Why we did this study

Older offenders constitute an increasing percentage of CSC’s custodial population (Beaudette & Stewart, 2014). Existing research suggests this sub-group of offenders may have unique needs relative to their younger counterparts, as well as the older adult population in general (Uzoaba, 1998; Omolade, 2014; Aday & Krabill, 2012; Williams et al., 2006). Understanding trends regarding the older offender population is therefore necessary to better respond to the needs of this group.

What we did

An in-custody snapshot was taken on January 20th 2019 to identify the presence of older offenders (i.e., those aged 50 years and above) in the overall custodial population. While there is some debate regarding the definition of older offenders, the age category 50 and up has been deemed appropriate for correctional populations due to their greater health needs compared to the general population (Baidawi et al., 2011).

What we found

On January 20th 2019, offenders aged 50 years and up accounted for one-quarter (25%) of the overall custodial population, while those aged 65 and up accounted for 5%. The percentage of older offenders varied across regions, with the highest representation in Quebec (34%) and the lowest in the Prairie Region (14%).

Within the older adult population, the vast majority (80%) of offenders are between the ages of 50 and 64 and most (97%) are male. Indigenous representation among the older offender population is 20% overall, although considerably higher in the Prairie region (39%).

What it means

Given that older offenders account for one-quarter of the current federal custodial population, further research is needed to explore the unique needs of this group, as well as diversities within this group, so that CSC can more effectively manage and support this group while providing interventions and services that are responsive to age-based needs.

References:


For more information

Please e-mail the Research Branch or contact us by phone at (613) 995-3975.

You can also visit the Research Publications section for a full list of reports and one-page summaries.

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