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# Key findings and recommendations from the 2010-2012 needs assessment of forensic mental health programs and services for mentally disordered offenders in Saskatchewan, Canada

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## Abstract

Although national and provincial initiatives are in place to address the needs of mentally disordered offenders (MDOs), Saskatchewan has unique demographic needs that are exacerbated among aboriginal offenders in general, and Aboriginal women and youth in particular. A needs assessment of offenders with compromised mental health issues and an environmental scan of forensic mental health services and programs were undertaken in Saskatchewan from 2010 to 2012. This study was designed with three questions in mind: 1) What are the needs of offenders in Canada with compromised mental health including substance use disorders?; 2) How are the mental health needs of mentally disordered offenders currently being met in Saskatchewan?; and 3) What evidence-based forensic mental health services are needed for Saskatchewan? The study was carried out in three concurrent phases to capture the social, geopolitical, and cultural circumstances unique to the province of Saskatchewan. This included: 1) interviews with immediate family members of offenders; 2) an E-scan of correctional and community programming and services completed by facility managers; and 3) surveys with front line personnel who engage offenders in correctional environments and in the community. The triangulated methodology included a literature review of government documents and published literature, together with statistical and thematic analyses of the data from the three phases of the study. This presentation will highlight the key findings and recommendations from the 2010-2012 needs assessment of forensic mental health programs and services for mentally disordered offenders in Saskatchewan, Canada.

## Biography

Arlene Kent-Wilkinson, RN, CPMHN(C), BSN, MN, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor, College of Nursing, at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatchewan. She is a nurse educator who has launched and taught many Forensic nursing courses and programs, and online graduate and undergraduate courses on Aboriginal health. She has been recognized nationally and internationally for her pioneering work in Forensic nursing education. She is a member of the Centre for Forensic Behavioural Sciences and Justice Studies at the University of Saskatchewan, and PI, of a province-wide needs assessment of the programs and services for mentally disordered offenders in Saskatchewan.