Research in Brief

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CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

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Pandemic Era Changes in Federal Corrections Age Structures

Post pandemic there is an increasing representation of older offenders in federal custody and under community supervision.

Why are we doing this study

The composition of the correctional population as it relates to different age groups provides for emerging challenges and specific rehabilitative needs relative to various age groups. Younger inmates often require a sufficient number of correctional, educational and/or vocational programs. Upon conditional release, they also require meaningful employment to promote safe community reintegration. Older inmates as well as those on conditional release in the community require access to appropriate housing and health care services.

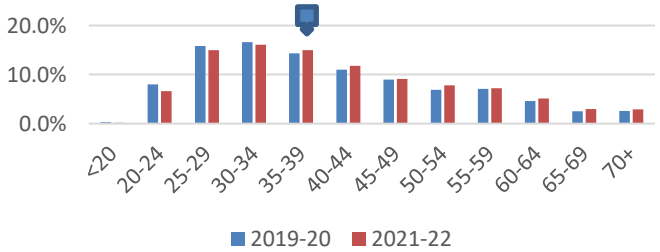
What we did

Two separate years of age distribution data recorded in Correctional Service of Canada's Corporate Reporting System-Modernized were extracted at year-end for both federal custody (13,720 in *2019-20* and 12,328 in *2021-22*) and community supervision (9,832 in *2019-20* and 8,479 in *2021-22*) populations.

What we found

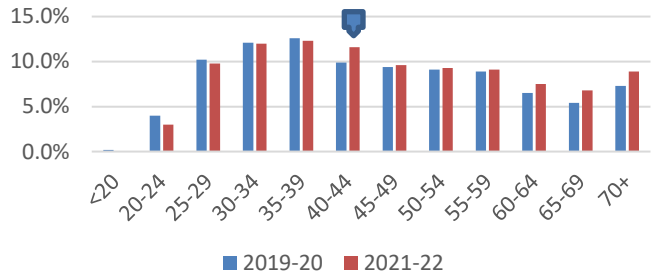
As reflected in Figure 1 below, age distribution data show that pre-pandemic the federal inmate population presented a higher representation across the <35 age bands. In *2019-20*, results reveal a higher representation across the younger age bands of under 20 years of age (0.3%), 20-24 (8.0%), 25-29 (15.8%), and 30-34 (16.6%) than at year-end *2021-22* for the same age groupings (0.2%, 6.6%, 15.0%, and 16.1% respectively). Within the older age bands (35+), pre-pandemic inmates show a lower representation than during the pandemic era.

Figure 1. Custody



Displayed in Figure 2 below, pre-pandemic offenders under community supervision presented a higher representation across the <40 age bands. In *2019-20*, there was a higher representation across the age bands of under 20 years of age (0.2%), 20-24 (4.0%), 25-29 (10.2%), 30-34 (12.1%) and 35-39 (12.6%) than by year-end *2021-22* for the same age groupings (0.0%, 3.0%, 9.8%, 12.0% and 12.3%respectively). Within the older age bands (40+), pre-pandemic offenders consistently show a lower representation than during the pandemic era.

Figure 2. Community Supervision



What it means

The upward shift in age structure representation in federal custody and community supervision populations may partly be attributed to age disparity in admissions and releases that occurred during the pandemic era. Consequently, continuous intervention efforts and active engagement with community-based partnerships that consider this are required for the care, custody and safe return of these offenders to the community.

For more information

Please e-mail the Research Branch. You can also visit the Research Publications section for a full list of reports and one-page summaries.

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