

## CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

CHANGING LIVES. PROTECTING CANADIANS.

## Older Offenders in Federal Custody: Overall Trends

**One-quarter of the federal custodial population is now over the age of 50, however, 5% of offenders are over 65.**

**Why we did this study**

Older offenders constitute an increasing percentage of CSC's custodial population (Beaudette & Stewart, 2014). Existing research suggests this sub-group of offenders may have unique needs relative to their younger counterparts, as well as the older adult population in general (Uzoaba, 1998; Omolade, 2014; Aday & Krabill, 2012; Williams et al., 2006). Understanding trends regarding the older offender population is therefore necessary to better respond to the needs of this group.

**What we did**

An in-custody snapshot was taken on January 20<sup>th</sup> 2019 to identify the presence of older offenders (i.e., those aged 50 years and above) in the overall custodial population. While there is some debate regarding the definition of older offenders, the age category 50 and up has been deemed appropriate for correctional populations due to their greater health needs compared to the general population (Baidawi et al., 2011).

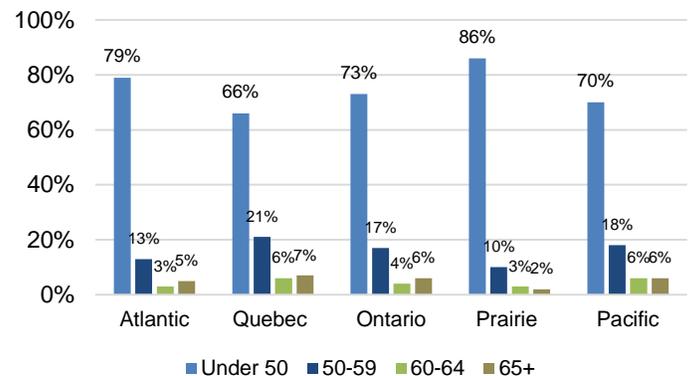
**What we found**

On January 20<sup>th</sup> 2019, offenders aged 50 years and up accounted for one-quarter (25%) of the overall custodial population, while those aged 65 and up accounted for 5%. The percentage of older offenders varied across regions, with the highest representation in Quebec (34%) and the lowest in the Prairie Region (14%).

Within the older adult population, the vast majority (80%) of offenders are between the ages of 50 and 64 and most (97%) are male. Indigenous representation among the older offender population is 20% overall, although considerably higher in the Prairie region (39%).

**What it means**

Given that older offenders account for one-quarter of the current federal custodial population, further research is needed to explore the unique needs of this group, as well as diversities within this group, so that CSC can more effectively manage and support this group while providing interventions and services that are responsive to age-based needs.

**Age Breakdown of Offenders in Custody on January 20th, 2019****References:**

- Aday, R. H., & Krabill, J. J. (2012). Older and geriatric offenders: Critical issues for the 21st century. In Gideon, L. (ed). *Special needs offenders in correctional institutions*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Baidawi, S., Turner, S., Trotter, C., Browning, C., Collier, P., O'Connor, D., & Sheehan, R. (2011). Older prisoners - A challenge for Australian corrections. *Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice*, 426.
- Beaudette, J. & Stewart, L. (2014). *Older Offenders in the Custody of the Correctional Service of Canada* N° RS-14-21. Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada.
- Omolade, S. (2014). *The needs and characteristics of older prisoners: Results from the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) survey*. London: Ministry of justice.
- Uzoaba, J. H. E. (1998). *Managing older offenders: Where do we stand?* Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada.
- Williams, B. A., Lindquist, K., Sudore, R. L., Strupp, H. M., Willmott, D. J., & Walter, L. C. (2006). Being old and doing time: Functional impairment and adverse experiences of geriatric female prisoners. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 54(4), 702-707.

**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.

**Prepared by:** Laura McKendy, Stephanie M. Biro, Daina Stanley, and Leslie Anne Keown

