

STATISTICS ON SEXUAL ASSAULT IN CANADA

This is a summary of a survey done by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. The survey used police data as well as results from a general social survey done in 2004. A summary of the results:

- Victimization data suggests that most incidents of sexual assault are not formally reported, with less than 1 in 10 coming to the attention of police. 94% of incidents of sexual touching go unreported, versus 78% of sexual attacks.
- Although victimization surveys indicate that the rates of sexual assault have remained stable in recent years, police-reported data show a trend of steady decline since 1993.
- Rates of sexual offences reported to police vary widely across the provinces and territories. Prince Edward had the lowest rate of sexual offences reported to the police per 100,000 population, while Saskatchewan had the highest.
- The most commonly stated reason why victims of sexual assault did not report the incident to the police was because they felt it was not important enough (58%). Other reasons included because they dealt with it in another way (54%); they felt that it was a personal matter (47%); or they did not want to get involved with the police. (41%).
- Although victims may not report to police, many did turn to other informal sources of support, such as friends (72%), family (41%), co-workers (33%), or doctors or nurses (13%).
- According to the general survey, more than half of sexual assault incidents occurred in a commercial or institutional establishment, followed by a residence (31%), public place (12%) or other location (6%).
- According to the general survey, most (93%) of sexual assaults resulted in no physical injury to the victim, particularly for victims of sexual touching (96%) compared to sexual attacks (78%).
- Both the general survey and police data show that the majority of sexual offences in Canada are of a less serious nature. Level one sexual assault is the most common type of sexual offence reported. According to the general survey, the majority of self-reported (81%) of sexual offences took the form of unwanted sexual touching while sexual attacks accounted for 19%. Police data indicates that level one sexual assault comprise the majority (86%) of sexual offences. The more serious form of sexual assault and other sexual offences, such as invitation to sexual touching and sexual exploitation, made up the remaining 14%.

- The rates of reported assaults ending up in charges being laid by police are lower for sexual offences than for other types of violent crime. In 2007, charges were laid by police in just over a third of sexual offences reported to them, Other reported violent crimes resulted in charges being laid in almost half of the cases.
- Conviction rates in adult criminal courts are lower for sexual offences than for other types of violent crime. Half of sexual offences are likely to result in a finding of guilt. However, adults convicted of sexual offences generally tend to receive harsher sentences than those found guilty of other violent offences
- Females and youth were at particular risk of being sexually victimized. Victimization surveys and police-reported data both indicate that the rate of sexual victimization for females was about 5 times higher than the rate for males.
- All data confirmed that those accused of sexual assaults were most often male, and the victim and the accused were in the majority of cases known to each other.