



Research at a glance

Conditional Release of Federal Offenders Convicted of Criminal Organization Offences

KEY WORDS: *criminal organization, gang, offender profile, release outcomes.*

Why we did this study

In its efforts to fight organized crime, the Government of Canada amended the *Criminal Code of Canada* (CCC) in 1997 to make participation in criminal organizations an indictable offence. Further CCC amendments introduced strengthened provisions to combat organized crime and introduced three new offences that target various degrees of involvement with criminal organizations.

This study extended the knowledge surrounding criminal organization offenders by updating past profiles, focusing on community outcomes while on conditional release, and identifying risk factors related to re-offending for criminal organization offenders.

What we did

This study examined all 451 offenders who were identified by the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) as being convicted of a criminal organization offence and admitted between April 25, 1997 and March 31, 2009. A matched sample of offenders was also used to compare the profile and outcomes of those with a criminal organization offence to the general offender population.

What we found

The population examined included 418 non-Aboriginal males, 19 Aboriginal males, and 14 women offenders, with an average sentence length of 5.2 years.

Examination of criminogenic risk, need and reintegration potential found that the typical criminal organization offender was "medium" risk and "high" need, with "high" reintegration potential (meaning that they posed a good risk for community re-entry). Domain-level analyses of need revealed that criminal organization offenders were significantly more likely to have some or considerable need in the areas of criminal attitudes and criminal associates than the matched sample of CSC offenders.

Almost three-quarters (73.6%) of the 451 criminal organization offenders had been released to the community by March 2009. Most (76.4%) had been employed during release, while 14.8% had participated in a community intervention program.

Of those who had been released, 12.7% were re-admitted to a federal institution for violating the conditions of their release ($n = 42$), and 14.3% of that total had been re-admitted with a new offence ($n = 6$).

Survival analyses conducted to determine the risk of failure upon release found that those convicted of criminal organization offences were significantly less likely than the matched group to be returned to custody. Risk factors found to be predictive of re-conviction included age at release and type of release, with younger offenders and those on statutory release more likely to be returned to custody.

What it means

The criminal organization offender population is significantly different from the general CSC offender population, as they have unique needs and pose different risks. Development of institutional and community-based policy and programming for these offenders should be based on empirical research, which is key element of evidence-based practices.

For more information

Stys, Y. (2010). *Conditional release of federal offenders convicted of criminal organization offences*. Ottawa, Correctional Service of Canada.

A PDF version of the full report can be obtained from: research@csc-scc.gc.ca.

Prepared by: Yvonne Stys

Contact

Research Branch
(613) 996-3287
research@csc-scc.gc.ca

