

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

CHANGING LIVES. PROTECTING CANADIANS.

Age Structure of Women in Federal Custody: 2009-10 and 2019-20

Proportionally, there are more younger and fewer older Indigenous women in federal custody than non-Indigenous.

Why are we doing this study

A previous examination found that there is an increasing representation of younger Indigenous women in federal custody relative to their non-Indigenous counterparts.¹ While changes in the age structure of a carceral population can signal potential for future growth, it also provides an indication of the type and amount of interventions required to address the treatment needs of younger versus older inmates. This study unpacks the age structure for women in federal custody.

What we did

Ten years of age data reflected in Correctional Service of Canada's Corporate Reporting System-Modernized were extracted at year-end for both Indigenous (168 in 2009-10 and 279 in 2019-20) and non-Indigenous (355 in 2009-10 and 406 in 2019-20) women inmates.

What we found

Data for 2009-10 reveals that Indigenous women present a higher representation across the younger age groups of under 35 years of age than non-Indigenous women (62% and 45%, respectively). Within the older age groups (55+), Indigenous women inmates show a lower representation than non-Indigenous women (1% and 8%, respectively).

Women in Federal Custody 2009-10

Age	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Overall
	168	355	523
<20	3	5	8
20-24	24	40	64
25-29	43	64	107
30-34	34	50	84
35-39	20	48	68
40-44	22	66	88
45-49	10	31	41
50-54	10	24	34
55-59	2	10	12
60-64	0	9	9
65-69	0	6	6
70+	0	2	2

In 2019-20, results reveal that the Indigenous women inmates continue to present a higher representation across the younger age groups of under 35 years of age than non-Indigenous women (61% and 42%, respectively). Within the older age groups (55+), Indigenous women inmates continue to show a substantially lower representation than non-Indigenous women (3% and 13%, respectively).

Women in Federal Custody 2019-20

Age	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Overall
	279	406	685
<20	1	1	2
20-24	35	33	68
25-29	71	70	141
30-34	63	66	129
35-39	58	63	118
40-44	23	52	75
45-49	12	37	49
50-54	9	33	42
55-59	2	24	26
60-64	3	16	19
65-69	2	7	9
70+	0	4	4

What it means

The disproportionate representation of Indigenous women (41%) in federal custody may be partly attributed to age disparity, and therefore sustained intervention efforts and effective partnerships that consider this aspect of the Indigenous women population profile are required for the safe return of these offenders to the community.

¹Shifting Age Structure in Federal Custody: 2009-10 and 2019-20. RIB-21-02.

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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