

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

CHANGING LIVES. PROTECTING CANADIANS.

Age at Time of Admission to Federal Corrections – 2020-21

The majority of Indigenous, Black and Others being newly admitted to federal custody are aged 30 and over.

Why are we doing this study

Throughout the penological literature it has been well established that the ‘age-crime curve’ is a robust and valid predictor of criminal behaviour, prison misconduct and recidivism. Risk assessment tools and correctional programs intervention strategies both reflect and incorporate age in sentence plans. The Canadian federal system receives persons who are aged 18 years or older and sentenced to serve two years or more. Previous research has found that post pandemic there has been an upward shift in the age structure in federal custody. As some weight is assigned to age during the security classification process, it remains to be seen how much is attributable to various age-related strata across racial groupings in federal admissions.

What we did

Federal admission counts and disaggregated racial data are recorded as standardized reports in Correctional Service of Canada’s Corporate Reporting System-Modernized. Data were extracted for fiscal year 2020-21 on 3,175 new warrant of committal admissions received from the courts. There were also 2,024 revocations and 61 other admissions (e.g. international transfers). Among the new warrant of committal admissions, 1,019 (or 22.4%) were ‘Indigenous’, 223 (or 7%) were ‘Black’ persons and 1,380 (or 71.4%) ‘Others’ (including ‘White’, ‘Asian’, etc.).

The Custody Rating Scale (CRS) is an actuarial tool administered at intake to assist with initial security level classification. While the CRS is not determinative of actual placement, it is two dimensional with institutional adjustment and security risk. Moreover, the CRS is comprised of 12 empirically derived risk-related items among which ‘age at time of admission’ is included in the public security dimension. No (0) weight is assigned by the CRS to persons age 30 and over. Age at time of admission data by CRS weight was disaggregated by racial groupings.

What we found

As reflected in Table 1, age distribution data show that during 2020-21, the majority (65.8%) of new admissions to federal custody were 30+ years of age. While it appears

that 58.3% of ‘Indigenous’ and 51.6% of ‘Black’ admissions were 30 and over, ‘Others’ at 71.4% were considerably higher in numbers and representation. Also noteworthy, is the relatively low number of ‘Indigenous’ (40 or 3.9%), ‘Black’ (7 or 3.1%) and ‘Others’ groupings (45 or 2.3%) being admitted under 21 age (92 or 2.9%).

Table 1. Warrant of Committal Admissions - 2020-21

Age	CRS Item Weight	Indigenous (N=1,019) (n)	Black (N=223) (n)	Others (N=1,934) (n)	Total (N=3,176) (n)
18	24	4	2	2	8
19	22	18	2	18	38
20	20	18	3	25	46
21	18	31	8	33	72
22	16	36	15	36	87
23	14	37	9	62	108
24	12	42	14	49	105
25	10	54	15	58	127
26	8	41	9	68	118
27	6	51	13	56	120
28	4	42	9	86	137
29	2	51	9	61	121
30-39	0	347	68	630	1,045
40-49	0	152	31	383	566
50-59	0	78	10	224	312
60-69	0	13	5	103	121
70-79	0	4	0	37	41
80+	0	0	1	3	4
30+	0	594 (58.3%)	115 (51.6%)	1,380 (71.4%)	2,089 (65.8%)

What it means

As previously hypothesized¹, the upward shift in age representation in the federal custody population can partly be attributed to age at time of admission across all diverse groups. Consequently, continuous intervention efforts and active engagement with partnerships that consider this are required for the care and safe custody of these individuals.

¹ RIB-22-28 - Pandemic Era Changes in Federal Corrections Age Structures

For more information

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

Prepared by: Larry Motiuk and Leslie-Anne Keown

