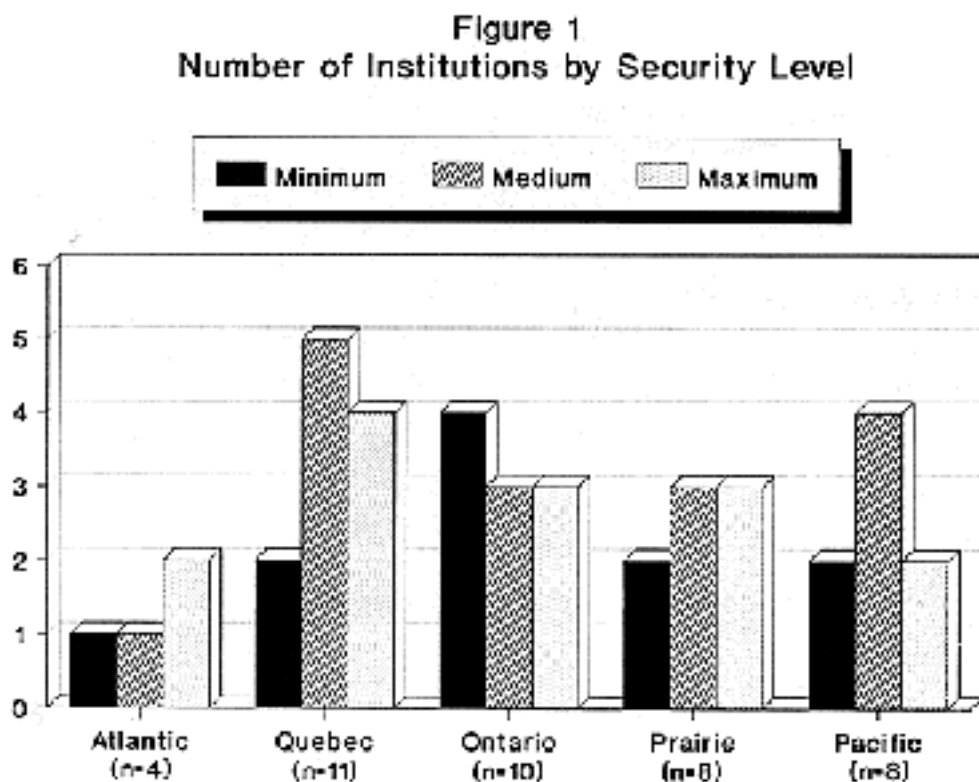


## A Snapshot of the Correctional Service of Canada's Institutions

The Correctional Service of Canada recently compiled descriptive profiles of all its institutions.<sup>(1)</sup> These profiles, assembled by the Operational Planning and Resource Analysis Branch, provide extensive information on the inmate composition, facilities and programming capabilities of our institutions. The Research and Statistics Branch analysed the information in the "1990/1991 Institutional Profiles," providing a summary of the characteristics of our institutions.

There are 41 federal institutions (excluding halfway houses) under the jurisdiction of the Correctional Service of Canada.<sup>(2)</sup> Four are in the Atlantic region, 11 in Quebec, 10 in Ontario, and the Prairie and Pacific regions each have eight. Eleven institutions are minimum-security facilities while 16 are medium- and 14 are maximum-security facilities (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1**



Roughly two thirds of the institutions in most regions are in rural areas on the outskirts of cities or towns, and one third are in urban areas. The exceptions are the Prairie region (where 88% of the institutions are in rural areas) and the Atlantic region (where only one of its four institutions is in a rural area). In considering just medium-security institutions, however, one finds that almost half are situated close to urban centres.

The average institution is located about 27 kilometres from the nearest source of community services. Not surprisingly, in the Atlantic and Prairie regions, the average distance between institutions and local services is considerably higher. There is also some variation in the average distances between regional

headquarters and the institutions. Most institutions are located within at least 160 kilometres of regional headquarters. In the Prairie region, however, the average distance is almost 500 kilometres, with one institution, Stony Mountain, located 900 kilometres from regional headquarters in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Only 16% of our institutions were built less than 10 years ago, and most of these are maximum-security facilities. Approximately 45% of our institutions were built between 10 and 25 years ago, an additional 23% between 26 and 50 years ago, and 16% more than 50 years ago. The oldest buildings are used primarily as maximum-security facilities. Nineteen of our institutions stand alone, with the remainder of sites incorporating more than one institution. In many cases, medium- and maximum-security facilities share the same property.

The stated capacity of our institutions ranges from 78 to 501 inmates, with an average of 259. The average capacity of minimum-security facilities is 121 inmates, while medium- and maximum-security institutions have average capacities of 377 and 235 respectively.

In terms of the actual numbers of inmates housed in our institutions at any one time, the headcount sometimes exceeds the capacity of the institution. On 12 October 1990, for example, approximately 40% of our institutions housed more inmates than their stated capacities. However, the majority were only overcapacity by 8.5% with a range of about 1% to 21% overcapacity. To manage the overcrowding problem, 19 of our 41 institutions were using "double-bunking." In any one institution, the number of inmates who were double-bunked ranged from two to 160. While one institution had 35% of its population double-bunked, most institutions double-bunk less than 20% of their populations.

The problem of overcapacity is primarily in the medium-security institutions.<sup>3</sup> In fact, on 12 October 1990, almost 70% of our medium-security institutions were overcapacity. On that same date, none of our minimum-security institutions were overcapacity, while 41% of our maximum-security institutions had populations in excess of their stated capacities. The Ontario and Prairie regions appear to have the most serious problem, with 45% and 44% of institutions respectively reporting overcapacity.

**Table 1**

<b>Characteristics of Our Institutions</b>			
	<b>Minimal</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
Number	11	16	14
Average Inmate Capacity	121	377	235
Institutions using Double Bunking	1	13	5
Age of Facilities (%)			
Under 10 Years	0	13	29
10-50 Years	100	75	42
Over 50 Years	0	12	29

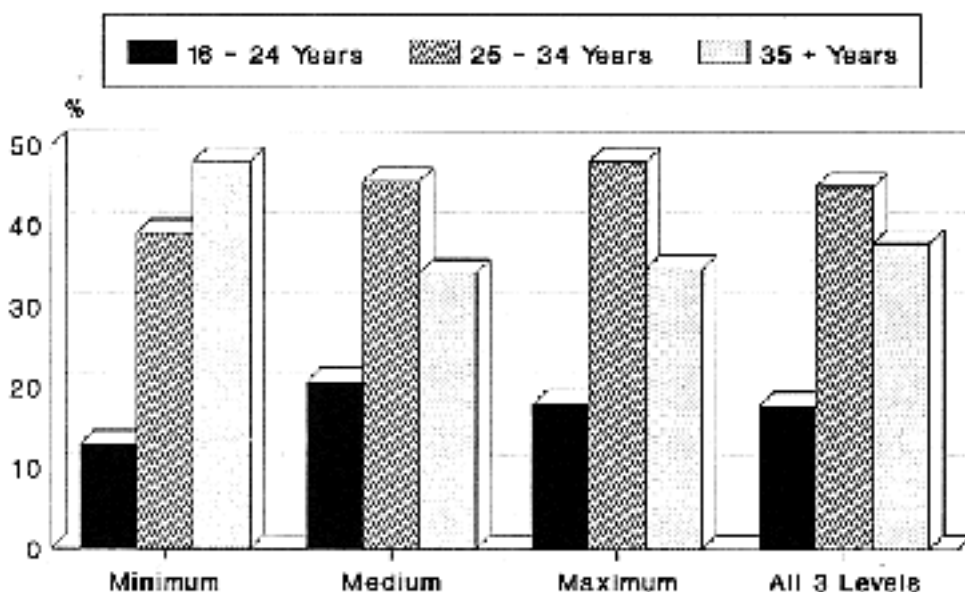
Location of Institutions (%)			
Urban	36	44	23
Rural	64	56	77
Average distance from community services (km)			
	9	40	22

The Correctional Service of Canada offers a variety of educational, vocational, occupational and personal development programs in most of its institutions. The average number of programs offered is quite close across the three institutional security levels. Most programs focus on the personal development of offenders. The Regional Psychiatric Centres in the Pacific and Prairie regions and the Regional Treatment Centre in Ontario provide the greatest number of personal development programs for inmates.

The institutional profile also contains information on the age of inmates and the length of sentences. Almost half the inmates in minimum-security institutions are 35 years of age or older. Inmates between the ages of 25 and 34 years comprise the largest group in both medium- and maximum-security institutions (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2**

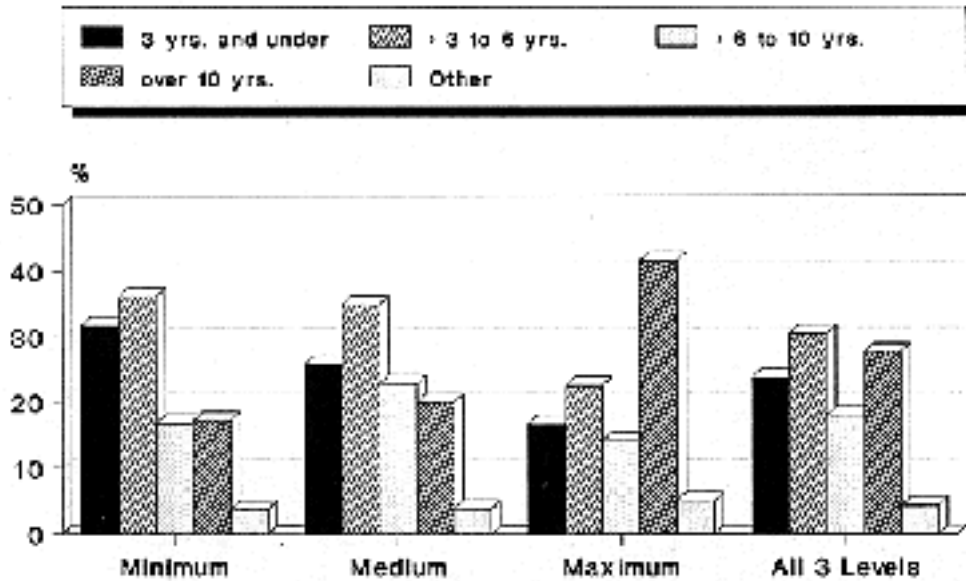
**Figure 2  
Inmate Age Distribution  
by Security Level**



As shown in Figure 3, approximately one third of inmates in minimum-security institutions are serving sentences of less than three years. A similar proportion of inmates in minimum-security institutions also serve sentences of three to five years on average. Medium-security facilities house a large portion (35%) of inmates who are serving three to five years while, not surprisingly, a considerable proportion also are serving sentences between six and 10 years (23%) and more than 10 years (20%). Maximum-security institutions have the highest proportion (42%) of inmates serving sentences of more than 10 years.

Figure 3

Figure 3  
Sentence Length by  
Security Level



"1990/91 Institutional Profiles." Report prepared by the Operational Planning and Resource Analysis Branch, Correctional Service of Canada, 12 October 1990.

(1) *The institutional profiles do not include Community Correctional Centres (CCCs) which are federal minimum-security institutions.*

(2) *For the purpose of this article, the Special Handling Unit (SHU) at Saskatchewan Penitentiary, the SHU at the Regional Reception Centre (Quebec) and the Regional Treatment Centre at Kingston Penitentiary are not counted as separate institutions.*

(3) *Overcapacity figures were calculated by dividing the institutional headcount by the stated capacity of each facility. The information available does not describe the nature of the inmate population in these institutions.*