



MEASURING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: STATISTICAL TRENDS – KEY FINDINGS

This fact sheet provides an overview of key statistical data included in *Measuring violence against women: Statistical trends* (2013). The full report can be accessed at www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2013001/article/11766-eng.pdf.

Violence against Women in Canada's Territories

Key Facts

- **The territories consistently record the highest rates of violence against women in the country.**
- **Police-reported rates of sexual assault and intimate partner violence against women are significantly higher in the territories than in the provinces.**
- **There are multiple, intersecting reasons to explain the higher rates of violence against women in the territories. These include the impacts of systemic discrimination against Aboriginal people through residential schools and colonization.**
- **Demographic characteristics – such as a younger average population and a large population identifying as Aboriginal – are also consistent factors for victimization.**

Prevalence and severity

- The rate of police-reported violent crime against women is higher in the territories than elsewhere in Canada. In 2011, the rate in the Yukon was four times higher than the national average. The rate in the Northwest Territories was nine times higher and the rate in Nunavut was nearly 13 times higher.
- Rates of intimate partner violence in the territories are also considerably higher than in the provinces. In 2011, Nunavut recorded the highest territorial rate of police-reported intimate partner violence against women, with 7,772 victims per 100,000 population. This rate was four times higher than Yukon's (1,900) and double the rate recorded for the Northwest Territories (3,818).
- The prevalence of police-reported sexual offences is substantially higher in the territories. A woman's risk of sexual violence in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut was nine and 12 times greater, respectively, than the provincial average. The rate of sexual offences against women in Yukon was more than 3.5 times the provincial average.

- Yukon had the fourth lowest rate of police-reported criminal harassment against women in the country, at 57 victims per 100,000 population. The other territories recorded the highest rates of all jurisdictions across Canada.
- The 2009 General Social Survey (GSS)ⁱ showed women and men living in the territories had similar rates of violent victimization, including spousal violence; 10% of the territorial population aged 15 years and older with a current or former spouse reported spousal victimization.
- However, as with women living outside of the territories, the forms of spousal violence directed at women were more severe than those directed at men. Women in the territories represented 78% of spousal victims who were beaten, choked, sexually assaulted or had a weapon used against them. Women were also more likely to fear for their lives.

Risk factors

- Victims of self-reported spousal violence in the territories, like elsewhere in Canada, tend to be young. Women under the age of 35 were more than three times as likely as those 35 and over to have experienced violence by a current or former spouse in the last five years.
- Educational background also emerged as a risk factor for women in the territories. Women with high school diplomas or less were almost twice as likely to state that their spouse had been violent towards them as those with higher levels of education.

Impacts

- In the territories, fearing for one's life is a reality for female victims of spousal violence, as approximately half of these women believed that their lives were in danger. About half of female spousal victims sustained physical injuries, a proportion

similar to that of male victims. Medical attention was required for about 41% of injured women and hospitalization for 38%. These rates were higher than in the provinces, where 18% of injured women required medical attention and 13% were treated in a hospital or health care centre.

Responses

- Consistent with findings from earlier reports, the rate of reporting spousal violence to police in the territories was generally higher than in the provinces. About six in 10 female victims of spousal violence (58%) in the past five years had contact with police as a result of the violence, compared to 30% in the provinces.
- Similar to the provinces, women victimized by their spouse in the territories indicated that police were contacted to stop the violence or receive protection.
- Also similar to the provinces, female victims in the territories often rely on informal sources of support to cope with the violence. Regardless of the type of perpetrator, female victims in the territories most often turned to family members and/or friends or neighbours for support or guidance. In 2009, 79% of women victimized by their spouse confided in a family member and 64% told a friend or neighbour. Similarly, when women were victimized by a non-spouse, more than half turned to family and/or friends or neighbours.
- It is important to note, in the context of the territories, that geographical realities, including the number of isolated communities, may present challenges in terms of access to some supports and services.

ⁱ Victimization data for the territories were collected using a different methodology due to small counts. As a result, comparisons of data on violent victimization between the territories and provinces must be done with caution.