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Research in Brief

Inuit Men Offenders: Characteristics, Institutional Adjustment, and Post-Release Outcomes

KEY WORDS: *Inuit, men offenders, profile, institutional behaviour, release type, return to custody*

What it means

Research has demonstrated that Inuit offenders have unique characteristics and needs. Greater knowledge of these cultural differences may allow the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) to refine its approaches for these offenders. CSC currently assists Inuit offenders through culturally-appropriate correctional interventions such as access to Inuit Elders and the provision of nationally-recognized programs in Inuktitut.

What we found

A snapshot of Inuit men under CSC's jurisdiction on May 2014 found that:

- they were more likely to be incarcerated in the Ontario (Beaver Creek) and Quebec (Federal Training Centre) regions;
- 75% were classified as medium security, with over half serving sentences of 2 to 4 years;
- 93% have committed violent offences (especially sex-related offences, but also homicide and assault);
- they were assessed as higher risk (75%) and higher need (84%), with low reintegration potential (69%) and low-moderate motivation level (94%); and,
- they had identified needs in the personal/emotional, substance abuse, and employment domains.

Inuit men often expressed interest in cultural activities and interventions; however, previous research¹ indicated that attachment to Inuit culture may diminish, and attachment to First Nations culture may increase, during incarceration due to the availability of cultural activities and ceremonies for each group.

Perhaps due to language barriers (about two-thirds speak primarily Inuktitut) and the low motivation² common in this population, Inuit offenders had a lower program participation rate than other Aboriginal

offenders. Nonetheless, Inuit offenders had the most stable institutional behaviour of the three Aboriginal groups, with fewer serious disciplinary charges, days in segregation, and positive urinalysis tests.

Compared to First Nations and Métis men, Inuit men were less frequently granted discretionary release and more frequently imposed special release conditions by the Parole Board of Canada, suggesting they are perceived to be higher risk. Despite these perceptions, the rates of return to custody were similar across Aboriginal offender groups, with a third of offenders returning within a year. Three-quarters (75%) of the Inuit offenders' returns were due to a revocation without a charge.

Why we did this study

Similar to other Aboriginal groups (First Nations & Métis), Inuit offenders are disproportionately represented within federal corrections, accounting for 5% of incarcerated and 4% of Aboriginal offenders in the community. Inuit people are a distinct group with their own language, culture, and beliefs³; these characteristics contribute to unique case management and intervention needs. To inform those needs, an overview of Inuit men offenders was completed.

What we did

May 2014 snapshot data were used to examine the current characteristics of Inuit men. Offenders in custody the preceding year (May 2013) were followed for one year to examine program participation, institutional behaviour and post-release outcomes.

For more information

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.

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¹ Trevethan, S., Moore, J., Naqitarvik, L., Watson, A., & Saunders, D. (2004). *The needs of Inuit offenders in federal correctional facilities* (R-142). Ottawa, ON: CSC.

² Motivation level ratings may be impacted by the cultural competency of staff conducting the assessment (Anala, 2002).

³ Anala, S. (2002). Serving the Inuit Offender. *Forum on Corrections Research*, 14(3), 4-6.

