computer and telecommunication restrictions, etc.

⁵ In total, 332 men had 10-14 release conditions; 68% of there were released in Ontario while 84% were released on statutory release and 48% were sex offenders. Manual file coding for five randomly selected men indicated that they had entrenched criminal histories, had not fully addressed their criminogenic risk prior to release, and required structured supervision.

⁶ Other factors controlled for in the survival analysis were: security classification at release, release type, dynamic factor rating, static factor rating, reintegration potential, motivation level, criminogenic need areas, releasing region, age at release, sentence number, and sentence length.