

Self-reported sexual assault in Canada, 2014

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Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics

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- . not available for any reference period
- .. not available for a specific reference period
- ... not applicable
- 0 true zero or a value rounded to zero
- 0^s value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
- ^P preliminary
- ^r revised
- X suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
- ^E use with caution
- F too unreliable to be published
- * significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

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Self-reported sexual assault in Canada, 2014: Highlights

- According to the General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization), there were 22 incidents of sexual assault for every 1,000 Canadians aged 15 and older in 2014. This represented approximately 636,000 self-reported incidents of sexual assault.
- The rate of self-reported sexual assault in 2014 remained unchanged from 2004; however, declines were noted over the same time period for all other types of violent and non-violent crime measured by the General Social Survey on Victimization.
- A higher risk of sexual assault was noted among those who were women, young, Aboriginal, single, and homosexual or bisexual, and those who had poorer mental health. In addition, individuals who had certain experiences—childhood abuse and homelessness—and more evening activities outside the home also had a higher risk of sexual assault.
- Among the three types of sexual assault measured by the General Social Survey on Victimization in 2014, seven in ten self-reported incidents were unwanted sexual touching, two in ten were sexual attacks and one in ten was sexual activity where the victim was unable to consent.
- Victims of sexual assault often had negative perceptions of their neighbourhood, lower levels of trust in others and less confidence in the police, compared to those who were not sexually assaulted. They were also less satisfied with their personal safety from crime and less likely to feel safe in certain situations.
- Overall, sexual assault offenders were most often men, acting alone and under the age of 35. Just over half of victims knew the person who sexually assaulted them.
- Most often, offenders were a friend, acquaintance or neighbour, then a stranger. Of all sexual assault incidents perpetrated by someone other than a spouse, one in twenty was reported to the police, compared to one in three incidents of other types of crime measured by the General Social Survey on Victimization.
- Most commonly, sexual assault victims reported feeling angry, or upset, confused or frustrated after the incident. One in four victims reported that they had difficulty carrying out everyday activities because of the incident. Further, one in six victims reported experiencing three or more longer-term emotional consequences, indicating the possibility of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Self-reported sexual assault in Canada, 2014

by Shana Conroy and Adam Cotter

Sexual assault is one of the most underreported crimes (Benoit et al. 2015; Brennan and Taylor-Butts 2008; Kaufman 2008; Luce et al. 2010). Research has attributed this to a wide range of reasons, including the shame, guilt and stigma of sexual victimization (Johnson 2012; Sable et al. 2006), the normalization of inappropriate or unwanted sexual behaviour, and the perception that sexual violence does not warrant reporting (Benoit et al. 2015).

Despite an increased societal awareness about sexual assault, it continues to be a persistent issue in Canada. In 2014, the rate of self-reported sexual assault was similar to that reported a decade earlier; in contrast, the rates for other types of self-reported violent and non-violent crime declined over the same time period (Perreault 2015). Sexual assault can have serious and traumatic consequences for victims (Chen and Ullman 2010), including poorer health and weaker social supports (Logie et al. 2014), feelings of anger, fear and anxiety, and substance abuse, depression and suicidal thoughts (Cybulska 2007; Luce et al. 2010).

While anyone could be a victim of sexual assault, research has shown an elevated risk for women and young individuals (Brennan and Taylor-Butts 2008; Bullock and Beckson 2011; Cybulska 2007; Kaufman 2008; Kong et al. 2003; Luce et al. 2010; Moreno 2015; Todahl et al. 2009), those who identify as non-heterosexual (Logie et al. 2014; Rothman et al. 2011), and individuals with disabilities (Benedet and Grant 2014; Luce et al. 2010; Nosek et al. 2001) and mental health issues (Cybulska 2007). Further, previous experiences such as childhood abuse (Daigneault et al. 2009; Elliot et al. 2004; Luce et al. 2010) and homelessness (Kushel et al. 2003; Wenzel et al. 2000) have also been associated with an increased risk of sexual assault.

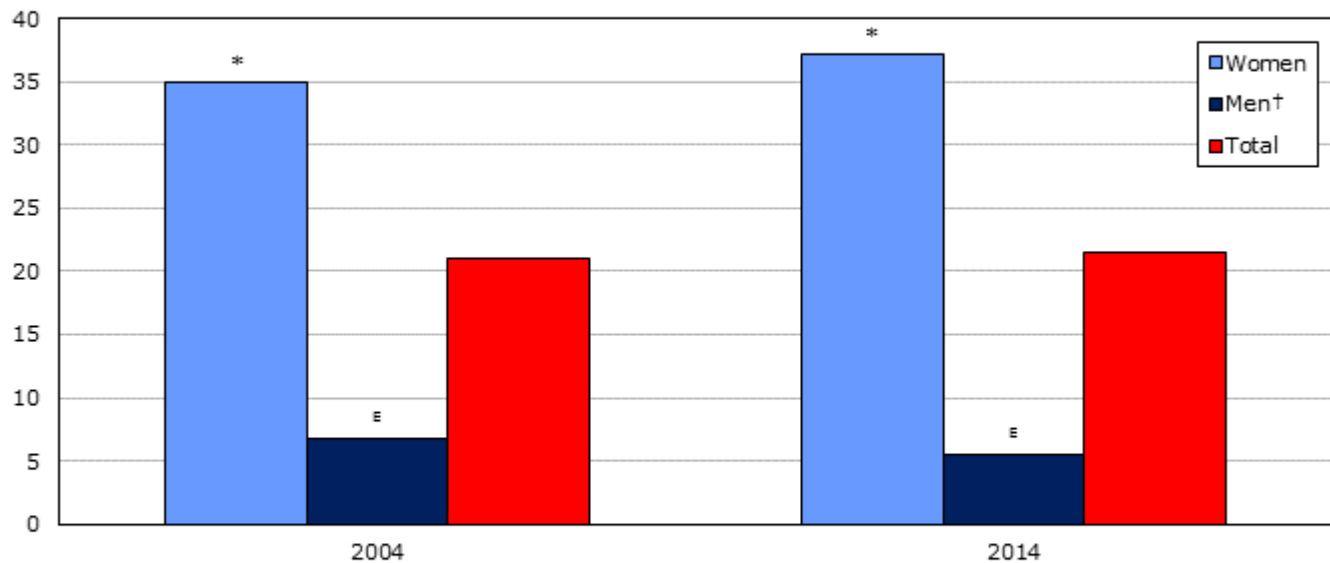
Statistics Canada uses two main data sources to collect information on crime: the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey for police-reported data, and the General Social Survey (GSS) on Canadians' Safety (Victimization) for self-reported data. Given that sexual assault is an underreported crime, self-reported data are essential for providing further insight into the nature and extent of sexual assault. Using data from the 2014 GSS on Victimization, this *Juristat* article presents information on self-reported sexual assault in Canada, including sexual attacks, unwanted sexual touching and sexual activity where the victim was unable to consent. The GSS on Victimization collects information from Canadians aged 15 and older, and respondents are able to provide details about their experiences of victimization, whether they were reported to the police or not.

The information presented in this *Juristat* article refers to incidents of sexual assault that occurred in the 12 months that preceded the 2014 GSS on Victimization. Some data from the 2004 GSS on Victimization are also used to allow for a comparison of sexual assault over time. This article examines the characteristics and experiences of sexual assault victims, and their perceptions of safety. Characteristics of sexual assault offenders and incidents are discussed, in addition to the emotional and physical consequences of sexual assault, and reporting sexual assault to the police. While this article provides important information on the nature and extent of sexual assault in Canada, it should be noted that the numbers may still be an underestimation due to the sensitive nature of sexual assault.

Self-reported sexual assault in Canada: 2004 and 2014

Rate of self-reported sexual assault remains unchanged since 2004

According to self-reported data from the 2014 GSS on Victimization, there were 22¹ incidents of sexual assault for every 1,000 Canadians aged 15 and older² in the 12 months that preceded the survey (Table 1, Chart 1). This represented approximately 636,000 incidents of sexual assault.³

Chart 1**Self-reported sexual assault, by sex of victim, Canada, 2004 and 2014**rate per 1,000
population

‡ use with caution

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

† reference category

Note: Rates are calculated per 1,000 population aged 15 years and older. Includes spousal and non-spousal sexual assault. 'Victim' refers to those who reported that they were sexually assaulted in the past 12 months. For comparison over time, data from Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut are excluded. As of 2014, includes sexual activity where the victim was unable to consent due to drugs, intoxication, manipulation or non-physical force.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

The rate of self-reported sexual assault in 2014 remained unchanged from the rate reported in 2004 (22 versus 21 per 1,000 population).⁴ This was a marked contrast to all other types of crime⁵ measured by the GSS on Victimization (Perreault 2015). For example, rates of self-reported robbery and physical assault—the other types of violent crime measured by the survey—declined by 39% and 35%, respectively, over the same time period.

Text box 1**Measuring self-reported sexual assault**

Estimates of sexual assault are derived from three questions in the 2014 General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization. It should be noted, however, that the questions are not a one-to-one match and do not correspond directly with the three levels of criminal offences in the *Criminal Code of Canada* (see Text box 2) due to different definitions. The questions pertaining to sexual assault in the 2014 GSS on Victimization were as follows:

- Sexual attack: “Has anyone forced you or attempted to force you into any unwanted sexual activity by threatening you, holding you down or hurting you in some way?”
- Unwanted sexual touching: “Has anyone ever touched you against your will in any sexual way...anything from unwanted touching or grabbing, to kissing or fondling?”
- Sexual activity where the victim was unable to consent: “Has anyone subjected you to a sexual activity to which you were not able to consent...where you were drugged, intoxicated, manipulated or forced in ways other than physically?”

The 2014 cycle of the GSS on Victimization measured three types of sexual assault. According to findings, 71% of sexual assault incidents were unwanted sexual touching, 20% were sexual attacks and 9% were sexual activity where the victim was unable to consent due to drugs, intoxication, manipulation or non-physical force. While the third type of sexual assault was measured for the first time by the 2014 GSS on Victimization, analysis shows little impact on comparability to previous cycles.⁶

Text box 2

Sexual offence legislation in Canada

The current Canadian laws surrounding sexual offences are the result of significant changes, most notably over the past four decades (see Kong et al. 2003).

Major milestones in sexual offence legislation include:

- Prior to 1983: Certain rules applied to sexual violence that had a negative impact on victims. For example, a victim was required to make a timely complaint following the incident in order to be believed, a victim's sexual history could have been used to question credibility and imply that sexual activity was consensual, a conviction required corroboration by another person, and a husband could not be convicted of raping his wife.
- 1983: A major reform of the approach to sexual violence began in 1983. These reforms created what are now Canada's sexual assault offences—level 1 (section 271), level 2 (section 272) and level 3 (section 273)—that focus on the assailant's level of violence rather than the type of sexual act committed. While 'sexual assault' is not defined in the *Criminal Code of Canada*, the Supreme Court of Canada has interpreted it as an assault of a sexual nature that, viewed objectively, violated the sexual integrity of the victim. These offences capture all non-consensual sexual activity ranging from fondling to penetration. The rules requiring timely complaint and corroboration were repealed. Further, it was clarified that a victim's sexual history is inadmissible in relation to credibility and that a person could be charged with sexual assault of a spouse. 'Rape-shield' provisions—preventing a victim's sexual history from being used to question credibility or imply that sexual activity was consensual—were also enacted to protect victims from myths and stereotypes about the way they 'should' behave.
- 1988: Reforms included the enactment of child-specific sexual offences. These offences include, but are not limited to, sexual interference, invitation to sexual touching and sexual exploitation.
- 1992: After the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the 1983 'rape-shield' provisions were unconstitutional (*R. v. Seaboyer* 1991), the provisions were amended to create two distinct rules: one categorically excludes all evidence of a victim's prior sexual activity used to suggest that the victim should not be believed or that sexual activity was consensual, and the other excludes such evidence for other purposes, unless specific criteria are met. Reforms also included a clear definition of consent, a list of situations where consent is not obtained—if the complainant submits or does not resist due to force, threat, fraud or authority—and limitations on the accused's ability to advance a mistaken belief in consent.
- 1997: New provisions were enacted to prevent the accused from seeking private records to undermine the victim's credibility.

The *Criminal Code of Canada* outlines a wide range of behaviours of different severity under sexual assault (*Criminal Code* 1985). The offences specific to sexual assault are as follows:

- Sexual assault, level 1 (section 271): Prohibits assault of a sexual nature that violates the sexual integrity of the victim.
- Sexual assault, level 2 (section 272): Prohibits a sexual assault in which the assailant uses a weapon, threatens to cause bodily harm to a person other than the victim or causes bodily harm to the victim.
- Sexual assault, level 3 (section 273): Prohibits a sexual assault in which the assailant wounds, maims, disfigures or endangers the life of the victim.

Characteristics and experiences of sexual assault victims

The vast majority of sexual assault victims are women

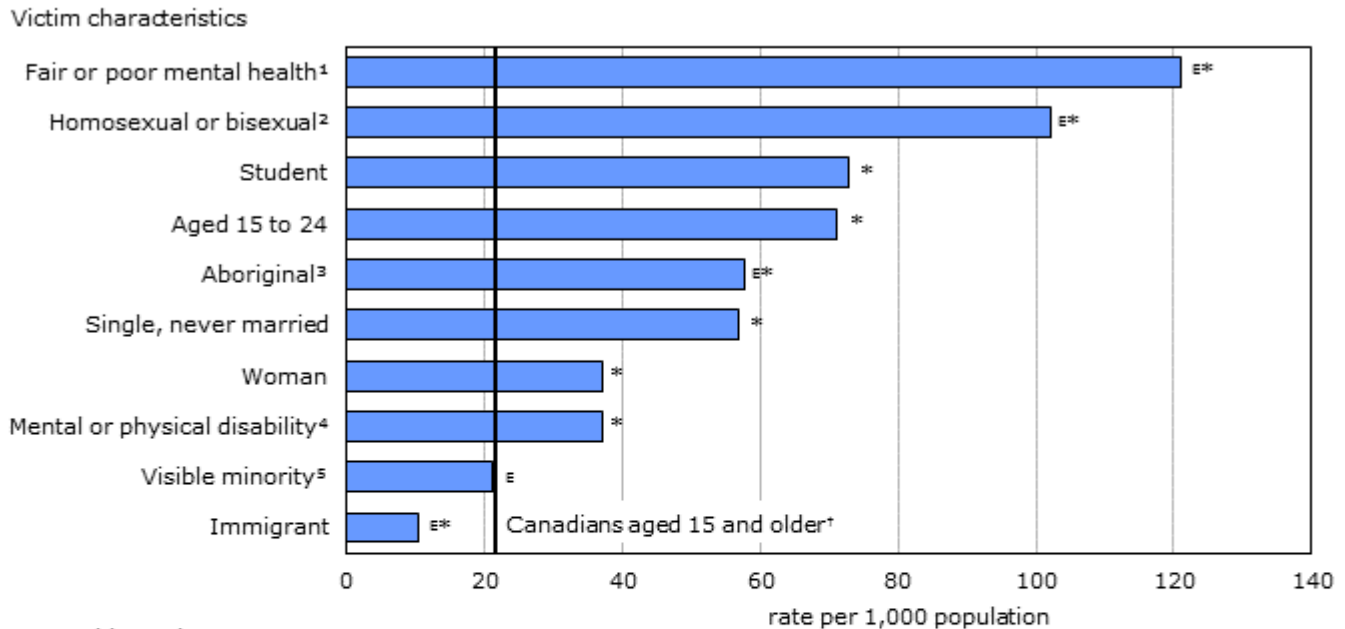
As has been the case historically, Canadian women were far more likely than men to report that they were sexually assaulted.⁷ Women reported a rate of 37 incidents of sexual assault per 1,000 population, while men reported a rate of 5^E incidents per 1,000 population (Table 2, Chart 1). Of all sexual assault incidents, the vast majority (87%) were committed against women. Women reported approximately 555,000 incidents of sexual assault in 2014, far more than the 80,000^E incidents reported by men.

Among victims of sexual assault, men more commonly reported that they experienced one incident of sexual assault than women (72% versus 49%). Among victims who were women, one-quarter (24%^E) reported that they experienced two incidents, while another quarter (26%^E) reported that they experienced three or more in the 12 months that preceded the survey.⁸

Victims are women aged 15 to 24 for nearly half of all sexual assault incidents

Overall, the rate of sexual assault was considerably higher for young Canadians—those aged 15 to 24—and this was especially true for young women (Table 2, Chart 2). Of all sexual assault incidents, nearly half (47%) were committed against women aged 15 to 24.⁹ Young women reported a rate of 134 incidents of sexual assault per 1,000 population. This rate was about two times higher than for women aged 25 to 34 and about eight times higher than for women aged 35 to 44 (58^E and 16^E per 1,000 population, respectively).¹⁰ The rate among young women was also about 12 times higher than among men of the same age group (134 versus 11^E per 1,000 population).

Chart 2
Self-reported sexual assault, by victim characteristics, Canada, 2014



† use with caution
* significantly different from reference category (p < 0.05)
† reference category

1. Self-rated mental health.
2. Includes those aged 18 and older.
3. Includes those who identified as First Nations, Métis or Inuit. The rates of self-reported sexual assault among the different Aboriginal groups are too unreliable to be published individually.
4. Includes those who reported that they have a mental or cognitive condition (e.g., developmental, learning, psychological) or a physical condition (e.g., sensory, mobility)—as well as those who reported that they experience one or more other unspecified health condition expected to last for six months or more—that limits their daily activities.
5. Includes those who reported that they belong to one or more of the following groups: South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani), Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian), West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan), Korean, Japanese, etc.

Note: Rates are calculated per 1,000 population aged 15 and older. Includes spousal and non-spousal sexual assault. 'Victim' refers to those who reported that they were sexually assaulted in the past 12 months.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

In recent years, increased attention has been given to the issue of sexual assault and the corresponding rape culture on Canadian campuses (Canadian Federation of Students n.d.; Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women 2016; Weikle 2016), which could be a contributing factor to the high rates of sexual assault noted among young women. Results from the 2014 GSS on Victimization show that students, and especially women who were students, reported relatively high rates of sexual assault. Overall, approximately 261,000 incidents of sexual assault—41% of all incidents—were reported by students. This represented a rate of 73 incidents of sexual assault per 1,000 population. Of all sexual assault incidents where the victim was a student, 90% were committed against women. However, rates of sexual assault among young women who were students and those who were not students were relatively similar (137^E versus 128^E per 1,000 population). As such, age may be a larger factor than student status.

More than one in five young Aboriginal women is sexually assaulted

Aboriginal¹¹ people—individuals who identified as First Nations, Métis or Inuit—were more likely than non-Aboriginal people to report that they were sexually assaulted. The rate of sexual assault among Aboriginal people was approximately three times higher than among non-Aboriginal people (58^E versus 20 per 1,000 population) (Table 2, Chart 2). Of all sexual assault incidents where the victim was Aboriginal, 94% were committed against women. Overall, Aboriginal women reported a rate of 113^E incidents of sexual assault per 1,000 population,¹² and among young Aboriginal women, more than one in five (22%^E) was sexually assaulted.

Findings from the 2014 GSS on Victimization are consistent with other research. Aboriginal people, and Aboriginal women in particular, are more likely to experience violent victimization than their non-Aboriginal counterparts (Dylan et al. 2008; Weinrath 2008).¹³

Rate higher among single individuals, especially women

The rate of sexual assault was higher among Canadians who were single, never married. In particular, the rate of sexual assault among individuals who were single was approximately eight times higher than among those who were married or common-law (57 versus 7^E per 1,000 population) (Table 2, Chart 2). Single women reported a rate that was nine times higher than the rate among married or common-law women and among single men (108 versus 12^E each per 1,000 population).¹⁴

Sexual orientation associated with higher rate of sexual assault

While research on sexual assault among non-heterosexual individuals is a comparatively new area of study, research thus far indicates that individuals who identify as homosexual or bisexual have an increased likelihood of being sexually assaulted than those who are heterosexual (Rothman et al. 2011). Research suggests that this may be attributed to discrimination and marginalization faced by the non-heterosexual community (Todahl et al. 2009).

Results from the 2014 GSS on Victimization show a similar pattern: Canadians who identified as homosexual or bisexual had a rate of sexual assault that was six times higher than those who identified as heterosexual (102^E versus 17 per 1,000 population) (Table 2, Chart 2).¹⁵ However, this difference was unlikely to be the result of discrimination only. The majority (72%) of homosexual and bisexual victims of sexual assault did not believe the incident to be a hate crime.¹⁶

Rates higher among individuals with mental disabilities and poorer mental health

Research has shown that individuals with disabilities—particularly women and those with mental disabilities—are at greater risk of sexual violence, which may be partially attributed to greater vulnerability, negative social attitudes and perceptions, and abuses of trust (Benedet and Grant 2014; Meer and Combrinck 2015; Nosek et al. 2001). Research has also pointed to the unique needs and challenges individuals with disabilities may face when dealing with the criminal justice system (Benedet and Grant 2014).

Results from the 2014 GSS on Victimization show that individuals with mental or physical disabilities¹⁷ were more likely to report that they were sexually assaulted. The rate of sexual assault among those with a disability was approximately two times higher than those with no disability (37 versus 16 per 1,000 population) (Table 2, Chart 2).

As indicated by research, individuals with mental disabilities are especially more likely to be sexually assaulted. Individuals with mental disabilities had a rate of sexual assault that was about five times higher than those with no such disability (83 versus 16 per 1,000 population), whereas the difference between individuals with physical disabilities and those with no such disability was not statistically significant (25^E versus 20 per 1,000 population).

Similarly, Canadians who rated their mental health lower had a relatively high rate of sexual assault.¹⁸ Those who rated their mental health as 'fair or poor' had a rate that was approximately 12 times higher than those who rated it as 'excellent' (121^E versus 10^E per 1,000 population). However, it should be noted that, in some cases, poorer mental health may be a consequence of sexual assault.

Substance use associated with higher rate of sexual assault, especially among women

Overall, individuals who reported substance use—that is, drug use¹⁹ or binge drinking²⁰—in the past month had a higher rate of sexual assault.²¹ For instance, the rate of sexual assault among Canadians who reported drug use in the past month was about four times higher than among those who did not (71^E versus 17 per 1,000 population) (Table 3). Similarly, the rate for those who reported binge drinking in the past month was about two times higher than for those who did not (35 versus 16 per 1,000 population).

These patterns were especially pronounced among women. For instance, while there was no difference in the rates of sexual assault between men who reported binge drinking in the past month and men who did not, the rate among women who reported binge drinking in the past month was over three times higher than among women who did not (89^E versus 25 per 1,000 population).

Higher rates among those who reported substance use in the past month may be a reflection of the situational context in which many incidents of sexual assault occur. Around one in four (27%^E) sexual assault victims reported that the incident occurred in a bar or a restaurant, and this increased to about four in ten (38%^E) of those who reported substance use in the past month. In terms of sexual activity where the victim was unable to consent, victims who reported substance use in the past month reported a rate that was over three times higher than victims who did not report substance use (56^E versus 16 per 1,000 population).

Finally, it should be noted that research has shown that while substance use can be a risk factor for sexual assault (Abbey et al. 2001), it can also be a coping mechanism following traumatic experiences (Ullman et al. 2013).

Frequent evening activity associated with higher rate of sexual assault, especially among women

Evening activities—such as going to work, night class, meetings or volunteering, or going to bars, clubs or pubs—were all associated with higher rates of sexual assault. Overall, Canadians who stated that they go out in the evenings 21 times or more per month reported 45 incidents of sexual assault per 1,000 population, over four times more than those who stated that they go out 10 times or fewer (10 per 1,000 population) (Table 3). This is consistent with research that indicates that individuals with increased activity outside the home, particularly at night, are more vulnerable to crime and have an increased risk of victimization. This is largely due to the increased presence of offenders and the absence of other people who could act as defenders (Franklin et al. 2011).

Similar to substance use, women who reported frequent evening activity had an even higher rate of sexual assault. Among those who reported going out in the evenings 21 times or more per month, the rate of sexual assault among women was about 12 times higher than among men (97 versus 8^E per 1,000 population).

Rates higher among individuals who have experienced childhood abuse, homelessness and stalking

Childhood abuse—that is, physical abuse²² or sexual abuse²³ experienced before age 15 perpetrated by an adult aged 18 or older—has been identified as a serious social issue that has the potential to affect victims into adulthood. Consequences include post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and substance abuse (Collin-Vézina et al. 2010), and further experiences of victimization later in life, including sexual assault (Daigneault et al. 2009; Luce et al. 2010).²⁴

Overall, Canadians who had experienced either type of childhood abuse reported a rate of sexual assault that was over two times higher than those who had not experienced abuse during childhood (36 versus 15 per 1,000 population) (Table 4). This difference was more pronounced among those who had experienced childhood sexual abuse as those individuals had a rate that was about four times higher than those who had not been abused in this way (70^E versus 17 per 1,000 population). Looking at it differently, among those who had experienced either type of abuse during childhood, the rate of sexual assault was over six times higher among women than men (65 versus 10^E per 1,000 population).

Another life experience associated with higher rates of sexual assault was homelessness.²⁵ Canadians who reported that they had ever experienced homelessness reported a rate of sexual assault that was three times higher than those who had never been homeless (54^E versus 18 per 1,000 population). This included individuals who had lived in a shelter, on the street or in an abandoned building, and those who had experienced hidden or concealed homelessness—for example, that they had lived with family or friends, or in a car because they had nowhere else to live.

Experience with stalking—repeated and unwanted attention that caused fear for personal safety or the safety of someone else—was also linked to higher rates of sexual assault.²⁶ Stalking behaviours included unwanted communication,²⁷ following, watching and threatening behaviours.²⁸

Among Canadians who were victims of stalking in the 12 months that preceded the survey, the rate of sexual assault was nearly 11 times higher than among those who were not stalked (182^E versus 17 per 1,000 population). Women who had been stalked in the 12 months that preceded the survey had a rate that was over eight times higher than women who were not stalked (246^E versus 29 per 1,000 population).²⁹

In addition to stalking experiences in the 12 months that preceded the survey, the GSS on Victimization also asked detailed questions about stalking in the five years that preceded the survey. Overall, those who had experienced stalking during that time period reported a rate of sexual assault that was nearly seven times higher than those who were not stalked

(100^E versus 15 per 1,000 population). This difference was greater for specific types of stalking.³⁰ Most notably, the rate of sexual assault among those who were watched—for example, someone waited outside their home, work, school or other location—was nearly 11 times higher than among those who were not stalked (163^E versus 15 per 1,000 population).

Among sexual assault victims who were stalked in the five years that preceded the survey, more than one in five (22%^E) reported that the stalker grabbed or attacked them at some point. However, it is not possible to determine from the GSS on Victimization if the stalker and the sexual assault offender were the same individual.

After controlling for other factors, the risk of sexual assault is higher for certain individuals

After controlling for other factors, certain characteristics and experiences increased the risk of sexual assault, while others did not. It should be noted that certain factors are closely associated to others—such as age, student status and evening activities outside the home—and the combination of certain factors may have contributed to higher rates of self-reported sexual assault. In order to account for this, the analysis included regression models and the results are presented in this section. A full list of factors that were included for analysis are detailed in Model 1 and Model 2.

After controlling for individual characteristics only (Model 1), a large difference in the risk of sexual assault remained between women and men: all else being equal, women were over six times more likely to be sexually assaulted than men. Self-rated mental health was also associated with an increased risk of sexual assault among Canadians aged 15 and older: individuals with 'fair or poor' self-rated mental health were about seven times more likely to be sexually assaulted than those who rated their mental health as 'very good' or 'excellent.'

The risk of sexual assault was impacted by marital status. Individuals who were single were about four times more likely to be sexually assaulted than those who were married or common-law. Age also had an impact: individuals aged 15 to 24 were over three times more likely to be sexually assaulted than those aged 35 and older.

Aboriginal identity also significantly impacted the risk of sexual assault after controlling for other factors. Individuals who identified as Aboriginal were over two times more likely to be sexually assaulted than those who were non-Aboriginal.

A second model (Model 2) was created to control for the same characteristics as Model 1, as well as experiences of childhood abuse and homelessness, and evening activities outside the home. All characteristics that significantly increased the risk of sexual assault in Model 1 remained significant in Model 2, with one exception: Aboriginal identity did not increase the risk of sexual assault when the new factors were introduced. This change may be attributed to—for instance—the increased proportion of Aboriginal people who experience childhood abuse and homelessness.

Individuals who had experienced childhood abuse before age 15 were about two times more likely to be sexually assaulted than those who had not. The same difference was noted between those who had experienced homelessness and those who had not. Evening activity also had an impact: for every additional evening activity outside the home per month, the risk of sexual assault increased by 3%.

A third model was created to control for the same characteristics in Model 1, in addition to sexual orientation, for Canadians aged 18 and older.³¹ After controlling for other factors, individuals who identified as homosexual or bisexual were over two times more likely to be sexually assaulted than those who identified as heterosexual.

Text box 3**Police-reported sexual assault**

An important source of information on crime in Canada is the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey, which includes individuals of all ages and covers approximately 99% of the Canadian population. The UCR measures crime that has both come to the attention of the police and has been substantiated by the police. Research has shown, however, that most incidents of sexual assault are not reported to the police and are therefore not captured by the UCR. For this reason, self-reported information collected by the General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization provides further insight into the nature and extent of sexual assault in Canada.

In 2014, according to the UCR, there were 20,735 victims of police-reported sexual assault. Of these, 98% were victims of sexual assault level 1 (20,311 incidents), 2% sexual assault level 2 (319 incidents) and 1% sexual assault level 3 (105 incidents). Among victims, 88% were women. Unlike the rate of self-reported sexual assault, police-reported sexual assault declined between 2004 and 2014: level 1 declined by 19%, level 2 declined by 28% and level 3 declined by 50% (Boyce 2015). Among all police-reported incidents of sexual assault captured by the UCR, a friend, acquaintance or neighbour was the offender for 41% of incidents, while a stranger was the offender for 19% of incidents. Further, 22% of incidents were perpetrated by a family member—such as a parent, child, sibling or extended family member—and 5% were perpetrated by a current or former spouse or common-law partner.³²

The police-reported data outlined above represent incidents of sexual assault that were reported by the police on the UCR after it was determined through investigation that a violation of the law occurred. This excludes incidents that were deemed 'unfounded.' An incident is classified as unfounded if police investigation determined that the reported offence did not occur, nor was it attempted. Since 2006, information on unfounded incidents has not been collected by Statistics Canada through the UCR, and unfounded incidents of sexual assault are not reflected in the numbers above. Statistics Canada collected data on unfounded incidents beginning in 1962 with the introduction of the UCR. Over time, inconsistent reporting led to poor data quality. A review conducted in 2006 found that reporting of unfounded incidents was incomplete and Statistics Canada stopped publishing this information (Statistics Canada 2017).

In April 2017, the Police Information and Statistics Committee (POLIS) of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police recommended resuming the collection, analysis and dissemination of unfounded incidents, including sexual assault, by Statistics Canada (Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police 2017; Department of Justice Canada 2017). POLIS further recommended the adoption of a common approach to be taken by police services for the classification and reporting of unfounded incidents. As a result, Statistics Canada will provide standards and guidelines to police services to ensure standardized reporting of unfounded incidents to the UCR. The implementation of these changes will be phased in over time.

In July 2018, Statistics Canada will publish the first set of results on unfounded incidents for 2017, including sexual assault.

Perceptions of safety among sexual assault victims

The 2014 GSS on Victimization asked questions on perceptions of safety in a general sense and not in connection to experiences of victimization; therefore, results among victims in this section may not be a direct outcome of the sexual assault they experienced.

Victims of sexual assault often had negative perceptions of their neighbourhood, lower trust in others and less confidence in the police compared to those who were not sexually assaulted. Victims were also less satisfied with their personal safety from crime and were more likely to take safety precautions.

Sexual assault victims have negative perceptions of their neighbourhood

Victims of sexual assault were less likely to report that they lived in a welcoming community than those who were not sexually assaulted (86% versus 92%) (Table 5). In addition, victims were more likely to report that there were one or more big problems related to social disorder³³ in their neighbourhood compared to those who were not victims of sexual assault (19% versus 8%).

Victims of sexual assault were less likely to report that their neighbours were 'very likely' to call police if they witnessed criminal behaviour (56%) than those who were not sexually assaulted (65%). In contrast, victims were about twice as likely to report that crime in their neighbourhood was higher than in other areas of Canada (9%^E) and that crime had increased in their neighbourhood in the five years that preceded the survey (25%) compared to those who were not victims of sexual assault (4% and 12%, respectively).

Trust in others lower among sexual assault victims

Victims of sexual assault had lower levels of trust in others. For instance, when asked if people in their neighbourhood were trustworthy, victims were more likely to report that they ‘cannot be trusted’ (17%^E) compared to those who were not victims of sexual assault (8%) (Table 5). Further, when asked the same about strangers, victims were more likely to report that they ‘cannot be trusted’ (68%) compared to those who were not victims of sexual assault (58%).

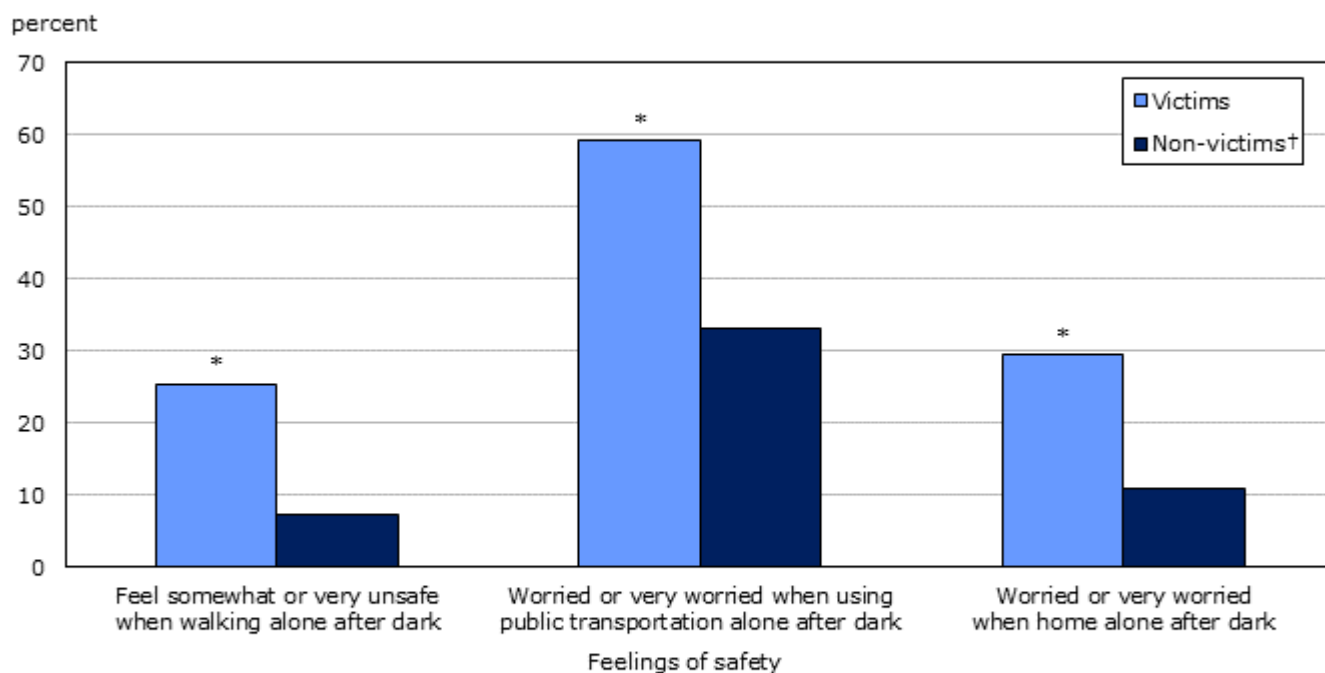
Victims of sexual assault have lower confidence in the police, are less satisfied with their personal safety from crime

In addition to lower levels of trust in others, victims of sexual assault also reported lower levels of confidence in the police and were less satisfied with their personal safety from crime. For example, victims were less likely to have ‘a great deal of confidence’ in the police than those who were not sexually assaulted (29% versus 45%) (Table 5). Victims were also more likely to have ‘no confidence at all’ in the police than those who were not victims of sexual assault (7%^E versus 2%).

Victims of sexual assault were, in general, less satisfied with their personal safety from crime. Two in three (67%) victims reported that they were ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with their personal safety, compared to almost nine in ten (89%) of those who were not sexually assaulted (Table 6).

Victims of sexual assault were less likely to report that they feel safe in specific situations (Chart 3). Sexual assault victims were more likely than victims of physical assault to state that they feel ‘somewhat or very worried’ when using public transportation alone after dark (59% versus 34%),³⁴ that they feel ‘somewhat or very unsafe’ when walking alone after dark (25% versus 11%),³⁵ and that they feel ‘somewhat or very worried’ when home alone after dark (30% versus 15%).³⁶ These differences were more pronounced when sexual assault victims were compared to those who were not sexually assaulted.

Chart 3
Feelings of safety, by self-reported sexual assault victimization,
Canada, 2014



* significantly different from reference category (p < 0.05)

† reference category

Note: Includes spousal and non-spousal sexual assault. ‘Victims’ refer to those who reported that they were sexually assaulted in the past 12 months. Percent calculations exclude those who reported that they never walked alone after dark, never used public transportation alone after dark or that public transportation was unavailable to them, or were never home alone after dark, respectively.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

Victims of sexual assault more likely to take safety precautions

In addition to different perceptions of safety, victims of sexual assault more commonly reported taking safety precautions in the past compared to those who were not sexually assaulted.³⁷ The greatest differences between the safety precautions of victims and those who were not victims were related to changing routine, activities or avoiding certain people or places (61%

versus 27%), and carrying something for self-defence or to alert other people (40% versus 12%) (Table 7). Victims also more commonly reported planning routes with safety in mind (60%), taking a self-defence course (32%) and checking the back seat for intruders when alone and returning to a parked car (52%), compared to those who were not victims (39%, 11% and 35%, respectively). Among sexual assault victims, women were more likely than men to report that they carry something for self-defence or to alert other people (43% versus 25%^E).

Victims of sexual assault were more likely to report taking certain safety precautions than victims of physical assault: for instance, those who were sexually assaulted were more likely to report that they used a car, taxi or public transportation rather than walking for personal safety (49% versus 32%). In addition, a large proportion of sexual assault victims reported planning routes with safety in mind (60%) and carrying something for self-defence or to alert other people (40%), compared to those who were physically assaulted (44% and 24%, respectively).

Characteristics of sexual assault offenders and incidents

This article thus far includes information on all victims of self-reported sexual assault, including incidents perpetrated by a friend, acquaintance or neighbour, a stranger or a spouse. The next three sections, however, focus on incidents of sexual assault perpetrated by someone other than a spouse as information pertaining to spousal violence—including sexual assault—is collected using a different methodology.³⁸ In 2014, nearly all (96%) incidents of sexual assault were perpetrated by someone other than a spouse.

Sexual assault offenders often known to victims

Sexual assault offenders were often known to their victims. A friend, acquaintance or neighbour was the offender for 52% of sexual assault incidents, while a stranger was the offender for 44% of incidents (Table 8). Among victims, a friend, acquaintance or neighbour was more often the perpetrator for men than women (62% versus 51%).

In contrast, physical assault³⁹ was more commonly perpetrated by a stranger (47%) than a friend, acquaintance or neighbour (33%). This was consistent among men as 63% were physically assaulted by a stranger while 29% were physically assaulted by a friend, acquaintance or neighbour. Women, however, were more commonly physically assaulted by a friend, acquaintance or neighbour (38%) than a stranger (28%).

Text box 4

Sexual violence perpetrated by dating partners

For the first time, the 2014 cycle of the General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization included questions on experiences of emotional, physical and sexual violence in the context of dating relationships. Those who were not in a spousal or common-law relationship at the time, or who were in a spousal or common-law relationship of fewer than five years, were asked about experiences of violence perpetrated by someone they were dating.

The 2014 GSS on Victimization asked the following questions:

- “In the past five years, has anyone you were dating tried to limit your contact with family or friends, called you names to make you feel bad, or threatened to harm you or someone close to you?”
- “In the past five years, have you experienced physical violence by someone you were dating?” Physical violence includes acts such as hitting, pushing, grabbing, kicking, biting, choking, throwing things to hurt you or threatening you with a weapon.
- “In the past five years, have you experienced sexual violence by someone you were dating?” Sexual violence includes acts such as forcing you into an unwanted sexual activity by threatening you, holding you down or hurting you, or subjecting you to a sexual activity to which you are not able to consent.

Compared to emotional (7%) and physical violence (4%), sexual violence perpetrated by a dating partner was less common, reported by 1% of those who had dated in the five years that preceded the survey. This represented approximately 138,000 Canadians aged 15 and older, 83% of whom were women.

Sexual assault offenders mostly men, acting alone, under the age of 35

Overall, the large majority (94%) of sexual assault incidents were perpetrated by a man (Table 8). However, a considerable difference was noted depending on the sex of the victim. For instance, women almost exclusively reported that they were sexually assaulted by a man (99%), while similar proportions of men reported that they were sexually assaulted by a man

(52%^E) or a woman (48%^E). Almost four in five (79%) victims reported that they were sexually assaulted by one offender acting alone.

Similar to sexual assault victims, those identified as offenders were often young.⁴⁰ For about two-thirds of incidents (68%), someone under the age of 35 was identified as the offender. More specifically, 31% of offenders were between the ages of 18 and 24, while 27%^E were between the ages of 25 and 34, and 10%^E were under the age of 18. Victims and offenders of sexual assault were often in the same age group. For example, 68% of victims aged 15 to 24 reported that they were sexually assaulted by someone under the age of 24. Similarly, 83% of victims aged 35 and older reported that they were sexually assaulted by someone aged 35 or older.

For comparison, the characteristics of offenders of physical assault⁴¹ were considered. Over half (56%) of physical assault offenders were under the age of 35: 23% were between the ages of 25 to 34, while 19% were between the ages of 18 to 24, and 13%^E were under the age of 18. Similar to victims of sexual assault, victims of physical assault were often in the same age group as offenders. Also similar to sexual assault, physical assault incidents were most often perpetrated by a man (82%) and by one offender acting alone (75%).

Majority of sexual assault victims believe that the incident was related to the offender's alcohol or drug use

Just over half (54%) of sexual assault victims believed that the incident was related to the offender's alcohol or drug use (Table 8). Women who were victims of sexual assault believed that the offender's alcohol or drug use was related to the incident more commonly than men (58% versus 32%^E).

Similar to sexual assault, half (51%) of physical assault victims believed that the incident was related to the offender's alcohol or drug use; however, men more commonly reported this than women (61% versus 38%).

Sexual assault most often occurs at a commercial or institutional establishment

Incidents of sexual assault most commonly occurred at a commercial or institutional establishment (43%)—such as a restaurant, bar, school, office building or shopping mall—followed by a private residence of someone other than the victim (22%^E) (Table 8). The residence of the victim and the street or other public place were less common locations for sexual assault (7%^E and 14%^E, respectively).

Emotional and physical consequences of sexual assault

As previously mentioned, this section provides information on incidents of sexual assault perpetrated by someone other than a spouse as information pertaining to spousal violence—including sexual assault—is collected using a different methodology.⁴²

Many victims of sexual assault report emotional consequences, few report physical injury

The impact of violent crime on victims is not limited to physical injury, nor is physical injury the primary indicator of sexual assault. Research has shown that sexual assault can have a profound psychological impact on victims (Chen and Ullman 2010; Cybulska 2007; Elliot et al. 2004; Logie et al. 2014; Luce et al. 2010). The 2014 GSS on Victimization asked about physical injury, such as bruises, cuts and broken bones resulting from sexual assault, as well as emotional consequences.

Most sexual assault incidents did not involve the presence of a weapon (86%) and did not cause physical injury to the victim (93%) (Table 8). In contrast to sexual assault, one-quarter (26%) of physical assault incidents caused physical injury to the victim.

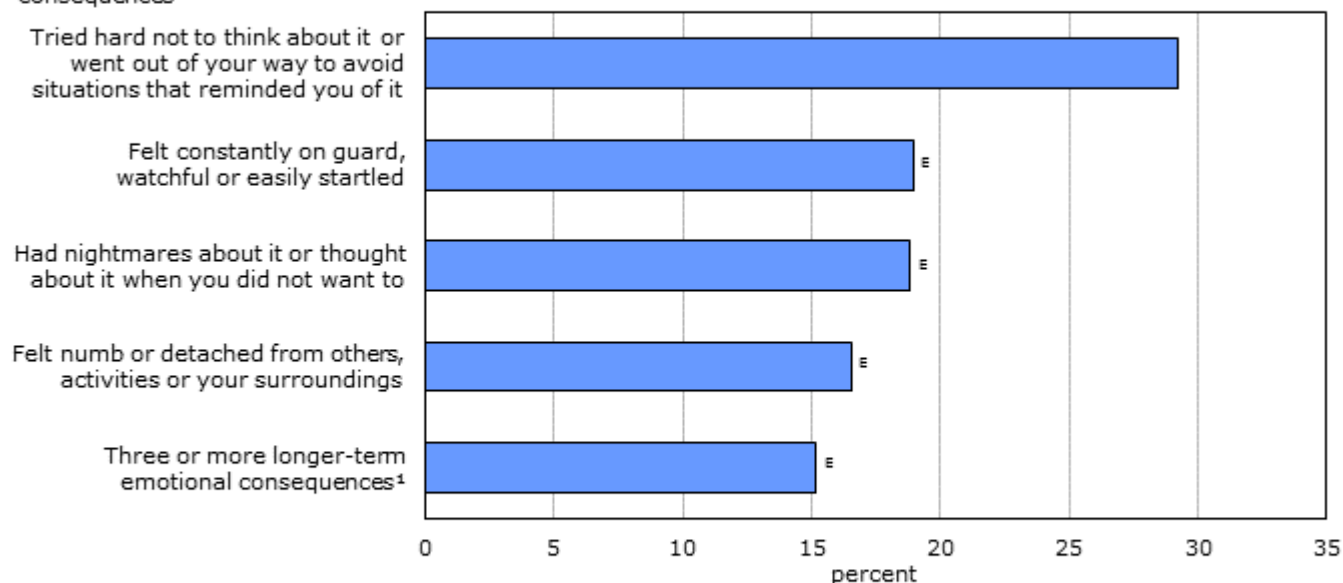
One in six sexual assault victims experiences symptoms consistent with post-traumatic stress disorder

Sexual assault resulted in negative emotional consequences for many victims. Most commonly, victims of sexual assault reported feeling angry (35%) or upset, confused or frustrated (21%) as a result of the incident they experienced. These emotional consequences were similar to those among victims of physical assault⁴³ (27% and 25%, respectively). Further, one-quarter (25%) of victims of sexual assault stated that they had difficulty carrying out everyday activities because of the incident they experienced, also similar to victims of physical assault (23%). However, while 26% of physical assault victims reported that they were not affected emotionally by the incident they experienced, 13%^E of sexual assault victims reported the same.

Certain longer-term emotional consequences have been identified as possible signs of PTSD (see Text box 5). Overall, 15%^E of sexual assault victims reported experiencing three or more longer-term emotional consequences (Chart 4), similar to 12%^E of victims of physical assault. Among the four longer-term emotional consequences, trying hard not to think about the incident or going out of the way to avoid situations that reminded the victim of the incident was most commonly reported (29%).

Chart 4
Longer-term emotional consequences of self-reported sexual assault,
Canada, 2014

Longer-term emotional consequences



^E use with caution

1. Based on the Primary Care Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder screening tool, responses of 'yes' to three or more of the four questions indicate that a victim or patient may require further assessment for a possible diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Note: Includes non-spousal sexual assault. In 2014, nearly all (96%) sexual assault was non-spousal in nature. Excludes spousal sexual assault due to a different methodology used to collect information on spousal violence.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

Text box 5

Primary Care Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder screening tool

Research has shown that victims of violence may experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) following physical or psychological trauma (Burczycka and Ibrahim 2016; Logie et al. 2014; Luce et al. 2010). PTSD is characterized by feelings of detachment, being constantly on guard, nightmares and avoidance behaviours. Further, PTSD has been associated with impaired physical health (Cybulska 2007), decreased quality of life and increased mortality (Luce et al. 2010; Prins et al. 2003).

For the first time, the 2014 cycle of the General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization included questions on longer-term emotional consequences of victimization using four questions from the Primary Care PTSD (PC-PTSD) screening tool. The PC-PTSD screening tool is designed to assess the PTSD-related symptoms of re-experiencing, numbing, avoidance and hyperarousal (Prins et al. 2003).

To measure longer-term impacts of victimization, the 2014 GSS on Victimization asked the following questions:

- “In the past month, have you had nightmares about it or thought about it when you did not want to?”
- “In the past month, have you tried hard not to think about it or went out of your way to avoid situations that reminded you of it?”
- “In the past month, have you felt constantly on guard, watchful or easily startled?”
- “In the past month, have you felt numb or detached from others, activities or your surroundings?”

Importantly, while these questions from the PC-PTSD screening tool cannot diagnose PTSD, they are used in frontline settings to determine whether victims or patients should be referred for further assessment and possible diagnosis (Burczycka and Ibrahim 2016; Prins et al. 2003). If an individual answers ‘yes’ to three of the four questions, it is suspected that they have PTSD. Further evaluation would be required to determine a PTSD diagnosis.

Reporting sexual assault to the police

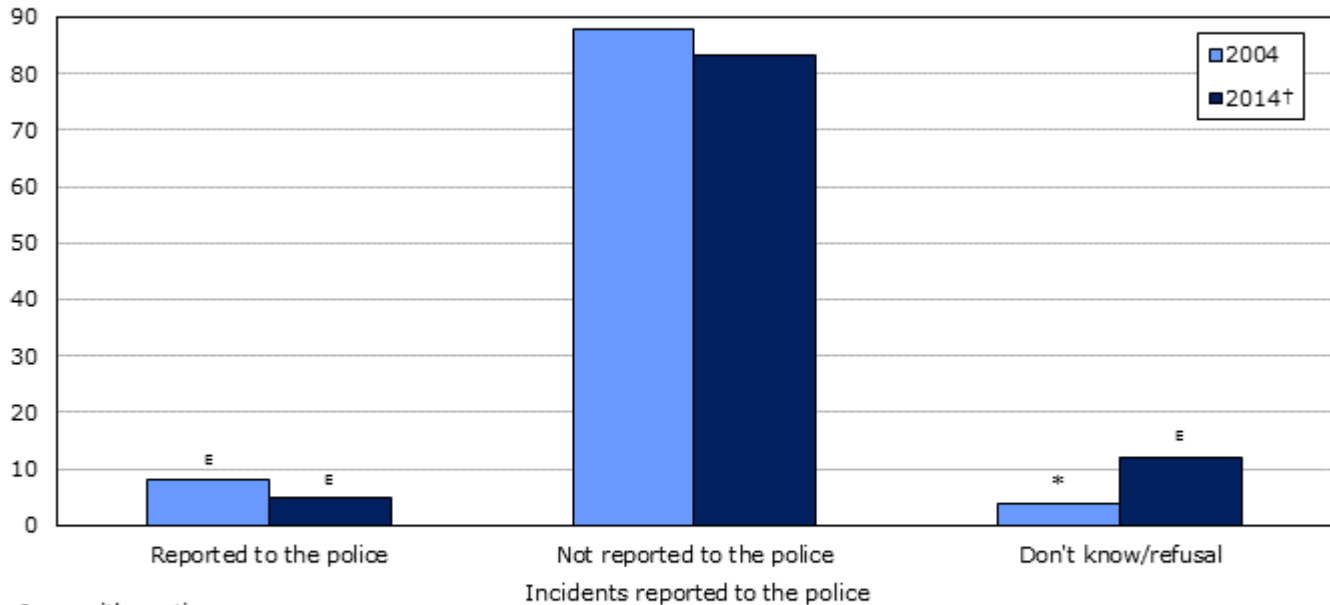
As previously mentioned, this section provides information on incidents of sexual assault perpetrated by someone other than a spouse as information pertaining to spousal violence—including sexual assault—is collected using a different methodology.⁴⁴

Large majority of sexual assault not reported to the police

Research has widely documented that sexual assault is an underreported crime (Brennan and Taylor-Butts 2008; Kaufman 2008; Luce et al. 2010). According to the 2014 GSS on Victimization, more than eight in ten (83%) sexual assault incidents were not reported to the police (Chart 5). This remained unchanged from 2004, when 88% of sexual assault incidents were not reported to the police.⁴⁵

Chart 5**Self-reported sexual assault incidents reported to the police, Canada, 2004 and 2014**

percent

^E use with caution^{*} significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)[†] reference category

Note: Includes non-spousal sexual assault. In 2014, nearly all (96%) sexual assault was non-spousal in nature. Excludes spousal sexual assault due to a different methodology used to collect information on spousal violence. For comparison over time, data from Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut are excluded. As of 2014, includes sexual activity where the victim was unable to consent due to drugs, intoxication, manipulation or non-physical force.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

In 2014, one in twenty (5%^E) incidents of sexual assault was reported to the police, a proportion that also remained unchanged from that which was reported in 2004 (8%^E).⁴⁶ Compared to other types of crime, sexual assault was particularly underreported to the police: for example, among the seven other types of crime measured by the 2014 GSS on Victimization, one in three (34%) incidents was reported to the police overall. Further, four in ten (38%) incidents of physical assault were reported to the police. These proportions also remained unchanged from those which were reported in 2004 (36% and 39%, respectively).⁴⁷

Among the three types of sexual assault measured by the 2014 GSS on Victimization, 88% of incidents of unwanted sexual touching, 74% of incidents of sexual activity where the victim was unable to consent and 66% of sexual attacks were not reported to the police.⁴⁸

Belief that crime was minor and not worth the time to report most common reason for not reporting sexual assault

Victims of sexual assault who did not report the incident to the police were asked why they did not do so.⁴⁹ The most common reasons provided were that the crime was minor and it was not worth taking the time to report (71%), that the incident was a private or personal matter and it was handled informally (67%), and that no one was harmed during the incident (63%) (Table 9). These were also common reasons among victims of physical assault⁵⁰ who did not report the incident to the police (66%, 59% and 45%, respectively).

In general, women and men provided similar reasons for not reporting incidents of sexual assault to the police. However, women were more likely than men to state that they did not report to the police because no one was harmed during the incident (66% versus 42%^E) and because there was a lack of evidence (46% versus 18%^E).

Victims of sexual assault more commonly stated that they did not report the incident to the police because of a lack of evidence (43%) and because no harm was intended (39%) than victims of physical assault (22% and 21%, respectively). In addition, a higher proportion of victims of sexual assault stated that they did not report the incident to the police because they did not want others to find out about their victimization⁵¹ (30%) and because they were afraid that reporting would bring shame and dishonour to their family (12%^E), compared to victims of physical assault (11%^E and 6%^E, respectively).

Most victims of sexual assault spoke to others, did not consult support services

While many victims of sexual assault did not report the incident to the police because they did not want others to find out about it, many did speak with someone. Nearly two-thirds (64%) stated that they talked to a friend or neighbour about their victimization. Smaller proportions stated that they talked to a family member (41%), a co-worker (24%), or a doctor or nurse (6%^E). Victims of physical assault were more likely to report speaking to a family member (69%), a co-worker (58%), or a doctor or nurse (13%) about their victimization.

Overall, 17%^E of sexual assault victims reported that they consulted any support services—such as crisis centres or crisis lines, victim services, counsellors or psychologists, or community centres—following the incident. More specifically, 19%^E of women who were victims consulted a support service. The corresponding proportion of men who were victims is too unreliable to be published; however, research suggests that men are less likely to seek support after sexual assault. This type of victimization may destabilize the self-identity and sexual identity of victims who are men (Elliot et al. 2004; Wall 2011), and misconceptions about sexual assault, victims and gender roles may create further barriers for men to access support services (Bullock and Beckson 2011; Elliot et al. 2004; Sable et al. 2006).

Summary

Self-reported data from the 2014 General Social Survey (GSS) on Canadians' Safety (Victimization) show that all types of violent and non-violent crime measured by the survey declined between 2004 and 2014 with one exception: sexual assault remained unchanged. In 2014, there were 22 incidents of sexual assault for every 1,000 Canadians aged 15 and older, similar to 2004. This represented approximately 636,000 incidents of sexual assault.

Some groups had a higher risk of sexual assault: those who were women, young, Aboriginal, single, and homosexual or bisexual, and those who had poorer mental health. Certain experiences—childhood abuse and homelessness—and evening activities outside the home were also associated with an increased risk of sexual assault.

Students had higher rates of sexual assault, as did individuals with mental or physical disabilities. These victim characteristics, however, did not have a significant impact on the risk of sexual assault when other factors were controlled. It should be noted that certain factors are closely associated to others—such as age, student status and evening activities outside the home—and the combination of factors may have contributed to higher rates of sexual assault.

Victims of sexual assault often had negative perceptions of their neighbourhood, lower levels of trust in others and less confidence in the police. They were also less satisfied with their personal safety from crime and less likely to feel safe in certain situations.

One in four victims of sexual assault reported that they had difficulty carrying out everyday activities because of the incident, and one in six reported experiencing three or more longer-term emotional consequences, indicating the possibility of post-traumatic stress disorder.

The proportion of sexual assault incidents that was reported to the police (one in twenty) also remained unchanged from a decade earlier. The most common reasons for not reporting were that the victim perceived the crime as minor and not worth taking the time to report, that the incident was a private or personal matter and it was handled informally, and that no one was harmed during the incident.

Survey description

General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization)

In 2014, Statistics Canada conducted the sixth cycle of the General Social Survey (GSS) on Canadians' Safety (Victimization). Previous cycles were conducted in 1988, 1993, 1999, 2004 and 2009. The purpose of the survey is to provide data on Canadians' personal experiences with eight offences, examine the risk factors associated with victimization, examine rates of reporting to the police, assess the nature and extent of spousal violence, measure fear of crime, and examine public perceptions of crime and the criminal justice system.

The 2014 GSS on Victimization was also conducted in Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut using a different sampling design. The GSS on Victimization was also conducted in the territories in 2009 and was preceded by test collections in 1999 and 2004.

In 2009, comparisons between the data from the territories and the provinces were to be made with caution primarily because the Inuit population was underrepresented in the territories. In 2014, as a result of advancements made to the frame and higher response rates, data in the territories can be compared, or combined, with data for the provinces. It is noteworthy, however, to keep in mind differences in survey methods and weighting strategies for the provinces and territories when analyzing GSS 2014 data at the Canada level. This report combined 2014 GSS on Victimization data from both the provinces and territories in order to report on the victimization of Aboriginal people in Canada.

The target population for the GSS on Victimization is the Canadian population aged 15 and over, living in the provinces and territories. Canadians residing in institutions are not included. Once a household was contacted an individual 15 years or older was randomly selected to respond to the survey.

In 2014, the sample size for the 10 provinces was 33,127 respondents. Of that number, 2,787 were from the oversample. In 2014, the sample size for the three territories was 2,040 respondents, about twice the number of respondents in 2009 (1,094).

Data collection

Provinces

Data collection took place from January to December 2014 inclusively. Responses were obtained by computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI). Respondents were able to respond in the official language of their choice.

Territories

Data collection took place from August 2014 to January 2015 inclusively. The method of collection was a mixture of CATI and personal interviews (CAPI). Most cases started as CATI at the regional office and could be transferred to a CAPI-interviewer depending on the community and collection constraints. Respondents were interviewed in the official language of their choice.

Response rates

Provinces

The overall response rate in 2014 was 52.9%, down from 61.6% in 2009. Non-respondents included people who refused to participate, could not be reached, or could not speak English or French. Respondents in the sample were weighted so that their responses represent the non-institutionalized Canadian population aged 15 and older.

Territories

The overall response rate was 58.7%, up from 50.7% in 2009. Non-respondents included people who refused to participate, could not be reached, or could not speak English or French. Respondents in the sample were weighted so that their responses represent the non-institutionalized territories population aged 15 and older.

Data limitations

As with any household survey, there are some data limitations. The results are based on a sample and are therefore subject to sampling errors. Somewhat different results might have been obtained if the entire population had been surveyed. This article uses the coefficient of variation (CV) as a measure of the sampling error. Estimates with a high CV (over 33.3%) were not published because they were too unreliable. In these cases, the symbol "F" is used in place of an estimate in the figures and data tables. Estimates with a CV between 16.6 and 33.3 should be used with caution and the symbol "E" is used. Where descriptive statistics and cross-tabular analyses were used, statistically significant differences were determined using 95% confidence intervals.

Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey

The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey collects detailed information on criminal incidents that have come to the attention of and have been substantiated by Canadian police services. Information includes characteristics pertaining to incidents (weapon, location), victims (age, sex, accused-victim relationship) and accused persons (age, sex). In 2014, data from police services covered 99% of the population of Canada. The count for a particular year represents incidents reported in that year, regardless of when the incident actually occurred.

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Notes

^E use with caution

- Numbers in text, tables and charts may not add up to totals due to rounding.
- Rates are calculated per 1,000 population aged 15 and older.
- The 2004 General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization collected information from respondents in the provinces only, while the 2014 GSS on Victimization collected information from respondents in the provinces and territories. For comparison over time, 2014 data from Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut are excluded where 2004 data are discussed. For this reason, the total number of incidents in Table 1 and Chart 1 do not equal the number that appears in the text for 2014.
- The difference between the rate of self-reported sexual assault in 2004 and in 2014 was not statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).
- The eight types of crime measured by the General Social Survey on Victimization are physical assault, sexual assault, robbery, theft of personal property, breaking and entering, motor vehicle theft, theft of household property and vandalism.
- An analysis of the impact of the additional question on sexual activity where the victim was unable to consent shows that sexual assault data from the 2004 and 2014 cycles of the General Social Survey on Victimization remain comparable. Excluding the newer question, the rate of self-reported sexual assault in 2014 remained unchanged from the rate in 2004 (20 versus 21 per 1,000 population). In 2004, 76% of incidents were unwanted sexual touching and 24% were sexual attacks.
- In this article, 'women' refers to females aged 15 and older and 'men' refers to males aged 15 and older.

8. The proportion of men who experienced two incidents or three or more incidents of sexual assault is too unreliable to be published.
9. It should be noted that the General Social Survey on Victimization collects information from respondents aged 15 and older; therefore, self-reported sexual assault data for those aged 14 and under are unavailable. Police-reported data show that sexual violence peaks between age 13 and 16 for victims (Cotter and Beaupré 2014).
10. The rate of self-reported sexual assault among men by age group is too unreliable to be published.
11. This article uses the term 'Aboriginal' instead of 'Indigenous' as 'Aboriginal' was used in the 2014 General Social Survey on Victimization. The rates of self-reported sexual assault among the different Aboriginal groups are too unreliable to be published individually.
12. The rate of self-reported sexual assault among Aboriginal men is too unreliable to be published.
13. Further information specific to Aboriginal victimization can be found in "Victimization of Aboriginal people in Canada, 2014" (Boyce 2016).
14. The rate of self-reported sexual assault among men who were married or common-law is too unreliable to be published.
15. Includes those aged 18 and older.
16. The corresponding proportion of victims who identified as heterosexual was 86%. The difference between victims who identified as heterosexual and victims who identified as homosexual or bisexual was not statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).
17. Includes those who reported that they have a mental or cognitive condition (e.g., developmental, learning, psychological) or a physical condition (e.g., sensory, mobility)—as well as those who reported that they experienced one or more other unspecified health condition expected to last for six months or more—that limits their daily activities.
18. Questions on self-rated mental health were asked in a general sense and not in connection to experiences of victimization; therefore, results among victims may not be a direct outcome of the sexual assault they experienced.
19. Drug use refers to using non-prescribed drugs including marijuana, hashish, magic mushrooms, cocaine, methamphetamine, ecstasy and heroin.
20. Binge drinking refers to drinking five or more drinks on one occasion. Includes those who reported binge drinking at least once in the past month.
21. Questions on substance use were asked in a general sense and not in connection to experiences of victimization; therefore, results among victims may not be a direct outcome of the sexual assault they experienced.
22. Childhood physical abuse: been slapped or hit with something hard enough to have been hurt; been pushed, grabbed or shoved; and/or been kicked, bitten, punched, choked, burned or otherwise attacked.
23. Childhood sexual abuse: been touched, grabbed, kissed or fondled in a sexual way; and/or been forced into unwanted sexual activity by being threatened, held down or hurt.
24. Further information specific to childhood maltreatment—physical abuse, sexual abuse and/or witnessing parental violence—can be found in Section 1 of "Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2015" (Burczycka and Conroy 2017).
25. Questions on homelessness were asked in a general sense and not in connection to experiences of victimization; therefore, results among victims may not be a direct outcome of the sexual assault they experienced.
26. Those who experienced both stalking and sexual assault were not necessarily victimized by the same offender.
27. Includes repeated, silent and obscene phone calls, unwanted email, text and social media messages, and unwanted letters, gifts and cards.
28. Includes persistently asking for a date, posting unwanted information on social media, intimidating or threatening someone close, attempting to intimidate or threaten by hurting pets, and attempting to intimidate or threaten by damaging property.
29. The rate of self-reported sexual assault among men who were stalked in the past 12 months is too unreliable to be published.
30. Respondents could report that they had experienced more than one type of stalking. Over half (55%) of stalking victims reported that they had experienced one type of stalking, while the remaining 45% of stalking victims reported that they had experienced more than one type of stalking.
31. The question on sexual orientation was not asked of those aged 15 to 17; therefore, sexual orientation was not included in the model for Canadians aged 15 and older. The risk of sexual assault among those aged 18 and older who identified as homosexual or bisexual was 2.51 times higher than those who identified as heterosexual.
32. The higher proportion of family relationships for police-reported incidents of sexual assault may be attributed to the fact that the General Social Survey on Victimization is limited to individuals aged 15 and older. Further information specific to police-reported crime can be found in "Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2014" (Boyce 2015).

33. Includes noisy neighbours or loud parties; people hanging around on the streets; garbage or litter lying around; vandalism; people being attacked because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion; people using or dealing drugs; people being drunk or rowdy in public places.
34. Excludes those who reported that they never used public transportation alone after dark or that public transportation was unavailable to them.
35. Excludes those who reported that they never walked alone after dark.
36. Excludes those who reported that they were never home alone after dark.
37. Questions about protection from crime and safety from crime were not limited to the past 12 months; therefore, victims may have taken safety precautions before they were sexually assaulted.
38. Information about non-spousal violence is collected by incident, whereas information about spousal violence—incidents perpetrated by a current or former spouse or common-law partner—is collected as a grouping of incidents by victim and may include incidents of non-sexual violence. Spousal violence often involves repeated victimization and it would therefore be too burdensome to ask victims to recall each incident they experienced. It is not possible to provide details about a specific incident of spousal violence. For this reason, information about sexual assault in the context of spousal violence is excluded from this article. Where details about physical assault are provided for comparison, includes incidents of physical assault perpetrated by someone other than a spouse. Information specific to spousal violence, based on the 2014 General Social Survey on Victimization, can be found in Section 1 of “Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2014” (Burczycka and Ibrahim 2016).
39. Includes non-spousal physical assault.
40. Characteristics of sexual assault offenders are based on self-reported information provided by victims who may not have had correct or precise information about offenders.
41. Includes non-spousal physical assault.
42. Information about non-spousal violence is collected by incident, whereas information about spousal violence—incidents perpetrated by a current or former spouse or common-law partner—is collected as a grouping of incidents by victim and may include incidents of non-sexual violence. Spousal violence often involves repeated victimization and it would therefore be too burdensome to ask victims to recall each incident they experienced. It is not possible to provide details about a specific incident of spousal violence. For this reason, information about sexual assault in the context of spousal violence is excluded from this article. Where details about physical assault are provided for comparison, includes incidents of physical assault perpetrated by someone other than a spouse. Information specific to spousal violence, based on the 2014 General Social Survey on Victimization, can be found in Section 1 of “Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2014” (Burczycka and Ibrahim 2016).
43. Includes non-spousal physical assault.
44. Information about non-spousal violence is collected by incident, whereas information about spousal violence—incidents perpetrated by a current or former spouse or common-law partner—is collected as a grouping of incidents by victim and may include incidents of non-sexual violence. Spousal violence often involves repeated victimization and it would therefore be too burdensome to ask victims to recall each incident they experienced. It is not possible to provide details about a specific incident of spousal violence. For this reason, information about sexual assault in the context of spousal violence is excluded from this article. Where details about physical assault are provided for comparison, includes incidents of physical assault perpetrated by someone other than a spouse. Information specific to spousal violence, based on the 2014 General Social Survey on Victimization, can be found in Section 1 of “Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2014” (Burczycka and Ibrahim 2016).
45. The difference between the proportion of incidents of sexual assault not reported to the police in 2004 and in 2014 was not statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).
46. It is unknown if the remaining 12% of sexual assault incidents were reported to the police as responses of ‘don’t know’ or refusal were given by respondents.
47. The difference between the proportion of incidents reported to the police in 2004 and in 2014 was not statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). This applies to sexual assault, the seven other types of crime measured by the General Social Survey on Victimization and physical assault.
48. The proportion of incidents of sexual assault reported to the police by type of sexual assault is too unreliable to be published.
49. Respondents could provide more than one reason for not reporting to the police.
50. Includes non-spousal physical assault.
51. Includes publicity and news coverage.

Detailed data tables

Table 1
Self-reported sexual assault, by sex of victim, Canada, 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014

| Sex of victim | 1999 | | 2004 | | 2009 | | 2014 | |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| | number (000s) | rate ¹ | number (000s) | rate ¹ | number (000s) | rate ¹ | number (000s) | rate ¹ |
| Women | 410 | 33* | 460 | 35* | 472 | 34* | 553 | 37* |
| Men† | 92 ^E | 8 ^E | 86 ^E | 7 ^E | 204 ^E | 15 ^E ** | 80 ^E | 5 ^E |
| Total | 502 | 21 | 546 | 21 | 677 | 24 | 633 | 22 |

^E use with caution

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

** significantly different from 2014 ($p < 0.05$)

† reference category

1. Rates are calculated per 1,000 population aged 15 years and older.

Note: Includes spousal and non-spousal sexual assault. 'Victim' refers to those who reported that they experienced were sexually assaulted in the past 12 months. For comparison over time, data from Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut are excluded. As of 2014, includes sexual activity where the victim was unable to consent due to drugs, intoxication, manipulation or non-physical force.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

Table 2
Self-reported sexual assault, by sex of victim and socioeconomic characteristics, Canada, 2014

| Characteristics | Women | Men | Total |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| | rate ¹ | | |
| Age group | | | |
| 15 to 24 years† | 134** | 11 ^E | 71 |
| 25 to 34 years | 58 ^{E*} | F | 32 ^{E*} |
| 35 to 44 years | 16 ^{E*} | F | 10 ^{E*} |
| 45 to 54 years | 20 ^{E*} | F | 13 ^{E*} |
| 55 years and older | F | F | 4 ^{E*} |
| Main activity | | | |
| Student | 127 ^{E***} | 15 ^{E*} | 73* |
| Other ² | 17 ^E | F | 11 ^E |
| Employed† | 26** | 5 ^E | 14 |
| Aboriginal identity³ | | | |
| Aboriginal | 113 ^{E*} | F | 58 ^{E*} |
| Non-Aboriginal† | 35** | 5 ^E | 20 |
| Marital status | | | |
| Single, never married | 108*** | 12 ^E | 57* |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 17 ^E | F | 13 ^E |
| Married or common-law† | 12 ^E | F | 7 ^E |
| Sexual orientation⁴ | | | |
| Homosexual or bisexual | 155 ^{E*} | F | 102 ^{E*} |
| Heterosexual† | 29** | 4 ^E | 17 |
| Disability⁵ | | | |
| Mental or physical | 56* | F | 37* |
| None† | 29** | 4 ^E | 16 |
| Self-rated mental health | | | |
| Fair or poor | 204 ^{E*} | F | 121 ^{E*} |
| Good | 48 ^{E*} | F | 28 ^{E*} |
| Very good | 23 ^{E*} | F | 13 ^E |
| Excellent† | 16 ^E | F | 10 ^E |
| Immigrant status | | | |
| Immigrant | 16 ^{E*} | F | 10 ^{E*} |
| Non-immigrant† | 42** | 5 ^E | 24 |
| Visible minority status⁶ | | | |
| Visible minority | 33 ^E | F | 21 ^E |
| Non-visible minority† | 37** | 5 | 21 |
| Total | 37** | 5^E | 22 |

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

** estimate for women significantly different from estimate for men ($p < 0.05$) but not reference category

*** estimate for women significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$) and estimate for men ($p < 0.05$)

† reference category

1. Rates are calculated per 1,000 population aged 15 and older.

2. Includes those who reported their main activity as retired, caring for children, household work, looking for paid work, long-term illness, etc.

3. Includes those who identified as First Nations, Métis or Inuit. The rates of self-reported sexual assault among the different Aboriginal groups are too unreliable to be published individually.

4. Includes those aged 18 and older.

5. Includes those who reported that they have a mental or cognitive condition (e.g., developmental, learning, psychological) or a physical condition (e.g., sensory, mobility)—as well as those who reported that they experience one or more other unspecified health condition expected to last for six months or more—that limits their daily activities.

6. Includes those who reported that they belong to one or more of the following groups: South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani), Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian), West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan), Korean, Japanese, etc.

Note: Includes spousal and non-spousal sexual assault. 'Victim' refers to those who reported that they were sexually assaulted in the past 12 months.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

Table 3
Self-reported sexual assault, by sex of victim and selected characteristics, Canada, 2014

| Characteristics | Women | Men | Total |
|--|------------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| | rate ¹ | | |
| Number of evening activities per month | | | |
| 0 to 10 [†] | 15 ^E | F | 10 |
| 11 to 20 | 35 ^{E*} | F | 19 [*] |
| 21 or more | 97 ^{***} | 8 ^E | 45 [*] |
| Going to work, night classes, meetings or volunteering in the evening | | | |
| Less than once a month [†] | 17 ^E | F | 12 ^E |
| One to ten times per month | 35 ^{***} | 5 ^E | 20 [*] |
| More than 10 times per month | 85 ^{E***} | 8 ^E | 40 [*] |
| Going to bars, clubs or pubs in the evening | | | |
| Less than once a month [†] | 23 ^{**} | 5 ^E | 15 |
| One to ten times per month | 72 ^{***} | 5 ^E | 33 [*] |
| More than 10 times per month | F | F | F |
| Going to other activities outside the home in the evening² | | | |
| Less than once a month [†] | 20 ^E | F | 13 ^E |
| One to ten times per month | 31 ^{**} | 4 ^E | 18 |
| More than 10 times per month | 71 ^{E***} | 7 ^E | 37 ^{E*} |
| Drug use in the past month³ | | | |
| Yes | 195 ^{E*} | F | 71 ^{E*} |
| No [†] | 29 ^{**} | 4 ^E | 17 |
| Binge drinking in the past month⁴ | | | |
| Yes | 89 ^{E***} | 5 ^E | 35 [*] |
| No [†] | 25 ^{**} | 5 ^E | 16 |
| Total | 37^{**} | 5^E | 22 |

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

** estimate for women significantly different from estimate for men ($p < 0.05$) but not reference category

*** estimate for women significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$) and estimate for men ($p < 0.05$)

[†] reference category

1. Rates are calculated per 1,000 population aged 15 years and older.

2. Includes going to restaurants, shops or sports practice, and visits with friends or family.

3. Drug use refers to using non-prescribed drugs including marijuana, hashish, magic mushrooms, cocaine, methamphetamine, ecstasy and heroin.

4. Binge drinking refers to drinking five or more drinks on one occasion. Includes those who reported binge drinking at least once.

Note: Includes spousal and non-spousal sexual assault. 'Victim' refers to those who reported that they were sexually assaulted in the past 12 months.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

Table 4
Self-reported sexual assault, by sex of victim and experiences, Canada, 2014

| Experiences | Women | Men | Total |
|---|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| | rate ¹ | | |
| Childhood physical or sexual abuse before age 15² | | | |
| Yes | 65 ^{***} | 10 ^E | 36 [*] |
| No [†] | 24 | F | 15 |
| Childhood physical abuse before age 15² | | | |
| Yes | 64 ^{***} | 10 ^E | 33 [*] |
| No [†] | 28 | F | 17 |
| Childhood sexual abuse before age 15² | | | |
| Yes | 85 ^{E*} | F | 70 ^{E*} |
| No [†] | 30 ^{**} | 5 ^E | 17 |
| Homelessness³ | | | |
| Yes | 100 ^{E*} | F | 54 ^{E*} |
| No [†] | 31 ^{**} | 5 ^E | 18 |
| Stalking in the past 12 months | | | |
| Yes | 246 ^{E*} | F | 182 ^{E*} |
| No [†] | 29 ^{**} | 4 ^E | 17 |
| Total | 37^{**} | 5^E | 22 |

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

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** estimate for women significantly different from estimate for men ($p < 0.05$) but not reference category

*** estimate for women significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$) and estimate for men ($p < 0.05$)

† reference category

1. Rates are calculated per 1,000 population aged 15 and older.

2. Refers to abuse perpetrated by an adult aged 18 or older.

3. Includes those who reported that they had lived in a shelter, on the street or in an abandoned building, and those who had lived with family or friends, or in a car because they had no where else to live.

Note: Includes spousal and non-spousal sexual assault. 'Victim' refers to those who reported that they were sexually assaulted in the past 12 months.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

Table 5
Perceptions of neighbourhood safety, by sex and self-reported sexual assault victimization, Canada, 2014

| Perceptions of safety | Women | | Men | | Total | |
|--|------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| | Victims | Non-victims† | Victims | Non-victims† | Victims | Non-victims† |
| percent | | | | | | |
| Live in a welcoming community | | | | | | |
| Yes | 85* | 92 | 89 | 93 | 86* | 92 |
| No | 13 ^{E*} | 6 | F | 5 | 13 ^{E*} | 6 |
| Social disorder in the neighbourhood¹ | | | | | | |
| One or more big problems | 18 ^{E*} | 8 | 24 ^{E*} | 7 | 19* | 8 |
| One or more moderate problems but no big problems | 18 ^E | 14 | 26 ^E | 14 | 19 | 14 |
| One or more small problems but no moderate or big problems | 34 | 29 | 28 ^E | 31 | 33 | 30 |
| No problems at all | 27* | 45 | 22 ^{E*} | 45 | 26* | 45 |
| Neighbours would call the police if they witnessed criminal behaviour | | | | | | |
| Very likely | 57 | 65 | 49 ^E | 65 | 56* | 65 |
| Somewhat likely | 33 | 25 | 36 ^E | 27 | 34 | 26 |
| Somewhat unlikely | 7 ^E | 3 | F | 3 | 7 ^E | 3 |
| Not at all likely | F | 3 | F | 3 | F | 3 |
| Crime in the neighbourhood compared to other areas in Canada | | | | | | |
| Higher | 6 ^E | 4 | 24 ^{E*} | 4 | 9 ^{E*} | 4 |
| About the same | 28* | 20 | 26 ^E | 19 | 28* | 19 |
| Lower | 65* | 74 | 50 ^{E*} | 74 | 63* | 74 |
| Crime in the neighbourhood compared to five years ago² | | | | | | |
| Increased | 25* | 13 | 27 ^{E*} | 11 | 25* | 12 |
| About the same | 65* | 78 | 54 ^{E*} | 77 | 64* | 78 |
| Decreased | 9 ^E | 8 | F | 11 | 10 ^E | 10 |
| Trust in people in the neighbourhood | | | | | | |
| Cannot be trusted | 16 ^{E*} | 9 | 26 ^{E*} | 8 | 17 ^{E*} | 8 |
| Neutral | 37* | 25 | 28 ^E | 27 | 36* | 26 |
| Can be trusted | 47* | 64 | 45 ^{E*} | 64 | 47* | 64 |
| Trust in strangers | | | | | | |
| Cannot be trusted | 69 | 60 | 61 | 56 | 68* | 58 |
| Neutral | 28 ^E | 28 | 35 ^E | 31 | 29 | 29 |
| Can be trusted | 3 ^{E*} | 9 | F | 10 | 3 ^{E*} | 10 |
| Confidence in the police | | | | | | |
| A great deal of confidence | 29* | 46 | 28 ^{E*} | 44 | 29* | 45 |
| Some confidence | 50 | 46 | 47 ^E | 46 | 49 | 46 |
| Not very much confidence | 15 ^{E*} | 5 | F | 7 | 15 ^{E*} | 6 |
| No confidence at all | 5 ^{E*} | 1 | F | 3 | 7 ^{E*} | 2 |

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

* significantly different from reference category (p < 0.05)

† reference category

1. Includes noisy neighbours or loud parties; people hanging around on the streets; garbage or litter lying around; vandalism; people being attacked because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion; people using or dealing drugs; people being drunk or rowdy in public places.

2. Excludes those who reported that they had not lived in their current neighbourhood long enough to assess.

Note: Includes spousal and non-spousal sexual assault. 'Victims' refer to those who reported that they were sexually assaulted in the past 12 months. Responses of don't know/refusal are included in the calculation of percentages but are not displayed if they represent less than 5% of all responses.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

Table 6
Perceptions of personal safety, by sex and self-reported sexual assault victimization, Canada, 2014

| Perceptions of safety | Women | | Men | | Total | |
|--|-------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| | Victims | Non-victims [†] | Victims | Non-victims [†] | Victims | Non-victims [†] |
| percent | | | | | | |
| Satisfaction with personal safety from crime | | | | | | |
| Very satisfied | 25 ^E | 32 ^{**} | 32 ^E | 44 | 26 [*] | 38 |
| Satisfied | 42 [*] | 53 ^{**} | 39 ^E | 47 | 41 [*] | 50 |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 26 [*] | 10 ^{**} | F | 6 | 25 [*] | 8 |
| Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied | 7 ^E | 3 ^{**} | F | 2 | 8 ^{E*} | 3 |
| Feeling of safety when walking alone after dark¹ | | | | | | |
| Somewhat or very unsafe | 28 ^{E*} | 11 ^{**} | F | 4 | 25 [*] | 7 |
| Reasonably safe | 48 | 50 ^{**} | 42 ^E | 32 | 47 | 40 |
| Very safe | 24 ^{***} | 38 ^{**} | 46 ^E | 64 | 27 [*] | 53 |
| Feeling of safety when using public transportation alone after dark² | | | | | | |
| Somewhat or very worried | 64 [*] | 48 ^{**} | F | 21 | 59 [*] | 33 |
| Not at all worried | 35 ^{E*} | 50 ^{**} | 62 ^E | 78 | 39 [*] | 66 |
| Feeling of safety when home alone after dark³ | | | | | | |
| Somewhat or very worried | 31 [*] | 16 ^{**} | F | 5 | 30 [*] | 11 |
| Not at all worried | 69 [*] | 83 ^{**} | 80 [*] | 94 | 70 [*] | 89 |

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

** estimate for women significantly different from estimate for men ($p < 0.05$) but not reference category

*** estimate for women significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$) and estimate for men ($p < 0.05$)

[†] reference category

1. Excludes those who reported that they never walked alone after dark.

2. Excludes those who reported that they never used public transportation alone after dark or that public transportation was unavailable to them.

3. Excludes those who reported that they were never home alone after dark.

Note: Includes spousal and non-spousal sexual assault. 'Victims' refer to those who reported that they were sexually assaulted in the past 12 months. Responses of don't know/refusal are included in the calculation of percentages but are not displayed if they represent less than 5% of all responses.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

Table 7
Safety precautions, by sex and self-reported sexual assault victimization, Canada, 2014

| | Women | | Men | | Total | |
|--|------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| | Victims | Non-victims† | Victims | Non-victims† | Victims | Non-victims† |
| Safety precautions¹ | | | percent | | | |
| Lock windows and doors at home | 93* | 88** | 90* | 81 | 92* | 85 |
| Change routine, activities or avoid certain people or places | 59* | 30** | 71* | 23 | 61* | 27 |
| Plan routes with safety in mind | 62* | 48** | 48 ^{E*} | 29 | 60* | 39 |
| Check the back seat for intruders when alone and returning to a parked car | 54 | 46** | 42 ^{E*} | 23 | 52* | 35 |
| Rather than walk, use a car, a taxi or public transportation for personal safety | 55* | 38** | F | 18 | 49* | 28 |
| Carry something for self-defence or to alert other people | 43*** | 15** | 25 ^{E*} | 8 | 40* | 12 |
| Installed burglar alarms, motion detector lights or a video surveillance system | 35 | 33 | F | 32 | 33 | 32 |
| Took a self-defence course | 32* | 12** | 35 ^{E*} | 11 | 32* | 11 |
| Installed new locks or security bars | 30 | 26** | 38 ^E | 25 | 31 | 26 |
| Obtained a dog | 17 ^E | 11** | F | 8 | 17 ^{E*} | 9 |
| Stay home at night because of fear of going out alone | 18 ^{E*} | 10** | F | 2 | 17 ^{E*} | 6 |
| Changed residence or moved | 6 ^E | 5** | F | 3 | 7 ^E | 4 |

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

** estimate for women significantly different from estimate for men ($p < 0.05$) but not reference category

*** estimate for women significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$) and estimate for men ($p < 0.05$)

† reference category

1. Questions on safety precautions were asked in a general sense and not in connection to experiences of victimization; therefore, results among victims may not be a direct outcome of the sexual assault they experienced.

Note: Includes spousal and non-spousal sexual assault. 'Victims' refer to those who reported that they were sexually assaulted in the past 12 months.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

Table 8
Self-reported sexual and physical assault, by sex of victim and incident characteristics, Canada, 2014

| Incident characteristics | Sexual assault | | | Physical assault | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | Women | Men† | Total | Women | Men† | Total |
| | percent | | | | | |
| Sex of the offender¹ | | | | | | |
| Man | 99* | 52 ^E | 94 | 70* | 92 | 82 |
| Woman | F | 48 ^E | 6 ^E | 28* | 7 ^E | 18 |
| Age group of the offender¹ | | | | | | |
| Under 18 years old | 8 ^E | F | 10 ^E | 16 ^E | 11 ^E | 13 ^E |
| 18 to 24 years | 33 ^E | F | 31 | 20 ^E | 18 ^E | 19 |
| 25 to 34 years | 28 ^E | F | 27 ^E | 21 ^E | 26 | 23 |
| 35 to 44 years | 8 ^E | F | 8 ^E | 14 ^E | 21 ^E | 18 |
| 45 to 54 years | 13 ^E | F | 12 ^E | 12 ^E | 13 ^E | 12 |
| 55 years and older | 10 ^E | F | 10 ^E | 14 ^{E*} | 7 ^E | 10 |
| Relationship of the offender to the victim² | | | | | | |
| Family | F | F | F | 11 ^{E*} | 3 ^E | 7 ^E |
| Friend, acquaintance or neighbour | 51 | 62 | 52 | 38 | 29 | 33 |
| Stranger | 45 | 34 ^E | 44 | 28* | 63 | 47 |
| Other | F | F | F | 21 ^{E*} | 4 ^E | 12 |
| Number of offenders | | | | | | |
| One | 81 | 67 | 79 | 82* | 69 | 75 |
| Two | F | F | F | F | 10 ^E | 8 ^E |
| Three or more | F | F | F | F | 17 ^E | 14 ^E |
| Don't know/refusal | 11 ^E | F | 13 ^E | 3 ^E | F | 3 ^E |
| Location of the incident | | | | | | |
| Residence of the victim | 7 ^E | F | 7 ^E | 29 | 21 ^E | 25 |
| Other private residence | 23 ^E | F | 22 ^E | 7 ^E | 9 ^E | 8 ^E |
| Commercial or institutional establishment | 45 | 27 ^E | 43 | 48* | 35 | 41 |
| Street or other public place | 14 ^E | F | 14 ^E | 15 ^{E*} | 32 | 25 |
| Other | F | F | F | F | F | 2 |
| Don't know/refusal | 9 ^E | F | 12 ^E | F | F | F |
| Related to the offender's alcohol or drug use | | | | | | |
| Yes | 58* | 32 ^E | 54 | 38* | 61 | 51 |
| No | 28 | 36 ^E | 29 | 54* | 32 | 41 |
| Don't know/refusal | 14 ^E | 32 ^E | 17 ^E | 8 ^E | 8 ^E | 8 |
| Presence of a weapon | | | | | | |
| Yes | F | F | F | 28 | 38 | 33 |
| No | 89 | 68 | 86 | 70 | 60 | 65 |
| Don't know/refusal | 10 ^E | F | 13 ^E | F | F | F |
| Caused physical injury | | | | | | |
| Yes | F | F | F | 30 | 23 | 26 |
| No | 92 | 96 | 93 | 70 | 77 | 74 |

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

† reference category

1. Includes incidents where there was one offender acting alone.

2. Includes incidents where the victim identified the number of offenders. For incidents with multiple offenders, the relationship is that of the offender with the closest relationship to the victim.

Note: Includes non-spousal sexual and physical assault. In 2014, nearly all (96%) sexual assault was non-spousal in nature. Excludes spousal sexual and physical assault due to a different methodology used to collect information on characteristics of spousal violence. 'Victim' refers to those who reported that they were sexually or physically assaulted in the past 12 months. Responses of don't know/refusal are included in the calculation of percentages but are not displayed if they represent less than 5% of all responses.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

Table 9
Reasons for not reporting sexual assault to the police, by sex of victim, Canada, 2014

| Reasons for not reporting to the police ¹ | Women | Men [†] | Total |
|---|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| | percent | | |
| Crime was minor and not worth taking the time to report | 71 | 75 | 71 |
| Incident was a private or personal matter and it was handled informally | 68 | 62 ^E | 67 |
| No one was harmed | 66* | 42 ^E | 63 |
| Did not want the hassle of dealing with the police | 47 | 33 ^E | 45 |
| Police would not have considered incident important enough | 43 | 43 ^E | 43 |
| Lack of evidence | 46* | 18 ^E | 43 |
| Offender would not be convicted or adequately punished | 41 | 27 ^E | 40 |
| No harm was intended | 38 | 49 ^E | 39 |
| Fearful or did not want the hassle of dealing with the court process | 34 | 37 ^E | 34 |
| Did not want the offender in trouble with the law | 29 | 36 ^E | 30 |
| Did not want others to find out about the victimization ² | 32 | F | 30 |
| Police would not have been efficient or effective | 27 ^E | F | 26 |
| Fear of revenge by the offender or others | 24 ^E | F | 22 ^E |
| Police would not have been able to find or identify the offender | 22 ^E | F | 21 ^E |
| Police would be biased | 13 ^E | F | 13 ^E |
| Received unsatisfactory service from the police in the past | 13 ^E | F | 13 ^E |
| Afraid reporting would bring shame and dishonour to the family | 13 ^E | F | 12 ^E |

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

† reference category

1. Respondents were able to provide more than one reason for not reporting to the police.

2. Includes publicity and news coverage.

Note: Includes non-spousal sexual assault. In 2014, nearly all (96%) sexual assault was non-spousal in nature. Excludes spousal sexual assault due to a different methodology used to collect information on characteristics of spousal violence. 'Victim' refers to those who reported that they were sexually assaulted in the past 12 months.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

Model 1**Logistic regression: Risk of sexual assault, by characteristics, Canada, 2014**

| Characteristics ¹ (independent variables) | Canadians aged 15 and older ² odds ratio |
|---|--|
| Sex | |
| Woman | 6.54*** |
| Man | Reference category |
| Age group | |
| 15 to 24 years | 3.43*** |
| 25 to 34 years | 2.54*** |
| 35 years and older | Reference category |
| Main activity | |
| Student | Not significant |
| Other | 0.54** |
| Employed | Reference category |
| Aboriginal identity | |
| Aboriginal | 2.19* |
| Non-Aboriginal | Reference category |
| Marital status | |
| Single, never married | 3.78*** |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 2.09** |
| Married or common-law | Reference category |
| Self-rated mental health | |
| Fair or poor | 7.14*** |
| Good | 2.46*** |
| Very good or excellent | Reference category |

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

** significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.01$)

*** significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.001$)

1. Disability, immigrant status and visible minority status were included in the original model for sexual assault among Canadians aged 15 and older. These factors were not significant so they were not retained in the model.

2. The question on sexual orientation was not asked of those aged 15 to 17; therefore, sexual orientation was not included in the model for Canadians aged 15 and older.

Note: Only significant characteristics were retained in the final model.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

Model 2

Logistic regression: Risk of sexual assault, by characteristics and experiences, Canada, 2014

| Characteristics and experiences ¹ (independent variables) | Canadians aged 15 and older ² odds ratio |
|---|--|
| Sex | |
| Woman | 7.39*** |
| Man | Reference category |
| Age group | |
| 15 to 24 years | 4.05*** |
| 25 to 34 years | 2.70*** |
| 35 years and older | Reference category |
| Marital status | |
| Single, never married | 3.30*** |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 2.02** |
| Married or common-law | Reference category |
| Self-rated mental health | |
| Fair or poor | 4.82*** |
| Good | 2.11*** |
| Very good or excellent | Reference category |
| Experienced childhood abuse before age 15³ | |
| Yes | 2.23*** |
| No | Reference category |
| Experienced homelessness | |
| Yes | 2.28*** |
| No | Reference category |
| Number of evening activities per month | |
| | 1.03*** |

** significantly different from reference category (p < 0.01)

*** significantly different from reference category (p < 0.001)

1. Main activity, Aboriginal identity, disability, immigrant status, visible minority status, and drug use and binge drinking in the past month were included in the original model for sexual assault among Canadians aged 15 and older. These factors were not significant so they were not retained in the model.

2. The question on sexual orientation was not asked of those aged 15 to 17; therefore, sexual orientation was not included in the model for Canadians aged 15 and older.

3. Includes physical and/or sexual abuse perpetrated by an adult aged 18 or older.

Note: Only significant characteristics and experiences were retained in the final model.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.