

Violence against women, 2011

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According to police-reported data, just over 173,600 women aged 15 and older were victims of violent crime in 2011, a rate of 1,207 female victims for every 100,000 women in the population.

Common assaults accounted for about half of all police-reported violent crimes against women. They were followed by uttering threats, which represented another 13%, serious physical assaults (10%), sexual assaults involving little to no physical injury (7%), and criminal harassment (stalking) (7%).

The rate of police-reported violent crime against women was about 5% higher than the rate for men in 2011. Except for sexual assault and criminal harassment, women and men tended to be victims of similar offences.

Women were 11 times more likely than men to be a victim of sexual offences, and 3 times more likely to be the victim of criminal harassment.

Between 2009 and 2011, rates of police-reported physical assaults against women, including common assaults and serious physical assaults, fell 5% to 705 victims per 100,000 women. Police-reported data also show a drop in rates of attempted murders against women over this same three-year period.

The rate of police-reported sexual assaults against women remained stable in 2011 after increasing between 2009 and 2010. The 2009 General Social Survey (GSS) on victimization, which provides information on self-reported incidents of victimization that are both reported and unreported to police, showed that a significant proportion of sexual assaults are not reported to police.

The rate of homicides against women, generally considered a barometer of violent crime, has been relatively stable since 2000. In the three decades prior to 2000, the rate had declined 58%.

Intimate partner violence

In 2011, police reported about 78,000 incidents of violence against women by current or previous intimate partners, including those by spouses (common-law and legally married partners) and dating partners. The overall rate of intimate partner violence against women was 542 per 100,000 women, almost four times higher than the rate for men.

Both women and men were more at risk of violence by dating partners than by spouses. Among women, rates of dating violence in 2011 were 60% higher than the spousal violence rate.

Rates of intimate partner homicides against women rose 19% between 2010 and 2011. However, the rate in 2011 was 15% less than it was a decade earlier.

The GSS on victimization found a decline in the percentage of women who reported experiencing spousal violence between 1999 and 2009, from 8% of women to 6%. This change is attributed to a decline in violence involving previous spouses.

The GSS also found that police were less likely to find out about spousal violence against women in 2009 than in 2004. The percentage of female victims indicating that the incident was reported to police, either by themselves or someone else, dropped from 36% to 30%.

Reporting to police was more likely when women had sustained an injury, when they feared for their lives, or when the abuse had gone on for some time.

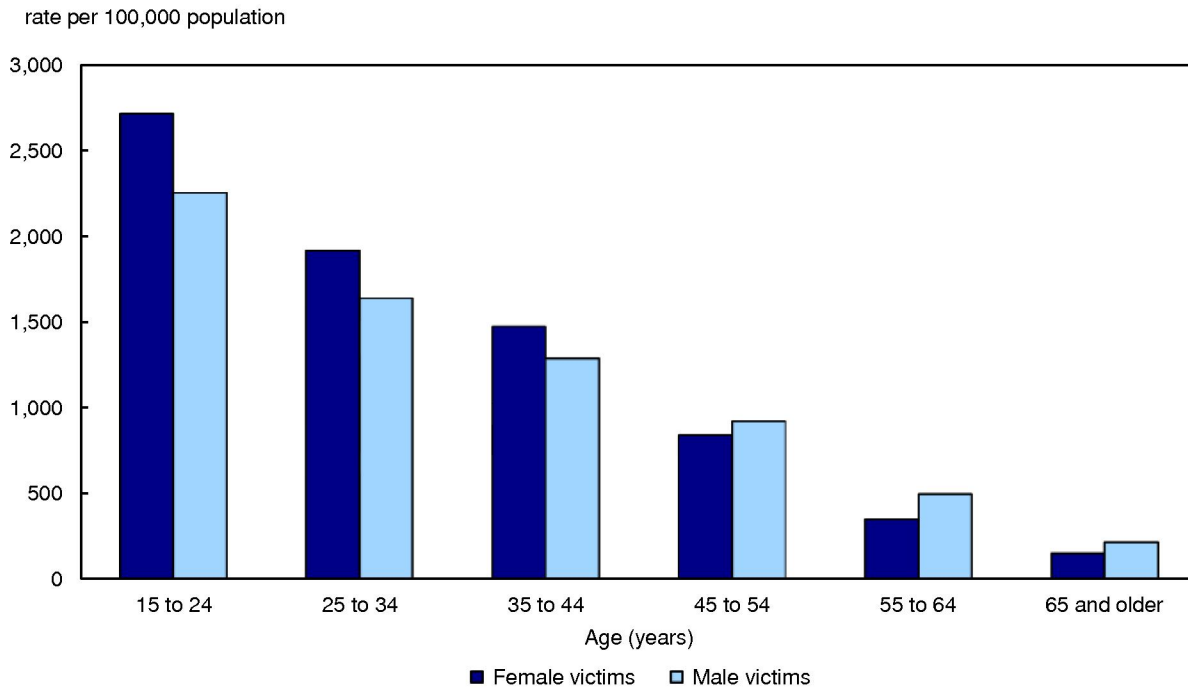
Young women most at risk of violence

Younger women were most at risk of violent victimization, according to both police-reported and self-reported victimization data. The risk generally decreases as women age.



The police-reported rate of violent crime against women aged 15 to 24 was 42% higher than the rate for women aged 25 to 34, and nearly double the rate for women aged 35 to 44.

Chart 1
Police-reported victims of violent crime, by sex and age group of victim, Canada, 2011



Police reported that in 2011, about 8,200 girls aged 11 and under were victims of violent crime, representing 381 victims for every 100,000 girls in the population. Over half (56%) of the violent crimes against girls were committed by a family member, and males were the offender in about 8 of 10 incidents.

In addition, nearly 27,000 female youth aged 12 to 17 were victims of violent crime in 2011; casual acquaintances were the most common offenders. The rate of 2,273 victims per 100,000 young women in the population was almost twice as high as the violent crime rate for adult women 18 and older.

The rate of physical assaults against female youth aged 12 to 17 in 2011 was 6% lower than in 2009. Trends in sexual assault followed a somewhat different pattern. The rate of sexual assaults against female youth dropped 4% in 2011 after increasing in 2010.

Regional variations

Provincially, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, which have consistently recorded the highest provincial rates of police-reported violent crime, had rates of violence against women in 2011 that were about double the national rate. Ontario and Quebec had the lowest rates of violence against women.

As is the case with violent crime overall, the territories have consistently recorded the highest rates of police-reported violence against women. The rate of violent crime against women in Nunavut was nearly 13 times higher than the rate for Canada.

Impacts of violent victimization

According to police-reported data, 41% of female victims had been physically injured as a result of violence, which was less than the share of male victims (46%). In general, injuries sustained by women and men were minor in nature.

Overall, female victims were more likely to sustain physical injury when a spouse or a date was involved. Police-reported data showed 49% of spousal violence victims and 53% of dating violence victims were injured, compared with 33% of other female victims. This was true regardless of the type of violent offence.

Note to readers

This Juristat article is the third edition of the statistical profile on violence against women, focusing primarily on women aged 15 and older. It examines the scope, nature and consequences of violence against women, as well as trends in their experiences of violence.

To provide a comprehensive statistical picture of violence against women, this report uses two sources: police-reported data from the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey and Homicide Survey, and self-reported data from the General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization, 2009, the latest available.

Trend analysis of police-reported non-lethal violence is based on the three-year UCR trend database (2009 to 2011). It is limited to only those offences that have complete victim records and where offence classification within the survey has remained constant over the three-year period. For the purpose of this Juristat article, the offences included in the trend analysis are attempted murder, physical assault and sexual assault.

The GSS complements police-reported data by providing information on self-reported incidents of victimization that are both reported and unreported to police. It also provides information on non-violent forms of abuse, such as emotional and financial, as well as consequences of victimization and use of social services.

Information also came from the Transition Home Survey and Victims' Services Survey.

Table 1
Police-reported victims of violent crime, by sex of victim and province/territory, 2011

	Female victims		Male victims		Total	
	number	rate ¹	number	rate ¹	number	rate ¹
Total	173,614	1,207	161,900	1,151	335,514	1,180
Newfoundland and Labrador	2,940	1,330	2,610	1,237	5,550	1,284
Prince Edward Island	682	1,096	568	961	1,250	1,030
Nova Scotia	5,201	1,262	5,111	1,324	10,312	1,292
New Brunswick	4,474	1,376	3,956	1,272	8,430	1,325
Quebec	34,813	1,036	34,564	1,049	69,377	1,042
Ontario	51,851	928	47,411	881	99,262	905
Manitoba	10,822	2,191	8,700	1,783	19,522	1,988
Saskatchewan	11,294	2,681	8,854	2,127	20,148	2,406
Alberta	21,959	1,459	20,400	1,301	42,359	1,379
British Columbia	25,369	1,301	26,826	1,410	52,195	1,355
Yukon	651	4,609	587	4,042	1,238	4,321
Northwest Territories	1,843	11,193	1,299	7,261	3,142	9,145
Nunavut	1,715	15,453	1,014	8,650	2,729	11,959

1. Rates are calculated per 100,000 population aged 15 years and older.

Note(s): Populations based upon July 1 estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division. Excludes incidents where the sex and/or age of victim was unknown.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers 3302, 3315, 3328, 4504 and 5035.

The *Juristat* article "Measuring violence against women: Statistical trends" (85-002-X) is now available. From the *Browse by key resource* module of our website under *Publications*, choose *All subjects*, then *Crime and justice*, and *Juristat*.

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