


## Demands on the forensic mental health services in the province of Ontario

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**Abstract** Forensic psychiatric patients consume an increasing proportion of mental health resources in Canada and the United States. To inform mental health policy and practice, we compared the criminogenic, clinical, and social problems of forensic patients to those of civilly committed psychiatric patients in two Canadian studies. We predicted that forensic patients would score higher on criminogenic problems and lower on clinical and social problems than civil patients in two studies: one comparing 83 forensic and 189 civil inpatients on a clinician-completed form, the Resident Assessment Instrument—Mental Health, at an urban mental health center, and the second comparing 423 forensic and 178 civil patients assessed at different times using the Patient Problem Survey. The two studies were quite similar in their findings, despite differences in their samples, measures, and data collection methods. In both studies, forensic patients were similar to or lower than civil psychiatric patients in all criminogenic, clinical, and social problems. We conclude that forensic mental health services would benefit greatly by drawing from knowledge accumulated in the general psychiatric literature. This finding also supports the idea that many forensic patients can be appropriately diverted to nonforensic mental health services.

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