

# Managing older offenders: Where do we stand? (R-70, 1998)

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The main purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive profile of the older offenders in federal institutions and community settings. This report highlights the problems and unique needs of these offenders that set them apart from their younger adult counterparts. First, the terms used in the study were defined as well as the age of the offenders. Data were collected on the population of older offenders (50 years and older) in relation to four major offences (homicide, robbery, sexual and drug) and on the population of offenders in federal institutions.

Part I of the report examines the rapid growth of older offenders in the institutions through comparisons of their populations in 1993 and 1996. The data indicate that the majority of older offenders are more likely serving time for a crime of sexual nature or violence than their younger counterparts. The personal characteristics of older and younger adult offenders were compared as they pertain to conventional behaviour in seven need areas (employment, marital and family factors, associates and social interaction, substance abuse, community functioning, personal and emotional orientation, and attitude) and four areas of risk management (criminal history, offence severity, sexual offence history, and suicide risk potentials).

Part II of the report analyses the offender needs, risk, and the combined risk and needs of older and younger offenders in the community settings. The study includes the following main offender need areas: academic and vocational training, employment, financial management, marital and family relationships, companionships of others, living accommodation, emotional stability, alcohol and drug usage, mental ability, health, degree of responsiveness, and the needs of aboriginal people.

Part III of the study deals with the detailed discussion of the critical needs of older offenders: medical care services, adjustment to imprisonment, programming, prison environment and violence, peer relationships, family relationships, and parole concerns.

The result of this study indicates that the population of older offenders is growing at a much faster rate than that of younger offenders. This situation merits attention, thought, planning, and action. As society on the whole is growing old, Correctional Service should be prepared to deal with the 'greying of Canada' in our prisons. ■