



Research at a glance

Women Gang Inmates: A Profile

KEY WORDS: *women offenders, profile, gang members, gang affiliation*

Why we did this study

Gangs pose a risk to the safety and security of both the correctional facilities where they serve their sentence, and the communities upon release. The rise in the number of women entering federal custody with gang affiliations, up 85% since 1997, suggests there is an important need to generate a profile of gang-involved women so effective gang management and intervention strategies can be developed.

What we did

All data were extracted from the Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC) Offender Management System (OMS) for all women gang-affiliated or gang members admitted to the CSC between 1978 and 2009. A comparison sample was generated by matching non-affiliated federal women offenders on sentence length and age. The resulting sample included 337 gang involved women inmates and 337 non-gang involved women inmates.

What we found

Compared with the non-gang group, women gang-involved inmates typically had more extensive criminal histories, static risk and dynamic risk (needs), lower motivation and reintegration potential, and poor institutional adjustment indicated by involvement in institutional incidents and involuntary segregation.

At intake, gang-involved women were more likely to be rated as as medium or maximum security level. In addition, many of the gang-involved women had both prior youth and adult convictions, and had previously served a sentence of up to 4 years.

Specific needs in the areas of procriminal attitudes and associates, which translated into difficulties within the institution as increased violent incidents and disruptive behaviour were found for the gang group more often. These women also participated in more core correctional programs for violent offenders,

substance abuse, education, living skills, and womens programs than their non-gang involved counterparts.

What it means

Gang-involved women offenders have more serious criminal histories and are more disruptive in the institution. Identification of high level's of criminogenic needs among these women suggests that program participation and interventions that encourage program participation with resistant offenders might be areas that would lead to effective reductions in gang membership.

For more information

Scott, T.-L. (2012). *Women Gang Inmates: A Profile*. Research Report, R-272. Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada.

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