

## CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

CHANGING LIVES. PROTECTING CANADIANS.

## Minimum Security Women: A Profile

*Minimum security women have lower risk/need profiles and better correctional outcomes than other security groups.*

**Why we did this study**

Classifying offenders to a security level based on their risk of being involved in institutional misconducts, incidents of violence, and escapes assists the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) in ensuring safe and secure institutions. Previous studies have been conducted on higher risk women, but very little research has focused on incarcerated women classified as minimum security. Given that the majority of women offenders spend at least part of their incarceration in minimum security, knowing more about their profiles and correctional experiences can aid in informing case management strategies.

**What we did**

Analyses focused on four areas of the correctional experience: intake information, institutional adjustment, intervention involvement, and outcomes on release for three groups of women: (1) women who were initially placed at minimum security and stayed there until release ( $n = 296$ ; 15% Indigenous); (2) women who had cascaded to minimum security prior to release ( $n = 132$ ; 35% Indigenous); and (3) women who had never cascaded to minimum security prior to release ( $n = 249$ ; 46% Indigenous). Information was extracted from the Offender Management System and the Computerized Mental Health Intake Screening System.

**What we found**

Results indicated that there were distinct differences in profile and in correctional outcomes by group.

- Relative to other groups, women who spent their entire incarceration in minimum security were the least likely to have been convicted of a violent offence, had the lowest risk and need ratings, and were least likely to have mental health concerns.
- Women who were always in minimum security were the least likely to violate institutional rules and receive sanctions.
- Congruent with the risk principle, women who did and did not cascade to minimum security prior to release

were enrolled in more correctional programs than women who were always in minimum security. Women who were always in minimum security had the highest rates of program completion, were most likely to be granted discretionary release, and had the best community outcomes on release.

- Across all groups examined, relative to non-Indigenous women, Indigenous women were more likely to be assessed as higher risk and need. On release, they had higher rates of revocation for any reason than non-Indigenous women. Encouragingly, Indigenous women often had the highest rates of enrollment and completion of programs and educational interventions; furthermore, 61% of Indigenous women who cascaded to minimum security by the time of their release had been involved in Indigenous-specific interventions.

**What it means**

The results of the study on the profile and outcomes of federally sentenced women classified as minimum security suggest that security classification decisions for women in CSC are appropriate. Women who were initially classified to minimum were least likely to receive sanctions while incarcerated. Results provide insight to where improvements could still be made to this group, namely, in increasing the focus on addressing the needs of minimum-security Indigenous women.

**For more information**

Wardrop, K., Thompson, J., & Derkzen, D. (2018). *Minimum security women: A profile* (Research Report R-394). Ottawa, Ontario: 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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