

FORUM

on Corrections Research

September 2000, Volume 12, Number 3

Featured issues

**Managing
Long-term
Offenders**

Perspectives

Profiles

Programs



Correctional Service
Canada

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FORUM ON CORRECTIONS RESEARCH is published three times a year in both English and French for the staff and management of the Correctional Service of Canada and the international corrections community.

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FORUM invites contributions to any section of the magazine from researchers in the field. Please send your contributions to

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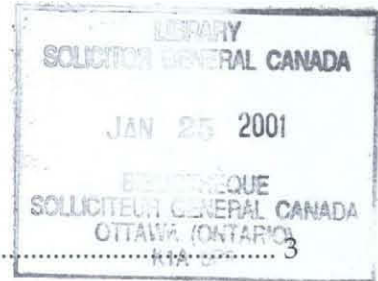
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To submit an article to FORUM, send two copies of the article and a diskette copy (in Microsoft Word or WordPerfect) to:

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Task Force on Long-term Offenders: A summary

Research Branch,
Correctional Service of Canada¹

During one of its meetings in 1997, the Executive Committee of the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), approved the terms of reference of the Task Force on Long-term Offenders which submitted its report in February 1998.²

Over recent decades, the Service had more and more long-term offenders. Although some recent initiatives had been undertaken to address their concerns, a group committed to handling the problems defined for long-term offenders was also formed.

In conjunction with the Life Line concept that was adopted by the 1998 Task Force on Long-term Offenders, recommendations were made for focused research activity on managing long-term offenders in a variety of targeted areas. Such work should lead to improvements in the use of correctional resources and enhance public safety.

Background

In the early 1980's, several representatives from St. Leonard's House in Windsor, Ontario met with senior officials from the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) and the National Parole Board (NPB) to discuss the feasibility of developing improved and comprehensive methods to respond to the needs of offenders serving life sentences. These efforts culminated in a 1990 report prepared in partnership with the CSC, NPB and non-governmental organizations and funded by the Donner Foundation. This report set out the Life Line Concept (In-Reach Workers, Community Resources, Public Education).

In 1991, CSC accepted the report of the first Task Force on Long-term Sentences.³ Its major recommendation was to adopt an overall strategy for managing long term sentences (defined as ten years or greater) according to four stages of the sentence: adaptation, integration, preparation for release, and reintegration.

In 1992, a report was produced ("More Than a Matter of Time") which outlined how the Life Line Concept could support implementation of most aspects of the 1991 Correctional Service Task Force Report on Long-term Sentences. In 1996, the CSC re-established the Life Line National Resource Group, a group made up of senior CSC and NPB officials and non-government organization partners. Their general mandate was to guide the development of programs aimed at assisting the offender to make more productive use of their time

while in custody with a view to increasing the likelihood of a safe release to the community.

Then, in 1998, the work of another Task Force on Long-term Offenders advanced implementation of key aspects of earlier efforts. This Task Force emphasized a partnership made up of the CSC, NPB and non-governmental proponents of the Life Line Concept. It also intended to set out a framework for the adoption of the Life Line Concept by CSC and by the NPB. The report provided an overview or directional approach and identified areas where further study, development, consideration and action are required. It also contained a number of recommendations of substance where there is ready consensus.

The Task Force Mandate

The 1998 Task Force on Long-term Offenders, based on, but not limited to, the ideas and experience with the Life Line Concept, addressed the management and program needs of offenders serving life or long-term sentences. It recommended a national strategy involving CSC, NPB, Life Line and other partners, as appropriate, to ensure the highest level of public safety is achieved consistent with the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*, the Missions of the CSC and the NPB and the basic elements of the Life Line Concept.

The 1998 Task Force on Long-term Offenders was to:

1. provide a profile of long-term offenders currently under the supervision of CSC;
2. describe current Life Line services available to offenders under federal jurisdiction, and
 - a) assess the capability of expanding the services;
 - b) identify prerequisites for successful service delivery including:
 - definition of the scope of work, qualifications, remuneration, orientation, training, and
 - ongoing development and integration within current operational regimes, etc.;
3. develop a set of minimum Standards and Guidelines for Life Line-type programs, and propose an approach to conducting a review and evaluation of all such programs against these Standards and Guidelines;

4. develop a potential role for long-term offenders both in penitentiaries and in the community including but not limited to involvement in programs, training, employment and community service;
5. develop a proposed approach to the early completion of a short term research study to identify key elements which contribute to the successful reintegration of long-term offenders, as well as a strategy to incorporate the results of this study into the overall approach to the management of this group of offenders;
6. estimate the type and amount of resources required to carry out its recommendations, with particular attention to points 2 and 3.

Major findings/observations

The 1998 Task Force on Long-term Offenders established a profile of the institutional and community population of offenders serving life sentences, indeterminate sentences and those serving determinate sentences of ten years or greater. At the time of the 1998 report, there were 3,800 federal offenders serving life and indeterminate sentences in Canada, 31% of them being supervised in the community. The Task Force recommended that comprehensive profile of lifers and long-term offenders are produced at least every three years.

Community resources dedicated exclusively to offenders serving life sentences are rare, with only one residential centre in Canada. Nearly all Community Residential Centres will accept lifers, except those who may be bound by agreements with communities to refuse certain types of offenders, such rules are not based on sentence length but rather type of offence. While In-Reach services do not currently reach all incarcerated lifers, they are much more commonly available than are community services specifically designed for and dedicated to lifers.

In examining the feasibility of expanding Life Line services, the Task Force identified issues to be resolved. The first was the status of Life Line. It was agreed that trying to apply the term "program" to Life Line would be self-defeating, as this has come to be known within the correctional community to have a very specific meaning related to dealing with factors or problems affecting offenders' criminal behaviour. However, the term "service" also has meaning for effective corrections, and the 1998 Task Force on Long-term Offenders recommended adoption of this designation.

A second issue was the target group. Life Line was originally targeted at those serving life sentences, however, offenders with indeterminate sentences, or those serving long determinate sentences, may share many of the same problems faced by lifers. The 1998 Task Force on Long-term Offenders recommended that the target group include all those serving life sentences plus the approximately 260 offenders with indeterminate sentences. This target group should be reviewed after a period of experience with it to determine whether it should be changed or expanded.

The 1998 Task Force on Long-term Offenders was specifically required to develop detailed standards for In-Reach Workers. A common scope of work, list of qualifications, ratio for Workers and minimum compensation level were submitted. The 1998 Task Force also believed that contracts for In-Reach services should address the funds required for compensations, travel and administration, and should set out the parties' respective obligations for information sharing and protection. The major responsibilities of In-Reach Workers would be working with the lifers in the institutions to make the most of their time, maintaining team-work relationship with case management and participating in public education initiatives while inside institutions and in the community.

Proposed standard qualifications would require In-Reach Workers to be either lifers or long-term offenders with integrity and credibility with CSC, the NPB, other lifers and the community. Also, they should have demonstrated the knowledge, skills and experience needed to deliver the responsibilities of the job. Furthermore, they must be eligible for enhanced reliability screening.

The Task Force was also asked to provide a draft approach to orientation and training for In-Reach Workers. A three part package (required reading, skills training and on-the-job orientation) was developed to form the basis of consultations at various levels to determine the most effective ways to deliver the training.

The 1998 Task Force on Long-term Offenders was also concerned about the special needs of federally sentenced Aboriginal offenders and women offenders being addressed. For Aboriginal offenders, it recommended that consultations take place involving the CSC, the NPB, Native liaison workers and their agencies, Aboriginal offenders, Elders and the National Aboriginal Advisory Committee. The Task Force also felt that it is important on an ongoing basis to seek input from those with expertise on Aboriginal issues in managing the Life Line Concept.

To address the special needs of women offenders serving long sentences, the 1998 Task Force recommended that the Deputy Commissioner for Women take the leadership role in consultations and other work leading to developing services for women lifers and long-term offenders. The Task Force suggested that the ongoing elaboration of direction and policy applying to federal offenders in the Life Line Concept should also address and reflect the special needs of women.

The 1998 Task Force developed draft standards and guidelines describing the three components of Life Line and how they could operate. It was recommended to use these draft standards as the basis for extensive consultation within the CSC, the NPB, and among the agencies that are now, or may in the future be interested in providing services. In developing these standards and reviewing the progress to date in implementing the Life Line Concept, it became increasingly apparent to the 1998 Task Force members that creating specialized, dedicated community residential facilities for lifers across the country was not a realistic goal. Therefore, it recommended that the community component of Life Line recognize that achieving safe, gradual and progressively independent release for lifers can be achieved using a variety and combination of community residential and program resources.

Values/beliefs related to long-term offenders

The Task Force looked at ways to achieve better sentence planning and make more constructive use of time for all incarcerated long-term offenders. The concept of long-term offenders participating in correctional careers offered a constructive alternative to allowing offenders to possibly drift within the system for ten or fifteen years before they become the focus of real attention immediately prior to their release. These offenders could support and assist staff in the conduct of their correctional work while at the same time contribute significantly to their own personal growth. They should have the opportunity to acquire and practice the skills to contribute to society while incarcerated.

Research proposals

The 1998 Task Force report provided an outline for research activity on long-term offenders. The purpose was to examine long-term offenders from three perspectives:

- Demographically (age, gender, etc.);
- Psycho-socially (education, employment, addictions, mental health, etc.); and

- Personally (perspectives of the long-term offender of the factors they believe were most significant in their safe re-entry to the community).

These profiles of the long-term offender were also to be taken at three different points in the sentence, upon entry to the federal system, at time of release, and several years later while under supervision. The 1998 Task Force suggested that the research results could be of assistance in the areas of institutional placement, programming, safe release and community supervision.

Public education

The 1998 Task force on Long-term Offenders proposed a process for the development of an overall public education strategy related to lifers and long-term offenders. The Task Force strongly urged consultation, with a wide range of individuals and a variety of groups, to develop, approve and implement an effective public education plan. Thus, the overall goals, messages and timeframes were to be open to discussion and debate with potential partners, who must know that their concerns and views are being taken seriously in these discussions. To be effective, the strategy must be developed and implemented across three levels — national, regional and local.

Conclusion

The central defining characteristic of the Life Line Concept is an equal partnership among CSC, NPB and the proponents of the Life Line Concept. Further expansion of the Life Line Concept requires building a large network of focused support on managing long-term offenders nationally, regionally and locally. This network should help to provide expertise on lifers and long-term offenders, and reflect the diversity of Canada. ■

¹ 340 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0P9.

² This version of the Task Force report and its executive summary has been edited for stylistic consistency with other FORUM papers.

Task Force members: from CSC — Ken Peterson, Linda McLaren, Jim Murphy, Simonne Ferguson, Rene Durocher, Yvon Lacombe; and from the community of Windsor — Lou Drouillard.

³ See *Forum on Corrections Research on Long-term Offenders*, vol. 4, n° 2, 1992.

Residential program for lifers: Six keys to success

by Edward Graham¹

Residential Program, St. Leonard's House

St. Leonard's House in Windsor, Ontario, is the only facility to offer a Life Line Residential Program in Canada. Life Line evolved from a desire to better meet the challenge of a growing number of lifers in our institutions and released on parole to our communities. In 1976, the death penalty was abolished and replaced by life imprisonment without any consideration for parole for 10 to 25 years.

However, as everyone who works in corrections knows — at least in Canada — a life sentence rarely means imprisonment for your natural life. Nevertheless, a life sentence is forever, whether it is served in the institution or in the community on parole. The indeterminate sentence requires creative responses from both policy-makers and practitioners in prisons and the community. The challenges associated with successfully engineering the reintegration of the lifer, particularly one, who has experienced decades of institutional living, are many. With close to one-third of Canada's 3,500 lifers on supervised parole in the community, St. Leonard's dedicated Residential Program for lifers is a common sense approach to the community reintegration needs of a growing lifer population. As we experience, experiment and document, St. Leonard's has identified six key features that have contributed to a successful program for paroled lifers.

Community understanding, support and involvement

Community acceptance of paroled lifers is the cornerstone of a residential program for lifers. However, inspiring communities to embrace the challenge of reintegrating convicted murderers truly tests the tolerance of a community. "Halfway House for Killers Coming Here" was the headline on April 10, 1990 that informed the citizens of Windsor, that St. Leonard's was planning to start a halfway house for lifers.² A leading columnist probably summed-up the feeling of the ordinary citizen:

"The most humiliating aspect of this black-eye project is that it apparently originated right here in Windsor. The concept is good — but the location stinks. Its proponents should be told to hit the road!"³

Instead, our board of citizen volunteers "hit the streets" and, for over two years, held meetings in church halls, union halls, City Hall and met with neighbours, victims of violent crime, editorial boards and the community at large. The project, which became known as Life Line, withstood the proponents of the NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) syndrome and endured by consulting with interest groups and listening

to community concerns. As one editor observed, "St. Leonard's succeeded by meeting the community's fears halfway".⁴ The number of lifers was scaled-down to ten, and violent sex offenders were excluded. The Life Line Residential Program would be housed in the existing facility and an Admissions Committee would include representatives of the police, victims and the neighbourhood.

Intensive screening and selection

Obviously, any program to help lifers has to start in the prison, and thus the In-Reach Program was created to work with lifers throughout their prison sentence. The program recruits paroled lifers who have been in the community as productive members who return to institutions to motivate newly admitted lifers and to assist in their eventual reintegration back to the community.

The long-term relationship of the In-Reach worker with the inmate lifer ensures an accurate assessment of the individual's readiness for release. The Agency Residential Manager, working along with the In-Reach worker, also visits the applicant throughout his/her sentence to assess suitability for the Life Line Program. The Community Admissions Committee, which includes representatives from the police, victims and the neighbourhood, determines the level of support the community is able to offer the lifer after reviewing the file information provided by the Correctional Service of Canada and the National Parole Board.

Society acknowledges, for some lifers, that justice has been served by a long period of incarceration; however, community acceptance is not given lightly, but earned by demonstrating remorse, addressing the behaviours that resulted in the taking of a life, and providing solid evidence that meaningful change has occurred.

Longer residency — progressive living arrangement

The reality is that the time has come to pay for longer sentences. A quarter century has nearly passed since the introduction of the 25-year life sentence in 1976, and the first of this new breed of lifers are being considered for potential release. Lifers, by the very nature of their sentence, require a long re-entry time and decompression after a prolonged period behind bars. The Residential Program is designed for high-

need lifers who require a strong support system and an array of interventions.

The Life Line Program is based on a minimum period of residency of one year, up to three years (the full eligibility period of day parole). Given the longer residency, St. Leonard's has provided progressive living arrangements, with graduated levels of responsibility and independence. The lifer starts off in the highly structured group living environment, graduates to apartment-style living and, upon full parole, moves to independent living in the community with the support of an aftercare service.

Individualized treatment strategies

Long-term imprisonment has been described as a "behavioural deep freeze." Frozen in time, the typical paroled lifer leaves the institution in the same emotional state that he came in with. In other words, he comes out as a middle-aged adult with adolescent urges, adult expectations, and now wants to catch-up for lost time — a recipe for failure. Frustrated by everyday activities we take for granted, he is full of fear and confusion; however, despite this generalization, we have found lifers to be a diverse group of individuals in terms of their social background, criminal history and vocational skills. Therefore, each lifer requires a highly responsive, individualized approach, anticipating personal issues in terms of self-esteem, relationships, substance abuse and employment. Life Line is not a program per se, but a process of gradual re-socialization. "Life Line," a former resident writes, "gives the resident the freedom to become self-determining individuals. I am allowed to, and encouraged to, make my own decisions and am supported more often than not, by the House. With that choice, I quickly learn that my choices have consequences, often unforeseen. I am expected to take responsibility for my actions and am afforded more freedom as I show I deserve it."

Guided social interaction

Residential staff must be trained to be sensitive to the issues of long-term offenders — the fear of going back to prison, money management, relationships with females and the "Coney Island" effects of a world of choice after prolonged incarceration.

A dedicated parole officer, who supervises all Life Line residents, is essential to the concept of teamwork, as the nature and intensity of supervision must complement the individual's plan of care. Indeed, an established partnership and communication between St. Leonard's House and the Correctional Service of Canada in conjunction with a Parole Officer ensures a consistent and stable approach to achieving the goal.

The best guide for the lifer, especially in the first months of his return to community living, is a fellow lifer. Successful lifers on full parole return to the

home and share their experiences, enabling the new lifer to anticipate future problems. Full of anxiety, a new lifer can confide in his peer without fear of official sanctions or concern. Similarly, teaming up a lifer with a volunteer gives the lifer an opportunity to test out many of his new social skills in a more normalized environment.

Prison habits, protective masks and solitude govern his life outside of prison. As one lifer explains about his failed release:

"Trust comes hard. One must drop the public façade, and disclose, in order to trust. Trust and disclosure are like a trip to the dentist's office. They are to be endured with slightly clenched teeth, and visited only when necessary; only when all else fails."

The decision to trust others and pay heed to counselling voices is a critical step for the lifer and a certain indicator of future success.

Service to the community

The concept of service to others is a major program element of Life Line. Individuals are matched with community service projects according to interest and skills. To date, the residents have participated in The Special Olympics, Charity Walk-a-Thon, Community Clean-Up Projects, as well as public speaking at schools and community groups. Jerry, a current resident, remarks "I am approaching 50 years of age, and two-thirds of my life will have passed. I am at a major transition point in my life, but 'turning the page is easier said than done.' I have come to learn that helping others improves your own life. I want to salvage something from the years I have left and not simply go through the motions. Admittedly, some of my motivation is out of guilt, but it is a means of healing and repairing the damage to my soul and psyche."

The message, in word and in deed, is that lifers can help themselves and others. This reflects the optimum in reintegration. The offender is restored as a responsible citizen, who also is relied on to help others.

Concluding remarks

The Residential Program for lifers in Windsor was set up as a pilot — a model to be duplicated in other regions across the country. More than one community must rise above community fears by throwing a lifeline to those thousands of men and women drowning in oceans of time. St. Leonard's believes that some men and women, who have taken a life, deserve the opportunity to give a life back to society — their own! ■

¹ 491 Victoria Avenue, Windsor, Ontario N9A 4N1.

² The Windsor Star, April 10, 1990.

³ The Windsor Star, April 12, 1990.

⁴ The Windsor Star, September 5, 1992.

In-Reach workers: The foundation of Life Line

by *Cathy Delnef*

Research Branch, Correctional Service of Canada

and *Jim Murphy*¹

Correctional Operations and Programs, Correctional Service of Canada

Life Line, like any successful correctional program, requires an effective working relationship between motivated offenders and involved staff and community support. Together, these components become a powerful, progressive partnership.

The Mission of Life Line is to provide, through the In-Reach component and community resources, an opportunity to motivate inmates and to assist them to derive optimum benefit from correctional planning and program participation.

The purpose of In-Reach work is to "reach-in" to institutions under the sponsorship of an established non-profit community based correctional agency to provide inmates with hope, sensitivity, and continuity throughout lengthy prison sentences.

Some facts and background

About 4,000 offenders are serving life sentences. There are approximately 128 women and 520 Aboriginal offenders serving life sentences. Of this number, one-third are under parole supervision in the community for the rest of their lives. The inmate population of life sentenced and indeterminate male offenders has increased by 26% since 1990 and represents 18% of the total institutional population.²

There are 179 women serving sentences of ten years or more and 128 of these are serving a life sentence.

Aboriginal offenders are over-represented in the lifer population as in the offender population generally, compared to their representation in the Canadian population. Aboriginal offenders make up 17.8% of the total offender population. Thirteen percent of the male lifer population are Aboriginal (15% of incarcerated lifers, 12% of lifers under community supervision) and 13% of women lifers are Aboriginal.

In-Reach Worker

The first In-Reach worker commencing in 1991 was the late Tom French. He described his role as initially keeping lifers "...alive, sane and out of trouble." From that first contact he went on to help the lifer plan and carry out a program that offers hope and a chance to successfully return to society.

Tom's venture into Millhaven Institution soon led to his presence into the other major institutions in the Kingston area and paved the way for In-Reach workers in the future. Today, 24 In-Reach workers in all five regions of the Correctional Service of Canada, (Pacific, Prairies, Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic) help new inmates develop a "correctional career" that spans the length of their stay in the institution rather than aimlessly drifting through their incarceration.

Role of the In-Reach worker

With the objective of contributing to the successful reintegration of long-term and life sentenced offenders, the In-Reach worker must assess and understand the needs of lifers and long-term offenders during the incarceration and community phases of their sentences. They will also provide those inmates with ongoing support and advice that will enable them to adjust to the daily reality of institutional life and acceptance of their sentence.

The In-Reach workers actively encourage individual lifers to contribute to the management of their own sentences by informing them of the programs available, the case management process and other appropriate resources in institutions and in the community.

In-Reach workers participate as well in Parole hearings and Judicial Reviews and assist lifers and long-term offenders in dealing with decisions of such hearings.

Services for women offenders

For the most part, there are more similarities between men and women lifers than differences. There are only a few specific areas where the interests and needs of women lifers or long-term offenders may differ:

- Women are more likely to have had custody of their children before incarceration. Therefore, maintaining contact and responsibility for their children is a higher priority and a bigger worry.
- Women are more likely to have problems with using or being prescribed medications.

Female In-Reach workers are currently established in the Quebec, Ontario and Pacific regions.

Feedback from an In-Reach worker

René Durocher is a In-Reach worker since 1994, and has dealt with an average of 120 clients a year. René has been assisting his clients by motivating them to achieve the goal of turning their life around. He has attended case conferences with the purpose of "having his clients take charge of their own lives by planning with case managers and In-Reach workers to fulfil their case plans."

In addition, René attended the Offender Management Review Board to support the client in the reduction of their security clearance application. By meeting with his clients an average of once a month, René became the continuous link with his clients during their incarceration period. Therefore, at the choice

of the In-Reach worker, he has been able to attend Parole Board Hearings and judicial reviews.

Conclusion

In-Reach workers are providing that necessary link and lifeline exemplifying that a lifer cannot only survive, but succeed. The In-Reach worker is the visible evidence that somewhere there is someone who cares. They also offer a message to correctional staff — here is living proof that rehabilitation, reintegration and even redemption works... perhaps more often than we realize. ■

¹ 340 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0P9.

² 340 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0P9.

³ Life Line National Resource Group (1998), *Implementing the Life Line Concept: Report of the Task Force on Long Term Offenders*, Ottawa.

New Release

The Safe Return of Offenders to the Community

Statistical Overview
April 2000
Research Branch, CSC

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The long-term offender in federal corrections: A profile

by *Larry Motiuk and Mark Nafekh*¹
Research Branch, Correctional Service of Canada

This article presents a comparison between life sentenced, indeterminate, and offenders serving sentences of 10 years or more by institutional and conditional release status, admissions and releases, criminal histories, and identified needs at admission as well as on conditional release. Additional comparisons are made between the long-term offender groupings and shorter sentenced offenders on type of offence and amount of time served in custody.

Comprehensive information was obtained for profiling the federal long-term offender population² through Correctional Service of Canada's Offender Management System (OMS), Offender Intake Assessment (OIA) process,³ and Community Intervention Scale (CIS).⁴

National and regional distribution

A December 31, 1999 review of the Correctional Service of Canada's OMS identified 6,040 (or 27%) long-term offenders under federal jurisdiction. More specifically, 3,728 (or 17%) were life sentenced offenders, 247 (or 1%) were indeterminate offenders and 2,065 (or 9%) were sentenced 10 years or more.

The Service's Ontario and Quebec regions account for the most long-term offenders, being responsible for almost two-thirds of the long-term offender population. There are more long-term offenders in the Quebec and Ontario regions relative to their proportion of all federal offenders.

Institutional population (stock)

The end-of-1999 review also determined that there were 3,805 (or 30.1%) long-term offenders in federal institutions. More specifically, 2,362 (or 18.7%) were life sentenced offenders, 238 (or 1.9%) were indeterminate offenders and 1,205 (or 9.5%) were sentenced 10 years or more. It is notable that in relation to the proportion of incarcerated offenders, there are more long-term offenders in the Quebec, Ontario and Pacific regions relative to all federal offenders.

Slightly more than one-third of federally incarcerated long-term offenders were held in maximum-security institutions, about one-quarter were in medium-security institutions and the remainder were in minimum-security institutions.

Conditional release population (stock)

As well, this review determined that there were 2,235 (or 22.5%) long-term offenders on conditional release. More specifically, 1,366 (or 13.8%) were life sentenced offenders, 9 (or 0.1%) were indeterminate offenders and 860 (or 8.7%) were sentenced 10 years or more. Again, an examination of each region's proportion of offenders on conditional release revealed more long-term offenders in the Quebec, Ontario and Pacific regions relative to their proportion of all federal offenders.

Consistent with the general federal offender population, long-term offenders were not evenly distributed across three types of conditional release — day parole, full parole and statutory release. In contrast, about four-fifths of long-term offenders were on full parole, one-seventh on day parole and one-fifteenth on statutory release.

Long-term offender admissions (flow)

The absolute number of long-term offenders in federal institutions declined by 0.8% over the 1999 calendar year (see Table 1). The Atlantic, Quebec and Ontario regions experienced decreases in the absolute number of long-term offenders (-16, -26 and -4, respectively). The Prairie and Pacific regions showed increases in long-term offenders in federal custody (+8 and +3, respectively).

When you compare regional "flow-to-stock ratios," the Ontario region retained a greater number of long-term offenders in federal custody relative to the other regions. Both the Atlantic and Pacific regions retained the least numbers of long-term offenders relative to the other regions.

Long-term offender releases (flow)

The number of long-term offenders supervised under some form of conditional release increased by 6.6% over the 1999 calendar year (see Table 2). Note that we removed from the release figures any offender who was at the end of their sentence.

Regionally, Ontario has experienced the most growth in the absolute number of long-term offenders under community supervision, with an increase of 45 cases. However, an examination of the regional flow-to-stock ratios reveals that the Ontario

Table 1

**Regional Distribution of the Federal Long-Term Offender
Institutional Population and Admissions (1998–1999)**

Region	Institutional Population 1998 [stock]	Admissions 1999 [flow]	Institutional Population 1999 [stock]	Flow-to-stock Ratio	Growth
Atlantic					
Life sentenced	201	20	196	1:9.90	-2.5
Indeterminate	12	1	16	1:16.0	+33.0
10 years +	82	9	67	1:7.44	-18.3
	295	30	279	1:9.30	
Quebec					
Life sentenced	585	50	580	1:11.6	-0.9
Indeterminate	8	0	10	1:10.0	+25.0
10 years +	430	51	407	1:7.98	-5.3
	1,023	101	997	1:9.87	
Ontario					
Life sentenced	731	58	735	1:12.7	+0.5
Indeterminate	95	9	99	1:11.0	+4.0
10 years +	358	50	346	1:6.92	-3.4
	1,184	117	1,180	1:10.0	
Prairie					
Life sentenced	362	34	373	1:11.0	+3.0
Indeterminate	38	4	41	1:10.3	+7.9
10 years +	216	29	214	1:7.38	-0.9
	616	67	628	1:9.37	
Pacific					
Life sentenced	475	47	478	1:10.2	+0.6
Indeterminate	65	11	72	1:6.55	+10.8
10 years +	178	20	171	1:8.55	-3.9
	718	78	721	1:9.24	
Total					
Life sentenced	2,354	209	2,362	1:11.3	+0.3
Indeterminate	218	25	238	1:9.52	+9.2
10 years +	1,264	159	1,205	1:7.58	+4.7
	3,836	393	3,805	1:9.68	-0.8

region experienced the lowest retention in long-term offenders under community supervision during 1999 relative to the number of community supervision releases.

Major offence categories

To examine differences in four major offence categories (homicide, sex, robbery and drug) across the selected long-term and non-long-term groupings, we separated the end-of-December 1999 institutional (stock) and conditional release (stock) populations (see Table 3).

We can see from Table 3 that life sentenced offenders (18.6%) in federal custody are over-represented by homicide (74.3%) and under-represented by sex (7.6%) and drug (6.5%) offenders. A similar result was found for the conditional release population.

In contrast, indeterminate offenders (1.9%) in institutions are under-represented by homicide (0.4%) and over-represented by sex offenders (9.0%). Sentenced 10 years or more offenders in federal prison (9.5%) are over-represented by sex offenders (12.5%), robbery (14.0%) and drug offenders (10.7%).

Table 2

**Regional Distribution of the Federal Long-Term Offender
Conditional Release Population and Releases (1998-1999)**

Region	Cond. Rel. Population 1998 [stock]	Releases 1999 [flow]	Cond. Rel. Population 1999 [stock]	Flow-to-stock Ratio	Growth
Atlantic					
Life sentenced	78	16	84	1:5.25	+7.7
Indeterminate	1	0	0	0:0	-100.0
10 years +	32	18	40	1:2.22	+25.0
	111	34	124	1:3.65	
Quebec					
Life sentenced	383	98	402	1:4.10	+5.0
Indeterminate	0	0	0	0:0	0.0
10 years +	346	102	366	1:3.59	+5.8
	729	200	768	1:3.84	
Ontario					
Life sentenced	362	82	379	1:4.62	+4.7
Indeterminate	2	0	2	0:0	0.0
10 years +	200	58	228	1:3.93	+14.0
	564	140	609	1:4.35	
Prairie					
Life sentenced	199	38	206	1:5.42	+3.5
Indeterminate	1	0	1	0:1	0.0
10 years +	70	32	79	1:2.47	+12.9
	270	70	286	1:4.09	
Pacific					
Life sentenced	280	83	295	1:3.55	+5.4
Indeterminate	7	4	6	1:1.50	-14.3
10 years +	136	48	147	1:3.06	+8.1
	423	135	448	1:3.20	
Total					
Life sentenced	1,302	317	1,366	1:4.31	+4.9
Indeterminate	11	4	9	1:2.25	-18.2
10 years +	784	258	860	1:3.33	+9.7
	2,097	579	2,235	1:3.86	+6.6

Table 3

Major Offence Categories Across Longer-Term and Shorter-Term Groupings

Population	Life sentenced	Indeterminate	Sentenced 10 years +	Shorter-term
Institutional	18.6%	1.9%	9.5%	70.0%
Homicide***	74.3%	0.4%	7.3%	18.1%
Sex***	7.6%	9.0%	12.5%	70.9%
Robbery***	9.7%	0.9%	14.0%	75.4%
Drug***	6.5%	0.4%	10.7%	82.4%
Conditional Release	13.8%	0.1%	8.7%	77.4%
Homicide***	71.9%	0.0%	7.0%	21.1%
Sex***	2.4%	0.6%	5.5%	91.5%
Robbery***	6.6%	0.0%	11.7%	81.7%
Drug***	2.8%	0.0%	10.8%	86.4%

*** = The difference is statistically significant $p < .001$; ** = $p < .01$; ns = non-significant

Table 4

Average Time Served (Years) Across Long-Term and Non-Long-Term Offender Groupings				
Population	Life sentenced	Indeterminate	Sentenced 10 years +	Non-long-term
Institutional	9.01 (0.1 to 44)	7.06 (0.1 to 32)	5.11 (0.1 to 32)	1.48 (0.1 to 41)
Conditional release	21.4 (1.5 to 59)	23.8 (16.9 to 36)	9.80 (0.3 to 36)	3.30 (0.3 to 43)

Time served

The average time served (at the end of 1999) for long-term offenders in federal custody was about 8 years, ranging from 0.1 to 44 years (revoked cases removed). On conditional release, long-term offenders had accumulated, on average 17 years of time served, ranging from 0.3 to 59 years.

Not surprisingly, the average amount of time served of long-term offenders across the various groupings (see Table 4) was found to be substantially greater than shorter term offenders, in institutions and on conditional release.

Profiling long-term male and female offenders

The Correctional Service of Canada's Offender Assessment (OIA) process collects and stores information on each federal offender's criminal and mental health background, social situation and education, factors relevant to determining criminal risk (such as number/variety of convictions and previous exposure/response to youth and adult corrections) and factors relevant to identifying offender needs (such as employment history, family

backgrounds, criminal associations, addictions and attitudes). While the results help determine institutional placement and correctional plans, a distribution of selected *criminal history* and *case need* variables can result in a comprehensive profile of the federal offender population.

In November 1994, the OIA process was implemented Service-wide. Four years later, we extracted case-specific information on available OIAs contained in OMS. To facilitate comparative analyses we focused on male and female offenders who had full OIAs and were under federal supervision on December 31, 1999. Note that these results are generalized to a recent admission population (within the last five years).

Criminal history

As mentioned, the OIA process collects extensive information on each federal offender's criminal history record. In Table 5, we present comparative statistics on selected criminal history variables for long-term male and female federal offenders across the selected long-term offender groupings.

We found significant differences across the long-term groupings for males in relation to young

Table 5

Variable	Criminal Histories Across Long-Term Offender Groupings					
	Life sentenced		Indeterminate		Sentenced 10 years or more	
	Male (738)	Female (44)	Male (103)	Female (0)	Male (241)	Female (18)
Young offender history						
Previous offences ***/ns	35.1%	20.5%	40.8%	—	35.5%	44.4%
Community supervision ***/ns	26.3%	14.3%	31.6%	—	26.4%	23.5%
Open custody ***/**	18.3%	11.9%	20.2%	—	19.0%	33.3%
Secure custody ***/ns	18.7%	11.6%	25.5%	—	21.5%	33.3%
Adult offender history						
Previous offences ns/ns	67.7%	52.3%	93.4%	—	71.8%	67.7%
Community supervision ns/**	53.3%	29.6%	87.6%	—	56.8%	38.9%
Provincial term(s) ns/*	50.1%	65.3%	83.0%	—	53.3%	27.8%
Federal term(s) ns/ns	22.6%	25.0%	63.2%	—	30.8%	27.8%

Note: statistical significance male/female
 *** = The difference is statistically significant $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; ns = not significant.

Table 6

Variable	Identified Needs at Admission					
	Life sentenced		Indeterminate		Sentenced 10 years or more	
	Male (2,553)	Female (69)	Male (237)	Female (0)	Male (1,613)	Female (23)
Employment ^{ns/ns}	65.3%	55.1%	62.5%	-	68.9%	56.5%
Marital/family ^{*** /ns}	67.4%	62.3%	75.5%	-	54.2%	73.9%
Associates ^{ns/ns}	65.1%	52.2%	61.2%	-	74.0%	69.1%
Substance abuse ^{ns/ns}	72.9%	53.6%	74.7%	-	64.5%	56.5%
Community functioning ^{ns/ns}	62.8%	49.3%	74.3%	-	60.6%	69.6%
Personal/emotional ^{*/ns}	95.9%	89.9%	100.0%	-	86.3%	91.3%
Attitude ^{ns/ns}	66.4%	33.3%	82.3%	-	70.8%	43.5%

Note: statistical significance male/female
 *** = The difference is statistically significant $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; ns = not significant.

offender (under 18) history. Indeterminate offenders were more likely to have had previous offences, community supervision, open and secure custody as young offenders than their life sentenced and sentenced 10 years or more counterparts.

Needs at admission

Among male long-term offenders at admission there appear to be no statistically meaningful differences between life sentenced, indeterminate and sentenced 10 years or more offenders in relation to all of the seven need areas (see Table 6). Similarly, for female offenders, there were no statistically meaningful differences between the various long-term groupings in relation to the various need domains. In Table 6, we can see that long-term offenders in each grouping are most needy in the area of personal/emotional orientation.

Needs on conditional release

The Service has an automated means of monitoring offender risk/needs levels in the community. OMS currently contains the overall risk/need and identified need levels gathered since implementation of the *Community Risk/Needs Management Scale* (now known as the *Community Intervention Scale* or *Reintegration Potential Reassessment*). This information can be retrieved at any time to provide caseload snapshots.

A national overview of seven separate identified needs (ratings of "some need for improvement" or "considerable need for improvement") in the conditional release population shows there is some variation across these need areas between long-term groupings and gender specific offender categorizations (see Table 7).

Table 7

Variable	Identified Needs on Conditional Release					
	Life sentenced		Indeterminate		Sentenced 10 years or more	
	Male (1,143)	Female (55)	Male (5)	Female (0)	Male (606)	Female (17)
Employment ^{***/**}	19.2%	9.1%	20.0%	-	28.7%	17.7%
Marital/family ^{***/**}	18.7%	20.0%	0.0%	-	21.0%	17.7%
Associates ^{***/**}	11.6%	18.2%	0.0%	-	26.5%	17.7%
Substance abuse ^{***/**}	14.4%	9.1%	20.0%	-	19.3%	23.5%
Community functioning ^{***/**}	17.0%	12.7%	0.0%	-	25.1%	11.8%
Personal/emotional ^{***/**}	33.4%	30.9%	20.0%	-	41.7%	35.3%
Attitude ^{ns/**}	7.0%	1.8%	0.0%	-	19.3%	5.9%

Note: statistical significance male/female, ns = not significant.
 *** = The difference is statistically significant $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; ns = not significant.

Among male and female long-term offenders there were statistically meaningful differences between the various groupings and most of the need areas. In Table 7, we also see that long-term offenders on conditional release are most needy in the area of personal/emotional orientation.

Discussion

Producing meaningful, timely and accurate profiles of selected offender characteristics can raise awareness about the composition of the federal long-term offender population. In Canada, long-term offenders are accumulating in institutions and on conditional release. As a group, long-term offenders are likely to have been convicted of a serious offence, have had extensive involvement with the criminal justice system as youth/adult and

possess some unique criminogenic needs at admission and on conditional release. Such findings point to offering specialized programs and services to long-term offenders. More importantly, careful attention should be paid to these individuals during the reintegration process. ■

- ¹ 340 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0P9.
- ² Motiuk, L.L. and R. Belcourt. "Profiling federal offenders with violent offences," *Forum on Corrections Research*, vol. 9, n° 2, 1997, p. 8-13.
- ³ Motiuk, L.L. "Classification for correctional programming: The Offender Intake Assessment (OIA) process," *Forum on Corrections Research*, vol. 9, n° 1, 1997, p. 18-22.
- ⁴ Motiuk, L.L. "The Community Risk/Needs Management Scale: An effective supervision tool," *Forum on Corrections Research*, vol. 9, n° 1, 1997, p. 8-12.

Let's Talk

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Release outcomes of long-term offenders

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While offenders serving long sentences have been studied to determine the impact of incarceration, there has only been limited research on their rate of recidivism. Offenders serving long sentences differ from the general inmate population in terms of the crimes they have committed, the age at which they are released from prison and the length of their criminal record. Given the seriousness of their crimes, offenders serving long sentences are often perceived by the general public to be at a high risk to re-offend; however, a few studies suggest that these offenders may be at a lower risk to re-offend than those serving shorter sentences. This article examines readmission and recidivism rates of three groups of long-term offenders released to the community from a Correctional Service of Canada penitentiary: those serving life and other indeterminate sentences, those serving long determinate sentences (10 years or more) and those serving shorter determinate sentences (less than 10 years).

Almost one-third of the approximately 13,000 offenders in Canadian federal penitentiaries are serving sentences of ten years or more. Given the size of this offender group, and the amount of time they will be incarcerated, a task force was created to study their special needs. The *Report of the Task Force on Long-Term Offenders*² studied offenders serving long sentences to determine what interventions would be appropriate. The Task Force produced a report with 21 recommendations.

Numerous studies have examined the institutional behaviour and adjustment to incarceration among offenders serving long sentences.³ However, only a few studies have looked at how successful offenders serving long sentences are after they have been released to the community. These offenders differ from the general offender population on the basis of the type of offences they committed. Generally, they have committed the most serious violent offences, most frequently involving homicide (54%), but also including robbery, sexual assault and assault. Among Canadian federal offenders serving indeterminate sentences, over 90% are serving sentences for homicide or homicide-related offences.

The main purpose of this study is to determine if offenders serving long sentences differ from those serving shorter sentences in terms of their release outcomes and the patterns of recidivism observed. In addition, the results from this study make it possible to determine if offenders serving different

types of sentences (determinate and indeterminate) differ in release outcome patterns. Comparisons like these will help to improve how these offenders should be risk managed after release to the community.

Comparison groups

In Canada, most sentences that include incarceration are for a fixed period of time and are referred to as determinate sentences. Determinate sentences do not require that the person remain in custody for the entire length of the sentence. Rather, the National Parole Board may grant them a discretionary release at various eligibility dates during their sentence. If they are still in custody at two-thirds of their sentence, they are normally released to serve the final one-third under supervision.

Offenders may also be sentenced to indeterminate sentences. The most common indeterminate sentence is a "life" sentence. Offenders sentenced to life remain under the authority of the Correctional Service of Canada until they die, but do not generally remain incarcerated for the entire period. Offenders convicted of first-degree murder are automatically required to serve 25 years in custody before they are eligible for parole. However, under section 745 of the *Criminal Code* (also known as "faint hope") there is possibility of release by means of a judicial review at 15 years. For offenders sentenced to life for second-degree murder or for other offences, the judge sets the date they are eligible for parole with the minimum period being 10 years and the maximum 25 years. When offenders have completed the minimum custodial portion of the sentence, they are reviewed for parole and if granted, are released by the National Parole Board. Once released to the community, they are supervised by Correctional Service of Canada parole officers and may be returned to federal custody if they fail to meet the conditions of their release or if they commit a new offence.

Another form of indeterminate sentence, used with offenders who have shown a history of violent (including sexual) crimes, is the declaration by the court that the individual is a "dangerous offender." Once declared a dangerous offender by the court, the person must remain in custody until the National Parole Board determines that the individual is no longer a danger to the community.

Each of the three groups of offenders used in the study are more completely defined below along with some of their demographic characteristics.

Indeterminate: Offenders serving life sentences and those declared dangerous offenders by the court.⁴ The group accounts for 2% of all releases and includes 280 offenders, of which 4% (11) are women. Most offenders in this group are Caucasian (84%), 11% are Aboriginal and 6% are from other racial groups. On average, these offenders were 34 years of age at admission and 44 years of age at time of release.

Long-term determinate: These offenders have determinate sentences of 10 years or more. The group accounts for 3% of all releases and includes 373 offenders, of which 2% (8) are women. Aboriginal offenders account for 8% of these offenders, while 78% are Caucasian and 14% are from other racial groups. On average, these offenders were 32 years of age at admission and 38 years of age at release.

Shorter-term determinate: Offenders with determinate sentences of less than 10 years. They account for the majority of the federal offender population released in any one year — approximately 95%. Over the two years of releases studied, the group included 11,521 offenders, of which 3% (311) were women. Approximately 13% of these offenders are Aboriginal, similar to their representation in the general federal offender population, while 78% were Caucasian and 9% were from other racial groups. On average, these offenders were 32 years of age at admission and 33 years of age at time of release.

Follow-up

All offenders released from federal penitentiaries in 1993 and 1994 were followed from their release date

to January 2000. This provided a minimum of four years for follow-up and a maximum of seven years. Survival analysis was used to evaluate the differences between groups on rates of being offence free (no recidivism) over time.

Survival analysis provides a number of unique benefits. First, it makes it possible to include all cases without regard to length of time they could be followed-up. Second, survival analysis provides a visual examination of the data, showing the rate of failure across time, so that groups that fail very quickly after release can be identified and compared to those that fail more slowly and over a longer period of time.

Two measures of recidivism are used — new conviction and new violent conviction. New conviction includes any offence that occurred after release for which an offender is required to serve a period of incarceration in a federal penitentiary. New violent conviction is similar to the new conviction measure but includes violent offences only, such as all murder related offences, assault, sexual assault and robbery.

Current offence

The most serious offence that offenders had been convicted of up to the time of their release is presented in Table 1. The order of the offences represents the relative seriousness of the offences for the analysis. An offender with a murder conviction and a sexual assault would only be counted in the murder group for the purposes of this study.

Most of the offenders (85%) in the indeterminate group (“lifers”) were convicted of second-degree murder. Offenders released with a first-degree murder charge were convicted prior to 1976 when a change in legislation required those convicted of first-degree murder to serve 25 years in custody before being eligible for parole. None of the

Table 1

Offence History

Type	Indeterminate	Long-term determinate	Shorter-term determinate
Murder 1 ¹	4.3 (12)	N/A	N/A
Murder 2 ²	85.0 (238)	0.5 (2) ³	N/A
Manslaughter/Attempt/ Conspire Murder	3.9 (11)	25.3 (94)	4.3 (486)
Sexual offence	3.2 (9)	8.3 (31)	13.4 (1 549)
Assault	1.4 (4)	14.2 (53)	17.9 (2 058)
Robbery	1.4 (4)	26.1 (97)	22.6 (2 604)
Other offences	0.7 (2)	25.6 (75)	41.8 (4 822)
Number of offences	280	372	11,519

1. includes Capital Murder; 2. includes Non-capital Murder; 3. includes international transfers with determinate sentences.

offenders convicted after 1976 were eligible for parole in 1993 and 1994. For the long-term determinate group, about one quarter had a homicide-related offence, another quarter were convicted of robbery and another quarter were convicted of either sexual or other assaults. The remaining offenders in the group were convicted of a variety of other offences. By comparison, for federal offenders serving determinate sentences of less than 10 years, robbery was the most common offence (23%), followed by assaults (18%) and sexual assaults (13%).

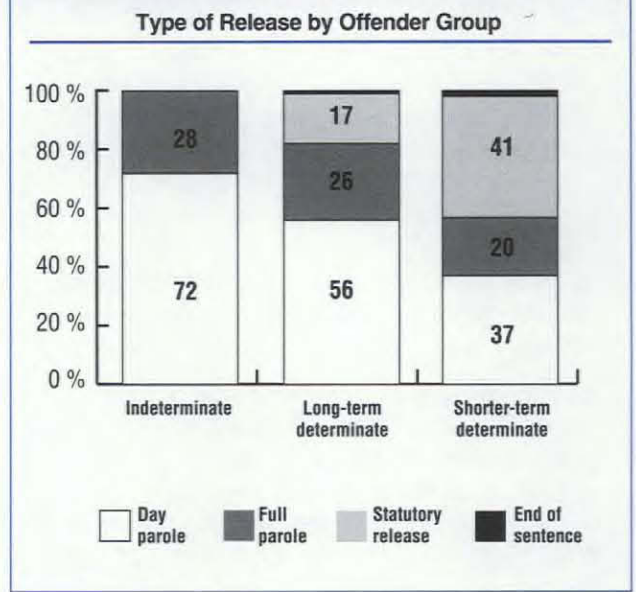
Release Type

Offenders serving indeterminate and determinate sentences are not eligible for the same types of release and this could affect the follow-up results. Offenders serving indeterminate sentences are only eligible for day parole and full parole whereas offenders serving determinate sentences have four release options. Offenders serving determinate sentences are eligible for parole and day parole early in their sentence. If these offenders have not been released after serving two-thirds of their sentence they are automatically eligible for statutory release. In special cases, offenders may be detained in custody until the end of their sentence. In general, offenders released on parole remain under supervision longer than offenders released on their statutory date.

To determine the effect the different release options might have on the follow-up results, it is important to look at the types of release for each of the offender groups. These data are presented in Figure 1. For offenders with determinate sentences, as sentence length increases the percentage of offenders released on statutory release increases. Almost three-quarters (72%) of the offenders serving indeterminate sentences are first released on day parole with the balance released directly to full parole. Over half (56%) of the offenders serving long-term determinate sentences are first released on day parole and another one-quarter (26%) are released on full parole. Most of the balance of these offenders are released after serving two-thirds of their sentence (statutory release) and a very small percentage are released to the community only at the end of their sentence. Offenders serving shorter-term determinate sentences are most likely to receive statutory release (41%) or day parole (37%). A slightly higher percentage of shorter-term offenders, than the long-term offenders, are released at the end of their sentence.

The data on release types suggests that all other things being equal, both readmission and new conviction with a federal sentence (two years or more) will be highest for offenders serving indeterminate sentences,

Figure 1



followed by long-term determinate and lowest for the offenders in the shorter term determinate group. These differences would occur because offenders serving longer sentences are under supervision for longer periods of time and therefore offer a greater time at risk in the community for breaches of release conditions or new offences.

Release outcome: new offences

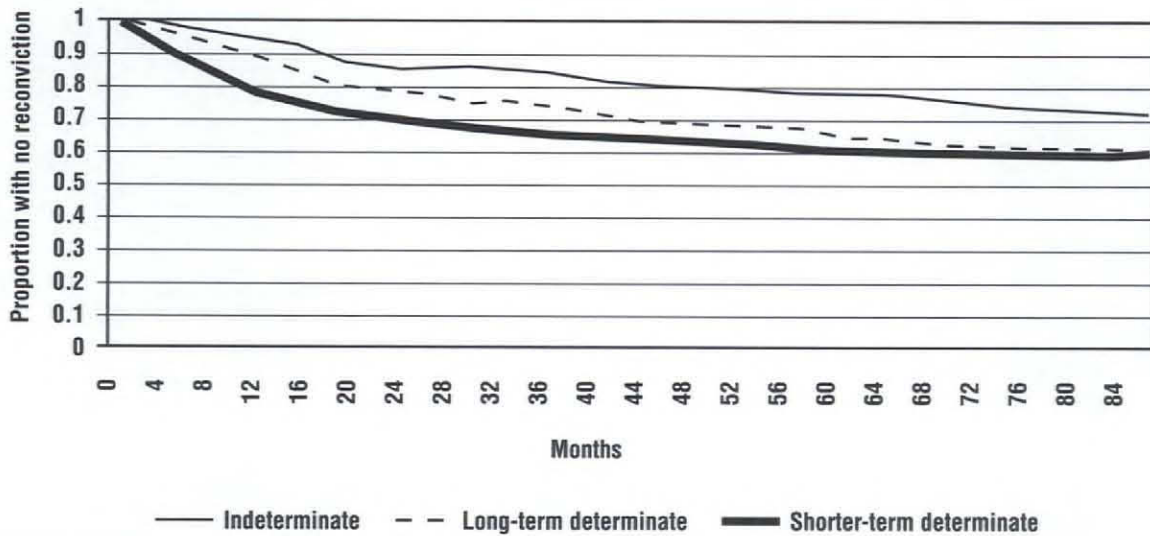
At the end of the seven year follow-up period, approximately 60% of offenders serving determinate sentences had not been convicted of a new offence, while 73% of offenders serving indeterminate sentences had not been convicted of a new offence. While the offence free rate by the end of seven years was similar for the two determinate sentence groups, the pattern over the release period was quite different, as shown in Figure 2.

The shorter-term determinate group has the poorest survival curve with the fastest decline. Just over 20% were convicted of a new offence in the first 12 months after release and 30% were convicted of new offences in the first two years. By comparison, slightly more than 10% of the long-term determinate group and about 5% of the indeterminate group had a new conviction within the first year of release.

The survival curves for all three groups remain different throughout the follow-up period except that shortly after the five-year point, the curve for the long-term determinate group starts to match that of the shorter-term determinate group; however, the indeterminate group performs the best out of the three groups.

Figure 2

Survival Rates of Long-Term Offender Releases (Offence Free)



Release outcome: new violent offences

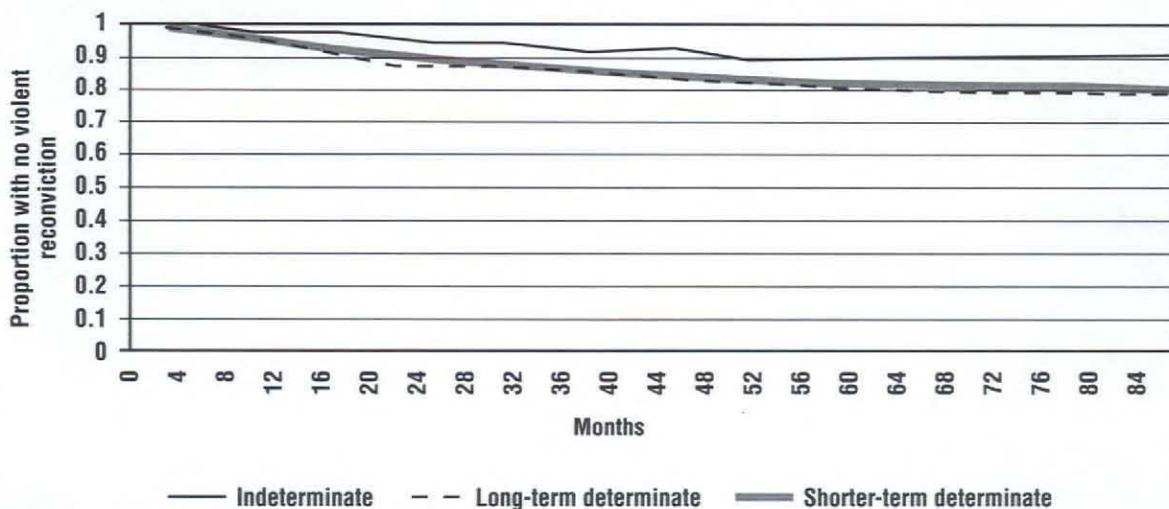
A survival analysis using new violent offence (see Figure 3) indicates that after seven years 89% of the offenders in the indeterminate group remained free of a new violent offence compared with approximately 80% of offenders in the shorter- and long-term determinate sentence groups. The pattern of re-offending with a new violent offence was very similar for the two determinate groups, which is different than that observed for the new convictions, in general.

Analyses were also conducted to look at the number and type of new convictions. In addition to being

less likely to have a new conviction, offenders serving indeterminate sentences had fewer new convictions over the entire follow-up period. For example, while 1% of offenders in the indeterminate group had more than five new convictions, this increased to 5% for the long-term determinate group and 10% for the shorter-term determinate group. More specifically, the most serious offence committed was non-violent for over half of the indeterminate group who had a new offence. In addition, no offenders in the indeterminate group had a new conviction for a homicide-related offence.

Figure 3

Survival Rates of Long-Term Offender Releases (Violent Offence Free)



Conclusions

Overall, the results indicate that offenders serving indeterminate sentences have a lower recidivism rate than offenders serving determinate sentences. Offenders serving long-term determinate sentences have better survival rates, particularly in the early years after release, than offenders serving shorter-term sentences. Differences between the groups, in terms of new convictions, are meaningful and significant during the first five years of follow-up and this is consistent with previous research. However, after five years the curves for the two determinate groups merge and the differences seem to disappear, but the indeterminate group remains different with a high survival rate, with almost three-quarters of offenders remaining free of new convictions.

Unfortunately, the reasons for the differences between the groups cannot be identified with from this research; however, data presented showed that the comparison groups differ in terms of their type of offence, the type of release and age. For example, offenders with indeterminate sentences are older, more likely to have received a conviction for homicide and more likely to be

released on day parole than offenders in the other groups. Earlier research has shown that sentence length by itself does not have an effect on recidivism⁵ so other factors must be responsible. The recidivism data suggest that within the group of offenders serving indeterminate sentences, there is a proportion that is at low risk to reoffend. Additional research will be needed to develop tools to identify this group. The challenge for correctional staff is to work with this group to ensure they can safely be released at the earliest possible date. ■

¹ 340 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0P9.

² Implementing the Life Line Concept: *Report of the Task Force on Long-Term Offenders*, Ottawa, ON, Correctional Service of Canada, February, 1998.

³ Zamble, E. "Behavior and Adaptation in Long-Term Prison Inmates: Descriptive Longitudinal Results," *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, vol. 19, n° 4, 1992, p. 409-425.

⁴ This group also includes a few offenders who, under previous legislation, had been declared dangerous sexual offenders and habitual offenders.

⁵ Motiuk, L.L., R. Belcourt and J. Bonta. "Managing High Risk Offenders: A Post-Detention Follow-up," R-39, Correctional Service of Canada, 1995.

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Classifying offenders serving life sentences

by Fred P. Luciani¹

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Initial security and reclassification of lifers present a number of unique challenges for correctional staff. While the gravity of the offence is common to all offenders serving life sentences, the security risk profile of lifers diverge in many important ways. The research evidence supports continuing the application of the Custody Rating Scale and Security Reclassification Scale to lifers, relying on the professional discretion of staff, considering additional guidelines and advising caution.

Objective measures of risk assessment in the management of offenders have yielded a number of tangible benefits for corrections. These include improvements in the consistency and accuracy of security placement, programming and discretionary release decisions, the formulation of publicly explicit and defensible norms for decision-making, and provision for regular tracking, verification and refinement of assessment measures.

Many actuarial assessment instruments rely on statistically weighted items and standardized decision rules that provide relative ratings of individual risk derived from the aggregate risk profile of the subject population. Objective instruments are now routinely applied by the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) to support initial and subsequent reclassification of offenders, to assess offender risk and needs, reintegration potential, education aptitude, psychological functioning, program responsiveness and in many other areas as determined by individual circumstances.

Substantial evidence continues to accumulate to support the effectiveness of objective measures in both clinical² and correctional application³ and when combined with seasoned judgement a balanced decision-making modal can be expected. Despite the growing confidence in these measures, field testing⁴ and operational reviews⁵ of security classification scales, the ongoing analysis of scale overrides have raised concerns.

Research found that scales applied under conditions for which they are not designed and factors unrelated to risk can result in assessments contrary to ratings prescribed by the scale. Field responses also indicated that scale overrides are more likely to occur when risk factors with high face validity are not included in the instrument (often because of lack of statistical support) or item weightings are not in

accord with the perceptions of the users. Finally, dealing with outliers or unique sub-groups within the subject population can present problems.

Most clinical or correctional populations contain unique groups that may not fully share or contain characteristics distinct from the aggregate profile. Unless assessment instruments are specifically validated and recalibrated, caution is warranted and dedicated instructions for dealing with the groups are recommended. In the development and operational review of CSC's classification scales many of these issues emerged in applying the scales to the "lifer" group and form the topic of the following discussion.

Custodial classification

For federal corrections, initial penitentiary placement of offenders begins with the Custody Rating Scale⁶ (CRS), a 12 item scale based on static, historical indices of institutional adjustment and public safety risk. The CRS assigns a security level rating and is applied at admission to all new offenders and those readmitted by way of conditional release revocation. Future security reviews for reclassification purposes take place at any time following the transfer of the offender to the initial placement site but no later than the first anniversary of the transfer and annually thereafter.

Reclassification is supported by the Security Reclassification Scale⁷ (SRS), a 13 item scale that with the exception of History of Involvement Institutional Incident drawn from the CRS, all items are based on recent in-custody behaviour or progress. (The SRS was recently revised to include two additional items and adjustments to the item scores, cut-off values and override procedures.)

Life sentences

An indeterminate or life sentence can result from a number of dispositions including convictions for first- and second-degree murder, a dangerous offender designation including offenders designated under former dangerous sex offender legislation, and offenders convicted of a serious offence where life is imposed as a maximum sentence. The group is generally referred to as the "lifer" population.

A recent survey of the CSC offender population found that 2,732 or approximately 20% of the total population of offenders were currently serving an indeterminate sentence. The longest serving lifer was admitted in December 1955. Offenders serving time for first- or second-degree murder constitute the majority (85%) of lifers followed by offenders designated as dangerous offenders (9%) and offenders serving life as a maximum (4%). Lifers were far more likely to be admitted by warrant of committal (83%) and were most often incarcerated in medium-security (59%) facilities. Reintegration potential ratings were available on 2,649 lifers, most of whom received either low (45%) or medium (42%) reintegration potential ratings with the remainder rated high reintegration potential. Approximately 30% of the current lifer population were past parole eligibility and another 13% will reach eligibility within two years.

Classifying offenders serving life sentences

While lifers undergo similar assessment procedures as offenders serving determinate sentences, they often present unique classification challenges. The gravity of the offence is common to all offenders serving life sentences while the security risk profile of lifers diverge in many important ways. They range from your stereotypical, premeditated contract killer, hardened by a life of crime and incarceration, to the lifer whose sole offence and incarceration resulted from a domestic dispute, an impulsive act with no obvious antecedents and for which the lifer is often remorseful.

Static risk instruments assume that the best predictor of future criminal or institutional behaviour is past criminal or institutional behaviour. In the case of many lifers, their past bears little relationship to the offence that landed them in federal custody and often they have little or no incarceration history. Offence severity and sentence length are heavily weighted against the lifer by the CRS, however, these are offset by the very favourable scores on items that assess criminal or incarceration history, age and street stability and often result in a contradictory security risk profile.

While incarcerated, lifers tend to be the most well-adjusted, co-operative offenders who maintain and even strengthen their community resources while making the most of programming opportunities to address criminogenic needs, improve their educational and employment skills. The Security Reclassification Scale (SRS) is dominated by in-custody, dynamic factors assessed during the current year of incarceration and thus provides ample opportunity for many lifers to quickly improve reclassification ratings irrespective of offence severity, sentence length and remote release potential.

Lifers form a unique group and many share characteristics distinct from those of the aggregate profile on which the scales are based. The following analyses are based on regular tracking of the classification scales and placements decisions for lifers and non-lifers. An examination of the operational data gathered serves to illustrate many of the issues encountered in applying the security classification scales to the lifer population.

Initial security classification

In fiscal year 1999/2000, 3,985 offenders were admitted to federal custody for which both a CRS rating and a final Offender Security Level (OSL) decision was available on the Offender Management System. (OSL represents the final classification decision rendered by the Parole Officer at time of admission). The sample consisted of 133 (3%) offenders identified as lifers.

Table 1 compares the concordance, override and distribution results of the CRS ratings and OSL decisions for lifers and non-lifers admitted for the year. The results for lifers are presented in the top left of each cell and for non-lifers in the bottom right. CRS/OSL concordance is presented on the shaded diagonal, override to higher security in the cells below the diagonal and to lower security in the cells above the diagonal. The distribution by CRS ratings across security levels is found on the row marginal and for OSL decisions on the column marginal.

At admission, the CRS assigned more lifers maximum-security ratings (38%) than did the OSL decisions (20%), while there were no real differences in the distribution by CRS ratings (0%) or OSL decisions (1%) to minimum-security. (Note: The CRS is purposefully weighted to prevent the direct assignment of a minimum-security rating to a lifer at initial placement). OSL decisions leaned heavily toward medium decisions (79%), exceeding CRS scale ratings (62%).

The CRS/OSL concordance rate for lifers at admission was lower (74%) compared to the rate (80%) for non-lifers. As expected, far fewer maximum-security ratings (8%) and decisions (5%) were assigned to non-lifers than lifers and substantially more non-lifers (35%) received minimum-security decisions. Override of lifers were predominately to lower security (21%) consisting almost exclusively of offenders rated maximum security by the scale who received medium security OSL decisions. In contrast, overrides of non-lifers were evenly split to higher (10%) and lower (10%) security.

Table 1

CRS/OSL Concordance Lifers and Non-lifers: Admission Population

OSL Decision

CRS Rating	LIFER	OSL Decision			CRS DISTRIBUTION
	NON-LIFER	MAXIMUM	MEDIUM	MINIMUM	
MAXIMUM	17 %	4 %	21 %	0 %	38 %
MEDIUM	4 %	1 %	58 %	1 %	62 %
MINIMUM	0 %	0 %	9 %	30 %	0 %
OSL DISTRIBUTION	20 %	5 %	79 %	1 %	(n = 133)
			60 %	35 %	(n = 3,852)

Note: Rows and columns may not tally accurately due to the effect of rounding.

Security reclassification

An operational review of the SRS⁸ was recently completed involving 6,993 applications of reclassification scale administered from the first of January to mid-November, 1999. SRS results and OSL decisions were available on 1,015 lifers, representing about 37% of the total lifer population. Table 2 compares the concordance, override and distribution results of the SRS ratings and OSL decisions for the resident lifer and non-lifer population. The results of the application of the SRS and security reclassification decisions of the lifer population provided some interesting contrasts to the CRS and initial decision results.

The SRS rated fewer lifers maximum-security (5%) and more minimum-security (29%) than did OSL decisions (11% and 18% respectively). OSL decisions again favoured medium decisions (70%) over scale ratings (65%).

The SRS/OSL concordance rate (see diagonal of Table 2) for lifers at reclassification was lower (80%) than the rate (86%) for non-lifers. Non-lifers were more frequently rated maximum-security (12%) and fewer were rated minimum-security (21%) than the lifer sample. In contrast to admission overrides, lifer overrides at reclassification were predominately to higher security (19%) consisting largely of offenders rated minimum-security who received OSL decisions of medium-security (12%) and medium-rated who received maximum OSL decisions (6%). Less than 2% of lifer overrides was to lower security. Non-lifer overrides to higher security (11%) also exceeded those to lower security (4%).

Concordance and overrides

In contrast to CRS ratings of lifers, the SRS was more liberal relative to SRS ratings of non-lifers and OSL decisions. Lifers were more frequently assigned to lower security levels by the SRS than non-lifers but more likely to be overridden by OSL decisions to higher security. The higher proportion of lifers assigned lower security ratings reflects the positive adjustment and ability of lifers to utilize incarceration opportunities to lower their risk profile. The large number of lifers assigned medium-security OSL decisions at admission in combination with lifers ability to earn minimum SRS ratings (often within a few years of arriving at a medium facility) becomes problematic.

The decision to assign a lifer to minimum-security must balance positive institutional adjustment against severity of the offence and length of sentence, and address the question of expanding resources designed to prepare offenders for release on those with no immediate release potential. In part, these issues explain the large number of minimum-rated lifers overridden to medium-security at the reclassification review.

Conclusions

While objective security classification measures offer many benefits, they are not intended to simply replace but rather to inform professional judgement, a maxim especially true in dealing with the security classification needs of offenders serving life sentences. For offenders serving life sentences overrides of both the CRS and SRS were more

Table 2

SRS/OSL Concordance for Lifers and Non-Lifers: Resident Population					
OSL Decision					
SRS Rating	LIFER	MAXIMUM	MEDIUM	MINIMUM	CRS DISTRIBUTION
	NON-LIFER				
MAXIMUM		5 %	0 %	0 %	5 %
		11 %	1 %	0 %	12 %
MEDIUM		6 %	58 %	1 %	65 %
		6 %	59 %	3 %	68 %
MINIMUM		0 %	12 %	17 %	29 %
		0 %	5 %	16 %	21 %
OSL DISTRIBUTION		11 %	70 %	18 %	(n = 1,015)
		17 %	65 %	19 %	(n = 5,971)

Note: Rows and Columns may not tally accurately due to the effect of rounding.

frequent and concordance rates lower and there was greater deviation from the design targets in the distribution across security levels. In addition, the classification override patterns of lifers suggest that the CRS overestimates security risk at admission and the SRS underestimates security risk at reclassification.

Security classification practice embraces the principle of "least restrictive method of confinement" and this is evident at admission where efforts are made to limit the placement of lifers to maximum-security. Consequently, many lifers begin their incarceration at medium-security where they adjust well, earn lower SRS scores and become candidates for minimum-security. The influence of sentence gravity, length and no immediate release potential, however, often overtake good adjustment resulting in frequent overrides to medium-security. Nonetheless, lifers earn high or medium reintegration potential ratings and many do migrate to lower security facilities where they continue their successful adjustment.

Considerable attention in this article and in earlier reports has been paid to CRS and SRS/OSL concordance rates and while they provide an indication of the concurrent validity of the instrument, the pursuit of higher concordance would do little to raise confidence in the scales. Correctional policy is to encourage staff to exercise their professional discretion and provides procedures to do so.

It may be possible to recalibrate the CRS and SRS scales to improve concordance, however, before doing so it would be more helpful to gather additional information about how well the scales predict institutional adjustment, escape and public

risk. It may also be possible to design classification scales specifically for offenders serving life sentences, however, the net gains are not obvious. The evidence supports continuing the application of the scales to lifers and the prudent option would appear to be to continue current practice, rely on the discretion of staff, consider additional guidelines and advise caution. ■

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Women offenders serving long sentences in custody

by Brian A. Grant and Sara L. Johnson¹

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The 1998 Report of the Task Force on Long-Term Offenders² provided an overview of federal offenders serving long sentences as well as a number of recommendations on how their time in custody could be more productive.

This article profiles the characteristics of women offenders serving long sentences in federal custody as of February 1, 1999. The women offenders were divided into three groups: lifers serving sentences for first degree murder, lifers serving sentences for second degree murder and offenders serving fixed sentences of 10 years or more.

In 1999, 82 women were incarcerated in Canadian federal penitentiaries serving sentences of 10 years or more.³ The *Report of the Task Force on Long-Term Offenders* states that offenders serving long sentences should be managed differently from those serving shorter sentences. Eventually, offenders with long sentences will have their cases reviewed by the National Parole Board (NPB) to determine if they are ready for release to the community. Therefore they must be adequately prepared for their release if they are to be successfully reintegrated into the community.

The *Report* also points out that offenders with long sentences could serve as a resource for institutions. Given their long period of incarceration, they can be trained to provide services within the prison to make their period of incarceration more meaningful and productive. Skills that are developed in the institution can be transferred to community work sites upon release thereby increasing the likelihood of successful reintegration. With respect to women offenders in particular, the Service has implemented programs that appear especially beneficial to those serving longer sentences. For example, long-term offenders are particularly good candidates for the intensive training and continuous nature of the Peer Support⁴ and Canine Programs for women.

For this article, offenders serving a sentence of 10 years or more are considered long-term offenders. In Canada, most custodial sentences are for a fixed period of time and are referred to as determinate sentences. Determinate sentences do not require that the offender remains in custody for the entire length of the sentence. Rather, they may be released to the community to complete their sentences after having served one-third of the time in custody if the NPB grants full parole. If they are still in custody at two-thirds of their sentence they are normally

released on statutory release. In exceptional circumstances they may be required to serve their entire sentence in custody.

The courts give some offenders indeterminate sentences. The most common indeterminate sentence is "life." A woman offender sentenced to life remains under the authority of the Correctional Service until she dies, but does not necessarily remain incarcerated for the entire period. At the time of sentencing, an offender convicted of first-degree murder is automatically required to serve 25 years in custody before she is eligible for parole. Offenders sentenced to life for second-degree murder or other offences have the date they are eligible for parole set by the judge with the minimum period being 10 years and the maximum 25 years. When offenders have completed the minimum custody portion of the sentence they are eligible for parole and may be released to serve the remainder of their sentence in the community if the NPB believes they will not endanger public safety. If they are deemed to still be a danger, then they must remain in custody until the NPB is satisfied they are safe to release. Once released to the community, an offender may be returned to custody if she fails to meet the conditions of her release or if she commits a new offence.

Comparison groups

We compared all women and men offenders in custody serving long sentences. Long sentences were divided into three types:

Life-murder 1: offenders serving a life sentence for first-degree murder.

Life-murder 2: offenders serving a life sentence for second-degree murder. It is possible to get a life sentence for an offence other than murder, but no women are currently serving life sentences for offences other than murder.

Long-term determinate: offenders serving determinate sentences of 10 years or more.

Description

Approximately one-quarter of women offenders in custody are serving long sentences as compared to about one-third of men offenders. Table 1 presents a

Table 1

Comparison of Women and Men by Type of Sentence		
Sentence type	Women % (n)	Men % (n)
Life: Murder 1	20 (16)	15 (624)
Life: Murder 2 and other	54 (44)	39 (1,666)
Dangerous Offender	0 (0)	6 (243)
Long-term determinate	27 (22)	41 (1,758)
Number of cases	(82)	(4,291)

comparison between men and women offenders of the types of long-term sentences being served. As of February 1, 1999, there were 82 women serving long sentences, the majority of which were serving life sentences for second-degree murder (54%). About one-quarter of the women offenders serving long sentences have determinate sentences of 10 years or more, while two-fifths of the men offenders have long determinate sentences. Compared to their male counterparts, women offenders are slightly more likely to be serving a sentence for first- or second-degree murder (20%). However, they are less likely to be serving long determinate sentences than men.

Race. Approximately three-quarters of women serving long sentences are Caucasian, while 15% are Aboriginal, and 10% are from other racial groups. This is consistent to the race profile for the entire federally sentenced women inmate population. Women offenders convicted of first-degree murder were more likely to be Caucasian (24%) than the other racial groups, while Aboriginal women (67%) and women in other racial groups (63%) were more likely to be serving a life sentence for second-degree murder. Approximately one-quarter of the offenders in each racial group were serving a determinate sentence of 10 years or more.

Age. Women offenders in the life-murder 1 group were found to be, on average, over 10 years older than those in the other two groups. For example, the average age of women in the life-murder 1 group was just under 50 years of age while for women in the life-murder 2 group it was 38 years of age and for women in the long-term determinate group it was approximately 36 years of age. In addition, women serving life sentences for murder 1 were, on average, 41 years of age at admission compared to women in the other groups who were between 30 and 31 years of age when admitted. Interestingly, on average, women offenders in the life-murder 1 group will be 64 years of age when they reach full parole eligibility.

Table 2

Most Serious Offence of In-Custody Long-Term Women Offenders (n)			
Offence type	Life-murder 1	Life-murder 2	Long-term determinate
Murder 1	100% (16)	N/A	N/A
Murder 2	N/A	100% (44)	N/A
Manslaughter/attempt/conspire murder	N/A	N/A	59% (13)
Sexual offence	N/A	N/A	0
Assault	N/A	N/A	18% (4)
Robbery	N/A	N/A	0
Other violent offence	N/A	N/A	5% (1)
Non-violent offence	N/A	N/A	18% (4)
Total	19% (16)	54% (44)	27% (22)

Note: N/A = not applicable

Type of Offence. In this sample, the most serious offences committed by the majority of women in custody serving long determinate sentences are manslaughter, attempted murder or conspiracy to commit murder (13 offenders or 59%). An additional 18% of women serving long sentences have been convicted of assault while the balance have been convicted of other offences (See Table 2).

Time Served in Custody. The length of time women serving long sentences have been in custody since their admission is presented in Table 3. Most of these women have served a relatively short period of time in custody (5 years or less), and therefore have a considerable amount of time left to serve of their sentence. This finding is particularly important given that life sentenced offenders are not eligible for parole for between 10 and 25 years, and will therefore spend substantial amount of time in custody before their release.

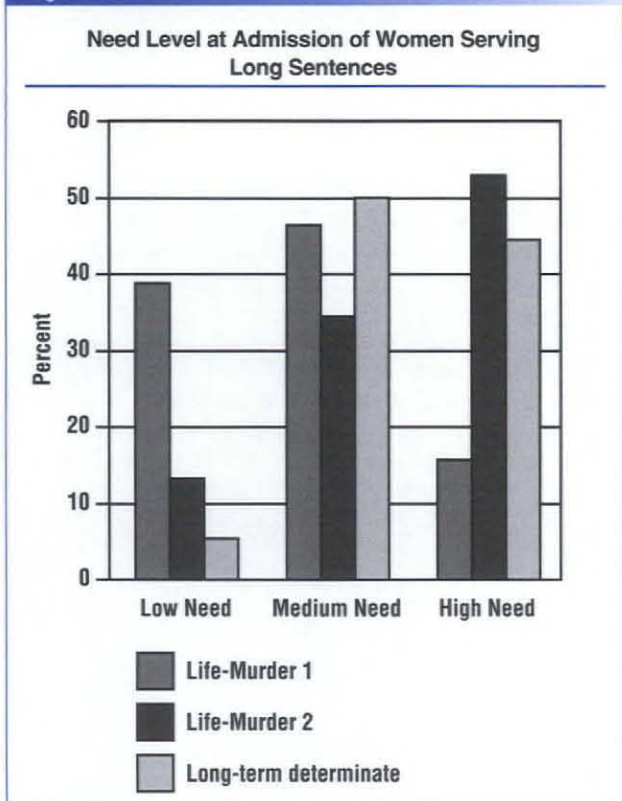
Need Level. Shortly after admission to a federal prison offenders are assessed to determine their level of criminogenic need. These needs impact on the risk of

Table 3

Time Served Among Women Long-Term Offenders in Custody			
Time served	Life-murder 1 % (n)	Life-murder 2 % (n)	Long-term determinate % (n)
5 years or less	37.5 (6)	54.5 (24)	47.6 (10)
5 to 10 years	18.7 (6)	25.0 (11)	33.3 (7)
10 years or more	25.0 (4)	20.4 (9)	19.0 (4)
Number of cases	(16)	(44)	(21)*

** Information missing for one offender*

Figure 1

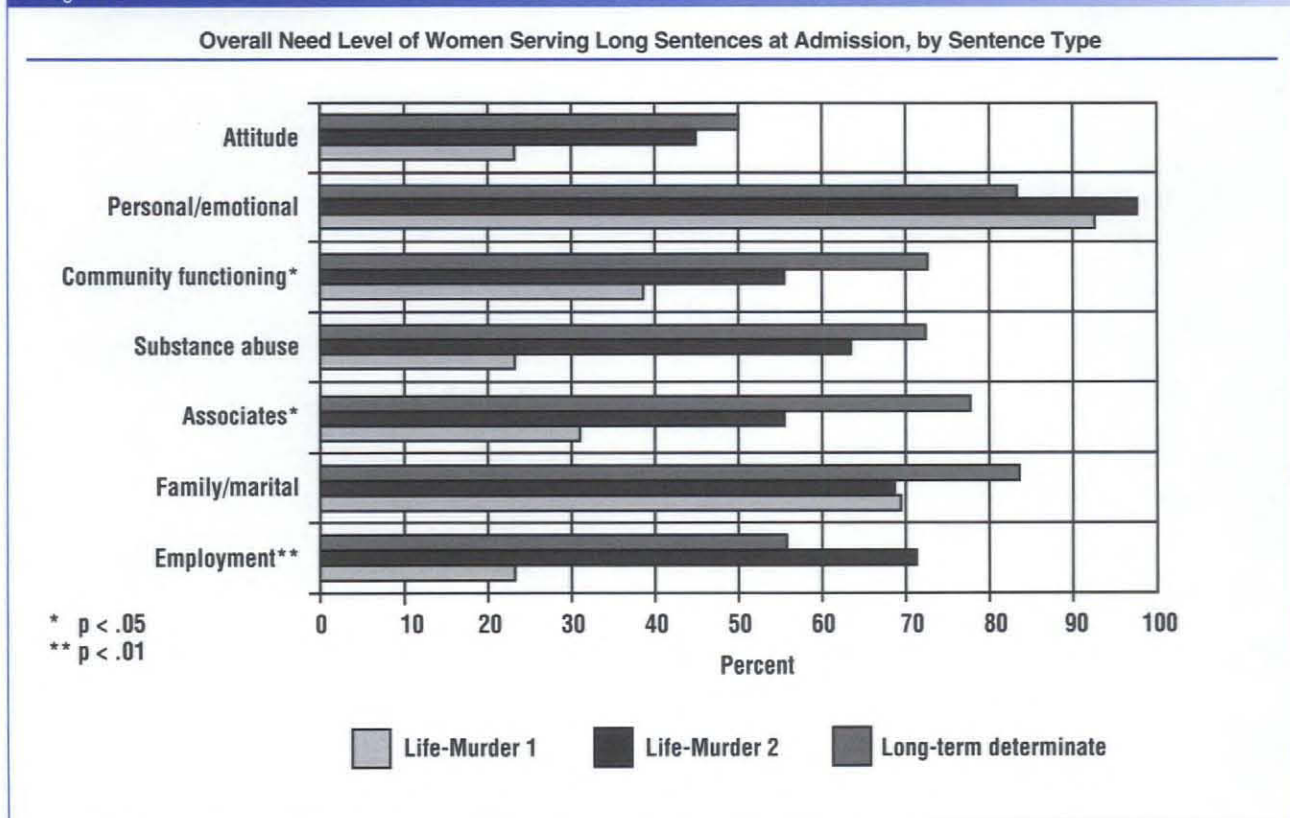


recidivism, but unlike the static risk measured with criminal history, criminogenic needs are dynamic and can be affected by correctional interventions. Programs that target problems like addictions, family dysfunction and employment are addressing dynamic risk factors or criminogenic needs.

Results presented in Figure 1 also show that those women in the life-murder 1 group have the lower levels of criminogenic needs than women in the other two long sentence groups. Offenders in the life-murder 2 and determinate sentence groups are most likely to be rated as medium- or high-need.

In addition to providing an overall rating of dynamic factors, the Offender Intake Assessment (OIA) process provides ratings for seven individual domains including employment, marital/family, associates/social interaction, community functioning, substance abuse, personal/emotional orientation and attitude. For four of these domains (attitude, community functioning, substance abuse and associates), women offenders serving determinate sentences had the highest need levels, followed by those in the life-murder 2 group, with offenders in the life-murder 1 group having the lowest ratings. While 71% of those serving life sentences for second degree murder had employment/education identified as a need, only 23% of the life-murder 1 group had this need identified at admission.

Figure 2



Summary

The majority of women offenders (89%) serving long sentences have been convicted of a homicide or homicide-related offence (including attempted and conspiracy to commit murder). However, between group differences, by sentence type, have been identified.

Overall, women serving sentences for first-degree murder appear to be different from other women offenders serving long sentences. In terms of demographic factors, they are older, were admitted at an older age and are more likely to be Caucasian. They have also been rated as having fewer criminogenic needs. Based on the comparisons made, women serving life sentences for second-degree murder show characteristics more similar to women serving determinate sentences of 10 years or more than women serving life sentences for murder 1.

The characteristics of women serving sentences for first-degree murder present an important challenge for correctional workers who recognize that these women will spend a considerable amount of their life, a minimum of 25 years, incarcerated. The skills that these women possess and the new skills they could develop during their long incarceration period could contribute to the operation of the institutions in which they must live and assist them to find meaningful activities to engage in while serving their sentences. ■

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² Implementing the Life Line Concept: *Report of the Task Force on Long Term Offenders*, Correctional Service of Canada, Ottawa, ON, February, 1998.

³ In Canada, sentences of two years or more are served in federal penitentiaries.

⁴ Blanchette, K. and G. Eljdupovic-Guzina (1998). "Results of a Pilot Study of the Peer Support Programs for Women Offenders." Research Report R-73. Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada.

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Population aging and the federal inmate profile of 2010!

by Roger Boe¹

Research Branch, Correctional Service of Canada

“Demographics explains about two-thirds of everything”²

In 1996, David K. Foot’s *Boom Bust and Echo: How to Profit from the Coming Demographic Shift* became a best seller and helped popularize public discussion on issues related to the aging of Canada’s baby boomers.³

Canadian society was transformed by the baby boom generation, which Foot defines as those born in the two decades following WW II (1947–1966). This birth cohort was of unprecedented size and persons born in this generation totalled 9.8 million people or almost 33% of the Canadian population as of the 1996 census. As this huge birth-cohort flooded in succession through one public institution after another, a massive restructuring began to occur, beginning first in the pediatric wards, then the kindergartens, the elementary and secondary schools, before finally spilling into the universities and the job market.

An issue that Foot also talks about, although it got less play in the media, is the impact of the aging boomers on crime rates.⁴

Demography and crime

The baby boom had a tremendous impact on Canada’s criminal justice system as boomers began

in the early 1960s to enter into their most crime-prone years. Traditionally, North American society’s youth population, those from their teens through to about thirty, are the highest crime-risk group. Baby boomers began to enter their teenage years in 1960 and didn’t reach thirty until 1977. The youngest of the boomers, meanwhile, only began entering their teens in 1979 and didn’t reach thirty until 1996.

The boomer generation therefore passed through their high crime-risk years over a period spanning from 1960 to 1996. As the large number of boomers swelled this crime-prone age group, crime levels began to increase. Crime rates increased throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

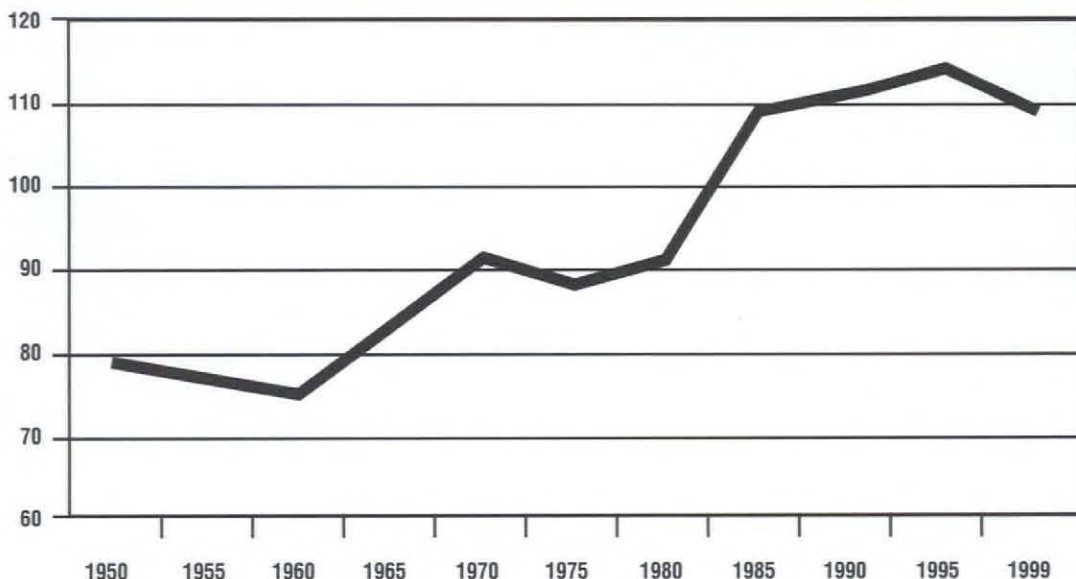
Now, however, all the boomers have aged beyond thirty and crime rates have been dropping since the early 1990s. One reason for this is that the follow-on (i.e., the baby bust and boomer echo) generations are much smaller in size so there is a smaller high crime-risk population.⁵

The demographics of imprisonment

As we might expect, with rapidly growing crime, Canada’s prison populations also grew significantly from the 1960s through to the 1980s. This can be seen in Figure 1, which shows the increase in the

Figure 1

Adult Penal Population in Canada per 100,000.



Source: Adult Correctional Services in Canada (CCJS, annual).

adult (federal and provincial) incarceration rate in Canada since 1950.

The adult incarceration rate started to increase in 1960 and continued upward — with the exception of a lull from 1970 to 1980 due to the introduction of a new parole system — for the next three decades. The incarceration rate peaked at 114 adult inmates per 100,000 population in 1995, at which point the rate was 52% higher versus the 75 per 100,000 recorded in 1960. Now that the crime rate has been in decline for several years, incarceration rates seem likely to follow.

Which way will crime and imprisonment rates go?

Does the aging of the boomers foretell a continued decline in crime and imprisonment rates over the coming decade? Foot suggests a mixed future. On the one hand, there will be fewer youth, so violent crime rate should continue to decline as boomers move out of their violent years and into their fraud and white-collar crime years. On the other hand, the lull in the growth of youth and violent crime may be short-lived because baby-boom echo kids, a larger cohort than the baby bust generation, is about to enter their crime-prone youth years.⁶ Moreover, he notes that teenagers

may be becoming more violent and that older people are more fearful of crime. Thus, he warns that our police forces will remain busy and demographics offer no reason for anyone to feel complacent about crime.⁷

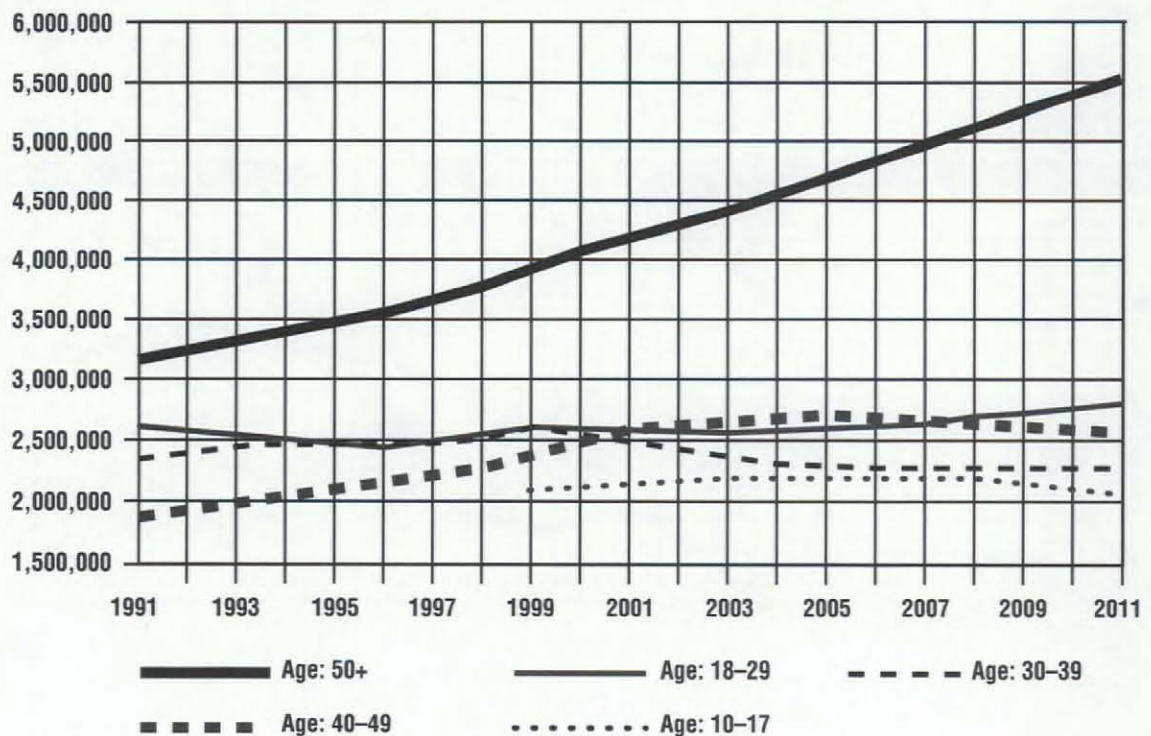
Aging reduces pressure on crime and incarceration rates

The “aging” of the boomer population will continue to be the central demographic trend dominating Canadian society for the coming decade. Society’s crime-prone youth population will increase slightly, as the echo-generation youth begin to enter this group in large numbers over the next decade. However, there are about 3 million fewer echo-generation members than boomers, so the impact should be nowhere as large as the 1960s, and will also be offset by a decrease in the baby bust generation. This can be seen from Statistics Canada’s population projections for males for the coming decade.

There will be very little upward demographic pressure on crime or incarceration rates, since the incarceration rates for 18–29 and 30–39 age groups have become very similar in recent years. Figure 2 indicates the projected size of the various age groups over the next decade.

Figure 2

Figure 2: Male Population and Projections to 2011



Source: Statistics Canada, Demography Division

According to the projections, by 2011 there will be a modest increase in the size of Canada's 18–29 year old male population (up about 180,000). However, this increase will be offset by a similar decrease in the population ages 30–39. The size of the population ages 40–49 at the end of the decade will be virtually identical to what it was at the beginning. The population over age 50 will increase by more than a million, from about 4.2 million to about 5.6 million by 2011. Finally, the population of young males ages 10–17 is projected to increase and then decrease slightly, all within the decade, from 2.12 million in 2000 to 2.07 million in 2011. So there is no new youth high-risk demographic wave waiting in the wings.

The admission risk of youth is declining

It was noted earlier that the highest crime-prone years were also the highest incarceration-risk years. Federal admission statistics suggest, however, that the risk rate for young adults is declining.

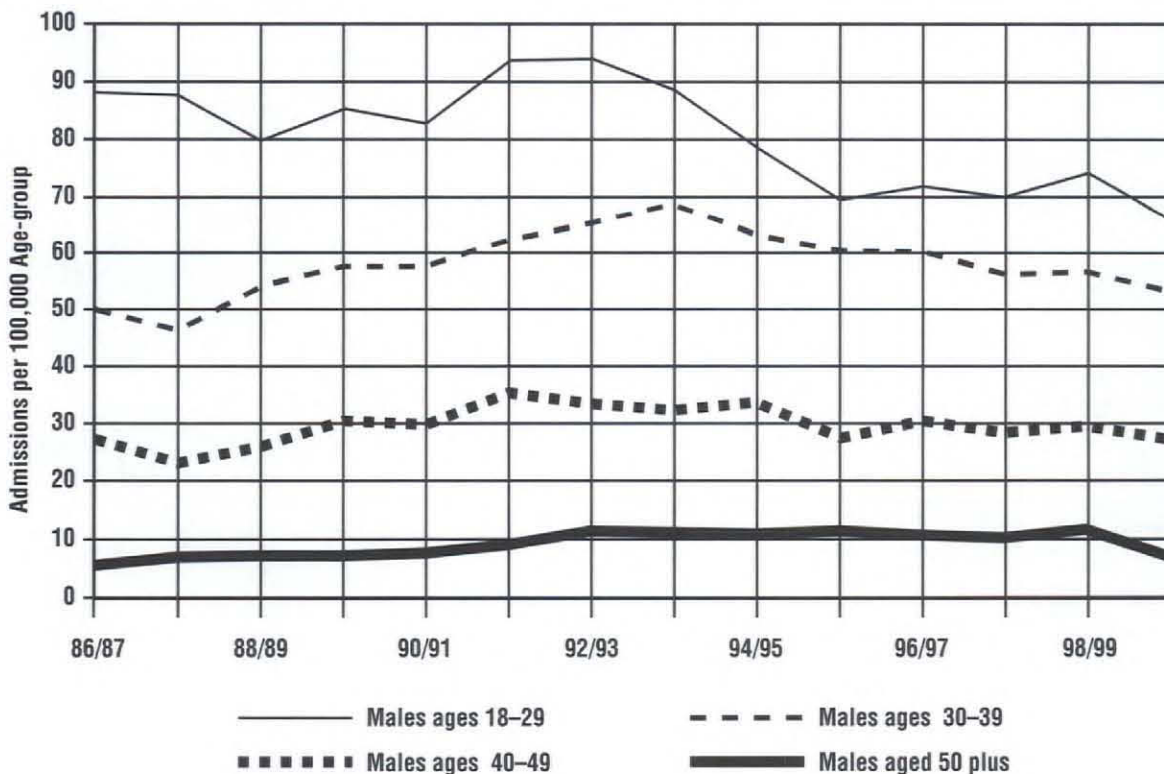
A youth admission-risk bias is evident in federal admission statistics. In fiscal year 1986–1987, the date to which reliable electronic files can go back, there were 88 males aged 18–29 admitted to federal prison for every 100,000 male aged 18–29 in the population. The corresponding federal admission rates for males 30–39 was 50; for males 40–49 it was 28; and for males 50 years and older it was 5 per 100,000 males (see Figure 3).

The age-related admission risk rate has narrowed between the younger and older groups over the past six or seven years. Fifteen years ago, the differences in the admission rates for the various age groups was much greater than today.

After 1993–94, the rate for all ages has declined. In fiscal year 1999–2000, for example, the federal male admission rate for males aged 18–29 years was 67 per 100,000 males in the population; for males 30–39 it was 55; for males 40–49 it was 28; and for males 50 plus it was 8.

Figure 3

Figure 3: Federal Male Admission Rate Trends*



*Warrant of Committals only. Research Branch, CSC

Federal admissions will continue to decline to 2010–2011

Estimating the number and ages of federal admissions in 2010–2011 requires we make some assumption regarding admission-rate trends. For this article, we have chosen to highlight two scenarios:

1. The first scenario assumes that the federal male Warrant of Committal admission rate will remain constant over the next decade (e.g., the same in 2010–2011 as it was in 1999–2000. This is labelled "Scenario a" (in Table 1);
2. The second scenario assumes that federal male Warrant of Committal admission rates will decline

at the pace between 1999–2000 to 2010–2011, as it did between 1990 and 1999. This is labelled as "Scenario b" (in Table 1).

Under the no-change scenario ("a"), the number of federal male Warrant of Committal admissions in fiscal year 2010–2011 will be slightly higher than today (4,240 versus 4,093). This is because the male population of Canada is projected to increase by about 12% over the next decade. If the admission rate (or crime rate) remains steady, the net effect is an increase in the number of admissions projected for fiscal year 2010–2011.

Under the second scenario (b), the number of federal male Warrant of Committal admissions in fiscal year

Table 1

Table 1: Estimates of Federal* Male Admission to 2010

Male adult population and projections, by age group	June 1990	June 1999	Projected – June 2010**
18–29 years	2,596,700	2,542,089	2,712,945
30–39 years	2,250,800	2,543,760	2,283,867
40–49 years	1,756,900	2,408,394	2,602,441
50 years or more	3,066,400	3,939,797	5,401,055
Male adult population — Total	9,670,800	11,434,040	13,000,308
Male admissions and projections, by age group	FY 1990–1991	FY 1999–2000	FY 2010–2011
Scenario a: admission rates remains constant ***			
18–29 years	2,155	1,695	1,810
30–39 years	1,311	1,394	1,252
40–49 years	531	681	736
50 years or more	217	323	443
Male admission — Total	4,214	4,093	4,240
Scenario b: admission rates decline at 1990–1999 rates ****			
Male WOC Admission 18–29 years	2,155	1,695	1,454
Male WOC Admission 30–39 years	1,311	1,394	1,178
Male WOC Admission 40–49 years	531	681	690
Male WOC Admission 50 years or more	217	323	374
Male WOC Admission — Total	4,214	4,093	3,697
Male admission rates (per 100,000 and per age group)	FY 1990–1991 (Actual Rate)	FY 1999–2000 (Actual Rate)	FY 2010–2011 (Continuation of 1990–1999 Trend)
18–29 years	83	66.7	53.6
30–39 years	58.2	54.8	51.6
40–49 years	30.2	28.3	26.5
50 years or more	7.1	8.2	6.9
Male – Total Admission rate	43.6	35.8	29.4

* A Federal sentence is 2-year or over.

** Statistics Canada Demography Division: Population and projections to 2011.

*** OMS data and Research Branch projections (Warrant of Committal (WOC) admissions only).

**** E.g., the admission rate declines in the same proportion between 2000 and 2010 as it did between 1990 and 2000.

2010–2011 would be smaller than today (3,697 versus 4,093). This is because the male population of Canada is projected to increase by about 12% over the next decade but the admission rate (or crime rate) is expected to decline at about the same rate as it has over the previous decade. The net effect is a smaller, but older, projected admission cohort in fiscal year 2010–2011.

The changing composition of crime

Foot predicts that the boomer aging will lead to a different mix of crimes being committed. He notes how demographics can explain the different growth rates in types of crime over the past three decades. “We experienced major growth in property crime during the 1960s and 1970s, when large numbers of baby-boomers were passing through their break-and-enter years. A shift in growth from property crime to violent crime occurred over the 1980s, as the last of the boomers moved out of their teen years into their 20s and early 30s.”⁸

The violent crime rate in Canada has generally declined since 1993, and Foot suggests this trend should continue as the large wave of baby-boom criminals moves out of its violent years and into its fraud years. White-collar crime may increase because of population aging.

As far as youth crime — especially youth violence — is concerned, the police and court-reported statistics tell a consistent story. Young offender crime — and violent crime — rates are dropping.⁹ The rate of youths charged with criminal offences has continued to decline since 1992, including a 7% drop in 1999. This decline was evident in all offence categories: the rate of youths charged with property offences declined 11%, violent crime dropped 5%. In total, youths were charged with Criminal Code offences at a rate of 4,100 per 100,000 youths, compared to about 5,200 a decade ago (a drop of 21%).¹⁰

Another crime-shift prediction — towards more fraud and related crimes — has also not occurred. Indeed, the only crime category that has shown an increase is drug related (perhaps this indicates the echo generation are mimicking their parents’ generation’s own youthful behaviour).

The crime statistics of Canada indicate that crime is down to levels not seen since the 1970s. According to the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, the crime rate as reported by police decreased by 5% in 1999, the eighth consecutive annual drop.¹¹ Not only were crime rates at their lowest level since 1979, but the rate for all major crime categories was also down.

Homicide rates are down 4.7% in 1999 and the homicide rate has generally been falling since the

mid-1970s. The 1999 rate of 1.8 homicides per 100,000 population is the lowest since 1967.

The rate of violent crime in 1999 declined for the seventh consecutive year and was down 2% from the previous year. All major categories of violent crime decreased in 1999, including attempted murder (–9%), sexual assault (–7%), assault (–2%), and robbery (–2%).

The property crime rate dropped 6%, continuing the general decline that began in 1991. All major property crime categories have decreased in 1999, including breaking and entering (–10%), motor vehicle theft (–4%), theft (–6%), and fraud (–5%). There is no evidence that youth are becoming more violent, though there are certainly too many spectacular incidents. The rate of violent crime is down, but so are the rates for fraud and other property crimes. Whether this continues is unknown, but demographics does not appear to be making the situation worse.

Aging and fear of crime

Fear of crime is probably the most dangerous shift we face. Why is fear of crime so at odds with actual crime statistics? David Foot suggests a demographic explanation: the crime rate is down for the simple reason that we have fewer people in the crime-prone youth age-groups, and conversely, the perception of crime is rising in this aging population because older people generally are more fearful of crime.¹²

Violent crime rose by a worrisome 49% between 1984 and 1994, largely because boomer criminals were reaching the age when all criminals are more likely to commit violence. Thus, the small dip in the overall crime rate by the mid-1990s (when Foot wrote this — note that crime has continued its decline since 1996) did not make our cities seem significantly safer. The public perception is right, says Foot: our cities in the mid-1990s were much more dangerous places than they were in the mid-1980s.¹³

However, are they really that much more dangerous in 1999 than in 1980? The answer is not easy to arrive at. However, a danger is that, because of our fears, we may overreact and invoke erroneous policy. The rapid increase in violent crime through the 1980s and early 1990s was due almost exclusively to common assaults and level 1 sexual assaults that exploded after the assault laws were revised in 1982.¹⁴ However, the most serious violent crime of all — murder — has actually declined since 1976. So, were our cities safer in 1990 than in 1976? Yes, certainly, far safer if “safe” is defined as the likelihood of being murdered. No, not as safe if “safe” is defined as the likelihood of common assault or sexual assault.

Conclusions

The "aging" of the baby boomers should contribute to a decline in crime and imprisonment over the next decade. Whether this lowering of risk continues to lead to lower crime and incarceration rates depends, however, on other factors as well. One key factor is how well we manage the fear of crime itself. If we react to fears of crime by pursuing harsher criminal justice policies, we will likely not contribute to the long-term reduction of risk.

American politicians have often found it in their self-interest to use fear of crime as a strategy to win elections, by promising to wage war on crime.¹⁵ It is ironic that in the United States, as in Canada, crime rates have been declining since 1991. However, by waging war on crime they have managed to double their prison population without making the United States a noticeably safer society than Canada. We would do much to advance the public interest if we can better manage the fear of crime than our American neighbours. ■

¹ 340 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0P9.

² Foot, D.K., D. Stoffman (1996). *Boom, Bust & Echo: How to Profit from the Coming Demographic Shift*. Toronto, ON: Macfarlane, Walter & Ross, p. 2. The Introduction argues why demographics explains about "two-thirds of everything."

³ Various government agencies in the 1980s had begun reviewing the consequences of population "aging." However, it was Foot's best-selling book that caught the public imagination, raising awareness of the many possible policy consequences (e.g., pensions and housing prices, etc.). The federal government created a Review of Demography and its Implications for Economic and Social Policy in April 1986, directing it to study possible changes in the size, structure and distribution of the population of Canada to 2025. A report from this Review, *Charting Canada's Future: A Report of the Demographic Review*, (Health and Welfare Canada, 1989) discussed how these changes might effect Canada's social and economic life.

⁴ *Op cit*: Foot's discussion relating to crime trends can be found in Chapter 7, p.127.

⁵ Starting in 1991, Canada's rising crime rate began to turn down. By 1999, Canada had experienced eight consecutive years of decline in the crime rate, which reached its lowest level since 1979. See Sylvain Tremblay, *Crime Statistics in Canada, 1999*. The Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, July 2000.

⁶ For example, in 1996 the baby bust generation (those born from 1967 to 1979) numbered 5.4 million persons whereas the baby-boom echo (born 1980 to 1995) numbered 6.9 million. However, both generations pale in size when compared to the boomers, who numbered 9.6 million.

⁷ *Op cit*: Boom, Bust & Echo (p.143).

⁸ *Op cit*: Boom, Bust & Echo (p.141).

⁹ *Ibid*. p. 141-142.

¹⁰ See for example, *Male Young Offenders in Canada: Recent Trends*. R.L. Sinclair and R. Boe, Research Branch, Correctional Service Canada. Research Brief No. B-22 (1998); and *Female Young Offenders in Canada: Revised Edition*. C.A. Dell and R. Boe, Research Branch, Correctional Service Canada. Research Report No. R-80 (1998).

¹¹ *Op cit*: Crime Statistics 1999.

¹² *Op cit*: Boom, Bust & Echo (p.140).

¹³ *Ibid*: p. 141.

¹⁴ The rate per 100,00 of level 1 (i.e., minor) sexual assault incidents increased from 41 in 1983 to 116 by 1993. Level 2 and 3 sexual assault (incidents involving a weapon or resulting in bodily harm) remained relatively unchanged at 4-5 per 100,000 throughout the period. See: *A Graphical Overview of Crime and the Administration of Criminal Justice in Canada, 1997*. Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada (Cat. 85F0018XPE), p. 17.

¹⁵ Davey examines the effect of waging a war on crime by comparing crime and imprisonment in adjacent states, where one Governor used the strategy and another did not. In North and South Dakota, for example, crime rates have always been similar but the incarceration rate is now twice as high in the latter since a Governor ran for election on a get tough on crime platform. See J.D. Davey (1998), *The Politics of Prison Expansion: Winning Elections by Waging War on Crime*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Coming up in the January 2001 issue of *FORUM on Corrections Research*

The January 2001 issue of *FORUM* will be dedicated to Reintegration Levers.

The May 2001 issue of *FORUM* will present a Special Issue of *Research Summaries: R-56, 1997 to R-100, 2000*.

The September 2001 issue of *FORUM* will focus on Alcohol and Drugs.

The Reintegration Effort for Long-term Infirm and Elderly Federal Offenders (RELIEF) Program

by Jack Stewart¹

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The Reintegration Effort for Long-term Infirm and Elderly, Federal Offender (RELIEF) program began on January 16, 1999, to assume a larger and more structured role in the community reintegration of elderly and infirm offenders in the Pacific Region of Correctional Service of Canada (CSC).

The RELIEF program is unique in that it grew from a true collaborative effort between offenders, community volunteers and Service staff to meet the needs of both incarcerated and conditionally released offenders who could not fully care for themselves.

The people involved in the RELIEF Program hold a deep respect for, and belief in, the potential for human growth and development and the role that human relationships play in realizing that potential.

Age and age-related infirmities are not seen as diseases to be treated but a fact of the life process to be understood and accommodated with dignity.

Illnesses and conditions that are imminently terminal can not be shied away from or left for "others" to deal with, as it is the responsibility of the sufferer's community to acknowledge pain and fear and assist the individual to deal with them in a caring environment. Based on holistic personalized care, and employing an interdisciplinary team approach, comfort and quality of life can be provided for those offenders who are elderly, infirm or nearing death. By "being with" the care recipient, and focusing on the individual's physical, emotional, social and spiritual aspects including the effects of incarceration, and with the support of families, volunteers, community health professionals, faith communities and engaged citizens, healing, hope and acceptance of circumstances is possible.

By providing humane care and control of the elderly, infirm and those nearing death, the care community can grow and benefit. Those receiving care can contribute by lending their support, assistance, encouragement and caring to the level of their ability. All participants in the RELIEF Program can lead by example.

As the general population in Canada is aging, so too is the federal offender population.

"The number of older offenders in CSC institutions is growing at a much faster rate than that of younger offenders;

Inmates who are 50 years of age and older now comprise 12% (1,600) of the institutional population. Thirty-eight percent

(38%) of the lifer's group will be 55 years of age or older before they are eligible for parole;

*The older inmate group includes those who have been incarcerated for a long period and have grown old in prison; repeat offenders (chronic recidivists) who have been incarcerated numerous times; and those who are serving their first sentence. There has been an increase of 500 inmates in this group over the past 4 years."*²

This trend is impacting CSC and the RELIEF Program can be part of addressing a number of the unique needs of this population, such as:

Personal care attendants. Some require special diets and equipment such as wheelchairs, walkers, oxygen tanks, self-dialysis kits, as well;

older offenders and offenders with a disability also can suffer from social isolation, hopelessness, high levels of anxiety and be at greater risk for suicide.

Geriatric offenders are estimated to cost up to three times more to maintain in an institution and their health costs cannot be shared with, or offset by, provincial government health plans. Any specialized treatments or hospital stays in the community often add additional security costs for institutions due to the inmate status of the patient.

Palliative care, assisting with death preparedness and "planned deaths" will assume a greater role. Dying with dignity, closer to families and significant others, in a setting other than a closed facility needs to be addressed to reduce the care-giving burden on higher security institutions and allow alignment with community resources.

Accommodations

Institutional designs and routines do not accommodate the elderly or infirm well and impact greatly on staff resources and the well-being of the offenders. The elderly and infirm have a greater need for privacy, calm, safety and structure in their environment. Ready access to assistance, meals and bathing facilities is critical.

Offender programming

Age specific programming is required to address the special needs of elderly and infirm offenders in the areas of special recreation, exclusion from the workforce, self-care, nutrition, living in special

care settings, etc. Due possibly to reduced attention spans or physical limitations, modified methods of delivering selected core programming elements for those who could benefit on a one-to-one or on an "in home" basis, needs to be developed.

Elderly and infirm offenders in institutions are used to certain structures and non-group living situations. A program to acclimatize them to a care program and community norms is required.

Training

Specialized training for offender caregivers and staff is essential to provide appropriate care and referral services for the elderly and infirm. All must become aware of the physical, social and emotional needs of these offenders and be aware of, and comfortable in working with, the issues of death and dying.

Community release

Release from institutions is difficult for elderly and infirm offenders due to issues of financial support, accommodations and lack of evidence of program participation. Often, no family support is available due to estrangement or death. The demands of special care and programming, combined with individual criminogenic factors, often result in Community residential facility's, whose facilities and programs are not yet designed for elderly and infirm offenders. The results being that these offenders are often refused acceptance in these facilities.

A facility with a multidisciplinary care and supervision team is needed to accommodate these offenders and broker them into appropriate community placements, if possible.

Program goals and objectives

- To provide a safe reintegration option for elderly/infirm offenders by addressing the needs and concerns of an aging population in a community setting.
- To provide safe, secure, humane care for offenders at a dependent stage of their life by fostering hope and dignity.
- To provide a caregiving program, in a correctional setting, that will follow the same high standards of care and practice established by the community hospice movement.
- To train selected offenders, on work release or day parole, to assist in the provision of care to elderly and infirm offenders at the Sumas Centre or in other pacific region community-based residential facility.

- To establish and maintain responsible care teams to ensure the offender client's needs are met and the wellness of the caregivers is maintained.
- To annually conduct three caregivers training programs of two months duration at the Sumas Centre.

Link to other initiatives and programs

The RELIEF Program, by providing care for long-term elderly and infirm offenders, training for caregivers, and community reintegration opportunities for both groups, assists in addressing the national issues being confronted by Geriatric Offender, the Long-Term Offender and the Correctional Careers committees. While meeting it's objectives, the RELIEF Program will provide a structured developmental model of institutional and community cooperation, planning and implementation that can be monitored and modified for application in other CSC Regions.

Program description

The RELIEF Program, located at Sumas Centre in Abbotsford, will provide a more home-like and less institutional-like setting for elderly and infirm conditionally released offenders. It will provide supervision, general care and access to medical care by utilizing the services of trained offender hospice/care workers, professional staff resources and general/specialized community medical services.

Four self-contained, six-bedroom houses are to be dedicated to housing clients and caregivers of the RELIEF Program. All living, recreational and programming spaces are on ground level and are walker and wheelchair accessible. However, only one house is currently equipped with a handicapped washroom and shower. The houses are also alarmed during the night hours to ensure that none of the residents will wander without being noticed.

Care recipients, or clients, will be regularly assessed to determine the level of intervention and support they require. They will then be assigned to one of three houses depending on whether they require "high," "medium," or "low" levels of attendant care.

House A will accommodate up to six "high" level residents who will require 24-hour, awake, caregiver availability due to the severity of their medical conditions, disabilities and mobility problems. Six caregivers will provide coverage in this house on a rotational shift basis with an average on-duty week of 37.5 hours each. Typical residents in this house are reliant on wheelchairs and walkers and require assistance in bathing, dressing, personal care needs and access to other areas of the Sumas Centre or the community. All cooking, cleaning and laundry tasks

will be completed by the caregivers. Residents will be placed in this house from institutions, or other houses at Sumas Centre, as individual care needs dictate.

House B will accommodate up to four "medium" level residents who will require 14 to 16 hour a day caregiver availability due to their reduced physical capacities. These residents will not require the same level of constant assistance available in House 10 as they will be more ambulatory. These residents will still have a need for bathing, personal care and access assistance. As in House A, the primary responsibility for cooking, cleaning and general laundry tasks will fall to the two live-in caregivers, but the residents will be expected to assist to the best of their individual abilities.

House C will accommodate up to four "low" level residents who will require eight to ten hours of caregiver availability. While identified as "low" level within the context of the RELIEF Program, these residents will require assistance in a variety of areas due to special medical conditions, physical disabilities, post-operative recovery, etc. The residents and the two live-in caregivers, with the caregivers assuming a strong assistance role, will share the responsibilities for cooking, cleaning and general laundry. As with the other two houses, the caregivers will be required to assist certain residents when they access the community.

House D will be set aside as a caregivers' residence for those working in House A to ensure respite. Designating one house for caregivers will also allow for changes in house assignments and the rotation of caregivers from "high" level residents to "low" level residents care with minimal impact on the routines of the houses.

A wide variety of staff is available during the day including Parole Officers, psychologists and program facilitators. In addition, specialists from the Regional Health Centre are available for emergency interventions, the Matsqui Health Services are available 24 hours a day and the Matsqui/Sumas/Abbotsford Hospital in Abbotsford is five minutes away by ambulance. During the evenings and weekends, Regional Duty Officers and commissionaires are on site and six caregivers will be assigned on a rotating shift basis to provide a 24-hour presence in the high-need care house.

The RELIEF Program is designed to provide attendant care to two distinct but interrelated groups of offenders who require it, and to provide training and support to another group of offenders who will assist in providing that care.

The program will focus primarily on those offenders who were sentenced while already elderly or having grown old within the correctional system. These

offenders are at a stage in life where they are beginning to need constant or specialized care, where the normal program interventions and offerings to deal with criminogenic factors and release preparedness may have little or no effect, and their vulnerability within an institutional setting is increased. Their risk to the community, as long as they are being supervised and cared for, is low due to their physical limitations and generally cooperative attitude towards authority and caregivers and their risk to walk away is low.

In addition to receiving care, this group of offenders will be provided with training in self-sufficiency and methods for dealing with reduced functions, basic living skills in preparation for group living in alternative settings, occupational therapy, use of leisure time, and programs targeted at the needs of the elderly.

A smaller group of offenders in need of regular care due to critical, or terminal, medical conditions could be younger but could be safely managed in the community. Their risk to the public and risk of walk away are also deemed to be low. This group will receive care and programming similar to that provided to the elderly offenders.

In addition to the elderly and infirm, the RELIEF Program will provide a meaningful reintegration opportunity for carefully selected and trained offender hospice/care workers on approved Work Releases or Day Parole. These offenders will provide all basic attendant care and assistance in daily living to the elderly or infirm offenders.

Caregivers will initially be those accepted from Mountain Institution, in British Columbia, who have taken that institution's standardized Caregivers' Training Program. For those individuals who are supported as potential caregivers who do not come from Mountain Institution, or do not yet have training, a duplicate two-month Caregivers' Training Program will be offered three times per year at the Sumas Centre. Food safe training and certification for caregivers will be added to the existing program, as will other training identified as essential by the care team.

All offenders, regardless of their role in the RELIEF Program, will be expected to participate in all programs and activities contained in their Correctional Plans and Community Strategies.

The RELIEF Program's purpose is not to be a health unit operated by non-medical personnel, a substitute for professional medical care, or a program for offenders who are totally handicapped and in need of constant professional care and intervention. Its purpose is to care for and work with elderly and infirm offenders in a community setting to assist in their reintegration while providing access to necessary professional care.

For both groups, the aim of the program is to demonstrate their ability to live outside the highly structured settings of higher security institutions and to function in the less formal atmosphere of a group home or intermediate care facility. For most of the elderly or infirm, the strategy will be to move towards a full release into a family setting, if possible, or an appropriate care facility after consultation with provincial, medical and social services agencies. For the caregivers, their training and experience could lead to similar employment in the community, or at the least, will demonstrate their progress in adopting pro-social attitudes and constructive behaviours.

Personnel

Capable, trained personnel working as Care Teams are essential to the proper delivery of the RELIEF Program. The Care Teams would be composed of core groups of Caregivers, Caregivers Aides and assigned Volunteers. Each core group would be supplemented and supported by a Program Coordinator, Parole Officers, a part-time Occupational Therapist and a part-time Quality Control Specialist (a professional trained in palliative/hospice and nursing to provide ongoing guidance/support for Care Teams).

Other members, such as community health and social service professionals with gerontology experience, will be added to the Care Teams as required.

Admission criteria

When offenders are seeking entry to the RELIEF Program from an institution the following criteria will apply:

- all participants must be eligible for release on Day Parole, have a sincere desire to participate in the program and be supported by their Case Management Team;
- clients must have a report stating that the medical staff supports release to the RELIEF Program and what needs must be addressed;
- clients must be moderately ambulatory, semi independent and have some mobility;
- the Sumas Centre Consultation Committee must accept all participants;
- some elderly and infirm offenders currently on conditional release can be expected to enter the Program from Sumas Centre if no other options are immediately available in the community;
- caregivers must be trained, or supported for training, and committed to providing care in the RELIEF Program for a specified period of time.

Discharge planning

As the RELIEF Program is not intended to be a final release option for most of its participants, individual discharge planning will be considered as part of the Community Strategy and will be reviewed regularly by the care team.

The care team will carefully assess each individual client to determine the level of ongoing care required and pursue the least restrictive option available. The first considerations would include parole to the offender's family home or a private home placement with community health care assistance. In the future, a transfer to a Community residential facility capable of supplying Caregiver assistance should be an option.

However, due to the age and personal circumstances of most of the clients, their lack of families and their high needs, few existing resources will be appropriate. Consideration must be given to contracting with Specialized Hostel contractors for the establishment of care programs for offenders in the community. Some client's needs will only be served by placement in provincial long-term care facilities.

Palliative care will become an increasing need as some clients will not leave the program, and others will be referred by institutions to access such care. The care team will assess each of these cases on an individual basis and make appropriate decisions as to whether the RELIEF Program would be the best option for planned death, or whether a higher level of care would be required.

Ways to monitor progress

To ensure the protection of society, the application of objective risk assessments and intervention techniques fundamental to CSC programming will not be compromised within this program and will be ongoing.

In addition, the monitoring of individual risk/needs levels and the number of offenders who can be safely reintegrated, or accommodated in the least restrictive manner by the RELIEF Program, the effectiveness of the Program and the progress of the participants will be measured in a variety of additional ways. ■

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² Uzoaba, J.H. (1998) *Managing Older Offenders: Where Do We Stand?*, Research Report R-70, Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada.

The effective management of women serving life sentences

by Craig Dowden and Kimberly Smallshaw¹
Research Branch, Correctional Service of Canada

Since the abolition of Capital Punishment in 1976, a life sentence is the most severe penalty that can be imposed by the Canadian Criminal Justice System. "Lifers" pose unique challenges and concerns for correctional administrators and front-line staff alike in terms of appropriate case management strategies. This article explores the risk and need issues surrounding this population with specific focus placed on life sentenced women offenders. A discussion will follow regarding how these findings relate to key policy issues for this specific offender population.

Recently, considerable attention has been placed on issues surrounding long-term offenders.² Within Canada, long-term offenders are defined as those who are serving life, indeterminate or determinate sentences of 10 years or more.³ A recent study⁴ revealed that there are currently 3,805 long-term offenders in Canadian federal institutions, of which 62% have been sentenced to life imprisonment.

The increased attention to long-term offender research may be considered a direct result of the growing proportion of this population over the past few decades⁵ and it appears that this trend will likely continue. Consequently, research has focused on case management and programming issues for long-term offenders, their coping and adaptability skills, as well as the broader correctional implications of this phenomenon.⁶

Despite the dramatic increase in the amount of resources committed to long-term offender research, there is a paucity of research devoted to women long-term offenders.⁷ This article will attempt to shed some more light on this relatively new area of scientific inquiry.

We will explore whether women offenders who are serving life sentences have unique offender management issues that need to be acknowledged by the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC). To accomplish this goal, we compared an archival sample of women lifers to a sample of women non-lifers on several important variables, including offender risk, need and suicide risk potential. These analyses will closely explore women lifers and examine what unique challenges and concerns correctional administrators and front-line staff face when dealing with this population.

Sample

The archival sample used for this study was originally extracted on October 1st, 1997, from the Correctional Service of Canada Offender Management System (OMS) and consisted of 326 women offenders. Study participants were classified as either lifers or non-lifers based on OMS information. This process rendered a group of 59 lifers and 267 non-lifers.

Demographic information

Several analyses were conducted on demographic variables comparing lifer and non-lifer women offenders to explore any between-group differences. Analyses revealed that the average age of lifers (38.8 years, SD=10.74) was significantly older than their non-lifer counterparts (32.98 years, SD=8.17), $t(73.5)=4.67, p<.001$. However, this was not surprising as past research⁸ has demonstrated that the average age of long-term offenders in Canada is approximately 38 years old.

Lifers and non-lifers were also compared on ethnicity and marital status. Results revealed that there was an equal proportion of Aboriginal offenders in both groups (20%). Finally, in terms of marital status, although non-lifers had a slightly higher proportion of women offenders who were married or common law (32.1%) as compared to lifers (28.3%), this difference was not statistically significant.

Need level

Both groups of women offenders were also compared on their need levels using the Dynamic Factors Identification and Analysis (DFIA) component of the OIA process. These need areas are grouped into seven domains, with each domain consisting of multiple individual indicators. These domains include associates/social interaction (11 indicators), attitude (24 indicators), community functioning (21 indicators), employment (35 indicators), marital/family (31 indicators), personal/emotional (46 indicators) and substance abuse (29 indicators).

The DFIA rates offenders on a four-point scale with the scores ranging from "asset to community adjustment"¹⁰ to "significant need for improvement."

The case management officers provide ratings for each of these variables following careful consideration of several sources of information.

To ease interpretation of the findings, these ratings can be converted into dichotomous variables. More specifically, ratings of “asset to community adjustment” and “no need for improvement” were categorized as not representing a problem area whereas ratings of “some need for improvement” and “significant need for improvement” were categorized to represent a problem area for the offender. The percentage of lifers and non-lifers who had an identifiable problem in any of the seven domains are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 clearly indicates that both groups of offenders show difficulties in a large number of need areas at intake. Interestingly, the non-lifer group evidenced significantly more problems in four of these domains (associates, community functioning, employment and marital/family). The lifer and non-lifer groups were also compared on the number of needs identified at intake through the DFIA process. The results revealed that the non-lifer group had a significantly higher mean number of needs (as determined by the DFIA) identified at intake (3.59 needs, $SD=4.4$) than the lifer group (2.67 needs, $SD=1.38$), $t(286.7)=2.80$, $p<.001$. Therefore, it appears that lifers have less problem areas than non-lifers.

Concomitantly, these findings raise an interesting question regarding the appropriate allocation of correctional resources. If non-lifers have more problems in these core criminogenic need areas, should they get more resources committed in terms of correctional treatment programming?

Flanagan (1998) noted that long-term inmates gravitate to the lower end of the priority list for the allocation of correctional resources as a result of the scarcity of program resources within correctional agencies. He suggests that this occurs because the needs of long-term prisoners are not an immediate concern as they are unlikely to be released for a long

time. Thus, program resources may be deferred for delivery more proximal to release eligibility. An alternative explanation to this perspective is, of course, that lifers indeed have fewer needs than non-lifers.

Preliminary support for this latter interpretation was found in this study as analyses demonstrated that non-lifers had a significantly higher number of offences in their criminal history ($M=12.8$, $SD=23.4$) as compared to non-lifers ($M=4.3$, $SD=7.2$), $t(293.3) = 4.95$, $p<.001$. This suggests that non-lifers may be more entrenched in a criminal lifestyle, thus evidencing more criminogenic need.

Suicide risk potential

A recent study conducted by the CSC revealed that federal male offenders who had attempted suicide were more likely to be serving life sentences¹¹ than non-attempters. However, these results were taken from a sample of male offenders and thus we were interested to explore whether or not women offenders serving life sentences endorsed significantly more suicide risk potential items than those women not serving life sentences.

Nine separate indicators of suicide risk potential are assessed during the OIA process. These include: 1) may be suicidal, 2) has previous suicide attempts, 3) has had recent psychiatric/psychological intervention, 4) has had recent loss of relationship or death of close relative, 5) excessively worried about problems, 6) is under the influence of alcohol or drugs or showing signs of withdrawal, 7) showing signs of depression, 8) has expressed suicide intent, and 9) has plans for suicide. It should be noted that these data were only available for 30 of the lifers and 233 of the non-lifers.

Table 2 presents the proportion of women offenders in the lifer and non-lifer groups who endorsed each of these indicators. The analyses revealed two significant between-group differences with the lifer group experiencing more problems in each case. Not surprisingly, the lifers were significantly more likely to be excessively worried about their problems (41.9%) than non-lifers (10.0%), $\chi^2=23.28$, $p<.001$. This intuitively makes sense as these ratings are given at intake and these offenders clearly recognize that they will be incarcerated for a very long period of time so life decisions appear more daunting.

A more disturbing finding was the fact that lifers have expressed suicide intent (16.1%) more frequently than non-lifers (5.1%), $\chi^2=5.56$, $p<.02$. This finding has important offender management implications as it suggests resources should be more heavily concentrated for these offenders during the initial stages of their incarceration where they are clearly vulnerable to adjustment problems.

Table 1

Overall Need Ratings Women Lifers and Non-Lifers		
Type of need	Lifers (N = 58)	Non-lifers (N = 261)
Employment***	52.5%	83.5%
Marital/Family*	62.7%	76.4%
Associates***	50.8%	82.0%
Substance Abuse	50.8%	61.4%
Community Functioning**	55.9%	75.3%
Personal/Emotional	84.8%	91.4%
Attitudes	33.9%	24.3%

* $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$; *** $p<.001$

Table 2

Suicide Indicator Endorsement for Lifers and Non-Lifers

Type of need	Lifers (N = 30)	Non-lifers (N = 232)
Inmate may be suicidal	12.9%	6.9%
Previous suicide attempts*	46.7%	31.3%
Recent psychiatric/psychological intervention	33.3%	23.7%
Recent loss of relationship or death of close relative	22.6%	15.8%
Excessively worried about problems***	41.9%	10.0%
Under influence of alcohol or drugs / signs of withdrawal	6.7%	5.2%
Showing signs of depression*	25.8%	13.4%
Has expressed suicide intent**	16.1%	5.1%
Has plans for suicide	3.2%	1.3%

* $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.001$

Several other findings are also important to note. In particular, it appears that lifers have more previous suicide attempts and demonstrate more symptoms of depression at intake than non-lifers do. However, it should be noted that these between-group differences were not found to be statistically significant. Once again, these findings highlight the importance of assigning adequate resources to these offenders at intake, particularly in the area of mental health.

Each of the aforementioned suicide indicators was scored dichotomously (absent or present). In order to obtain a more comprehensive examination of the degree of suicide risk potential for this sample of offenders, these items were summed to have a composite measure with a potential range from 0 to 9. Comparing the lifers and non-lifers on this composite variable revealed that the women serving life sentences endorsed a significantly higher mean number of suicide indicators (2.17 indicators, $SD=2.35$) than their non-lifer counterparts (1.02 indicators, $SD=1.50$), $t(31.1)=2.57$, $p < .02$. This provides even more support for the more focused attention of mental health resources at intake for women offenders sentenced to life imprisonment.

Discussion

The present study has explored whether women offenders serving life sentences have unique case management issues when compared to their non-lifer counterparts. The results clearly indicate that

this is in fact the case and these distinctions may have important implications for the delivery of mental health service.

The most important findings for the Service were found within the need and suicide risk potential analyses. More specifically, although women lifers do not exhibit as many problems in the core need areas as non-lifers, areas involving suicide risk potential appear particularly important. As such, mental health resources for women offenders should be allocated more intensively to this area and be made immediately available to these women upon their admission to federal custody.

Clearly more work needs to be done. Specifically, the area of prison adaptability for long-term women offenders needs further investigation. Therefore, future studies could examine the effective coping and adaptability skills employed by women long-term offenders who have been incarcerated for an extended period and develop these into a skills training program for incoming long-term women offenders to ease their transition to the institutional environment. This suggestion has merit as others have found that the early period of incarceration is particularly stressful or long-term offenders.¹² A program specifically designed to aid women long-term offenders in effectively coping with their institutional surroundings could ease their transition to prison life. ■

¹ 340 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0P9.

² Flanagan, T. (1998). *Long-Term Imprisonment: Policy, Science, and Correctional Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

³ Weekes, J.R. (1992). "Long-Term Offenders: Who Are They and Where Are They?" *Forum on Corrections Research*, vol. 4, n° 2, p. 3-13.

⁴ Motiuk, L.L. and M. Nafekh (2000). "The long-term offender in federal corrections: A profile," *Forum on Corrections Research*, vol. 12, n° 3, p.

⁵ Flanagan, T. (1992). "Long-Term Incarceration: Issues of Science, Policy and Correctional Practice," *Forum on Corrections Research*, vol. 4, n° 2, p. 19-24.

⁶ Flanagan. 1998.

⁷ MacKenzie, D., J. Robinson and C. Campbell (1998). "Long-Term Incarceration of Female Offenders," *Long-Term Imprisonment: Policy, Science, and Correctional Practice*, Ch.13, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

⁸ Weekes. 1992.

⁹ Motiuk, L.L. (1997). "Classification for correctional programming: The Offender Intake Assessment (OIA) Process," *Forum on Corrections Research*, vol. 9, n° 1, p. 18-22.

¹⁰ This rating is not applicable to the substance abuse or personal/emotional domains

¹¹ Wichmann, C., R. Serin and L.L. Motiuk. *Predicting suicide attempts among male offenders in federal penitentiaries*, R-91. Ottawa, ON: Research Branch, Correctional Service of Canada, 2000.

¹² MacKenzie, Robinson and Campbell, 1998.

Just released...

The Research Branch of the Correctional Service of Canada in Ottawa recently released the following publications:

- R-89 *Use of Residency Condition with Statutory Release:
A descriptive analysis***
by B. A. Grant, S. L. Johnson and M. Muirhead, June 2000.
- R-90 *Case Needs Review: Employment Domain***
by P. Gendreau, C. Goggin and G. Gray, June 2000.
- R-91 *Predicting Suicide Attempts Among Male Offenders
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by C. Wichmann, R. Serin and L. Motiuk, June 2000.

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FOCUS

"*Implementing What Works in the Community*" is the eighth in a series of research conferences sponsored by the International Community Corrections Association (ICCA). The *first* conference held in Philadelphia in 1993 examined promising assessment and classification tools, treatment and programming options, and general principles of implementation. The *second* conference held in Seattle in 1994, looked more closely at effective treatment approaches for particular populations. The *third* conference held in Ottawa in 1995, linked principles and examples of effective correctional programs with strategies to design and implements what works. The *fourth* conference, held in Austin in 1996, expanded on what works in the areas of juvenile justice, DWI offenders, Restorative Justice and offender assessment. The *fifth* conference, held in Cleveland in 1997, focused on critical issues and best practices in community corrections. The *sixth* conference, held in Arlington in 1998, focused on women and juvenile females in community corrections. The *seventh* conference, held in Cincinnati in 1999, addressed risk reduction strategies interventions for special needs offenders.

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To present
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To publish
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