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Research at a glance

National Prevalence of Mental Disorders among Incoming Federally-Sentenced Men

Rates of mental disorder among incoming federal men offenders are higher than those in the Canadian public.

Why we did this study

The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) requires information on the prevalence of mental disorders in newly admitted federal offenders to plan for appropriate services. The research literature has reported higher rates of mental disorder in offender populations than in community samples.

What we did

The study determined the prevalence rates of major mental disorders among 1,110 men offenders using the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM Axis I and Axis II disorders (SCID-I and SCID-II). Current and lifetime rates were obtained for the following disorders: 1) mood; 2) psychotic; 3) substance use; 4) anxiety; 5) eating; 6) pathological gambling; 7) antisocial personality disorder (APD); and 8) borderline personality disorder. Data were collected over a six-month period at reception centres in each region between March 2012 and September 2014. With the exception of offenders presenting with security concerns, all offenders admitted on new warrants of committal were approached to participate. The national consent rate was 78%.

What we found

Over 70% of men offenders met criteria for at least one mental disorder. The national rate for a current diagnosis for a major mental illness including at least one of the following: bipolar disorders, major depression, and psychotic disorders is 12.4%. Alcohol/substance use disorders and APD were the

most common disorders (see Table). These rates are much higher than those found in the Canadian public in the recent national Community Mental Health Survey. Of offenders with a current Axis I disorder, 57% were rated as having no/minimal impairment or moderate impairment in functioning based on the Global Assessment of Functioning scale, indicating they would not require intensive psychiatric treatment.

What it means

As expected, incoming men federal offenders have high rates of alcohol and substance use disorders and APD. Omitting these disorders, 40% of incoming offenders meet the criteria for at least one current mental disorder. This suggests that many men offenders may require interventions to address mental health issues. Findings from the study will inform population management plans for the provision of mental health services.

For more information

Beaudette, J.N., Power, J., & Stewart, L. A. (2015). *National prevalence of mental disorders among incoming federally-sentenced men offenders* (Research Report, R-357). Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service Canada.

To obtain a PDF version of the full report, or for other inquiries, please e-mail the [Research Branch](#) or contact us by phone at (613) 995-3975.

You can also visit the website for a full list of research publications.

Percentage of Prevalence Rates for Current Diagnosis of Major Mental Disorders among Incoming Men Offenders

	National N = 1,110	Atlantic n = 154	Quebec n = 197	Ontario n = 296	Prairies n = 325	Pacific n = 138
Mood Disorders	16.9	18.8	18.8	16.6	16.0	15.2
Primary psychotic	3.3	6.5	3.6	3.4	2.2	2.2
Alcohol/substance use disorders	49.6	50.0	37.1	42.9	58.8	60.1
Anxiety disorders	29.5	29.9	32.0	34.5	23.1	30.4
Eating disorders	0.8	0	2.0	0	0.3	2.9
Pathological gambling	5.9	7.1	3.6	5.1	6.2	8.7
Borderline personality disorder	15.9	11.0	17.8	15.2	13.8	23.9
Antisocial personality disorder	44.1	54.5	40.6	36.5	39.7	63.8