

## CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

CHANGING LIVES. PROTECTING CANADIANS.

**Revocations Related to Substance Use among Federally Sentenced Men with Substance Use Needs: Comparing Correctional Program Participants and Eligible non-Participants**

*Revocations among men with substance use needs were most commonly due to breaches of conditions not to consume drugs.*

**Why we did this study**

Substance use is a persistent area of criminogenic need for many federally sentenced men. This research project examined how substance use was related to post-release revocations with and without an offence. Further understanding of the role of substance use may inform and facilitate effective community supervision strategies for this subset of the federal offender population.

**What we did**

Federally sentenced men with moderate or high substance use needs at intake and revocations of their community supervision were identified from a cohort of admissions since February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 with releases on day parole, full parole, or statutory release. Revocations of community supervision must have occurred prior to data collection in December 2022. Four study groups were identified – Indigenous and non-Indigenous Integrated Correctional Program participants and eligible non-participants. Assessment for Decision files for 485 randomly selected cases<sup>1</sup> were coded for substance use information as it related to the decisions to revoke offenders' conditional release.

**What we found**

Special conditions not to consume drugs (97%) and alcohol (93%) and avoid certain persons (92%) were most commonly applied to the supervision of coded cases. These reflect indicators from their intake assessments of longstanding and criminogenic substance use histories. Revocations without an offence were usually due to breached conditions (89%), and frequently due to multiple breached conditions (48%).

Among these cases with revocations due to breaches, breaches of one or more substance use related conditions were most common (86%) while breaches of non-substance use conditions were less common (45%). When a given condition was applied, drug use conditions were the most likely to be breached (66%), followed by respect curfew (32%), and reside at a specified place (31%). Alcohol consumption conditions were breached 22% of the time. Non-Indigenous program participants were

statistically significantly more likely to breach their condition to not consume drugs than non-Indigenous eligible non-participants. However, given that pre-existing differences between program participants and non-participants were not controlled for, this result may be at least partially related to group differences.

Coding was completed for 57 men with revocations with an offence. Given the small sample size, comparisons were not presented between program participant and eligible non-participant groups. Fourteen (25%) of the men with revocations with an offence were identified as having committed a substance use related offence, most frequently drug possession. Substance use was cited as a motivation for the offence among six of the cases (11%), most frequently when offenders went unlawfully at large (UAL). Finally, 13 of the offences were committed while intoxicated (23%).

**What it means**

Among a sample of offenders with moderate or high substance use needs, substance use was an important contributing factor to revocation with and without offence decisions. Community-based correctional interventions, electronic monitoring, opioid agonist treatment, community residential facilities and resources that offer substance use counselling may assist offenders in preventing substance use and the potential resulting harmful effects while under community supervision.

**For more information**

Wilton, G., Wanamaker, K., Johnson, S., Filoso, D., & Mahboob, W. (2023). *Revocations related to substance use among federally sentenced men with substance use needs: Comparing correctional program participants and eligible non-participants*. (Research Report R-466). Ottawa, Ontario: Correctional Service of Canada.

To obtain a PDF version of the full report, or for other inquiries, please e-mail the [Research Branch](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Coding was completed for 428 revocation without an offence and 57 revocation with an offence cases.