



# Research at a glance

## Federally-Sentenced Sexual Offenders: Population Trends, Current Profile, and Release Outcomes

*Sex offenders in CSC require interventions to address substance abuse and employment as well as sexual offending.*

### Why we did this study

It is important for the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) to be prepared to respond to changes in legislation that could increase the federal sex offender population and place pressure on the management and programming of these individuals. Additionally, further development of CSC's Integrated Correctional Program Model will benefit from updated information on the profile of sex offenders to help inform planning and revisions.

### What we did

To assess recent population trends and provide a profile of federal sex offenders, we compared all federal offenders who were under CSC jurisdiction on February 23, 2014 who ever had a sex offence on their record ( $N=3,755$ ) with a previous survey of CSC sex offenders conducted on August 15, 2010 ( $N=3,519$ ). We then used the 2010 group of sex offenders and compared them to all offenders who did not have a sex offence on their record on August 15, 2010 in order to assess the profile and release outcomes of sex offenders versus non-sex offenders.

### What we found

Although there was no increase in the percentage of the CSC population with a sex offence on their criminal record over the past several years, findings did reveal a 14% increase in the proportion of sex offenders supervised in the community from 2010 to 2014.

The 2014 profile of sex offenders revealed that they have substantial criminal records, with 71% having had a previous adult conviction. Furthermore, the majority were found to have moderate or high criminal risk and need ratings. Over 47% had either serious alcohol or drug abuse problems; 56% had unstable employment histories; and only 28% had a high school diploma. Needs ratings on these domains were significantly higher among sex offenders of Aboriginal ancestry than of non-Aboriginal ancestry.

When comparing the 2010 cohort of sex offenders and non-sex offenders, sex offenders were older, had lower educational attainment, and higher rates of learning disability, mental health problems, and alcohol dependence. Despite this, follow-up analyses revealed that sex offenders who were incarcerated on August 15, 2010 and subsequently released into the community were less likely than non-sex offenders to return to custody within the first year of their release. Additionally, sex offenders who had only adult victims were twice as likely to return to custody within a year for any reason as those with child victims.

### What it means

Given the slight increase in the proportion of sex offenders supervised in the community over the past several years, sex offender programs and maintenance programs will continue to be a key component of community case management. Results suggest that many sex offenders may benefit from interventions that address substance abuse and employment problems in addition to focused intervention for their sex offences. Low educational attainment suggests program material may need to be adapted to literacy level. Furthermore, programs for Aboriginal sex offenders should consider that these individuals have fewer child victims, more domestic violence, and much higher rates of substance abuse than non-Aboriginal sex offenders.

### For more information

Stewart, L. A., Nolan, A., & Rubenfeld, S. (2016). *Federally-sentenced sex offenders: Population trends, current profile, and release outcomes.* (Research Report R-349). Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada.

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