

**Title**

The National Trajectory Project : A study of individuals declared not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder in Canada.

**Investigators:**

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Mental Health Commission of Canada; Fonds de recherche en santé du Québec (FRSQ)

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**Collaborating sites:** BC Mental Health & Addiction Services (BC), Brockville Mental Health Centre (ON), Douglas Mental Health University Institute (QC), Institut Philippe Pinel de Montréal (QC), Hôpital Louis-H.Lafontaine (QC), review boards of British Columbia, Ontario and Québec

### Summary

The National Trajectory Project (NTP) is a project funded through the Mental Health Commission of Canada and based on an ongoing study in Québec funded by the Fonds de recherche en santé du Québec. The project will examine the operation of current criminal justice provisions for individuals declared not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder (NCRMD) and under the authority of a provincial or territorial review board. It will examine the antecedents and trajectories of NCRMD accused, including mental health and criminal justice involvement, review board decision-making, and mental health and criminal outcomes. The study will include the three largest provinces (Ontario, Québec and British Columbia), which comprise the majority of NCRMD cases. This is a multidimensional study which involves quantitative and qualitative research projects, as well as a legislative review.

The objectives of the quantitative arm of the NTP are to:

1) Explore the demographic, psychosocial, and criminological profiles of NCRMD accused in Canada, as a function of geographic region and type of institution of detention; 2) Evaluate the relevance and systematization of assessments of risk of violence presented to the Review Boards; 3) Report the rationale for decisions made by the Review Boards as a function of the disposition rendered (absolute discharge, conditional discharge, or custody); 4) Examine outcomes for NCRMD accused, including rates of criminal recidivism and psychiatric rehospitalisation of discharged persons; 5) Examine the migration trajectories or sedentary patterns of persons found NCRMD; 6) Identify the individual and organizational factors associated with these trajectories; 7) Determine the use and predictors of mental health services by the accused prior to the NCRMD verdict, during the jurisdiction of the Review Board, and following discharge. An overarching objective will be to examine each of these findings with respect to the culture and gender of NCRMD accused. To do so, a file-based study of individuals declared NCRMD, examining mental health services received and criminal involvement prior to being declared NCRMD, during NCRMD tenure, and following absolute discharge from review board jurisdiction.

Based on the results, qualitative interviews with key stakeholders in the NCRMD and mental health systems (e.g., persons declared NCRMD, caregivers, victims, family, review board members, psychiatrists, lawyers, and hospital administrators) will be carried out in order to contextualize the quantitative arm as well as report on current practices across jurisdictions.

Finally, a legislative review committee will be formed to examine the history, development, implementation, and consequences of the 1992 reforms to the mental disorder provisions of the Criminal Code. The objective is to ensure that the NTP maintains a practical focus on the operation of the current law.

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