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Research at a glance

Profile of Women in Segregation

KEY WORDS: *segregation, women offenders, aboriginal women*

What it means

Consistent with the findings of previous research, the current study found that women who have been segregated have higher risk, poorer institutional adjustment, and greater challenges associated with reintegration than those who have not been segregated. Furthermore, the results suggest that these differences, along with those in demographic and incarceration characteristics and program participation may shed light on factors that could be used to minimize the potential for segregation through the development of interventions.

What we found

Although the use of segregation is growing, it is not increasing at the same rate as the population growth. The majority of segregations were involuntary in nature (89%), with voluntary (8%) and disciplinary segregation (3%) being used infrequently. Most segregation events were under 10 days in length and involuntary segregation occurred much earlier in a sentence than voluntary or disciplinary segregation. Most regions used segregation similarly, although some variation was found.

Compared to women who had not been in segregation, women who had been in segregation were more likely to have a higher level of security and ratings of high static and dynamic risk, higher rates of involvement in institutional incidents and charges, lower rates of successful completion of correctional programs, and to have a revocation of their supervision period.

Additionally, women who have been in segregation were less likely than those who had not to be rated as having high reintegration potential or motivation to participate in their correctional plan, to have completed some programming and to be granted discretionary release.

Aboriginal women were more likely than non-Aboriginal women to be involuntarily segregated and have longer segregations. The scope of the current study did not allow for an examination of factors that

may be associated with differences in the use and length of segregation.

Why we did this study

Segregation is among the most restrictive measures available in correctional institutions. Given this, some argue that segregation should not be used, while others argue that it is an operational necessity. Previous research indicates that women who have been segregated have greater criminogenic risks and needs at intake, poorer institutional adjustment, and greater challenges associated with reintegration than those who have not been segregated. The current study aims to update knowledge regarding the characteristics and experiences of women in segregation and provides an opportunity to understand the risk factors that may lead to segregation.

What we did

This study included 844 women who had been segregated and 1,858 who had not been segregated between April 2002 and March 2012. We examined demographic and incarceration characteristics, security classification information, intake assessment results, institutional adjustment and release outcomes. We focused on the event of segregation as well as the differences between women who were and were not segregated.

For more information

Thompson, J., & S. Rubinfeld. (2013). *A Profile of Women in Segregation* (Research report R-320). Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of 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.

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