

## CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

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## Characteristics of Federal Offenders in Structured Intervention Units, the Mainstream Population and Administrative Segregation

*Offenders in SIUs distinguish themselves from those in the General Population and previously in Administrative Segregation.*

### Why we are doing this study

In 2019, Bill C-83 transformed federal corrections to focus on rehabilitation and mental healthcare. This legislation also brought about the elimination of both administrative and disciplinary segregation and introduced Structured Intervention Units (SIUs) for those inmates who could not be managed in the general population. Comparing the case characteristics of inmates in SIUs with the mainstream or general inmate population as well as those who were formerly in administrative segregation yields some important information especially with respect to providing targeted interventions to these individuals.

### What we did

All federal offenders in SIUs were drawn from Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC) Offender Management System on February 28, 2021. On that date, there were 217 offenders in SIUs, (214 men and 3 women). In accordance with the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (31-A, B, C), the reasons for SIU placement were: 105 (or 48.4%) *jeopardizes the security of the institution or the safety of any person*, 2 (or 0.9%) *interferes with an investigation* and 110 (or 50.7%) *inmate is in danger*. Given the low representation of women offenders in SIUs, the focus of this research is on men only. SIU group comparisons were made in relation to the general inmate population at that time and a previous group in administrative segregation<sup>1</sup>.

### What we found

Two intake assessment measures were used to gather criminal history background (Criminal Risk Index or CRI) and initial security level designation (Custody Rating Scale or CRS). Analyses revealed that those in SIUs who *jeopardize the security or safety of any person* were more likely than those whereby the *inmate is in danger* to have a high/very high risk of re-offending (79% and 68%, respectively) and almost equally to be designated as maximum security (80% and 78%, respectively). Substantial differences also emerged for the SIUs population relative to the general institutional population and those previously in administrative segregation with respect to CRI high/very high risk of re-offending (69%, 35% and 67%, respectively) and CRS maximum-security designation (79%, 42%, and 59%, respectively).

On the other hand, for Dynamic Factors Identification and Analysis (case needs) assessed at intake to federal custody there were considerable differences observed between those in SIUs and the general institutional population. Overall, the SIU population relative to the comparison groups were found to be

rated as "high needs" (98%, 72% and 92%, respectively). More specifically, offenders in SIUs were more likely to be assessed as "high needs" in the Attitudes domain (78%, 47% and 64% respectively); "high needs" in the Personal/ Emotional domain (69%, 60% and 66%, respectively); and "high needs" in the Associates domain (50%, 29%, and 42%, respectively).

In the Attitude domain, there were found to be characteristics such as: displays non-conforming attitudes towards society (93%, 72% and 91%, respectively); displays negative attitudes towards the criminal justice system (90% and 65%, and 83% respectively); supports instrumental/goal-oriented violence (89%, 58% and 75%, respectively); and displays negative attitudes towards the correctional system (78%, 39% and 73%, respectively). For the Personal/Emotional domain the following were found: being impulsive (93%, 77% and 92%, respectively), limited in ability to generate choices (78%, 75% and 87%, respectively), have difficulty solving interpersonal problems (87%, 73% and 81%, respectively), has low frustration tolerance (80%, 48% and 74%, respectively) and frequently acts in an aggressive manner (80%, 45% and 72%, respectively). With respect to the Associates domain there were found to be gang/organized crime affiliations (27%, 17% and 29%, respectively).

### What it means

These analyses confirm that the SIU population, like those in previous administrative segregation, distinguish themselves as a group from the mainstream population in a number of cognitive-behavioural and attitudinal ways. Moreover, the current SIU population has increased needs compared to the previous administrative segregation population. Clearly, those in SIUs display complex needs and require intensive levels of service. This reinforces that interventions being delivered to those who are placed in SIUs need to be focused on motivation to change, problem solving, violence prevention and interpersonal relations. As well, these services need to be offered by well-trained and qualified staff.

<sup>1</sup>Examining the Case Characteristics of Federal Offenders in Administrative Segregation Research in Brief April 2018 | 18-04

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