

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

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Regional Comparisons of Security Threat Group (STG) Affiliated Men Offenders

Although the regional prevalence of STG affiliated offenders varied, criminogenic needs and behavioural indicators were consistent across regions.

Why we did this study

Recent research regarding Security Threat Group (STG)^{1,2} affiliated offenders indicated that they have unique profiles compared to non-affiliated offenders,³ as well as across STG subgroups.⁴ This study was conducted to explore the regional differences of STG affiliated versus non-STG affiliated offenders under the jurisdiction of the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC).

What we did

In total, 3,889 men offenders⁵ were identified as STG affiliated between FY2013-2014 and FY2018-2019. Over half (59%; $n = 2,299$) of STG affiliated men were in-custody and 41% ($n = 1,590$) were in the community. A matched comparison group⁶ of non-STG affiliated men ($N = 3,889$) was identified as well as a general men's population group ($N = 34,677$).⁷ Comparisons across study region for STG and non-STG affiliated offenders examined demographics, sentence and offence information, criminogenic risk and need characteristics, institutional experience indicators, and post-release outcomes.

What we found

Almost half of all STG affiliated men in-custody and about one-third in the community were managed in the Prairie region during the study period. Overall, STG affiliated offenders accounted for 20% of the general in-custody offender population in the Prairie region during the study period, compared to 6% to 14% in the other regions. In the community, the variation in prevalence of STG affiliated offenders across regions was less (2% to 10%).

Comparisons of STG affiliated offenders across regions indicated that those in the Quebec region were older for both the in-custody and community cohorts, while STG affiliated offenders in-custody in the Atlantic region were more likely to have committed violent offences, to be classified as maximum security, and to be serving a second or subsequent sentence. Criminogenic risk profiles were similar for STG affiliated offenders across regions; however, those in-custody in the Ontario region and those in the community in the Atlantic

region were more engaged in their correctional plans. STG affiliated offenders in the Atlantic and Pacific regions were more likely to have experienced negative indicators such as charges, incidents, and positive urinalysis tests, as well as residency conditions and release suspensions.

Analyses of STG affiliated offenders and the two comparison groups across the regions indicated similar results. STG affiliated offenders were younger and more likely to be serving a second or subsequent sentence, to be classified as maximum security, to be high static risk or dynamic need, or to have identified needs with criminal associates and attitudes, especially compared to the general offender men's population. Examination of institutional experiences and post-release indicators demonstrate that STG affiliated offenders were more likely to have charges, incidents, and positive urinalysis tests, as well as more likely to have residency conditions or be suspended on release than the comparison groups.

What it means

STG affiliated offenders pose operational and reintegration challenges for CSC. As demonstrated, regardless of region, they were more likely than the comparison groups to have an entrenched criminal history and to have high static risk and dynamic need than the general population, even though they were younger. Prevalence was highest in the Prairie region; however, STG affiliated offenders in the Atlantic and Pacific regions demonstrated the most problematic behaviour.

For more information

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¹ STGs are defined as any formal or informal offender group, gang, or organization consisting of three or more members (e.g., street gangs, Indigenous gangs, prison gangs, outlaw motorcycle gangs, traditional organized crime, Asian gangs, white supremacy groups, subversive groups terrorist organizations, and hate groups; CSC, 2016).

² The Correctional Service of Canada is currently reviewing and updating the STG definition.

³ Farrell MacDonald, S., Cram, S., Smeth, A., Jones, K., Garrel, S., & Derksen, D. (in review). *Examining differences between Security Threat Groups (STGs) and the general offender population* (R-XXX). Ottawa, ON: CSC.

⁴ Farrell MacDonald, S., Cram, S., Smeth, A., & Derksen, D. (in press). *Comparing characteristics, institutional adjustment, and post-release outcomes of Security Threat Groups* (STGs; R-451). Ottawa, ON: CSC.

⁵ Regional comparisons for women offenders were not completed due to the high proportion of STG affiliated women in the Prairie region.

⁶ Matching variables included ethnocultural group, CSC region and age during the study period, sentence length, and release type for community cohorts.

⁷ Indigenous offenders were 47% of STG affiliated and matched group offenders versus 25% of the general in-custody population. In the community, 25% of the STG affiliated and matched groups were Indigenous compared to 15% of the general population.