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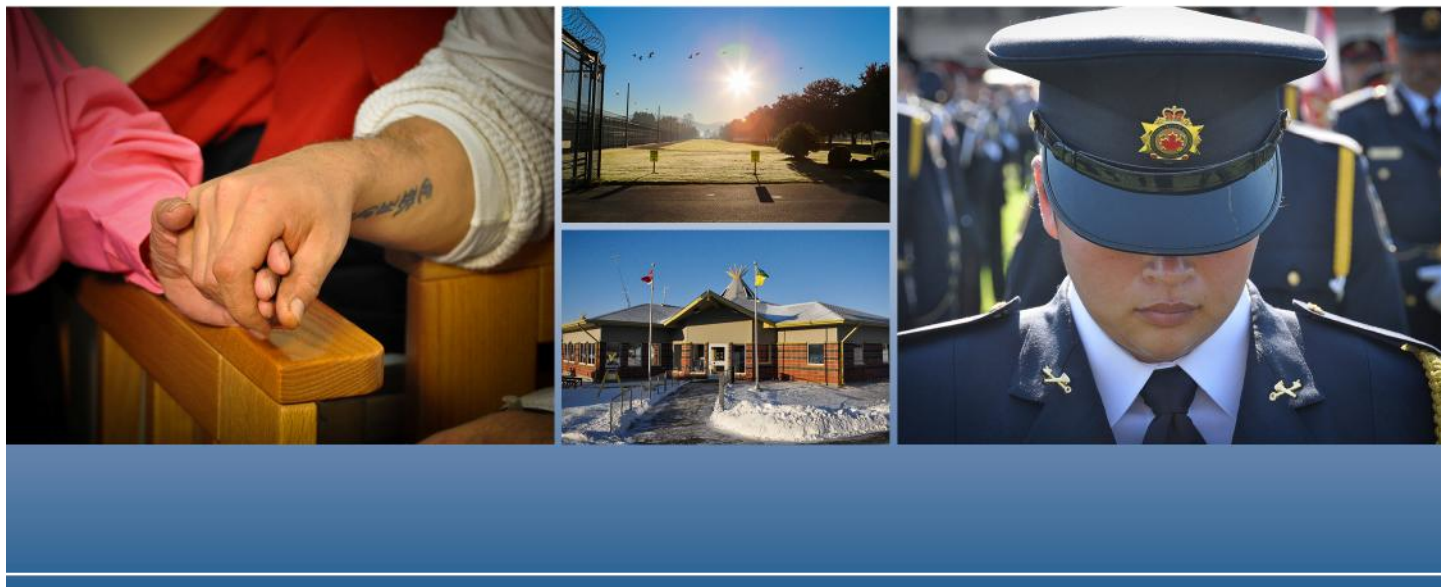
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# CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

CHANGING LIVES. PROTECTING CANADIANS.



## SPECIAL REPORT

### 2017 International Survey of Correctional Services: International Correctional Issues

2017 N° SR-17-01

Ce rapport est également disponible en français. Pour en obtenir un exemplaire, veuillez vous adresser à la Direction de la recherche, Service correctionnel du Canada, 340, avenue Laurier Ouest, Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0P9.

This report is also available in French. Should additional copies be required, they can be obtained from the Research Branch, Correctional Service of Canada, 340 Laurier Ave. West, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0P9.

## **Background**

Globally, correctional organizations aim to continuously adapt to changing circumstances and address the challenges facing their organizations. In [2015](#) and [2016](#), the Correctional Service of Canada conducted a series of international surveys to gain a better understanding of the challenges nations encounter in their correctional organizations, notably with respect to aging infrastructure, rapid technological development, offender health, and offender reintegration, and the best practices they apply to address them. In January 2017, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) hosted the International Symposium on Operational Correctional Issues and Challenges in Ottawa. This Symposium, attended by leading international correctional organizations, further highlighted a number of shared challenges that organizations globally are dealing with, and encouraged the sharing of information regarding how to address these challenges. The perspectives highlighted during this International Symposium formed the basis for the themes included in the 2017 International Survey of Correctional Services.

## **Purpose**

CSC conducted an international survey of numerous correctional organizations around the world to gain a better understanding of not only the operational challenges various nations encounter in their correctional organizations, but also the strategies implemented to address these challenges. The international consultation was completed in collaboration with CSC's Intergovernmental Relations Division (IGR) and representatives from the International Corrections and Prisons Association (ICPA).

## **Overview**

The following is a summary of the responses received for the International Survey of Correctional Services: International Correctional Issues. The survey was developed by staff at CSC's Research Branch in collaboration with the Strategic Policy and Planning Division. It was available in English and French and could be completed online or on paper. The structure of the survey included both multiple choice and open-ended questions. Core challenge areas in correctional practices were identified and questions specific to each area were developed. The

survey was organized based on the following five areas: (1) contraband detection and elimination; (2) application of health technology; (3) security threat groups; (4) administrative segregation/solitary confinement; and (5) the rehabilitation of women offenders.

The target sample was approximately 170 correctional organizations affiliated with ICPA. Respondents were able to respond to the survey between June 29 and July 31, 2017. A total of 11 correctional organizations representing 9 countries responded to the survey. The majority of responses were received from individuals at the executive-level of their organization (73%), followed by those at the senior management level (18%) and those in “other” roles/rankings (9%). The respondent who selected “other” did not specify their role or rank.

Regarding the characteristics of participating organizations, 55% of organizations were at the Federal/National level of government, followed closely by organizations at the State/Regional (27%), and Local/Municipal (18%) levels. The majority of organizations indicated that they supervised both custodial and non-custodial sentences (73%) while 27% indicated they supervised only custodial sentences. Notably, no organizations indicated that they only supervise those with non-custodial sentences.

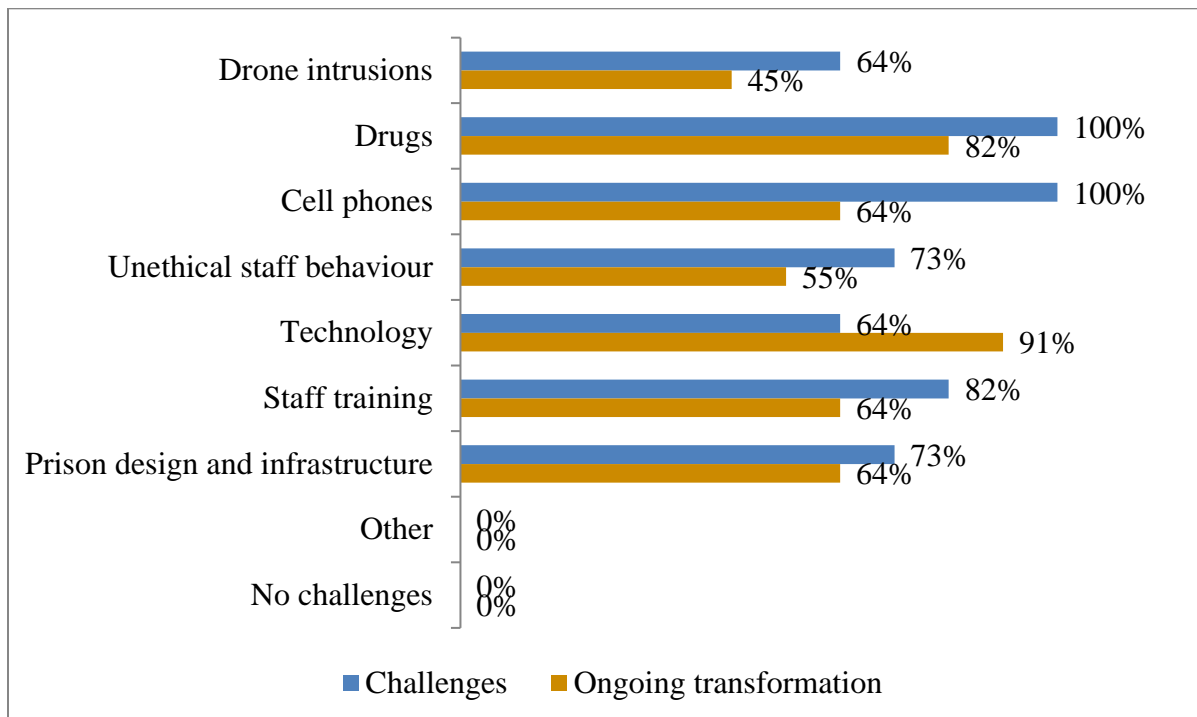
The results of this report are organized according to each key area assessed. The quantitative results examine the challenges and associated transformation plans for each sub-area examined. Thereafter, the qualitative themes associated with the challenges leading to transformation, the ongoing transformation projects that have been planned or occurred in the past year, as well as any best practices garnered throughout the transformation process are discussed. A summary of findings is provided at the end of the document.

## Results

### Part I: Contraband Detection and Elimination

For the majority of organizations, drugs, cell phones (100%, for each), staff training on this issue (82%), unethical staff behaviour, prison design and infrastructure (73%, for each), drone intrusions, and technology (64%, for each) were identified as significant challenges in the area of contraband detection and elimination (see Figure 1). Notably, none of the organizations indicated that they were experiencing no challenges in this area. Consistent with these top identified challenges, the majority of organizations reported that they had undertaken transformation in the following areas of contraband detection and elimination in the past year addressing: technology (91%), drugs (82%), cell phones (64%), staff training (64%), prison design and infrastructure (64%), and unethical staff behaviour (55%). Generally, most areas identified as challenges had fewer organizations indicating that these areas were undergoing transformation. The one exception to this was the use of technology to detect and eliminate contraband.

*Figure 1.* Proportion of organizations facing challenges and ongoing transformation in the area of contraband detection and elimination.



Organizations were also asked to describe the issues leading to transformation, the ongoing transformation projects that had occurred in the last year, as well as any best practices applied throughout the transformation process. Specific to the issues leading to transformation in the area of contraband detection and elimination, two major themes were identified – a high level or increasing level of contraband (e.g., cell phones, drugs, etc.) entering institutions and posing threats to institutional safety. Some more unique issues that lead to transformation in a small number of organizations included decreases in community substance misuse services requiring increased through-care in institutional and community rehabilitation programs and new contraband-related technological threats (e.g., drone technology) facing correctional organizations.

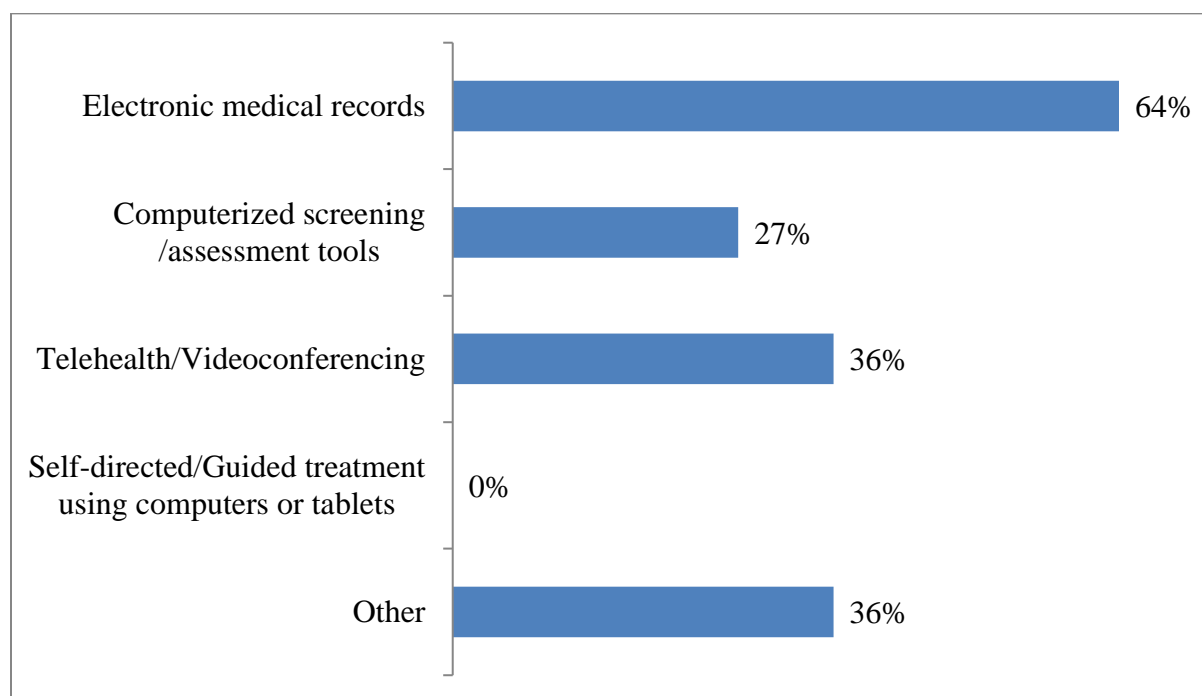
With regard to action plans associated with transformation, several organizations cited increased staff training to search and detect contraband, the implementation of policies and procedures related to staff integrity management efforts, and the use of technological improvements to aid in the search and seizure of contraband (e.g., cell-sense, drone detection, x-ray technology, etc.). Some unique transformation strategies included eliminating all physical books and letters from entering the institution – replacing them with electronic copies – in an effort to reduce the amount of contraband being smuggled into institutions. As well, one organization mentioned using harm reduction strategies (e.g., opiate substitution therapy) to address substance misuse concerns – thereby reducing the amount of contraband within institutions. Several organizations, describing best practices that had been developed through the process of transformation, noted two themes: making organizational-level policy and procedural changes and using advanced detection methods (e.g., drug detection dogs, Ion Mobility Spectrometry) to detect and eliminate contraband.

## **Part II: The Application of Health Technology**

Organizations were asked about health technology currently in use. As illustrated in Figure 2, the majority of organizations reported that they used electronic medical records (64%). Fewer organizations reported using telehealth/videoconferencing, “other” technology (36% for each), and computerized screening/assessment tools (27%). Several organizations provided examples of “other” health technology in use. Examples included: idose methadone dispensers, digital x-ray technology, digital medical devices (e.g., pharmacy dispensing software), and computer-generated health forms. Notably, no organizations responding to the survey this year

indicated that they used computer or tablet based self-directed/guided treatment, whereas results of the 2016 International Survey found that a number of respondents, particularly those from European countries, indicated the emerging use of self-serve kiosks, computers, and tablets to address challenges in providing treatment.<sup>1</sup> As European constituencies were noticeably absent from responses to the current survey, this may explain why this type of health technology was not referenced.

*Figure 2. Proportion of organizations using various types of health technology*



Organizations were asked about the challenges they experienced related to the use of health technology in several sub-areas (see Figure 3). Only one organization indicated it experienced no challenges in the area of health technology application. In comparison to other major areas examined, the use of health technology was not seen as a particularly challenging area. However, for those organizations who did experience difficulties in the application of health technology, the most challenging areas were relating to the efficiency of network

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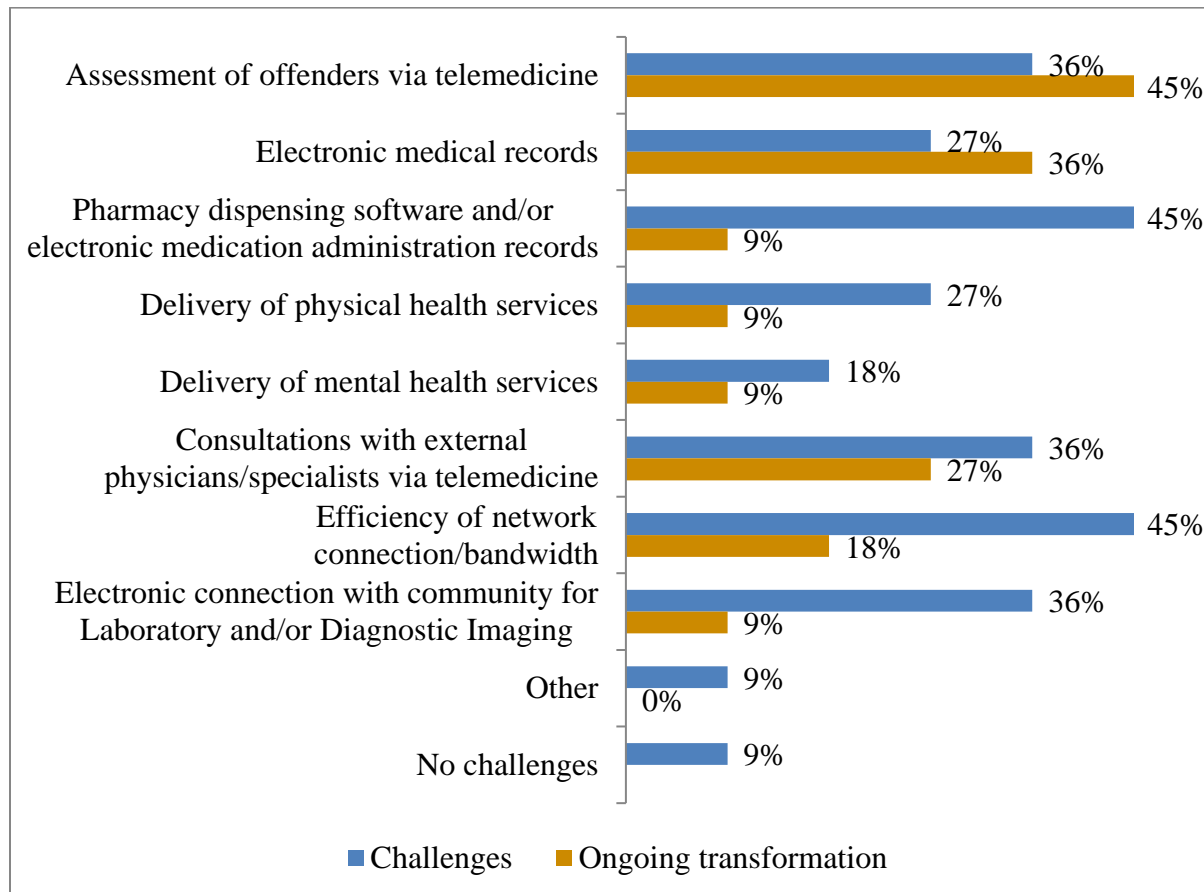
<sup>1</sup> Correctional Service of Canada (2016). *2016 International Survey of Correctional Services: Corrections in Transformation*. Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada.

connection/bandwidth and pharmacy dispensing software and/or electronic medication administration records (45% for each). This was followed by the assessment of offenders via telemedicine, consultation with external physicians/specialists via telemedicine, and the electronic connection with community for Laboratory and/or Diagnostic Imaging (36% for each). One organization indicated they were experiencing “other” challenges in the area of health technology. This included difficulties relating to bandwidth limitations and the storage of large digital images. When asked about what sub-areas were currently experiencing ongoing transformation, respondents indicated their organizations were more frequently undergoing transformation in the sub-areas of the assessment of offenders via telemedicine (45%) and electronic medical records (36%). Notably, a number sub-areas seen as relatively more challenging were rarely experiencing transformation. This included the sub-areas of the efficiency of network connection/bandwidth (18%), pharmacy dispensing software and/or electronic medication administration records (9%), and electronic connection with community for Laboratory and/or Diagnostic Imaging (9%). These results provide suggestions on where organizations could focus their attention to address the most challenging areas in the application of health technology.

Several organizations noted challenges that led to the need for transformation in the area of health technology application. Many of the organizations outlined the difficulties in the availability and accessibility of specialist health care services and medical professionals. Similarly, a number of organizations also referenced further challenges accessing specialist care in the community due to the financial costs and security risks associated with transporting offenders into the community. Another theme that emerged included the difficulties providing efficient health services (e.g., unconnected informational systems and long waiting lists). Related to the themes identified as leading to the need for transformation in the area of health technology, several organizations highlighted actions related to the development of electronic health records and telemedicine systems. Other countries highlighted other technological improvements they were able to implement in the past year (e.g., digital x-ray technology, hand held devices, pharmacy software systems, etc.). With regard to best practices learned through transformation in the area of health technology, many countries highlighted the importance of engaging and collaborating with partners and stakeholders. This could include collaborating with IT services to address network capacity issues or partnering with community health centers to

improve accessibility of health services.

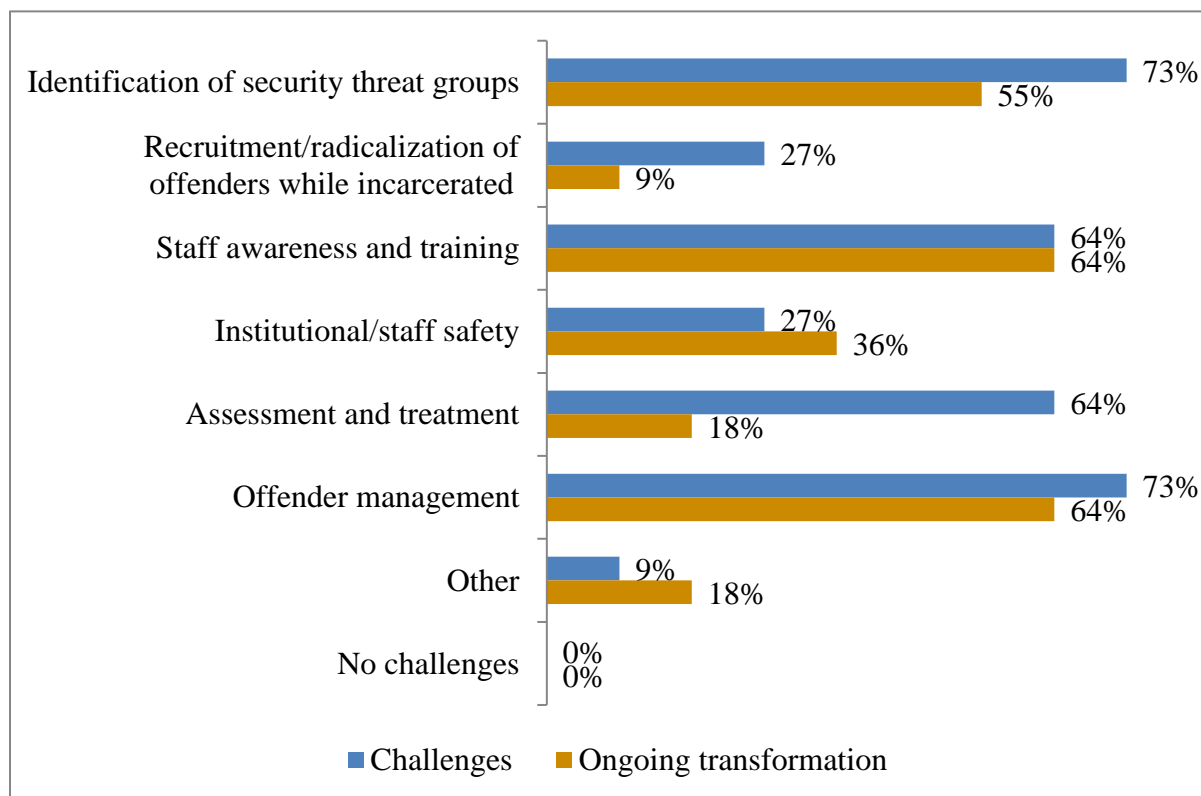
*Figure 3. Proportion of organizations facing challenges and ongoing transformation in the area of health technology.*



### Part III: Security Threat Groups

As illustrated in Figure 4, sub-areas noted as particularly challenging related to security threat groups included the identification of security threat groups, offender management (73% for each), staff awareness and training, and the assessment and treatment of security threat groups (64%, for each). Notably, only one organization reported experiencing no challenges in this area. With regard to sub-areas in which transformation had been planned or undertaken in the last year, the majority of organizations reported taking action in staff awareness and training, offender management (64%, for each), and the identification of security threat groups (55%).

Figure 4. Proportion of organizations facing challenges and ongoing transformation in the area of security threat groups.



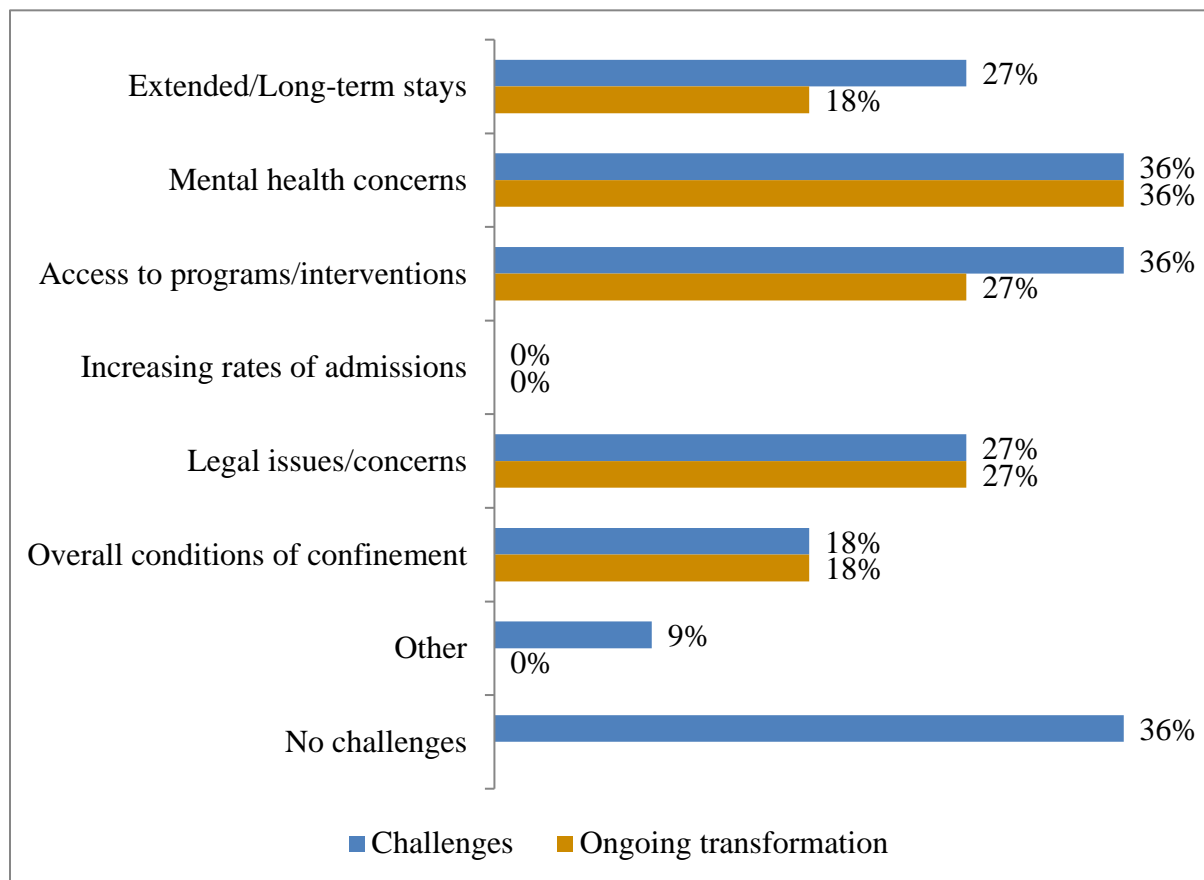
When asked to describe the issues in the area of security threat groups leading to transformation, several themes were identified. Many organizations cited the challenges associated with managing unique and diverse groups of offenders (e.g., how to effectively identify, assess, and safely manage these offenders). Other themes included challenges related to the risk of internal security threats and how to safely share information about security threat groups with necessary parties. When asked about transformation strategies planned for or used within the last year to address these challenges, several themes emerged. Firstly, organizations frequently cited increasing staff awareness and training to aid in managing security threat groups. This often involved the development of specialized intelligence staff in conjunction with local law enforcement organizations. Secondly, many organizations highlighted the improvements in security measures implemented in their jurisdictions (e.g., enhanced monitoring and dynamic security). Lastly, many respondents referenced engaging their partners and stakeholders to develop more advanced policies and procedures to manage security threat group members and to share pertinent information. Across many of the organizations that responded to the survey,

developing case management policies and procedures and conducting ongoing security monitoring were identified as best practices learned through transformation.

#### Part IV: Administrative Segregation/Solitary Confinement

The area of administrative segregation/solitary confinement, relative to other major areas, was not as frequently reported as being a particular challenge (see Figure 5). Notably, 36% of organizations reported experiencing no challenges in this area. The most frequently cited challenges were related to mental health concerns and access to programs/interventions (36%, for each) while in administrative segregation/solitary confinement. When asked about the areas currently undergoing transformation, most sub-areas had as much transformation occurring as there were challenges suggesting that they are addressing the challenge. The exceptions to this were the sub-areas of extended/long-term stays (18%), access to programs/interventions (27%), and “other” challenges (0%).

*Figure 5. Proportion of organizations facing challenges and ongoing transformation in the area of administrative segregation/solitary confinement.*

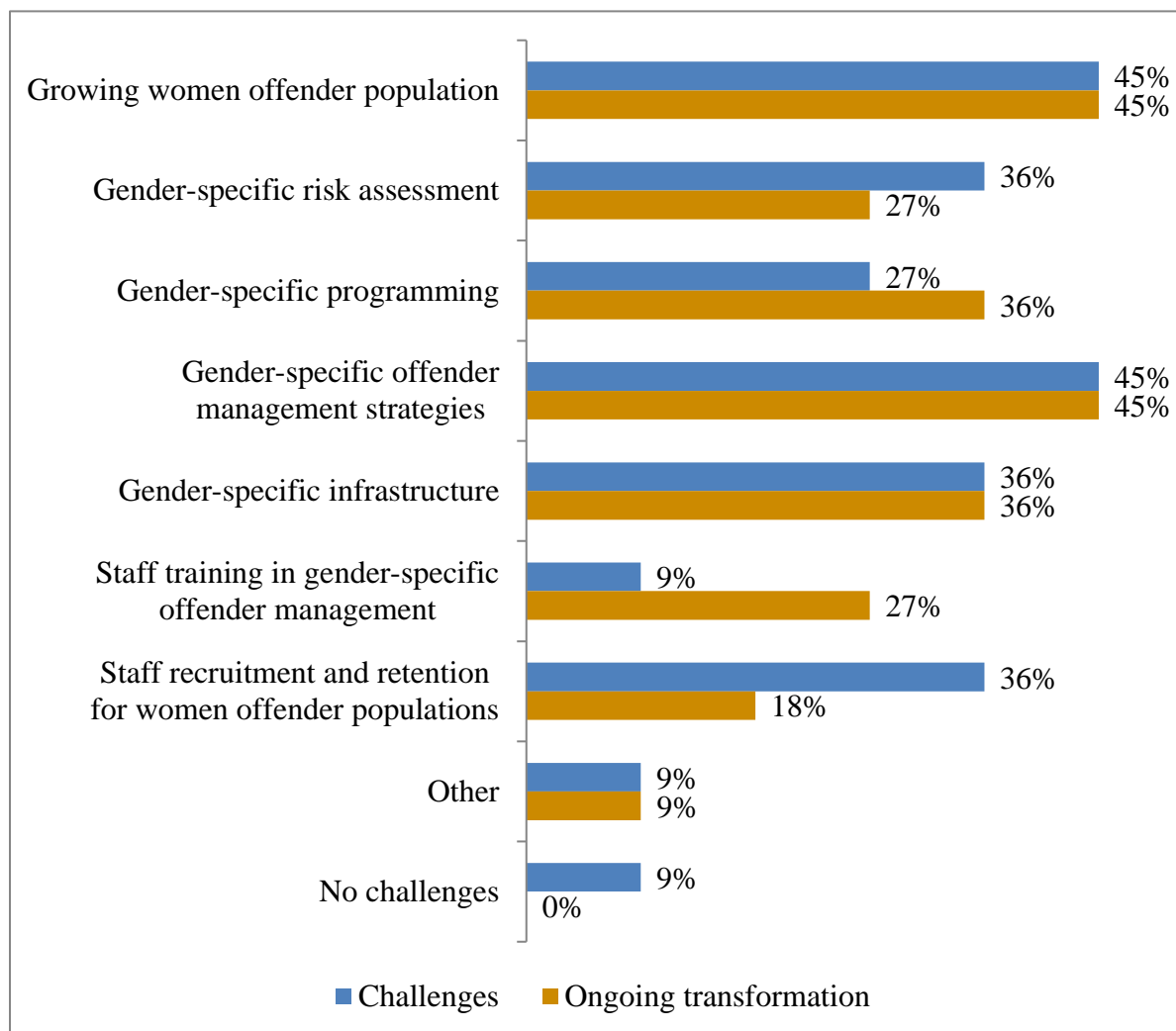


Respondents were asked about the issues leading to transformation and two major themes emerged: the consideration of human rights and legal challenges associated with the use of administrative segregation/solitary confinement and the mental health of offenders in administrative segregation/solitary confinement. Action plans to address these challenges included organization-wide reviews to ensure the appropriate use of administrative segregation/solitary confinement and, when necessary, the development of new policies and procedures to enhance offender management practices. As well, a number of organizations referred to the development of alternative approaches to manage offenders with mental health concerns (e.g., intensive support or step-down units). Correctional organizations cited a number of best practices learned through transformation, including restricting the use of segregation, conducting regular reviews of those in segregation, increasing the involvement of segregated offenders into day-to-day operations (e.g., involvement in programs and daily activities), and providing offenders increased mental health support.

#### **Part V: Rehabilitation of Women Offenders**

Organizations were asked about the challenges they experienced related to the rehabilitation of women offenders in several sub-areas (see Figure 6). While this area was seen as relatively non-challenging for organizations in comparison to some of the other major areas examined in this survey, the most challenging sub-areas included the growing women offender population and provision of gender-specific offender management strategies (45%, for each). Notably, one organization indicated they were experiencing “other” challenges relating to the rehabilitation of women offenders and these included the accommodation of transgender inmates and staff at women’s institutions and difficulties in program completion for women serving short sentences. Consistent with these top identified challenges, the same sub-areas of growing women offender population and gender-specific offender management strategies were also frequently reported to be undergoing transformation (45%, for each).

Figure 6. Proportion of organizations facing challenges and ongoing transformation in the area of the reintegration of women offenders.



When asked to describe the issues leading to transformation in the area of the rehabilitation of women offenders, several themes were identified. Many organizations cited the challenges associated with having limited or under-developed gender-responsive interventions and case-management strategies, increasing numbers of women offenders, particularly those belonging to Indigenous groups, and difficulties recruiting and retaining women staff members. One respondent referenced the unique challenge of timely program delivery when so few women offenders are incarcerated within their correctional organization. Several themes emerged with regards to the ongoing transformation plans being used to address challenges in the rehabilitation of women offenders. Many organizations cited the development of gender-responsive case

management strategies, the development of employment and/or education programs to support women, and increased focus on recruiting and/or training staff to be aware of gender-responsive issues. Some particularly unique transformation plans included encouraging the use of technology (e.g., FamilyLink, tablets, etc.) to aid in the maintenance and strengthening of relationships between women and their loved ones in the community. As well, one organization cited the adoption of a gender-informed risk/needs assessment tool to supplement their existing gender-neutral risk assessment instrument. Across many organizations, widespread organizational shifts to become more gender-informed and trauma-informed were referenced as being best practices learned from transformation. A unique best practice mentioned by one organization was the operation of a Mother-Child Program supporting women offenders in cultivating strong bonds between the women and their children.

## **Summary of Findings**

The purpose of this survey was to gain a better understanding of the challenges various correctional organizations around the world are facing and the transformation strategies that have been used to resolve them. Results showed that there were many similarities in the issues leading to transformation and the plans undertaken in the last year to address them. Many of the participating correctional organizations, for example, referenced common challenges concerning illicit goods (e.g., drugs, cell phones) entering institutions and highlighted their use of technology to detect and eliminate contraband. As well, the majority of organizations cited challenges identifying and managing security threat groups and outlined how they addressed this concern with increased dynamic security and the training of specialized intelligence staff. These results show that organizations find resourceful ways to mitigate and/or eliminate the impact of common challenges.

These findings also provide insight on areas where additional efforts are needed to address ongoing challenges. Responses indicated that organisations were experiencing more challenges than they had identified transformation plans to address them, particularly in the areas contraband detection and elimination and application of health technology sections. Moving forward, these are key areas in which to develop transformation strategies through international partnerships and knowledge sharing.

## **Appendix A: Participating Organizations**

- Australian Capital Territory Corrective Services, Australia
- Correctional Service of Canada, Canada
- Correctional Services Department of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
- Department of Correctional Services, Republic of South Africa
- Department of Corrections, New Zealand
- Direction de l'administration pénitentiaire (Haiti)
- Her Majesty's Prison Dodds, Barbados
- Northern Territory Correctional Services, Australia
- Prison Service of Czech Republic, Czech Republic
- Singapore Prison Service, Singapore
- Tasmania Prison Service, Australia