

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

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Examining the Case Characteristics of Federal Offenders in Administrative Segregation

Characteristics of offenders in administrative segregation set them apart from others and offer targets for intervention.

Why we are doing this study

A substantial decline for federal offender counts in administrative segregation has been observed in recent years. From April 2014 to March 2018, the federal offender population in administrative segregation showed a decrease of 56.4% (from 780 to 340). Currently, exploring the characteristics of those in administrative segregation yields some important information especially with respect to developing alternatives for those not requiring mental health interventions to further reduce the utilization of administrative segregation in federal corrections.

What we did

All federal offenders in administrative segregation were drawn from Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC) Offender Management System on March 4, 2018. On that date there were 340 offenders in administrative segregation (334 men and 6 women). In accordance with the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (31-A, B, C), the reasons for administrative segregation placement were: 182 (or 53.5%) *jeopardizes the security of the institution or the safety of any person*, 23 (or 6.8%) *interferes with an investigation* and 135 (or 39.7%) *inmate is in danger*. Given the relatively low representation of women offenders in administrative segregation the focus of this research is on men only. For men offenders, the assigned Offender Security Level (OSL) at time of placement was found to be: 199 (or 62%) maximum, 117 (or 36%) medium and 6 (or 2%) minimum.

What we found

Examinations of two objective measures used to gather criminal history background (Criminal Risk Index) and security level designation (Custody Rating Scale) at intake to federal custody revealed little difference in risk scores or security designations across the various reasons for segregation placement. However, substantial differences did emerge for the administrative segregation population relative to the institutional population with respect to CRI high/very high risk of re-offending (67% and 38%, respectively) and CRS maximum security designation (59% and 31%, 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 administrative segregation and the comparison group, the institutional population. The administrative segregation population relative to the comparison group were found to be rated as "high needs" (92% and 64%, respectively). More specifically, offenders in administrative segregation were more likely to be assessed as "high needs" in the Personal/ Emotional domain (66% and 47%, respectively); "high needs" in the Attitudes domain (64% and 38% respectively); and "high needs" in the Substance Abuse domain (58% and 41%, respectively).

Some noteworthy comparative case characteristics for the administrative segregation population relative to the institutional population in the Personal/Emotional domain include the following: impulsive (92% and 70%, respectively), limited in ability to generate choices (87% and 67%, respectively), have difficulty solving interpersonal problems (81% and 63%, respectively), has low frustration tolerance (74% and 40%, respectively) and frequently acts in an aggressive manner (72% and 35%, respectively).

Moreover, in the Attitude domain there were found to be case characteristics such as: displays non-conforming attitudes towards society (91% and 68%, respectively); displays negative attitudes towards the criminal justice system (83% and 57%, respectively); attitudes support instrumental/goal-oriented violence (76% and 45%, respectively); and displays negative attitudes towards the correctional system (73% and 30%, respectively).

What it means

In developing viable and safe alternatives to being placed in administrative segregation for offenders not requiring a mental health intervention, it is suggested that they be:

- managed in highly structured units with active routines;
- provided a stimulating environment; and
- have strategies in place to reduce treatment resistance.



Importantly, programs being delivered to these offenders should be targeted at problem solving, anger management, violence prevention, interpersonal relations and substance misuse.

For more information

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