

# "Canada Can Do Better": An Exploration of Canadian News Media's Portrayal of Federal Penitentiaries and Prisoners During a Global Pandemic.

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## Presentation Description:

Have you ever wondered what Canadian newspaper articles are saying about prisons and prisoners during COVID-19? The media's portrayal of federal prisons and their residents may come to surprise you.

## Abstract:

COVID-19 has impacted everyone on a global scale and Canada is not immune. Canadian prisoners have faced many challenges and the media have been quick to document COVID-19 in justice facilities. How the media document these events plays a crucial role in our understanding of the criminal justice system. Therefore, it is imperative that researchers understand the media's depiction of these atrocities because not only does it influence the public's knowledge and understanding of the criminal justice system, but it has the potential to create policy change. Prior research on this subject matter has found that the media consistently offer an inaccurate and misconstrued image of prisoners, as being extremely violent and dangerous, and prisons being akin to a hotel. The current study adds to the existing literature by examining how online Canadian newspaper articles portray federally sentenced prisoners and the institutions they reside in during the pandemic. Conducting a content analysis of 85 articles published from March 2020 to January 2021, the researcher sought emergent themes. The findings, limitations, suggestions for future research, and policy recommendations are discussed.