

Impacts of Indigenous Intervention Centres on Men's Institutional Behaviour

IIC involvement has positive impacts on the institutional behaviour of participating Indigenous men offenders.

Why we did this study

Indigenous offenders face unique challenges within the Canadian criminal justice system. Within the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), Indigenous Intervention Centres (IICs) were developed to streamline Indigenous resources and services, providing a culturally responsive and integrated approach to case management. IICs aim to increase success and healing for Indigenous offenders, while ensuring CSC supports their safe reintegration into society. In collaboration with the Indigenous Initiatives Directorate, this study examines the impacts of IICs on the progress and outcomes of Indigenous offenders.

What we did

Indigenous men who were admitted to a federal institution between April 1, 2018 and March 15, 2020 and participated in IICs ($N = 477$) were compared to Indigenous men that were eligible but did not participate ($N = 297$). In order to participate in IICs, offenders must meet certain eligibility criteria related to shorter sentence length, non-sexual offence types,¹ program eligibility (i.e., none or moderate program needs), and a willingness to work with an Elder/Spiritual Advisor and participate in the Indigenous continuum of care.

Demographics, offence and sentence characteristics, criminogenic risk and need profile, participation in culturally-specific services and interventions, and institutional behavior were compared between groups.² Offenders were examined during their first year of incarceration following admission.

What we found

IIC participants were older, more likely to be married, and less likely to be serving a sentence for a violent offence or to have a Security Threat Group affiliation compared to non-participants. While non-participants were higher in dynamic need and static risk and lower in reintegration potential at intake, participants were rated higher in accountability, motivation, and engagement, and less likely to have identified responsiveness concerns.

Compared to non-participants, IIC participants showed a greater interest and participation in Indigenous initiatives, both at intake and throughout incarceration. IIC participants were more likely to be assigned to and complete Indigenous specific correctional programs. This finding is consistent even when controlling for program assignment and motivation level. In addition, IIC participants started those programs earlier.

IIC participants were less likely to have institutional incidents, and minor or serious disciplinary charges. When controlling for static risk and dynamic need at intake, the odds of participants receiving a decrease in security level were 2.2 times higher than for non-participants. In addition, IIC participants were more likely to receive discretionary release than non-participants. This finding remains supported even when taking into account relevant risk and need characteristics.

What it means

Consistent with the objectives of the IIC model, results suggest that participants are accessing correctional programs and services in a timely fashion, transitioning to lower security sooner in their sentence, and accessing discretionary release earlier. Findings from this study support the rationale for IICs to maximize Indigenous-specific resources at concentrated sites and focus efforts at intake. Given this streamlining of resources, future research should consider the operational impacts of the IIC model on Indigenous offenders that are not placed at IIC sites but are still interested in the Indigenous continuum of care. The next phase of this research will examine the impact of IIC involvement on release outcomes.

For more information

Hanby, L., Beauchamp, T., & Farrell MacDonald, S. (2023). *Impacts of Indigenous Intervention Centre Participation on Institutional Behaviour* (Research Report R-452). Ottawa, Ontario: Correctional Service of Canada.

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¹ Eligibility criteria was modified in January 2021, removing the restrictions on sex offences.

² Sub-analyses by Indigenous group were completed where possible.