

# Inuit sexual offenders: Victim, offence and recidivism characteristics

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Inuit offenders in federal correctional facilities are more likely to be incarcerated for sexual offences than non-Aboriginal offenders, as well as Aboriginal offenders.<sup>3</sup> Currently, over 60% of Inuit offenders are incarcerated for a sexual offence.<sup>4</sup> However, to date, there is a paucity of research that has examined Inuit sexual offending behaviour. This article provides a profile and examination of recidivism patterns of Inuit sexual offenders in comparison to non-Aboriginal sexual offenders.

## Present study

This study compares the profiles of Inuit ( $N = 37$ ) and non-Aboriginal ( $N = 1,937$ ) sex offenders. In addition, a 12-year follow-up of 37 Inuit and 37 non-Aboriginal sex offenders was performed to examine recidivism patterns. The Inuit sex offenders were compared with a random and stratified sample of 37 non-Aboriginal sexual offenders.<sup>5</sup> Data were retrieved from the Offender Management System (OMS)<sup>6</sup> of Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) and the 1991 National Sex Offender Census.<sup>7</sup>

## Results

Overall, Inuit and non-Aboriginal sexual offenders differ in several areas, including age, type of victim, sex, victim age and rates of recidivism. For instance, Inuit sex offenders are significantly younger at the time of admission than non-Aboriginal sexual offenders (average of 31 versus 39 years). This is similar to age differences typically found between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders.<sup>8</sup>

Inuit sex offenders are currently incarcerated for different types of sexual offences than non-Aboriginal sex offenders. The largest percentages of both groups are rapists, with approximately one-half of both groups in this category (see Table 1). However, in spite of the majority of both groups falling into the rapist category, Inuit sex offenders are more often classified as mixed sexual offenders (i.e., offending against both child and adult victims) than the non-Aboriginal group (16% versus 4%).

Although there are no significant differences between Inuit and non-Aboriginal sex offenders on the average number of victims, they do differ in

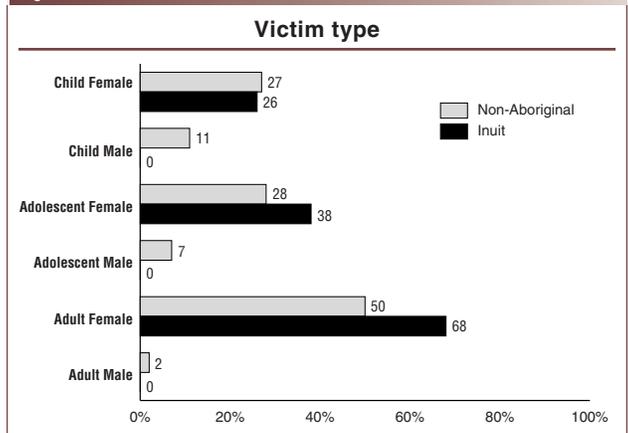
Table 1

	Inuit		Non-Aboriginal		$\chi^2$ ( $\lambda$ )
	%	(n)	%	(n)	
Incest Offender	—	(—) <sup>†</sup>	20	(331)	12.74**
Child Molester	—	(—) <sup>†</sup>	27	(455)	
Mixed Offender (child/adult victim)	16	(5)	4	(64)	
Rapist	47	(15)	50	(840)	

\*\* $p < .01$ ; <sup>†</sup> amount too small to be expressed

their choice of victims. As illustrated in Figure 1, no significant differences exist between the proportions of Inuit and non-Aboriginal sex offenders who victimized adult males, adolescent males, adolescent females, or female children. However, significantly larger proportions of Inuit sex offenders victimized adult women (68% versus 50%) and significantly less victimized male children (0% versus 11%). Importantly, no Inuit sex offenders had male victims.

Figure 1



Inuit and non-Aboriginal offenders do not differ significantly on the amount of physical injury to the victim(s). However, Inuit sex offenders were significantly more likely to have the involvement of alcohol and/or other drugs in their current sexual offence as compared with non-Aboriginal sexual offenders (88% versus 61%).

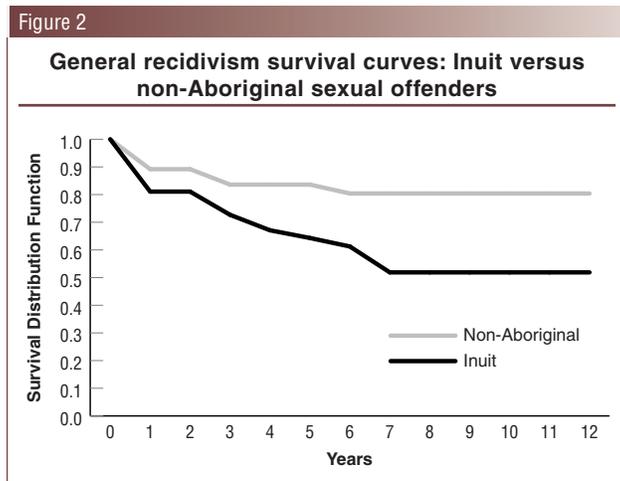
Overall, Inuit and non-Aboriginal sex offenders are similar regarding some characteristics relating to their sexual offences, such as their number of victims. However, there are differences on other

variables such as their age and their victim's sex and age. Some of these differences may be of great importance in the treatment of Inuit sex offenders in order to address risk of re-offending.

### Recidivism

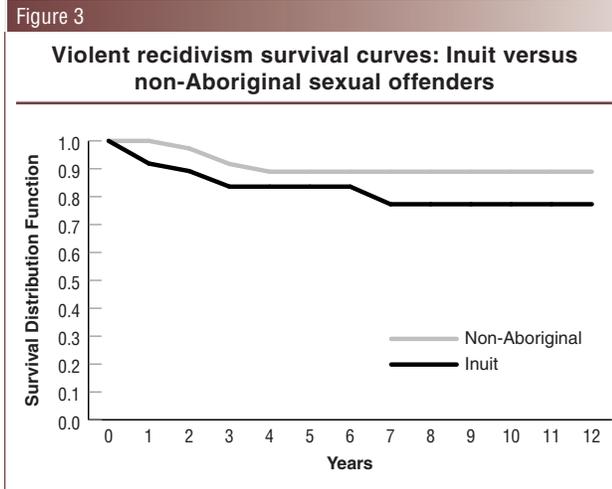
Survival analysis was used to compare recidivism for the 37 Inuit sex offenders and a sample of 37 non-Aboriginal sex offenders, over a 12-year period. An examination of any re-admission to a federal correctional facility (general recidivism),<sup>9</sup> as well as re-admissions for violent and sexual offences was conducted.

Figure 2 indicates the proportion of offenders who have survived without being re-admitted to federal facilities, with the remaining percentage reflecting the recidivism rate. The results indicate that the Inuit sex offenders have significantly higher rates of general recidivism than non-Aboriginal sex offenders. Approximately seven years into the follow-up period, 48% of the Inuit sex offenders who could be followed for 7 years had been re-admitted to a federal facility, compared to approximately 20% of non-Aboriginal sex offenders. The rate of recidivism was greatest in the first three years of the follow-up period among the non-Aboriginal sex offenders. For the Inuit sex offenders, recidivism was greatest up until the seventh year.

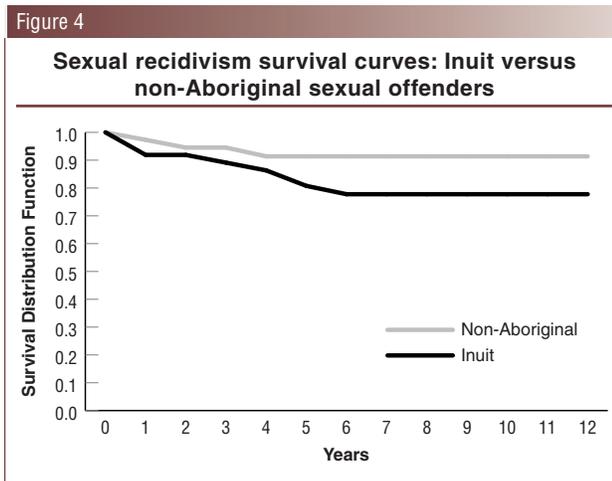


In terms of violent recidivism, although larger proportions of Inuit than non-Aboriginal sex offenders were re-admitted for violent offences, these differences were not statistically significant.<sup>10</sup> Approximately seven years into the follow-up, approximately 20% of Inuit sex offenders were re-admitted to a federal correctional facility compared to 7% of non-Aboriginal sex offenders (see Figure 3).

Differences between Inuit and non-Aboriginal sex offenders on sexual recidivism approached significance ( $p = .07$ ), indicating that the Inuit sex



offenders have higher rates of sexual recidivism than non-Aboriginal sex offenders. As seen in the rates of general and violent recidivism, rates of recidivism were most dramatic in the first four years of follow-up, with recidivism remaining stable for both groups after six years of follow-up. Approximately 22% of Inuit sex offenders sexually recidivated, compared to 5% of non-Aboriginal sex offenders (see Figure 4).



### Discussion

Significantly larger proportions of Inuit than non-Aboriginal sex offenders were re-admitted to federal correctional facilities over the 12-year time-period examined. When examining the specific types of re-offending, differences between the two groups approached significance for sexual recidivism, but was non-significant for violent re-offending. Inuit sex offenders were also found to have certain characteristics that are related to recidivism among sexual offenders (e.g., younger age, mixed sexual offences and a more extensive criminal history). These variables may help explain the higher rates of recidivism for the Inuit sex offender population. ■

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- <sup>2</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> floor, R. H. Coats Building, Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa Ontario K1A 0T6.
- <sup>3</sup> Nahanee, T. (1995). *A profile of Aboriginal sex offenders in Canadian federal custody*. Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada. See also Motiuk, L., and Nafekh, M. (2000). Aboriginal offenders in federal corrections: A profile. *Forum on Corrections Research*, 12(1), 10-15.
- <sup>4</sup> Moore, J. P. (2001). *A comparative profile of North American Indian, Métis and Inuit federal offenders*. Masters thesis in Criminology. Ottawa, ON: University of Ottawa.
- <sup>5</sup> The sample was randomly selected by SAS and stratified to match the number of Inuit sex offenders in the community or institution to the number of non-Aboriginal sex offenders in the community or institution.
- <sup>6</sup> The Offender Management System (OMS), created in 1992, is a system designed to monitor and track offenders under the supervision of the Correctional Service of Canada.
- <sup>7</sup> The National Sex Offender Census examined all federally sentenced sexual offenders (either incarcerated or under

community supervision) in 1991. Sex offender status was determined by the presence of any of the following characteristics: the offender at the time of the census was serving a sentence for a sexual offence; had been convicted of a prior sexual assault or multiple sexual assaults (receiving either a federal or provincial sentence); committed a sexually-related offence, but was not serving a sentence for a sexual assault at the time of the census; or committed a sexual offence in the past which a conviction was not handed down.

- <sup>8</sup> Trevethan, S, Tremblay, S., and Carter, J. (2000). *The over-representation of Aboriginal people in the justice system*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada.
- <sup>9</sup> General recidivism refers to any readmission to a federal institution due to the commission of a new offence. Violent recidivism refers to any readmission to a federal institution due to a violent offence (e.g., assault, attempted murder, other related person-based offences). Sexual recidivism refers to any readmission to a federal institution due to a sexual offence (e.g., sexual assault, sexual interference, sexual exploitation, invitation to sexual touching, indignity to a body).
- <sup>10</sup> Although a substantial difference is evident in the proportions of Inuit and non-Aboriginal offenders who violently recidivated, significant results were likely not achieved due to the small sample size.

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