

Police-reported violent crimes against young women and girls in Canada's Provincial North and Territories, 2017

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Thursday, July 4, 2019

A disproportionate amount of violent crime occurred in northern Canada in 2017, with young women and girls most at-risk for violence. While young women and girls in the North accounted for less than 7% of Canada's female population aged 24 and younger, they represented 17% of young female victims of police-reported violent crime. As a result, the rate of violent crime against young women and girls living in the North was nearly three times higher than it was in the South.

Violence against young women and girls is an ongoing human rights issue and a significant barrier to gender equality. In addition to gender, where people live can also influence the risk of violent victimization. Crime rates are higher in northern Canada and its geographic remoteness can be a barrier to accessing victim services and escaping violence. These factors are especially critical for young women and girls at risk of violence in the North.

This *Daily* article is based on the *Juristat* article released today, entitled "[Police-reported violent crimes against young women and girls in Canada's Provincial North and Territories, 2017](#)," which looks at the nature and extent of police-reported violent crimes against young women and girls in the North and how this violence differs from that which occurs in the South.

This study defines the 'North' as the three territories (Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut) and the northern areas of selected provinces, which are generally similar to the territories in terms of geographic remoteness, and economic and social characteristics. When comparing crime in the North with the South, it is also important to consider the impact of social and environmental conditions.

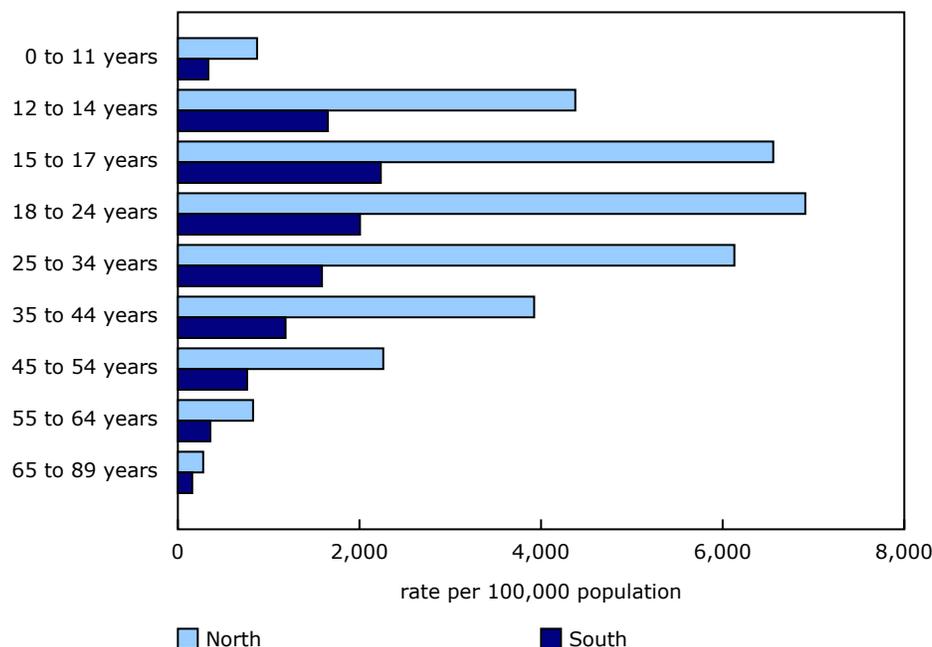
Police-reported violent crime rate nearly three times higher for young women and girls in the North

There were 12,036 young women and girls aged 24 and younger who were victims of a police-reported violent crime in the North in 2017. This translated into a violent crime rate of 3,643 victims per 100,000 population, nearly three times higher than the rate for young women and girls in the South (1,235) and nearly twice the rate for young men and boys in the North (2,090).

Almost two-thirds (63%) of violent crimes against young females in the North were physical assaults, nearly one-quarter (24%) were sexual offences and 10% were criminal harassment or threat-related offences.



Chart 1
Police-reported violent crime rates for female victims by age group and North/South region, Canada, 2017



Note(s): Victim age group is based on the age of the victim at the time of the incident. Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population. Populations are based upon July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division. The North includes the three territories as well as the northern regions of Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, based on a geographical definition used by the Conference Board of Canada's Centre for the North. The South includes the southern regions of these provinces in addition to all of Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Victims whose sex or age was unknown, or who were older than 89, are excluded.
Source(s): Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (3302).

Young women aged 18 to 24 in the North were victims of violent crime at the highest rate (6,910 victims per 100,000 population) across all sex and age groups in the North and the South. Violent crime rates peaked around 15 years of age for female victims in both the North and the South. In the South, rates declined before girls entered adulthood, but in the North, rates of violence were consistently high for women up until their 30s.

Police-reported violence against young women and girls more severe in the North

In addition to being victims of violent crime at a rate three times higher than their counterparts in the South, young women and girls aged 24 and younger in the North were also more likely to be victims of more severe violent crimes and to be physically injured by their assailant.

A greater proportion of young women and girls in the North (45%) had suffered a physical injury as a result of the violent crime committed against them, compared with young females in the South (32%). Young women and girls in the North were also seven times more likely to be victims of the most serious type of physical assault (level 3 aggravated assault) than young females in the South.

Homicide rate more than three times higher for young female victims in the North

From 2009 to 2017, 74 young women and girls in the North were victims of homicide, 56 of whom were Indigenous (First Nations, Métis or Inuit).

Females represented a larger proportion of victims of homicide aged 24 and younger in the North (31%) than in the South (24%). On average, homicide rates from 2009 to 2017 for young females were more than three times higher in the North (2.36 victims per 100,000 population) than in the South (0.70 victims).

Overall, homicide rates were highest for young men and boys aged 24 and younger in the North (4.92 victims per 100,000 population). However, when comparing the North with the South, the gap in homicide rate was widest among young women and girls (more than three times higher in the North for young females overall, compared with just over two times higher in the North for young males).

Police-reported violent crime rates highest in northern Saskatchewan and northern Manitoba

According to police-reported data, rates of violent crime against young women and girls were highest in northern Saskatchewan (13,886 victims per 100,000 population) and northern Manitoba (9,025 victims) in 2017. These rates were five to six times higher than in their respective southern areas and both were higher than in each of the three territories. Of note, northern Saskatchewan and northern Manitoba had consistently higher violent crime rates than the territories for female and male victims of all age groups.

Perpetrators of police-reported violent crime against a young female in the North were most often an intimate partner, casual acquaintance or family member

In 2017, over two in five (44%) young female victims of police-reported violent crimes in the North had been victimized by an intimate partner or spouse. More than one in five (22%) had been victimized by a casual acquaintance. Another 20% experienced violence at the hands of a family member, which can include a parent, a grandparent, an aunt, an uncle, a cousin or a sibling.

A slightly larger proportion of young female victims in the North knew their assailant, compared with their counterparts in the South (95% versus 92%), specifically as someone they were in an intimate relationship with at the time of the crime (27% versus 20%) or as an extended family member (9% versus 4%).

Young female victims of violence in the North were most commonly victimized by a male (77%). Of these victims, 44% were more than five years younger than their assailant.

As research has often found with young victims of violent crime, girls younger than age 12 in the North were most commonly victimized by a family member (54%), while young women aged 18 to 24 in the North were most commonly victimized by an intimate partner (61%). In both the North and the South, young female victims more often experienced sexual violence, while physical violence was more common among adult victims.

Persons accused of violence against young women and girls more likely to be identified by police in the North, but equally as likely to be charged

Compared with young female victims in the South, young women and girls who were victims of police-reported violent crime in the North were far more likely to see their assailant identified by police in connection with the incident (81% versus 68%). This may be attributable in part to the realities of smaller communities where residents are more likely to know each other, making it easier for police to identify an accused.

When an accused was identified by police, there was no significant difference in the proportion of criminal charges laid in violent crimes involving young female victims in the North compared with those in the South (69% versus 70%).

Note to readers

In this study, **young women and girls** refer to females aged 24 and younger at the time of the incident.

This release is based on data from the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey and the Homicide Survey. It includes violent offences under the Criminal Code that were reported to and substantiated by police. Many female victims of violence, particularly at the hands of an intimate partner or a family member, may be reluctant to report to police. As such, police-reported crime data are likely an underestimation of the true extent of violence against young women and girls in Canada.

The North refers to the northern parts of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and Newfoundland and Labrador—collectively, the 'Provincial North'—as well as the three territories (Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut), per geographical boundaries adopted by the Conference Board of Canada's Centre for the North (Map 1). Although the North accounts for the majority of Canada's landmass, about 6% of the Canadian population resided in the North in 2017.

Victim age and sex information is based on information provided by the police. One incident can involve multiple offences. Data represent the most serious offence in the incident as determined by a standard classification rule used by all police services.

Some victims experience violence over a period of time, sometimes years, all of which may be considered by the police to be part of one continuous incident. Information about the number and dates of individual incidents for these victims of continuous violence is not available.

Conversely, a victim record is collected for each victim involved in the incident. If an individual is a victim in multiple incidents in the same reference year, that individual will be counted as a victim for each separate incident.

Map 1 – Delineating northern and southern Canada



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

The article "[Police-reported violent crimes against young women and girls in Canada's Provincial North and Territories, 2017](#)" is now available as part of the publication *Juristat* (85-002-X).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).