

# Victimization of Aboriginal people in Canada, 2014

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## Overall victimization higher for Aboriginal people than non-Aboriginal people

In 2014, 28% of Aboriginal people aged 15 and older (about 275,000) reported that they or their household had been a victim in the previous 12 months of at least one of the eight types of crime measured by the General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization. This was a higher proportion than for non-Aboriginal people (18%). The analysis in this release is based on provincial and territorial data from the 2014 GSS on Victimization.

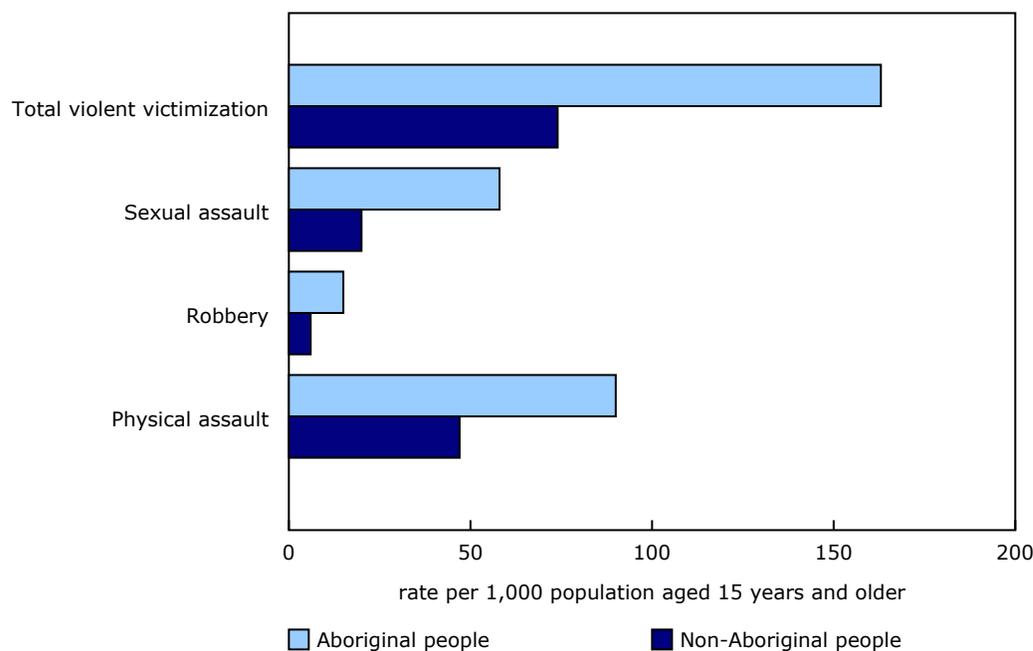
The proportion of Aboriginal people who reported having been victimized decreased from 38% in 2009 to 28% in 2014 in the provinces and from 36% to 28% in the territories.

The overall violent victimization rate—which includes sexual assault, robbery and physical assault—was 163 incidents per 1,000 people among Aboriginal people in Canada in 2014, more than double the rate among non-Aboriginal people (74 incidents per 1,000 people).

Rates of almost all types of violent victimization were higher for Aboriginal people than for non-Aboriginal people. Specifically, the sexual assault rate of Aboriginal people (58 incidents per 1,000 people) was almost three times that of non-Aboriginal people (20 per 1,000), while the physical assault rate of Aboriginal people (90 per 1,000) was nearly double that of non-Aboriginal people (47 per 1,000).

### Chart 1

#### Violent victimization incidents (including spousal violence) reported by Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people, by type of violent offence, provinces and territories, 2014



**Note(s):** All differences between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people are statistically significant, except for robbery.  
**Source(s):** General Social Survey on Victimization (4504).

## **Aboriginal people are more likely to experience spousal violence than non-Aboriginal people**

In 2014, Aboriginal people (9%) were more likely than non-Aboriginal people (4%) to have been a victim of spousal violence in the past five years. This was particularly the case for Aboriginal women (10%), who were about three times more likely to report being a victim of spousal violence than non-Aboriginal women (3%). Aboriginal men (8%) were two times more likely than their non-Aboriginal counterparts (4%) to report this type of victimization.

Half (51%) of Aboriginal victims of spousal violence reported experiencing among the more severe forms of spousal violence, such as having been sexually assaulted, beaten, choked or threatened with a gun or knife. This compares with just under one-quarter (23%) of non-Aboriginal victims of spousal violence.

Spousal violence involving Aboriginal victims (50%) was more likely to come to the attention of police than spousal violence involving non-Aboriginal victims (28%). Aboriginal victims (92%) were also more likely than non-Aboriginal victims (66%) to have spoken about the spousal violence with someone else.

## **When various factors are taken into account, Aboriginal identity on its own is not associated with a higher risk of violent victimization**

While the overall rate of violent victimization in Canada was higher for Aboriginal people than non-Aboriginal people, Aboriginal identity on its own was not associated with an increased risk of violent victimization when various risk factors were taken into account. The analysis in this release could not take into account certain societal factors, such as the impact of residential schools on Aboriginal families and communities, as this information was not collected.

The study found that the higher victimization rates among Aboriginal people were related to the presence of other risk factors, such as experiencing childhood maltreatment, perceiving social disorder in one's neighbourhood, experiencing homelessness, using drugs, or having fair or poor mental health.

A higher proportion of Aboriginal people presented these risk factors compared with non-Aboriginal people. For example, Aboriginal people (40%) were more likely than non-Aboriginal people (29%) to report having experienced some form of childhood physical and/or sexual maltreatment before the age of 15.

## **Higher risk of violent victimization remains for Aboriginal women after accounting for risk factors**

An increased prevalence of other victimization risk factors did not fully account for the high victimization rates among Aboriginal women. Even when controlling for all of the selected risk factors, Aboriginal identity remained a risk factor for violent victimization among women.

Certain risk factors were more likely to be present for Aboriginal women. For example, Aboriginal women (14%) were more likely than their male counterparts (5%) to report experiencing both physical and sexual maltreatment as a child. In addition, they were also more likely than their male counterparts to report having a disability (37% versus 27%). On the other hand, they were less likely to report binge drinking and drug use in the month preceding the survey than were Aboriginal males.

## **Most non-spousal violent incidents not reported to police**

In 2014, 77% of non-spousal violent incidents involving Aboriginal victims were not reported to police, a higher proportion than for non-Aboriginal people (66%). Most Aboriginal (80%) and non-Aboriginal (88%) victims of non-spousal violent incidents, however, reported speaking of the incident to someone else, such as a family member or friend.

While a number of services—such as crisis centres, shelters and victim assistance programs—are available to victims, most Aboriginal (72%) and non-Aboriginal (69%) victims reported not accessing them to obtain help. Aboriginal victims (59%) and non-Aboriginal (68%) victims frequently cited not wanting or needing help as a reason for not using these services.

## Most Aboriginal people report feeling safe from crime

Despite their higher risk of victimization, most Aboriginal people (85%) reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their personal safety from crime; this was slightly higher among non-Aboriginal people (88%). Aboriginal victims (77%), however, were proportionally less likely to report feeling safe than Aboriginal people who had not been victimized (88%). Similar findings were noted among the non-Aboriginal population.

In 2014, Aboriginal people (16%) were more likely than non-Aboriginal people (11%) to believe that crime had increased in their neighbourhood over the past five years, despite the fact that the proportion of Aboriginal victims was down over the same period.

**Table 1**  
**Victimization incidents (including spousal violence) reported by Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people, by type of offence, provinces and territories, 2014**

Type of offence	Aboriginal people <sup>1,2</sup>		Non-Aboriginal people <sup>2,3</sup>	
	number in thousands	rate per thousand	number in thousands	rate per thousand
Sexual assault <sup>4</sup>	56 <sup>E</sup>	58 <sup>E*</sup>	577	20
Robbery <sup>4</sup>	14 <sup>E</sup>	15 <sup>E</sup>	176	6
Physical assault <sup>4</sup>	88 <sup>E</sup>	90 <sup>E*</sup>	1,341	47
<b>Total violent victimization<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>159</b>	<b>163*</b>	<b>2,094</b>	<b>74</b>
Breaking and entering <sup>5</sup>	21 <sup>E</sup>	74 <sup>E*</sup>	391	30
Theft of a motor vehicle or parts <sup>5</sup>	5 <sup>E</sup>	18 <sup>E</sup>	231	18
Theft of household property <sup>5</sup>	28 <sup>E</sup>	97*	684	52
Vandalism <sup>5</sup>	16 <sup>E</sup>	55 <sup>E</sup>	514	39
<b>Total household victimization<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>70</b>	<b>244*</b>	<b>1,820</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>Theft of personal property<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>98</b>	<b>101*</b>	<b>2,062</b>	<b>72</b>

<sup>E</sup> use with caution

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

1. Includes those who self-identified as First Nation, Métis or Inuit.

2. Aboriginal households consist of households in which the two spouses have Aboriginal identity; lone-parent families in which the parent has Aboriginal identity; single people with Aboriginal identity; and other households in which the respondent reported having Aboriginal identity and living with related people only.

Non-Aboriginal households consist of households in which the two spouses did not report Aboriginal identity; lone-parent families in which the parent did not report Aboriginal identity; single people that did not report Aboriginal identity; and other households in which the respondent did not report Aboriginal identity and reported living with related people only. The data exclude all other types of households, which accounted for 5% of households.

3. Reference category.

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

5. Rates are calculated per 1,000 households.

Source(s): General Social Survey on Victimization (4504).

### Note to readers

Data on victimization were collected as part of the General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization, which aims to provide data on the personal experiences of Canadians with respect to eight types of crime: sexual assault, robbery, physical assault, theft of personal property, breaking and entering, theft of a motor vehicle or parts, theft of household property, and vandalism. The GSS is a household survey conducted every five years; the most recent cycle was conducted in 2014. The target population of the survey consisted of people aged 15 and older and excluded people living full time in institutions. In 2014, 2,040 respondents from the territories and 33,127 respondents from the provinces took part in the survey.

In 2009, comparisons between the data from the territories and the provinces were to be made with caution primarily because Inuit were underrepresented in the territories. In 2014, as a result of advancements made to the survey frame and higher response rates, data for the territories can be compared or combined with data for the provinces. However, users should keep in mind the differences in survey methods and weighting strategies for the provinces and territories when analyzing data from the 2014 GSS on Victimization at the Canada level.

This article combined provincial and territorial data from the 2014 GSS on Victimization to provide information on the victimization of Aboriginal people in Canada. Other reports that include additional analysis on the victimization of Aboriginal people, but that use provincial data only from the GSS on Victimization are available: "Criminal victimization in Canada, 2014" and "Trends in self-reported spousal violence in Canada, 2014." The article, "Criminal victimization in the territories, 2014," which contains additional analysis on the victimization of Aboriginal people using territorial data only from the GSS on Victimization, is also available.

The question used for people to self-identify as an Aboriginal person (that is, as a First Nations person, Métis or Inuk) was changed in 2009 to coincide with the question used in the 2006 Census. As such, results for the Aboriginal population cannot be directly compared with those from survey cycles prior to 2009.

### Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 4504.

The *Juristat* article, "[Victimization of Aboriginal people in Canada, 2014](#)" (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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