

# **Police-reported sexual assaults in Canada, 2009 to 2014: A statistical profile**

by Cristine Rotenberg  
Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics

Release date: October 3, 2017



---

## How to obtain more information

For information about this product or the wide range of services and data available from Statistics Canada, visit our website, [www.statcan.gc.ca](http://www.statcan.gc.ca).

You can also contact us by

**email at** [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)

**telephone**, from Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the following numbers:

- Statistical Information Service 1-800-263-1136
- National telecommunications device for the hearing impaired 1-800-363-7629
- Fax line 1-514-283-9350

### Depository Services Program

- Inquiries line 1-800-635-7943
- Fax line 1-800-565-7757

## Standards of service to the public

Statistics Canada is committed to serving its clients in a prompt, reliable and courteous manner. To this end, Statistics Canada has developed standards of service that its employees observe. To obtain a copy of these service standards, please contact Statistics Canada toll-free at 1-800-263-1136. The service standards are also published on [www.statcan.gc.ca](http://www.statcan.gc.ca) under “Contact us” > “Standards of service to the public.”

## Note of appreciation

Canada owes the success of its statistical system to a long-standing partnership between Statistics Canada, the citizens of Canada, its businesses, governments and other institutions. Accurate and timely statistical information could not be produced without their continued co-operation and goodwill.

Published by authority of the Minister responsible for Statistics Canada

© Minister of Industry, 2017

All rights reserved. Use of this publication is governed by the Statistics Canada [Open Licence Agreement](#).

**An HTML version is also available.**

*Cette publication est aussi disponible en français.*

---

## Police-reported sexual assaults in Canada, 2009 to 2014: A statistical profile: Highlights

- Over a six-year period between 2009 and 2014, police reported 117,238 sexual assaults in Canada where sexual assault was the most serious violation in the incident.
- Almost all (98%) police-reported sexual assaults were classified as level 1 offences (assault without a weapon or evidence of bodily harm).
- The median age of victims of police-reported sexual assault was 18 years. The majority (87%) of victims were female, particularly young women and girls. One in four (26%) victims were children aged 13 and younger. This is more than four times greater than the proportion of child victims of physical assault (6%).
- An accused was identified in 60% of police-reported sexual assaults, of which 69% were charged. Overall, less than half (41%) of police-reported sexual assaults resulted in a charge being laid, compared with half (50%) of physical assaults.
- The vast majority (98%) of accused charged with sexual assault were male, with a median age of 33 years.
- The median delay in reporting to police—the time between when the offence took place and when it was reported to police—was 25 days for sexual assaults, compared with only two days for physical assaults. The longest delay in reporting to police was observed among incidents involving children sexually assaulted by their parent, with a median delay of one year.
- Of sexual assaults where a charge was laid by police, the majority (87%) of victims knew their assailant; most commonly as a casual acquaintance, a family member, or an intimate partner. Only a small proportion (13%) of sexual assaults were perpetrated by someone who was a stranger to the victim.
- Most (83%) victims of sexual assault were sexually assaulted by someone older than them. Of these charged cases, the median age gap between the victim and their assailant was 13 years. These findings are in contrast to those for physical assault, where victims were most commonly assaulted by someone in their peer age group (within five years).
- One in five (19%) sexual assaults with a charge laid were perpetrated by an accused that may meet the age-based criteria for pedophilia. This includes incidents where the accused was 16 years of age and older, the victim was 13 years of age and younger, and there was at least a five year age gap between them (as stipulated by clinical criteria). Over half (55%) of these cases involved a child sexually assaulted by an older family member.

## Police-reported sexual assaults in Canada, 2009 to 2014: A statistical profile

by Cristine Rotenberg

In Canada, sexual assault is a violent criminal offence ranging from unwanted sexual touching to violent, non-consensual intercourse, commonly referred to as rape.

Recently, there has been a considerable amount of research related to sexual assault, including: self-reported experiences of victims of sexual assault (Brennan and Taylor-Butts 2008; Conroy and Cotter 2017), police-reported sexual offences against children and youth (Cotter and Beaupré 2014), sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces (Cotter 2016), and within annual publications of police-reported crime (e.g., Allen 2016; Boyce 2015; Keighley 2017). The current study builds on existing research and offers a comprehensive analysis of incident, victim and accused characteristics for sexual assaults that were reported by police over a six-year period between 2009 and 2014. Although more recent sexual assault figures are available (see Keighley 2017), data were selected to align with the reference period used for an upcoming record linkage study on court outcomes of police-reported sexual assaults (see Rotenberg forthcoming 2017).

For the first time, information on potential investigational challenges such as the delay in reporting to police and the incidence of incomplete or unknown information regarding the sexual assault are explored. Paired with a detailed analysis of victims, their assailants, and the relationship between them, this *Juristat* article offers a deeper understanding of the profile of those who commit sexual assault and those who are victims of it.

This *Juristat* article examines characteristics of sexual assaults in comparison with physical assaults,<sup>1</sup> where applicable, in order to provide an analytical reference point. Both sexual and physical assault are violent offences, and both have three levels of severity as per the *Criminal Code* of Canada, with similar sentencing penalties (see Text box 2). While the nature of sexual and physical assault is unquestionably different in terms of motive of the accused and experience of the victim, physical assault is the best suited comparable offence type for the purposes of this analysis (as has been done in previous research—see, for example, Felson and Paré 2005; Thompson et al. 2007).

It is important to note that police-reported sexual assaults include only incidents reported to and classified as founded crimes by police (see Text box 1). Sexual assault is the most underreported violent crime in Canada with only 5% (use with caution) of incidents reported by victims to police in 2014 (Conroy and Cotter 2017). As such, it must be understood that any analysis of sexual assault that is based exclusively on crimes reported by police represents a fraction of the true extent of sexual assaults in Canada.

This article establishes a profile of sexual assaults in Canada to lay the groundwork for an upcoming *Juristat* article that traces the outcomes of sexual assault cases in the criminal justice system. For information on the full picture of how sexual assaults progress through the justice system, including attrition, conviction, and sentencing outcomes, see Rotenberg (forthcoming 2017).

### Measuring the scope of sexual assault in Canada

It is estimated that in one year alone there were more than 600,000 sexual assaults in Canada (Conroy and Cotter 2017). According to the General Social Survey (GSS) on Canadians' Safety (Victimization), in 2014, just 5% (use with caution) of sexual assaults against persons 15 years and older were reported to police, a proportion that has remained unchanged over the past decade. This makes sexual assault the violent crime least likely to be reported to police. By comparison, over one in three (38%) physical assaults were reported to police (Conroy and Cotter 2017; Perreault 2015).

The most common reasons for not reporting a sexual assault to police were that the victim felt the crime was minor and not worth taking the time to report (71%), the incident was a private matter and was handled informally (67%), or that no one was harmed (63%) (Conroy and Cotter 2017). Some victims voiced concerns regarding the justice system process, including not wanting the hassle of dealing with police (45%), the perception that police would have not considered the sexual assault important enough (43%), or that the offender would not be convicted or adequately punished (40%).

Self-reported surveys such as the GSS on Canadians' Safety (Victimization) provide a great deal of insight on the nature, prevalence, as well as victim-focused impacts and consequences of sexual assaults whether or not they were reported to police. However, they do not include information on victims under the age of 15, and do not allow for a detailed analysis of the characteristics of the victim in relation to the accused, or whether the accused was formally charged. To do so, the present study utilizes six years of police-reported data from the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey, which is routinely used to analyze detailed crime trends in Canada.

## Text box 1 Unfounded sexual assaults

Police-reported sexual assault data used in this article represent criminal incidents reported by police to the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey where it was determined through investigation that a violation of the law took place. This excludes incidents reported to police that were deemed 'unfounded.' An incident is classified as unfounded if police investigation determined that the reported offence did not occur, nor was it attempted. At the time of writing this report (2017), since 2006, information on unfounded incidents has not been collected by Statistics Canada through the UCR, and unfounded incidents of sexual assault are not reflected in this article. Statistics Canada collected data on unfounded incidents beginning in 1962 with the introduction of the UCR. Over time, inconsistent reporting led to poor data quality. A review conducted in 2006 found that reporting of unfounded incidents was incomplete and Statistics Canada stopped publishing this information (Statistics Canada 2017).

In April 2017, the Police Information and Statistics Committee (POLIS) of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police recommended resuming the collection, analysis and dissemination of unfounded incidents, including sexual assault, by Statistics Canada (Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police 2017; Department of Justice Canada 2017). POLIS further recommended the adoption of a common approach to be taken by police services for the classification and reporting of unfounded incidents. As a result, Statistics Canada will provide standards and guidelines to police services to ensure standardized reporting of unfounded incidents to the UCR. The implementation of these changes will be phased in over time.

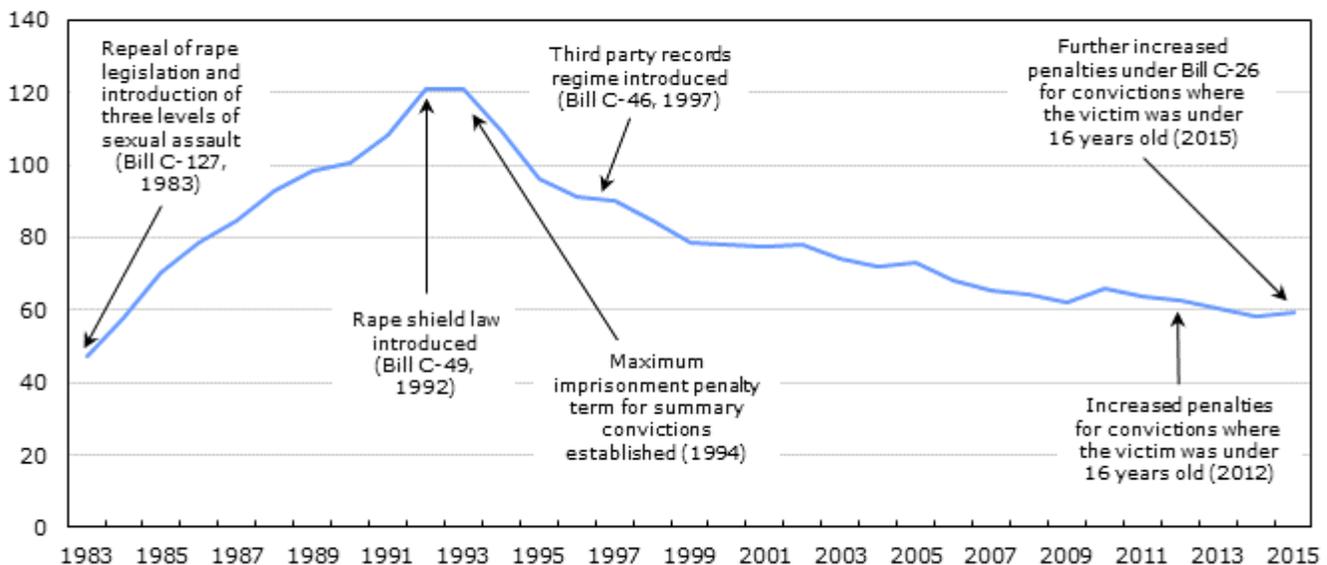
In July 2018, Statistics Canada will publish the first set of results on unfounded incidents for 2017, including sexual assault.

## Police-reported rates of sexual assault declined steadily over past two decades

Police-reported rates of sexual assault peaked in 1992 and 1993, during a time when there were significant changes to sexual assault legislation which sought to improve reporting and introduce rape shield laws that limited the ability to discredit the victim based on his or her past sexual behaviour (Sheehy 2000; Tang 1998). Further to these reforms, rates of police-reported sexual assault steadily declined from 1993 through to 2015 (Chart 1), coinciding with an overall decline of violent crime in Canada (Kong et al. 2003). That being said, it is worth noting that no significant decline in sexual assault was observed in self-reported victimization data at five-year survey intervals between 1999 and 2014 (Conroy and Cotter 2017).

**Chart 1**  
**Trends in the rate of sexual assault, Canada, 1983 to 2015**

rate per 100,000  
population



**Note:** Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population. Populations are based upon July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada Demography Division.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Between 2009 and 2014, there were 117,238 police-reported sexual assault incidents in Canada where sexual assault was the most serious violation in the incident.<sup>2</sup> This translated into an average annual rate of 62.1 incidents per 100,000 population,<sup>3</sup> and represented just under 1% of all criminal incidents in Canada.

### Nearly all police-reported sexual assaults were level 1 offences

The vast majority (98%) of sexual assaults reported by police between 2009 and 2014 were sexual assault level 1 incidents. Level 1 sexual assaults typically involve violations of a sexual nature without a weapon or evidence of bodily harm, such as unwanted touching or other non-consensual bodily contact for sexual purposes. However, some studies suggest that non-consensual sexual intercourse can be charged as a level 1 sexual assault (DuMont 2003; Johnson 2012). Several factors beyond the seriousness of the incident may play a role in the decision to pursue a sexual assault level 1 charge instead of a level 2 or 3 charge, including the sufficiency of evidence of bodily harm or weapon use and the desire to proceed as a summary offence so that the victim does not have to testify twice.

Given that sexual assaults reported by police as level 2 and 3 offences are relatively less frequent and small in number, they cannot be isolated and analyzed for every factor discussed in this article. Instead, where possible, they are compared with selected characteristics of level 1 sexual assaults in Text box 2.

#### Text box 2

#### Definitions of sexual assault by level

**Sexual assault (level 1)** (s. 271 of the *Criminal Code* of Canada) is a hybrid offence that criminalizes assault of a sexual nature involving a violation of the sexual integrity of the victim. The maximum penalties are 10 years imprisonment if prosecuted by indictment and 18 months if prosecuted by summary conviction. If the victim is under the age of 16 years, mandatory minimum penalties of one year apply if prosecuted by indictment and 90 days if prosecuted by summary conviction. There were 114,496 level 1 sexual assault incidents reported by police as the most serious violation in the incident between 2009 and 2014, representing 98% of all police-reported sexual assaults in Canada.

**Sexual assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (level 2)** (s. 272) is an indictable offence that criminalizes sexual assault involving a weapon, bodily harm or threats to cause bodily harm to a third party. The maximum penalty is 14 years imprisonment and mandatory minimum penalties apply, including a five year mandatory minimum penalty where the victim is under 16 years of age. There were 2,025 level 2 sexual assault incidents reported by police as the most serious violation in the incident between 2009 and 2014, representing approximately 2% of all police-reported sexual assaults.

**Aggravated sexual assault (level 3)** (s. 273) is an indictable offence that criminalizes sexual assault involving wounding, maiming, disfiguring or endangering the life of the victim. The maximum penalty is life imprisonment. Mandatory minimum penalties apply, including a five year mandatory minimum penalty where the victim is under 16 years of age. Between 2009 and 2014, there were 717 level 3 sexual assault incidents reported by police as the most serious violation in the incident, representing less than 1% of all police-reported sexual assaults.

#### Incident and victim differences across sexual assault levels

The more serious the level of sexual assault, the more likely an incident was to have a charge laid. While a charge was laid in under half (41%) of level 1 sexual assault incidents, a higher proportion of level 2 (59%) and level 3 (67%) incidents had a charge laid on an accused.

As expected given the definitional differences between the levels of sexual assault, a weapon other than physical force or threats was involved in a greater proportion of level 2 (63%) and level 3 (24%) incidents compared with level 1 (3%) incidents.<sup>4</sup> Victims of sexual assault level 2 and 3 also experienced more severe injuries than victims of level 1 sexual assault: Over half (58%) of victims of level 2 and nearly two in three (64%) victims of level 3 sexual assault suffered minor or major physical injuries, while 18% of level 1 victims experienced the same. Major physical injuries were reported for 25% of victims of level 3 sexual assault, 7% of level 2 victims, and no (zero) level 1 victims.

Victims of level 1 sexual assault tended to be much younger than victims of level 2 and 3 sexual assault. The median age of victims of level 1 sexual assault was 18, whereas the median age was 23 for victims of level 2 and 27 for victims of level 3 sexual assault. Victims of level 1 sexual assault were more likely to be children: While one in ten (11%) victims of level 2 and 3 sexual assault were children aged 13 and younger, the same was true for over one in four (27%) victims of level 1. Additionally, the age gap between the victim and the accused tended to be smaller for level 2 and 3 sexual assaults (median age gaps of 6 and 7 years, respectively), whereas the median age difference between victims of level 1 sexual assault and their assailant was 11 years.

## Accused charged in less than half of police-reported sexual assaults

In order for police or the Crown<sup>5</sup> to lay a charge on a criminal incident, an accused must be identified. Between 2009 and 2014, sexual assaults were less likely than physical assaults to have an accused identified in connection with the offence (60% versus 78%). This means that for every two in five sexual assaults reported to and substantiated by police, no accused was identified through the investigation.

Of incidents where an accused was identified by police, over two in three (69%) resulted in a charge laid on an accused. This is similar to the charge rate of 65% for physical assaults where an accused was identified by police. If all police-reported sexual assaults irrespective of whether an accused was identified are considered, an accused was charged in two out of every five (41%) sexual assaults. For one in five (19%) sexual assaults, the incident was cleared otherwise; in other words, the case was closed and the accused was processed by other means.<sup>6</sup> This includes incidents where the victim requested that charges not be laid, which was the case for 7% of sexual assaults (compared with 15% of physical assaults). The remaining 40% of sexual assault incidents were not cleared—these are cases where no accused was identified in connection with the incident. Compared with physical assaults, sexual assaults were nearly twice as likely to go uncleared without an accused identified (40% versus 22%), and less likely to have a charge laid (41% versus 50%) over the six-year period of study. More information on the attrition of sexual assault cases at subsequent levels of the justice system beyond charging practices can be found in an upcoming *Juristat* article (Rotenberg forthcoming 2017).

## Investigative challenges of sexual assaults

By nature of the offence, sexual assaults can be more challenging to investigate than physical assaults given the possible absence of physical evidence, potential lack of witnesses, the sensitivity of the crime for the victim, and often delayed reporting of a sexual assault to police. These factors, along with the effects of social stigmas and rape myths about victims of sexual assault (see Grubb and Turner 2012; Randall 2010; Sampert 2010; Weiss 2009), may collectively complicate laying a charge on an accused. The following section presents new findings that demonstrate how, relative to physical assaults, sexual assaults are more prone to delayed reporting to police and are more susceptible to unknown or incomplete case information. These investigative challenges are important to consider in tandem with court outcomes and attrition of sexual assaults in the justice system (Rotenberg forthcoming 2017), given that the lack of sufficient evidence or information regarding the incident itself may contribute to the case dropping out of the justice system (Cashmore et al. 2016).

## Delay in reporting to police more than ten times longer for sexual assaults than for physical assaults

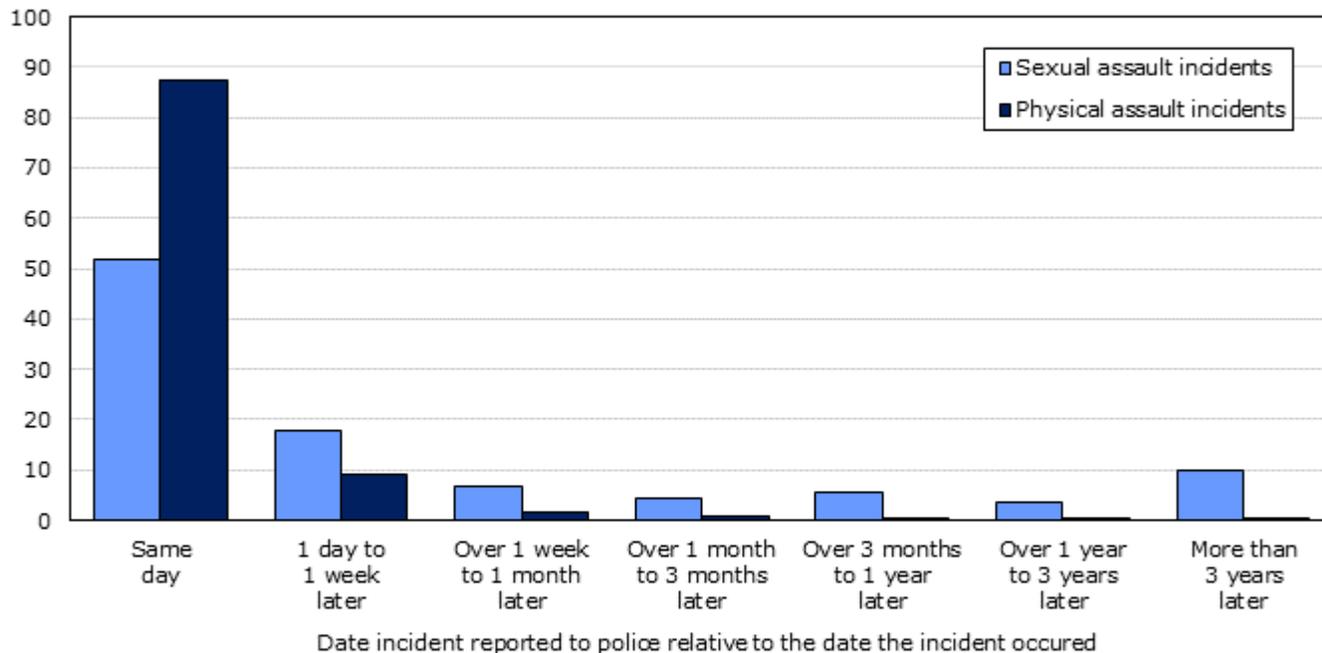
Between 2009 and 2014, about half (52%) of sexual assaults reported by police were brought to the attention of police on the same day that the incident took place. This was the case for a much greater proportion (88%) of physical assaults (Chart 2).

The remaining half (48%) of sexual assaults were reported to police at least one day after they took place and are considered in this study as delayed reports of sexual assault. Among these, the median delay in reporting was 25 days—12 times longer than the median delay of two days for physical assaults. More than one in four (28%) delayed reports of sexual assault were brought to the attention of police over one year after the sexual assault occurred (data not shown). This figure is compared with only 2% of delayed reports of physical assault.

The reasons for which victims may delay in reporting a sexual assault to police is well documented in research which suggests that the emotional trauma endured may prevent victims from reporting the crime to police, and when they do, it may take time for victims to process the event and make the decision to inform law enforcement (DuMont et al. 2003). The reluctance of victims to report to police immediately following a sexual assault can be explained by a number of psychological and emotional factors, including—but not limited to—denial, self-blame, shame, humiliation, fear, feeling threatened by the perpetrator, and a sense of helplessness (DuMont et al. 2003; Lievore 2003; Weiss 2010; Weiss 2011).

**Chart 2**  
**Delays in reporting of incidents to police, sexual assaults versus physical assaults, Canada, 2009 to 2014**

percent of incidents



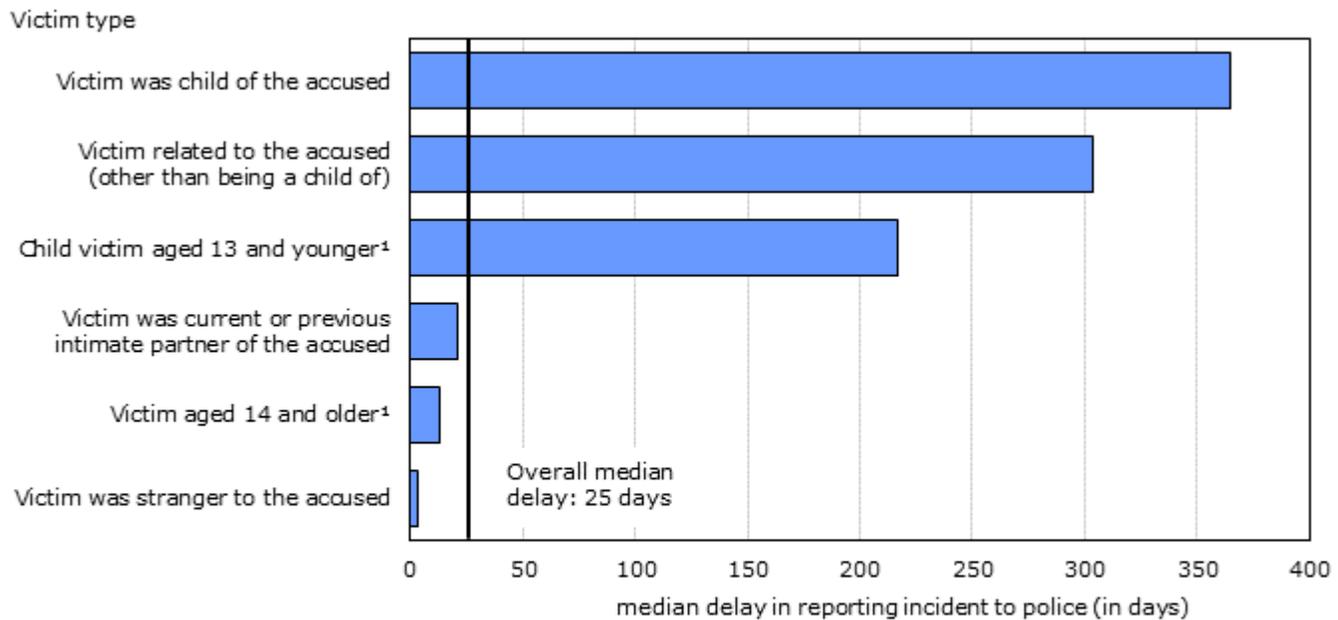
**Note:** The incident date is the date the incident is known or believed to have occurred. In cases where an exact incident date was unknown, the latest occurrence of the time period over which the incident was believed to have occurred is used. Data excludes incidents whose report dates were erroneously reported as prior to the incident date (<1%). Numbers may not add up to totals due to rounding.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

**Delay in reporting to police longest for victims sexually assaulted by a parent**

The psychological barriers to reporting one’s sexual victimization to authorities are also exacerbated among victims of sexual assault who knew their assailant (Jones et al. 2009) and among child victims (Leander 2010; London et al. 2008). In the present study, when the victim knew the person who sexually assaulted them, they were nearly twice as likely to delay reporting the crime to police by at least one day after the incident occurred (53%) compared with victims whose assailants were strangers to them (28%). However, knowing the perpetrator did not appear to influence delay in reporting to the same degree among physical assaults (14% versus 10%).

The delay in reporting to police was highest for victims (including both children and adults) who had been sexually assaulted by a parent or step-parent (one year/365 day median delay), followed by those victimized by other family members excluding spouses<sup>7</sup> (10 months/304 days). For those sexually assaulted by a stranger, victims who had delayed in reporting only waited a median of three days to report it to police (Chart 3).

**Chart 3****Median delay in reporting of sexual assault incidents to police, by select victim characteristics and relationship to accused, Canada, 2009 to 2014**

1. Age-based figures were derived from incidents that linked to victims (including incidents with multiple victims), and exclude victims aged 90 and older.

**Note:** Medians calculated in days based on sexual assault incidents where the date reported to police was at least 1 day after the date the incident is known or believed to have occurred. Data excludes incidents whose report dates were erroneously reported as prior to the incident date (<1%). Accused/victim relationship figures include incidents with single victims only in order to accurately deduce relationship types.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Delays in reporting were highest among sexual assaults of children, regardless of the child's relationship to their assailant. Half (48%) of sexual assaults involving child victims (aged 13 and younger)<sup>8</sup> were reported to police over one week after they took place, compared with one-quarter (24%) of incidents involving victims aged 14 and older. Furthermore, nearly one in three (29%) sexual assaults against children were reported over one year after they occurred, compared with less than one in ten (8%) sexual assaults against older victims. In summary, the median delay in reporting to police for sexual assaults involving child victims was 7 months (216.5 days), compared with only 13 days for victims aged 14 and older (Chart 3).

#### Delay in reporting longer for male victims than females, whether the victim was a child or an adult

Sexual assaults that involved male victims saw greater delays in reporting than those with female victims. The median delay in reporting for male victims of sexual assault was 7 months (212 days), which is over ten times longer than the median delay for female victims (20 days). This discrepancy is partly explained by the overrepresentation of children among male victims of sexual assault (see subsequent section "Who sexually assaults whom? A profile of victims and persons charged"). However, even when limiting findings to only child victims, the median delay in reporting for male child victims was double that of female child victims (one year/365 days versus six months/191 days). Among victims aged 14 and older, the median delay in reporting to police remained higher for males than for females (3 months/94 days versus 11 days).

It is important to note that a delay in reporting is not necessarily a reflection of the victim choosing to wait to report the incident to police—rather, bringing a crime to the attention of police can be done by any party, including the victim, a parent or guardian, or a third party. This is of particular importance for sexual assaults involving child victims, where the victim may have not fully understood their victimization, was too young to articulate the harms incurred, or was dependent on their assailant (Kuoppamäki et al. 2011; Ogrodnik 2010; United Nations 2006), all factors of which can contribute to the increased delay in reporting observed among child victims of sexual assault.

Finally, delay in reporting appeared to have a marginal impact on whether a charge was laid on an accused. Over the six-year period of study, the proportion of sexual assault charges laid was slightly lower among those reported long after the incident took place (38% for those reported to police more than 3 years later) than for sexual assaults reported to police on the day they occurred (42%). In comparison with the marginal attrition between reporting to police and charges laid, the

attrition that occurs between when police lay a charge of sexual assault and when the case goes to court is far more prominent (Rotenberg forthcoming 2017).

These findings are not to suggest that reporting a sexual assault to police immediately after it occurred is in the best interests of the victim or the investigation—in fact, some research has shown that given the emotional trauma endured during and immediately after a sexual assault, victims require a minimum of two nights of sleep to fully consolidate memories, after which they are better able to give their account to police (Haskell 2017). At the same time, when a crime is reported to police long after it took place, collecting evidence may be more challenging for police in part because of poorer memory recall, but also because of the limited ability to collect forensic or physical evidence as time passes. This may also translate into higher instances of incomplete information on the investigative file. The next section of this study explores how, similar to delayed reporting, sexual assault cases with incomplete or unknown details surrounding the incident may present an investigative challenge.

### **Incomplete incident information more common for sexual assaults than for physical assaults**

Compared with physical assaults, sexual assault incidents have higher instances of incomplete or unknown information in their case files. This does not mean that police did not conduct a thorough investigation, but rather that certain fields related to the incident and recorded through the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey were missing or were reported by police as unknown. Specifically, this was measured by having at least one of the following elements reported as incomplete or unknown: time of incident, location type of incident, presence of weapons, level of physical injury to the victim, or relationship between the victim and the accused.<sup>9</sup> Note that police would not necessarily need to have an accused identified in connection with the incident to have populated all of these fields as they are incident and victim-related.

Over the six-year period of study, sexual assaults had at least one unknown element related to the incident or victim for nearly half (45%) of analyzed incidents, compared with just one in five (20%) physical assaults. The field that was most commonly incomplete in police records was incident time of day, with 22% of sexual assaults reporting incident time as unknown, compared with only 4% for physical assaults.<sup>10</sup>

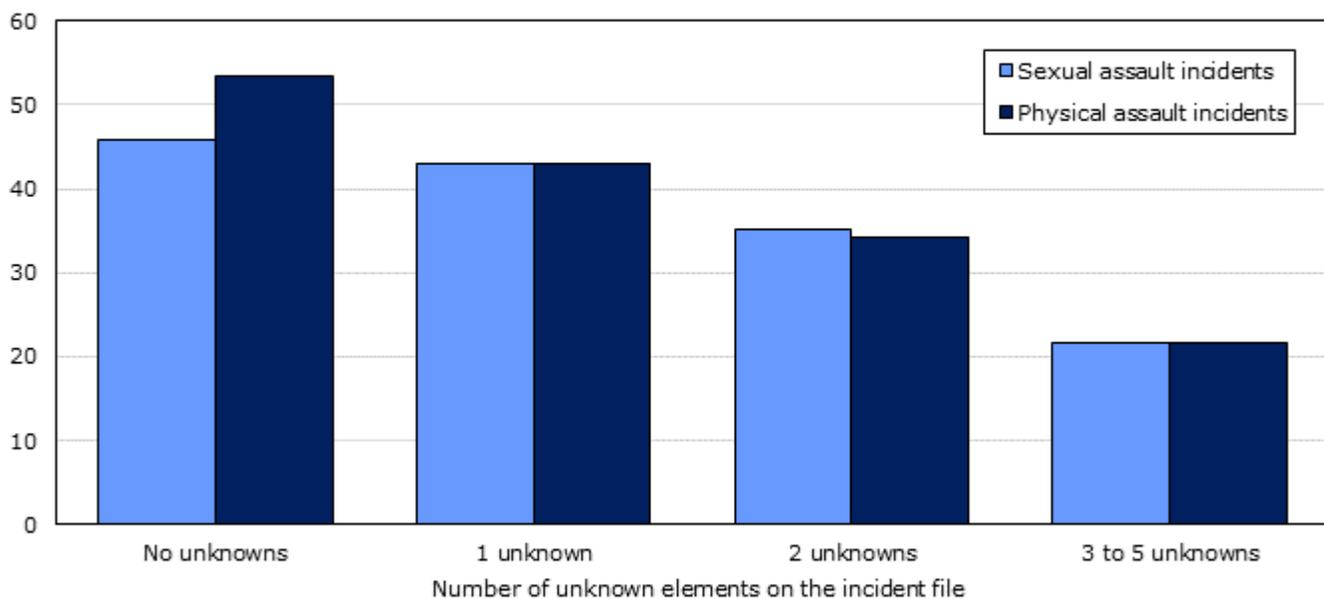
Furthermore, sexual assault incidents had a higher frequency of unknown elements than physical assault incidents. Of incidents with at least one unknown field, 24% of sexual assaults had two unknowns and 9% had three or more unknowns, compared with 14% and 2% of physical assaults, respectively.

### **Incidents less likely to be charged when there were more incomplete or unknown details**

Irrespective of assault type, incidents with unknown case details were less likely to have a charge laid on an accused than those with complete case information. Specifically, 39% of sexual assaults with at least one unknown resulted in a charge laid compared with 46% with no unknowns. A similar discrepancy was noted among physical assaults (41% versus 53%). Further, the charge rate decreased with every added unknown element on the incident, regardless of assault type. In fact, if a criminal incident has an unknown or incomplete case element, the gap in charge rate between sexual and physical assault disappears entirely (Chart 4). This suggests that the gap in charge rate between sexual and physical assaults is explained by the higher incidence of incomplete case information among sexual assaults. That said, a gap in charge rate still remains for incidents with complete case information (Chart 4).

**Chart 4****Proportion of incidents with a charge laid by police, by count of incomplete or unknown elements on the incident, sexual assaults versus physical assaults, Canada, 2009 to 2014**

percent of incidents charged



**Note:** Unknown elements on an incident include incidents where at least one of the following were reported by police on the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey as unknown or missing: time of the incident, location of incident, presence of weapons during the commission of the incident, level of physical injury of the victim, or relationship between the victim and the accused. Data is based on victims who linked to a police-reported incident.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

**The longer the delay in reporting, the more likely an incident was to have incomplete or unknown details, whether sexual or physical assault**

Incomplete or unknown incident details was positively correlated with delay in reporting to police for both sexual and physical assault: the longer the delay in reporting of the crime, the greater the number of unknowns on the file. When a sexual assault was reported on the same day it occurred, about one-third (35%) of incidents had at least one unknown on file, compared with over half (56%) of incidents that were reported at least one day after the sexual assault took place. A similar discrepancy, though smaller, was also observed for physical assaults (19% versus 31%). Finally, of incidents that were reported to police over one year after they occurred, the majority (75%) of sexual assaults and more than half (59%) of physical assaults had at least one piece of unknown information on the incident file.

The above findings provide context to the challenges in carrying sexual assaults forward through the justice system. Delays in reporting to police and unknown or incomplete elements of criminal incidents may be interrelated, and can collectively contribute to investigative challenges for police regardless of the type of assault. However, because sexual assaults are more prone to these challenges, they may be more susceptible to dropping out at various points in the criminal justice system (see Rotenberg forthcoming 2017).

**Incident characteristics: Where do sexual assaults happen?****Police-reported sexual assault rates highest outside of major cities and in Northern territories**

Between 2009 and 2014, the average annual rate of police-reported sexual assault in Canada overall was 62.1 incidents per 100,000 population. Sexual assault rates were higher outside of larger cities, with an average annual rate of 53.1 incidents per 100,000 population within census metropolitan areas (CMAs)<sup>11</sup> compared with 83.0 outside of CMAs.<sup>12</sup> This was not unique to sexual assault: the average annual rate of physical assault was nearly two times greater outside of CMAs than in CMAs (944.4 per 100,000 versus 510.7).

As with most violent crime in general, rates of sexual assault were highest in the Northern territories (Allen 2016; Keighley 2017). Over the six-year period of study, the highest average annual rates of sexual assault were reported in

Nunavut (567.4 per 100,000 population), the Northwest Territories (404.3) and Yukon (204.8). Sexual assault rates were lowest in Prince Edward Island (48.3), Quebec (49.6), British Columbia (57.0) and Ontario (57.3) (Table 1).

At the city level, the CMAs with the highest average annual rates of police-reported sexual assault over a six-year period were Winnipeg (93.0 incidents per 100,000 population), Brantford (85.5), Saskatoon (80.7) and Thunder Bay (80.1). Sexual assault rates were lowest in Abbotsford-Mission (39.0), Ottawa (43.2), Montreal (44.5) and Gatineau (45.5) (Table 2). It should be noted that differences in sexual assault rates at the city-level are not necessarily an indication of which cities have more sexual assaults relative to their population size, but may instead be a reflection of differing policy-based police enforcement practices. Some policing practices may aim to widen the scope of what incidents are captured in police-reported data, as opposed to, for example, classifying an incident as unfounded (see Text box 1).

### **Most sexual assaults took place on private property**

Nearly two in three (62%) sexual assaults reported to police between 2009 and 2014 took place on private property. This includes in a single home (41%) or a dwelling unit or private property structure (21%). It should be noted that an incident taking place on private property does not imply that the victim and the assailant were alone.<sup>13</sup>

About 16% of sexual assaults took place in an open area,<sup>14</sup> 7% in commercial spaces such as hotels or workplaces,<sup>15</sup> 4% on school property,<sup>16</sup> and 7% in other location types, including bars and restaurants.<sup>17</sup> A greater proportion of sexual assaults took place on private property than did physical assaults (62% versus 56%). Conversely, physical assaults were more likely to occur in open areas than sexual assaults (22% versus 16%).

### **Nearly all sexual assaults involved physical force, few involved weapons**

In nearly all (96%) sexual assaults reported by police during the six-year period of study, no weapons other than physical force or threats were used against the victim.<sup>18</sup> Weapons were present in the remaining 4% of sexual assaults.<sup>19</sup> Compared with physical assaults, sexual assaults were far less likely to have a weapon present in the commission of the crime (4% versus 20%).

### **Most sexual assaults did not result in physical injury to the victim**

Over the six-year reference period, police reported that most (66%) victims of sexual assault did not suffer physical injuries. About one in five (19%) victims endured minor physical injuries that required at most first-aid treatment, and less than 1% suffered major physical injuries that required medical attention.<sup>20</sup> The remaining 14% of sexual assault victims were reported as having an unknown level of physical injury.<sup>21</sup> These figures are in contrast to those for physical assault, where most (59%) victims suffered a minor or major physical injury, about one-third (36%) suffered no physical injuries, and 5% had an unknown level of physical injury. That said, the most damaging trauma for victims of sexual assault is often emotional and psychological suffering as a result of the act of sexual violation (Status of Women Canada 2002). Research on female victims of sexual assault has found that they experience more severe reactions, take longer to heal, and are more likely to develop depression than victims of assault of a non-sexual nature (Gilboa-Schechtman and Foa 2001). These are all important additional factors in the characterization of the harms caused by sexual assault that are not currently measured by police-reported surveys.

### **Sexual assaults spanned longer periods of time than physical assaults**

Abuse of a sexual nature, especially involving children, is often not isolated to one single incident but can be endured over a long period of time (Hornor 2010). According to first and last incident date information reported by police, one-quarter (25%) of sexual assaults had been ongoing for longer than a one-week period (defined here as 'long-term sexual assaults'—see the "Key concepts and definitions" section), compared with 3% of physical assault incidents. Of these long-term incidents, the median duration of the incident was 10 months (283.5 days) for sexual assaults and 3 months (83.0 days) for physical assaults.

Long-term incidents of sexual assault were disproportionately experienced by child victims. Children aged 13 and younger were twice as likely to be a victim of a long-term sexual assault incident that spanned longer than a one-week period (44%) than victims aged 14 years and older (19%). Among child victims, long-term sexual assaults did not appear to disproportionately affect one gender over another. Three-quarters (75%) of children who were victims of long-term sexual assault were girls, which is on par with the proportion of child victims that were girls overall (76%).

## Who sexually assaults whom? A profile of victims and persons charged

Between 2009 and 2014, an accused was identified in 60% of police-reported sexual assault incidents. Of these incidents with an identified accused, the accused was charged in 69% of incidents. To establish a profile of accused who were eligible to proceed to court for an upcoming linkage study on court outcomes of sexual assault (Rotenberg forthcoming 2017), subsequent accused-based characteristics in this analysis pertain only to accused who were charged with sexual assault. This represents 41% of all sexual assaults reported to police, and 69% of sexual assaults where an accused was identified.

It should be noted that by limiting the analysis to only sexual assaults where a charge was laid, the profile of accused changes. A disproportionate number of sexual assaults committed by youth are dropped,<sup>22</sup> given that youth crimes are often handled by alternative or extrajudicial measures as stipulated by the principles set out in the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (Allen and Superle 2016). Overall, accused were less likely to be charged if they were youth, female, or were a casual acquaintance or friend to the victim.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, accused-based characteristics presented below are not representative of all perpetrators of sexual assault; rather, they represent only those charged by police. For more information on youth accused of sexual offences whether charged or not, see Cotter and Beaupré (2014), and for a detailed analysis on the types of sexual assaults most prone to dropping out of the criminal justice system, see Rotenberg (forthcoming 2017).

### Most accused charged with sexual assault were male, with a median age of 33

Nearly all (98%) persons charged by police with sexual assault were male. The median age of persons charged was 33, with over one in five (22%) aged between 25 and 34 years old, 18% between 18 and 24 years old, and 14% aged younger than 18 years old. The minority group of females charged with sexual assault tended to be younger, with a median age of 28 years old, which was five years younger than the median age of males charged (33). Compared with physical assaults, a greater proportion of persons charged with sexual assault were male (98% versus 79%) and the median age was similar (33 versus 31 years old).

### Majority of police-reported sexual assault victims were young females

The majority (87%) of victims of sexual assault<sup>24</sup> were female, particularly young women and girls. The median age of victims was 18 years old. About one-third (31%) of victims were between 12 and 17 years old, and another 21% were between 18 and 24 years old. About 18% of victims were younger than 12 years old, 14% were between 25 and 34 years old, and 16% were 35 years of age and older. Overall, children aged 13 and younger accounted for one-quarter (26%) of victims of sexual assault. This is more than four times greater than the proportion of child victims of physical assault (6%), as victims of physical assault were typically older, with a median age of 29. Of note, unlike sexual assaults where most victims were women and girls, exactly half (50%) of victims of physical assault were female.

Male victims of police-reported sexual assault were notably younger than female victims (median age of 13 years old versus 18 years old). Consequently, while children represented about one-quarter (23%) of female victims, children accounted for half (50%) of male victims of sexual assault. Despite the number of male child victims of sexual assault being far lower than the number of female child victims, child victims of sexual assault were disproportionately young boys when compared with older victims. This finding has been evidenced in prior research (Johnson 2006), and the importance of recognizing the differing circumstances under which sexual assault disproportionately affects young male victims has also been underscored.

### Most victims of sexual assault knew their assailant

Among sexual assaults where an accused was charged by police, over four in five (87%) victims knew their assailant, while a small proportion (13%) were strangers to their assailant.<sup>25</sup> It is worth noting that among self-reported victimization data, nearly half (44%) of sexual victimization incidents were perpetrated by a stranger (Conroy and Cotter 2017).

The most common type of victim-accused relationship in sexual assault incidents where a charge was laid was casual acquaintances<sup>26</sup> (26%), followed by family members excluding spouses<sup>27</sup> (24%), or intimate partners (19%) (see Table 3 for a breakdown of relationship types by victim gender). Similarly, physical assaults with a charge laid by police were commonly perpetrated by someone known to the victim (89%); however, victims of police-reported sexual assault were far less likely than victims of physical assault to be victimized by an intimate partner (19% versus 58%), and conversely more likely to be assaulted by a family member (24% versus 10%) or a casual acquaintance (26% versus 13%).

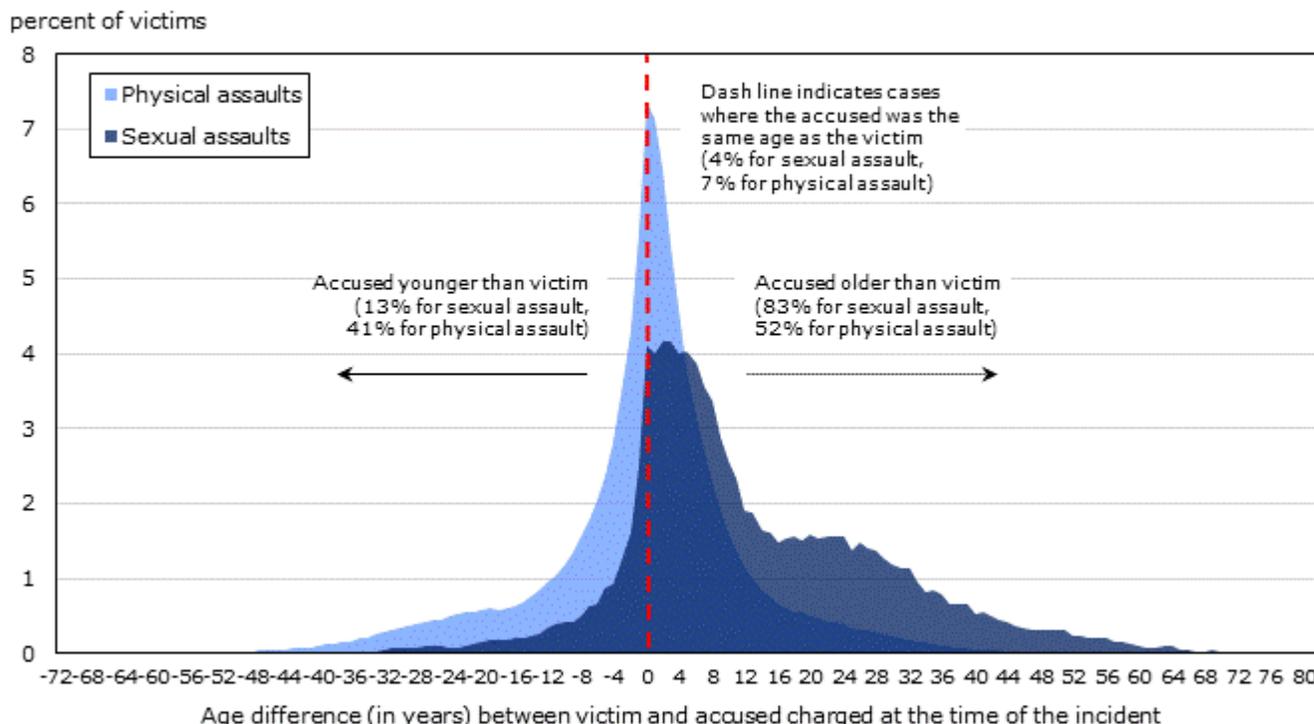
The relationship between a victim of sexual or physical assault and their assailant is often more complex than a single relationship category alone. Factors such as relative age difference can point to possible power differences and identify peer-against-peer assaults, and sexual assaults that involve an age difference that may sometimes indicate pedophilia. These age-based concepts are explored independently, as well as in combination with relationship variables and gender to build a more comprehensive profile of sexual assault victims and their assailants.

### Median age gap of 13 years observed between sexual assault victims and their assailants

Of sexual assaults in which an accused was charged by police, the vast majority (83%) of victims were sexually assaulted by someone older than them.<sup>28</sup> This was true whether the victim was male (91%) or female (82%). Adult accused aged 18 years and older were responsible for three quarters (76%) of sexual assaults of victims under 18 years old. Moreover, the age gap between victims and their assailants was notably wide: when the accused was older than the victim, the median age gap was 13 years. For about half (48%) of sexual assault victims, the accused was ten or more years older than them at the time of the crime. While the age gap was typically larger between child or youth victims and their assailants, a notable gap remained among older victims: of adult victims aged 25 and older who were sexually assaulted by someone older than them, the median age gap was still 9 years.

The age profile in Chart 5 depicts how a large proportion of sexual assault victims were victimized by someone who was near or slightly older than their age, but a plateau of cases where the accused was approximately 16 to 30 years older than the victim is also observed, accounting for a notable proportion (roughly 22%) of cases. This age profile is presented in stark contrast to that of physical assault victims, where victims are largely assaulted by someone in their peer age group (Chart 5).

**Chart 5**  
**Age difference between victims and their assailants, police-reported sexual assaults versus physical assaults with a charge laid, Canada, 2009 to 2014**



**Note:** Includes sexual assaults or physical assaults where a charge was laid by police on the incident, and where a single victim matched to a single accused. Excludes invalid ages where accused or victim was aged 90 and older.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

**Text box 3****Other sexual offences against children**

The scope of the present study includes level 1, 2 and 3 sexual assault, which includes sexual assaults committed against children or youth. However, there are several *Criminal Code* offences that are specific to the sexual exploitation or victimization of children and youth apart from sexual assault. These include, for example: sexual interference (touching a person under the age of 16 years old for a sexual purpose), invitation to sexual touching (inviting, counseling or inciting a person under the age of 16), sexual exploitation (touching or inviting the touching of a person who is aged 16 or 17 for a sexual purpose if the accused is in a position of trust or authority toward the victim), luring a child via a computer for sexual purposes, and making sexually explicit material available to children.

Between 2009 and 2014, there were 19,292 police-reported incidents in which the most serious violation in the incident was one of the sexual offences against children described above.

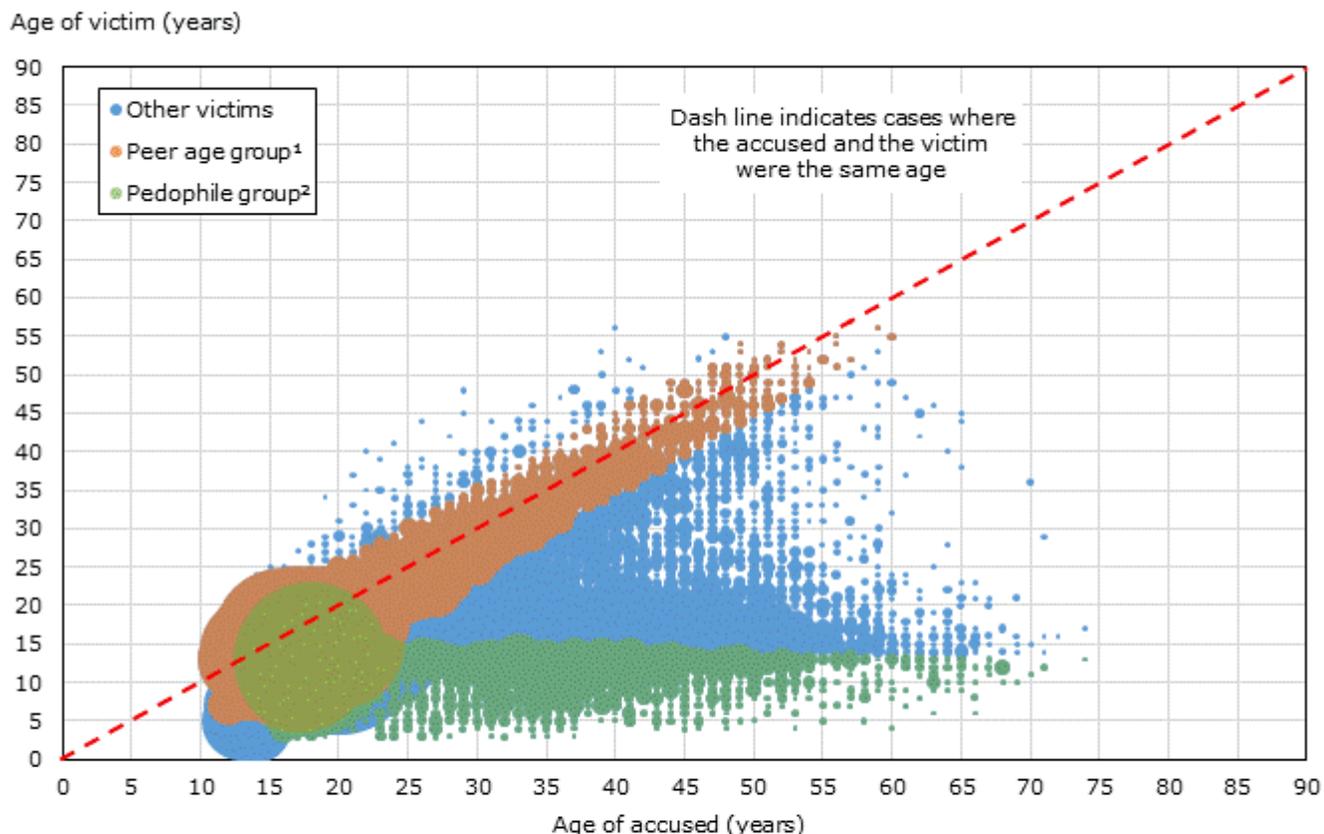
That said, the majority (70%) of sexual offences against children and youth<sup>29</sup> reported by police over the six-year reference period identified the most serious violation as sexual assault level 1. This finding aligns with previous research on child and youth sexual offences, where in 2012, 72% of all child and youth victims of sexual offences were victims of level 1 sexual assault (Cotter and Beaupré 2014). As such, while sexual assault offences do not encompass all sexually motivated crimes against children, they do represent the majority.

**Children far more likely to be sexually assaulted by a family member than by a stranger**

Of sexual assaults charged by police, child victims 13 years of age and younger were three times more likely than victims aged 14 and older to have been sexually assaulted by a family member (52% versus 15%). In turn, children were less likely to have been sexually assaulted by a stranger than older victims (5% versus 16%). This was true whether the child victim was male or female.<sup>30</sup> Children were also overrepresented among victims physically assaulted by a family member (51% versus 8%). These findings suggest that, relative to adults, children are at little risk of being sexually assaulted by a stranger; rather, sexual assaults of children most often occur at the hands of a family member or someone known to the child.

Another way to interpret relative age differences between victims and their assailants is to plot the cases on a scatterplot (Chart 6). The dots represent sexual assault incidents and indicate the age of the accused charged and the victim at the time of the incident. The size of the dots represents the volume, or clusters of sexual assaults with a similar victim-accused age profile. Apart from the notable clusters evident for younger victims and younger accused, two distinct patterns emerge: a linear relationship wherein accused are charged with sexually assaulting persons around their own age (their peers), and older accused charged with sexually assaulting children (some of which may be classified as meeting the age-based criteria for pedophilia—see the “Key concepts and definitions” section).

**Chart 6**  
**Relationship between age of accused and age of victim, police-reported sexual assault incidents with a charge laid, Canada, 2009 to 2014**



1. Peer age group includes victims sexually assaulted by someone who was within five years of the victim's age (whether older or younger) at the time of the incident and if the accused does not meet the criteria for the pedophile group.
2. Pedophile group includes victims aged 13 years and younger who were sexually assaulted by someone who was 16 years of age and older, and where there was an age difference of at least five years between the victim and the accused as per the clinical definition of pedophilia.

**Note:** The size of the bubbles indicates volume of incidents. Data points representing 5 incidents or less are suppressed for confidentiality reasons. Data include sexual assaults where a charge was laid by police on the incident, and where a single victim matched to a single accused. For data quality reasons, incidents where the accused or victim was aged 90 and older were excluded.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

### One in five sexual assaults were perpetrated by an accused that may meet the criteria for pedophilia

While the *Criminal Code* does not have offences specific to the clinical diagnosis of pedophilia, nor do police-reported data collect information on pedophiles as a distinct group of accused, the age-based criteria of the clinical definition of pedophilia (see the “Key concepts and definitions” section) is applied in this study to identify sexual assaults involving a child victim and someone significantly older than them. One in five (19%) sexual assaults with a charge laid involved an accused who may meet the age-based clinical criteria for pedophilia. This requires that the accused was 16 years of age and older, their victim was 13 years of age and younger, and that there was at least a five year age difference between them.

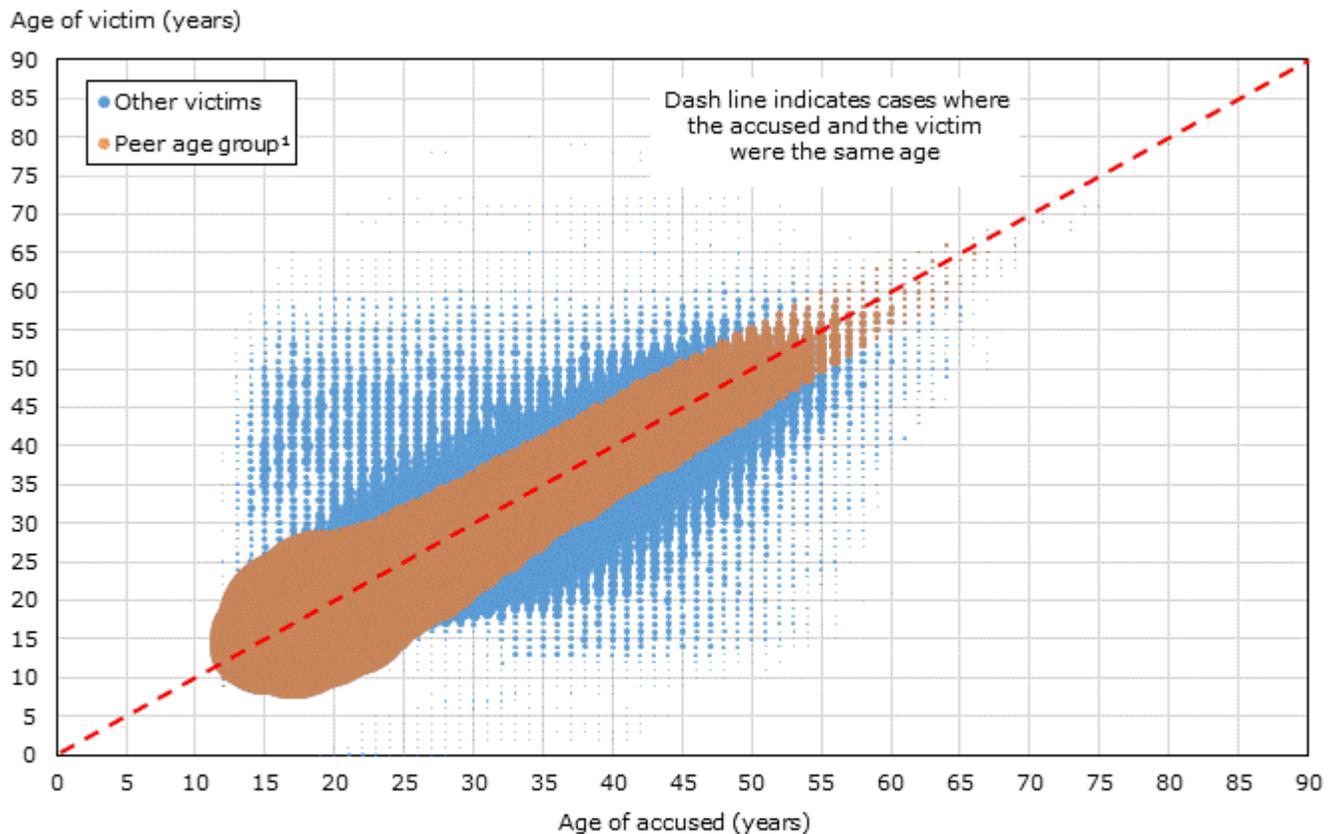
### One in three sexual assaults were perpetrated by someone close in age to the victim

About one in three (31%) sexual assaults with a charge laid involved peer-against-peer sexual assault, that is, where a victim was sexually assaulted by someone within their peer age group (within five years apart). Apart from pedophile and peer-perpetrated sexual assaults, the remaining half (50%) of sexual assaults involved other kinds of age relationships (Chart 6), the majority of which (65%) were comprised of victims who were ten or more years younger than the person who sexually assaulted them but did not meet the age-based criteria for pedophilia, most often because the victim was over 13 years of age.

The age profile of sexual assault victims and their assailants is in marked contrast to that of physical assaults (Chart 7), where the age of the victim typically increased along with the age of the accused. Over half (53%) of charged physical

assaults were perpetrated by someone in the same peer age group as the victim and one in five (22%) involved victims who were older than their assailants by more than five years.<sup>31</sup>

**Chart 7**  
**Relationship between age of accused and age of victim, police-reported physical assault incidents with a charge laid, Canada, 2009 to 2014**



1. Peer age group includes victims physically assaulted by someone who was within five years of the victim's age (whether older or younger) at the time of the incident.

**Note:** The size of the bubbles indicates volume of incidents. Data points representing 5 incidents or less are suppressed for confidentiality reasons. Data include physical assaults where a charge was laid by police on the incident, and where a single victim matched to a single accused. For data quality reasons, incidents where the accused or victim was aged 90 or older were excluded.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

### Sexual assaults perpetrated by a pedophile most often involved a family member

Of sexual assaults involving a charged accused who met the age-based criteria for pedophilia, over half (55%) of child victims were sexually assaulted by a family member. By comparison, less than one in five (17%) sexual assaults in the non-pedophile group were perpetrated by a family member of the victim. Sexual assaults involving child victims who were victimized by a family member that met the age-based criteria for pedophilia included extended family (e.g., uncles, cousins, grandparents; 21%), parents (13%), step-parents (9%), and other immediate family members (9%).<sup>32</sup>

Apart from family members, one in five (19%) child victims sexually assaulted by someone who met the age-based criteria for pedophilia knew their assailant as a casual acquaintance,<sup>33</sup> another 8% as an authority figure, and 5% were victimized by a stranger. The remaining 13% were victimized by someone known to them with whom they had another type of relationship not yet mentioned, including a friend or neighbour.<sup>34</sup>

Male victims accounted for a larger proportion of children sexually assaulted by a pedophile than victims of sexual assault overall. About 16% of child victims of pedophiles were male, which is double the proportion of male victims of all other sexual assaults (8%). Approximately one in four (24%) pedophile-perpetrated sexual assaults of a female child were committed by a parent,<sup>35</sup> which is a larger proportion than the 16% for male child victims (see Table 3). Conversely, male children sexually assaulted by a pedophile were more likely than female children to have been victimized by someone in a position of authority (14% versus 7%).

### Most peer age-group sexual assaults against females were committed by an intimate partner or a casual acquaintance

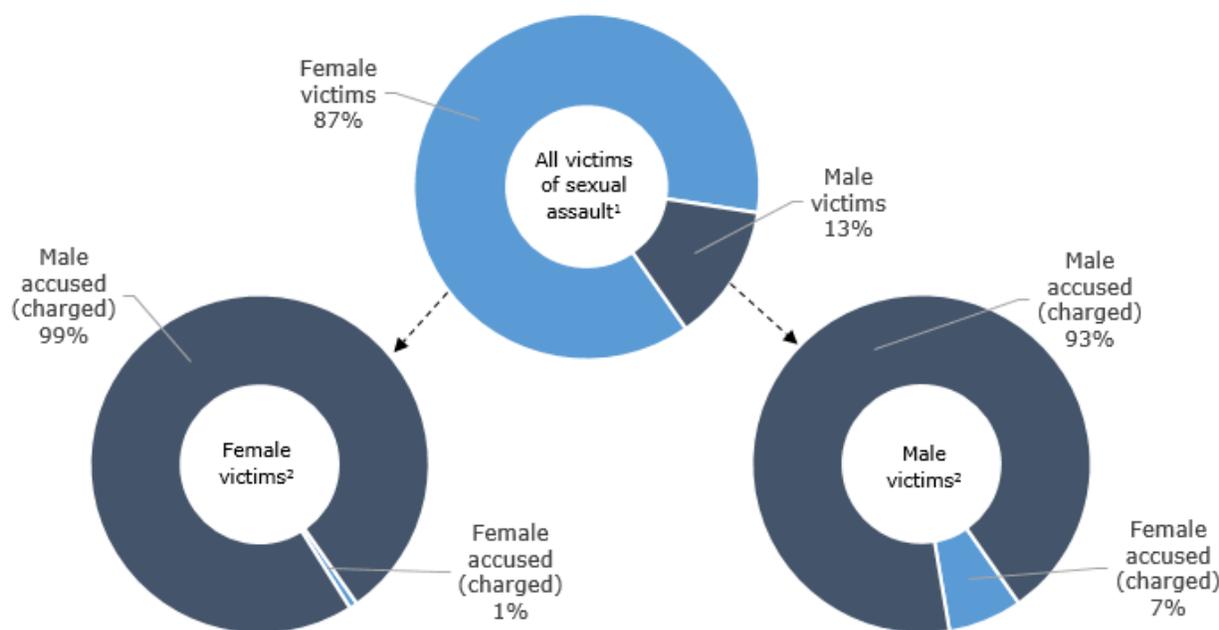
About one in three (31%) victims of sexual assault were victimized by someone in their peer age group, that is, by someone within five years of their age. Of these victims, the largest proportion (36%) were sexually assaulted by a peer with whom they had a current or previous intimate relationship (11% by a boyfriend/girlfriend, 10% by a spouse, 9% by an ex-boyfriend/girlfriend, 4% by an ex-spouse, and 1% by someone of another intimate relationship type—see the “Key concepts and definitions” section). Sexual assaults committed by an intimate partner within the same peer age group as the victim was disproportionately experienced by female victims (37% versus 8% for males) (Table 3).

Over one in four (28%) victims who were sexually assaulted by someone in their peer age group were victimized by a casual acquaintance, 10% by a family member, and 11% by a stranger. Males sexually assaulted by someone in their peer age group were more likely than females to have been violated by a family member other than a parent (25% of males versus 9% of females), a casual acquaintance (34% versus 28%) (Table 3) or by a friend or neighbour (19% versus 11%).

### Almost all females victimized by a male, most males victimized by males

Sexual assault is a highly gendered crime wherein women are most often the victims and men are most often the perpetrators. Overall, 87% of victims were female and 13% were male. Of sexual assaults with a charge laid, nearly all (99%) female victims were sexually assaulted by a male. Conversely, 7% of male victims were victimized by a female. In turn, the vast majority (93%) of sexual assaults against males were perpetrated by another male (Figure 1).

**Figure 1**  
**Gender breakdown of perpetrators of sexual assault, by victim gender group, Canada, 2009 to 2014**



1. Represents the breakdown by sex of all founded police-reported victims of sexual assault in the reference period. This includes incidents with no identified accused.

2. Includes sexual assaults where a charge was laid by police on the incident and where a single victim record matched to a single accused record.

**Note:** Excludes victims and accused with an unknown sex (<1%). Gender breakdown figures of accused will not match victim figures as a large proportion of police-reported sexual assault incidents with victims do not have an accused identified on the same incident.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

The highly male-against-female gender profile of sexual assaults is in contrast to that of physical assaults, where just over half (56%) of charged incidents involved a female victim and a male accused. Sexual assaults against a male victim were far less likely to be perpetrated by a female assailant (7%) than physical assaults were (34%). Similarly, sexual assaults against a female victim were less likely to be perpetrated by a female (1%) than physical assaults were (12%).

## Female victims most commonly sexually assaulted by a male acquaintance, family member or intimate partner; males most commonly victimized by a male family member

Of sexual assaults involving a female victimized by a male—the most common victim-accused gender profile representing 89% of charged sexual assaults—the victim most often knew her assailant as a casual acquaintance (25%), followed by a family member (23%) or an intimate partner (21%). In contrast, among male-against-male sexual assaults (accounting for 9% of sexual assaults), the most common perpetrator was a family member (32%). In fact, male-against-male sexual assaults were much more likely to involve an extended or immediate family member other than a parent (24%) than sexual assaults of any other gender-based combination.<sup>36</sup> These findings demonstrate the different types of relationships seen between a victim of sexual assault and their assailant, and underscore the multitude of circumstances under which a sexual assault can occur.

### Summary

This *Juristat* article presented a profile of sexual assaults reported by police in Canada over a six-year period and explored the circumstances under which they take place, the characteristics of persons charged with sexual assault, and those who are victims of it.

The vast majority (98%) of police-reported sexual assaults were classified as level 1 offences, which generally involve sexual assaults without a weapon or evidence of bodily harm. Victims of sexual assault were mostly (87%) women, while nearly all perpetrators (98%) charged with sexual assault were male. Victims were generally young in age, with a median age of 18, and over one in four (26%) were children aged 13 and younger. Perpetrators charged with sexual assault had a median age of 33 and tended to be much older than their victims, with a median age difference of 13 years. Most victims (87%) knew the person who sexually assaulted them, and only a small proportion were victimized by a stranger (13%). Victims most commonly knew their assailant as a casual acquaintance, a family member, or as a current or ex-intimate partner. Compared with victims of physical assault, victims of sexual assault were more likely to have been female, far younger in age than their assailant, and more likely to have been victimized by a family member.

Considering the profile of both victims and their assailants in tandem, the results of this study reveal two distinct groups among police-reported sexual assaults: 1) young to middle-aged males who sexually assaulted their female peers, often someone whom they knew through an intimate relationship or as a casual acquaintance; and 2) adult males who sexually assaulted children, who may have met the age-based criteria for pedophilia, and who were related to the victim more than half of the time. These profiles are in contrast to physical assaults, where most victims were physically assaulted by someone in their peer age group (within 5 years), most frequently a current or ex-intimate partner.

Most police-reported sexual assaults took place on private property, did not involve weapons, and did not cause physical injury to the victim. These characteristics are opposite those of physical assaults, which were more likely to take place in open areas, involve weapons, and result in physical injury to the victim. Geographically, sexual assaults were reported at higher rates in areas outside of larger cities (83.0 incidents per 100,000 population) than larger census metropolitan areas (53.1).

For the first time in national police-reported crime research, the delay between when an incident occurred and when it was reported to police was analyzed in detail. The median delay in reporting to police was over 12 times longer for sexual assaults than for physical assaults. Of incidents that had a delay in reporting of at least one day, more than one in four (28%) sexual assaults were brought to the attention of police over one year after the sexual assault occurred, compared with only 2% of physical assaults. Sexual assaults involving children victimized by a family member, specifically by their parent, saw notably longer delays in reporting with a median delay of one year. Given that most victims of sexual assault knew their assailant, this may exacerbate emotional barriers to reporting. These findings may be contextualized by external research on the psychological consequences of sexual assault and its impact on delayed or non-reporting to law enforcement (Lievore 2003; Thompson et al. 2007).

### Future research

Apart from sexual assault, there are several other offences against children under the *Criminal Code* that are sexual in nature, such as child sexual exploitation and sexual interference. Future research focused on children who are victims of any sexual offence may benefit from analysis of relationship types between the victim and their assailant, given the incidence of sexual assaults perpetrated by a family member who may meet the criteria associated with pedophilia found in the present study.

Additional research on delays in reporting to police for other offences would build on the results of this study and offer a broader understanding of what crimes see longer delays than others. This information may provide context to external research on psychological explanations for why victims of violent crime delay in reporting, as well as explain why certain crimes may experience more investigational challenges as a result of the time lapse between the time the crime was committed and when it was brought to the attention of police.

Information on unfounded sexual assaults remains a data gap in criminal justice research. Statistics Canada will be releasing initial findings of sexual assault incidents reported to police that were classified as unfounded in 2018 in aim of bridging this gap. This information will be of value in providing preliminary information on sexual assaults that previously fell out of scope for police-reported crime data.

Finally, an important next step in sexual assault research would be exploring how sexual assaults are dealt with in the justice system. Given that less than half (41%) of sexual assaults result in a charge laid by police, a measure of the extent of 'fall-out' of sexual assault cases between police and court is warranted to provide a full picture of the attrition and retention of sexual assault cases in the Canadian criminal justice system. An upcoming *Juristat* article (Rotenberg forthcoming 2017) will explore justice system outcomes of persons charged with sexual assault, in addition to what extent factors relating to the victim, accused or the incident may influence court outcomes.

## Survey description

### Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey

The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR) collects detailed information on criminal incidents that have been reported to and substantiated by Canadian police services. This information includes characteristics pertaining to criminal incidents (e.g., weapon use, location, delay in reporting), victims (e.g., age, sex, victim-accused relationship, physical injury) and accused persons (e.g., age, sex, charge laid). Between 2009 and 2014, data from police services covered 99% of the population of Canada. Incidents are based on pooled UCR micro-data for each individual year, and will not match data from CANSIM tables as these capture aggregate-based data.

### General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization)

Though this *Juristat* article was based on administrative policing data collected from the UCR, some research that used the General Social Survey (GSS) on Canadians' Safety (Victimization) was referenced.

In 2014, Statistics Canada conducted the victimization cycle of the GSS for the sixth time. The purpose of the survey is to provide data on Canadians' personal experiences with eight offences, examine the risk factors associated with victimization, examine rates of reporting to the police, assess the nature and extent of spousal violence, measure fear of crime, and examine public perceptions of crime and the criminal justice system. The target population was persons aged 15 and older living in the Canadian provinces and territories.

For recent research on self-reported sexual assaults utilizing survey data from the GSS on Canadians' Safety (Victimization), see Conroy and Cotter (2017).

## Key concepts and definitions

**Age gap:** the age difference (in years) between the victim and their assailant at the time of the sexual or physical assault incident. Includes incidents where a charge was laid on the accused.

**Attrition:** the proportion of criminal incidents that 'dropped out' of the criminal justice system at a given level, such as between being charged by police and going to court. The attrition rate can also be defined as the inverse of the 'linkage rate', or the inverse of the rate of retention of cases in the criminal justice system. See Rotenberg (forthcoming 2017) for more information on attrition of sexual assaults in the justice system.

**Casual acquaintance:** a social relationship between the victim and the accused which is neither long-term nor close and can include acquaintances known by sight only.

**Census metropolitan area (CMA):** consists of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a major urban core. A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000 of which 50,000 or more live in the urban core. To be included in the CMA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the central urban area, as measured by commuting flows derived from census data. A CMA typically comprises more than one police service.

**Charged by police:** criminal incidents that were either charged or recommended to be charged by police as reported to the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, or where a charge was laid by the Crown in provinces where the Crown is responsible for laying a charge (British Columbia, Quebec, and New Brunswick). An incident identified as 'charged by police' in this study reflects the clearance code assigned by police to the incident; however, once the incident information is relayed to the courts,

the Crown reserves the right to deny and dismiss the charge, which means that the incident was not formally charged. Data on Crown acceptance or denial of charges recommended by police is not available from police-reported data.

**Child victim:** contrary to other *Juristat* articles, this report defines child victims as those aged 13 and younger at the time of the incident in order to align with the definition of pedophilia which is used to characterize certain sexual assaults also analyzed in this report.

**Delay in reporting:** defined by the time (in days) elapsed between the date a criminal incident is known or believed to have occurred and the date the incident was formally reported to police, whether by the victim, a friend or family member of the victim, or a third party. In this study, an incident with a delayed report is considered as an incident that was reported to police at least one day after it took place.

**Family member:** includes parents (natural father or mother, legal guardian, or step-parent of the victim), other immediate family (natural brother or sister of the victim or step/half/foster/adopted sibling), and any extended family related to the victim either by blood or by marriage (e.g., grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, sister/brother-in-law, parents-in-law, etc.). Spouses of the victim are excluded from family members for the purposes of this *Juristat* and are captured under 'intimate relationship'.

**Hybrid offences:** crimes that can be processed as either summary or indictable offences. These can include sexual assault level 1, child pornography, sexual violations against children and some firearms offences, where the offence is "deemed indictable unless and until the Crown has elected to proceed summarily" (*R. v. Dudley* 2009).

**Indictable offence:** generally include more serious crimes (such as level 2 and level 3 sexual assault) that carry greater maximum penalties and involve more complex court procedures (such as preliminary hearings and juries).

**Intimate relationship:** a close or previously close relationship between the victim and the accused defined by a sexual relationship or mutual sexual attraction. This can include a spouse (married or common-law) or ex-spouse (separated or divorced) of the victim, current or ex-boyfriend or girlfriend of the victim, or any other intimate relationship type including 'one-night stands' or otherwise a person with whom the victim had a brief sexual relationship with. Applies to any sexual orientation.

**Long-term sexual assault:** defined in this report as sexual assaults that were reported by police as having begun on a given date (first incident date) and continued for longer than a one-week period (i.e., the last incident date must be at least 8 days after the first incident date). These sexual assault incidents are contrasted with isolated incidents, which are reported by police to have only one associated incident date. Long-term sexual assaults are not necessarily a measure of repeat victimization or offending, as a new incident for the same victim and/or accused may be entered by police if the circumstances or nature of the incident change.

**Major physical injuries:** physical injuries to the victim at the time of the incident or as determined through police investigation that were more than 'trifling' or 'transient' in nature and required professional medical treatment or immediate transportation to a medical facility.

**Minor physical injuries:** physical injuries to the victim at the time of the incident or as determined through police investigation that did not require professional medical treatment or only some first-aid (e.g., band-aid, ice, etc.).

**Most serious violation in the incident:** determined by police based on a number of classification rules regarding the seriousness of the offence. Because one incident can involve multiple (up to 4) offences, the most serious violation is often used to represent the incident. Classification rules take into account whether or not the offence was violent, the maximum penalty imposed by the *Criminal Code*, whether the incident involved a homicide violation (which would always take precedence over other violations with the same maximum penalty), and the discretion of the police department. The most serious violation in the incident is not the same thing as the most serious violation against the victim, which identifies the most serious violation committed against an individual person.

**Pedophile group:** represents police-reported sexual assault incidents charged by police involving an accused who may meet some of the clinical criteria for pedophilia as defined by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5) based on the age of the accused, the age of their victim, and the fact that the criminal offence was sexual in nature. The clinical diagnosis of pedophilia requires 1) intense and recurrent sexual urges towards and fantasies about prepubescent children that have either been acted upon or which caused the person with the attraction distress or interpersonal difficulty, and that 2) the person diagnosed be at least 16 years old, and at least five years older than the child aged 13 and younger (American Psychiatric Association 2013). While police-reported data does not contain information on such clinical diagnoses, the fact that the offence was reported as sexual assault by police is used to infer that an act of a sexual nature took place. However, this does not mean that the accused would definitively meet the clinical criteria for pedophilia, as they may not

have, for example, had intense and recurrent sexual urges towards prepubescent children. The pedophile group used in this *Juristat* is defined as persons charged with sexual assault who were 16 years of age and older at the time of the incident, with a victim 13 years of age and younger, and there was at least a five year age difference between them. This grouping does not represent an actual diagnosis of pedophilia by a medical professional, but rather an age-based grouping using accused and victim information which may suggest, given the sexual nature of the offence, that the accused may meet part of the criteria for pedophilia.

**Peer age group:** represents police-reported incidents where the victim and the accused were within five years in age of each other (whether older or younger), and the incident did not meet the criteria for the pedophile group.

**Physical assault:** refers to three levels of physical assaults detailed in the *Criminal Code*, which include the following categories:

- **Physical assault (common assault, level 1):** the least serious form of physical assault, including pushing, slapping, punching, and face-to-face verbal threats towards the victim.
- **Major assault (level 2):** more serious forms of physical assault, including assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm and carrying, using or threatening to use a weapon against someone or causing the victim bodily harm.
- **Major assault (level 3):** includes aggravated assault and involves wounding, maiming, disfiguring or endangering the life of the victim.

**Sexual assault:** ranges from unwanted sexual touching to sexual violence resulting in serious physical injury or disfigurement to the victim in the following categories as per the *Criminal Code*:

- **Sexual assault (level 1):** does not involve a weapon or evidence of bodily harm.
- **Sexual assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (level 2):** includes sexual assault with a weapon, threats or causing bodily harm.
- **Aggravated sexual assault (level 3):** results in wounding, maiming, disfiguring or endangering the life of the victim.

**Single accused:** police-reported criminal incidents where there was only one person who was accused in a given incident. Incidents with more than one accused are excluded from any analysis of accused characteristics in order to avoid the methodological issue of confounding accused characteristics for incidents with multiple accused.

**Single victim:** police-reported criminal incidents where there was only one victim present in a given incident. Incidents with more than one victim are excluded from any analysis of victim characteristics in order to avoid the methodological issue of confounding victim characteristics for incidents with multiple victims.

**Summary conviction offences:** generally includes less serious crimes such as mischief or petty theft, however it may include sexual assault level 1 in some circumstances. Summary offences are heard by provincial court judges and carry lower maximum sentences.

**Unfounded:** incidents reported to police where it was determined through investigation by police that no violation of the law took place. For more information, see Text box 1.

## References

- Allen, M. 2016. "Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2015." *Juristat*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-X.
- Allen, M. and T. Superle. 2016. "Youth crime in Canada, 2014." *Juristat*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-X.
- American Psychiatric Association. 2013. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. 5th Edition. Washington, D. C.
- Boyce, J. 2015. "Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2014." *Juristat*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-X.
- Brennan, S. and A. Taylor-Butts. 2008. "Sexual assault in Canada, 2004 and 2007." *Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics Profile Series*. No. 19. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85F0033M.
- Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. 2017. *Recommendations Regarding the Collection of 'Unfounded' Incidents via the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey*. Press release, April 26, 2017.
- Cashmore, J., A. Taylor, R. Shackel and P. Parkinson. 2016. "The impact of delayed reporting on the prosecution and outcomes of child sexual abuse cases." *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*. Sydney, Australia.
- Conroy, S. and A. Cotter. 2017. "Self-reported sexual assault in Canada, 2014." *Juristat*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-X.

- Cotter, A. and P. Beaupré. 2014. "Police-reported sexual offences against children and youth in Canada, 2012." *Juristat*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-X.
- Cotter, A. 2016. "Sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces, 2016." *Juristat*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-603-X.
- Department of Justice Canada. 2017. *Government of Canada Announces Measures to Combat Gender-Based Violence*. Press release, April 26, 2017.
- DuMont, J. 2003. "Charging and sentencing in sexual assault cases: An exploratory examination." *Canadian Journal of Women & the Law*. Vol. 15, no. 2. p. 305.
- DuMont, J., K. L. Miller and T. L. Myhr. 2003. "The role of 'real rape' and 'real victim' stereotypes in the police reporting practices of sexually assaulted women." *Violence Against Women*. Vol. 9, no. 4. p. 466-486.
- Felson, R. B. and P.P. Paré. 2005. "The reporting of domestic violence and sexual assault by non-strangers to the police." *Journal of Marriage and Family*. Vol. 67. p. 597-610.
- Gilboa-Schechtman, E. and E. B. Foa. 2001. "Patterns of recovery from trauma: The use of intraindividual analysis." *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*. Vol. 110, no. 3. p. 392-400.
- Grubb, A. and E. Turner. 2012. "Attribution of blame in rape cases: A review of the impact of rape myth acceptance, gender role conformity and substance use on victim blaming." *Aggression and Violent Behavior*. Vol. 17, no. 5. p. 443-452.
- Haskell, L. 2017. "The impact of trauma on the brain." Keynote address presented at the *Knowledge Exchange Conference, for the Criminal Justice System's Responses to Sexual Assault Against Adults*. Department of Justice Canada.
- Honor, G. 2010. "Child sexual abuse: Consequences and implications." *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*. Vol. 24, no. 6. p. 358-364.
- Johnson, H. 2006. *Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends 2006*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-570-X.
- Johnson, H. 2012. "Limits of a criminal justice response: Trends in police and court processing of sexual assault." *Sexual Assault in Canada: Law, Legal Practice and Women's Activism*. In E. Sheehy (ed.). p. 613-634. Ottawa, Ontario.
- Jones, J. S., C. Alexander, B. N. Wynn, L. Rossman and C. Dunnuck. 2009. "Why women don't report sexual assault to the police: The influence of psychosocial variables and traumatic injury." *Journal of Emergency Medicine*. Vol. 36, no. 4. p. 417-424.
- Keighley, K. 2017. "Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2016." *Juristat*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-X.
- Kong, R., H. Johnson, S. Beattie and A. Cardillo. 2003. "Sexual offences in Canada." *Juristat*. Vol. 23, no. 6. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-X.
- Kuoppamäki, S-M., J. Kaariainen and N. Ellonen. 2011. "Physical violence against children reported to the police: Discrepancies between register-based data and child victim survey." *Violence and Victims*. Vol. 26, no. 2. p. 257-268.
- Leander, L. 2010. "Police interviews with child sexual abuse victims: Patterns of reporting, avoidance and denial." *Child Abuse & Neglect*. Vol. 34, no. 3. p. 192-205.
- Lievore, D. 2003. *Non-reporting and Hidden Recording of Sexual Assault: An International Literature Review*. Commonwealth Office of the Status of Women. Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Australia.
- London, K., M. Bruck, M., D. B. Wright and S. J. Ceci. 2008. "Review of the contemporary literature on how children report sexual abuse to others: Findings, methodological issues, and implications for forensic interviewers." *Memory*. Vol. 16, no. 1. p. 29-47.
- Ogrodnik, L. 2010. "Child and youth victims of police-reported violence crime, 2008." *Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics Profile Series*. No. 23. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85F0033M.
- Perreault, S. 2015. "Criminal victimization in Canada, 2014." *Juristat*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-X.
- R. v. Dudley*. 2009. SCC 58, [2009] 3 SCR 570.
- Randall, M. 2010. "Sexual assault law, credibility, and 'ideal victims': Consent, resistance, and victim blaming." *Canadian Journal of Women & the Law*. Vol. 22. p. 397-433.
- Rotenberg, C. Forthcoming 2017. "From arrest to conviction: Court outcomes of police-reported sexual assaults in Canada, 2009 to 2014." *Juristat*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-X.
- Sampert, S. 2010. "Let me tell you a story: English-Canadian newspapers and sexual assault myths." *Canadian Journal of Women & the Law*. Vol. 22. p. 301-328.
- Sheehy, E. A. 2000. "Rape shield laws: Canada." *Encyclopaedia of Women and Crime*. In N. H. Rafter (ed.). Phoenix, Arizona. p. 226-227.
- Statistics Canada. 2017. *Statistics Canada will Collect and Publish Data on Unfounded Criminal Incidents*. Press release, April 26, 2017.

Status of Women Canada. 2002. *Assessing Violence Against Women: A Statistical Profile*. Catalogue no. SW21-101/2002E-IN. Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers responsible for the Status of Women Canada.

Tang, K. 1998. "Rape law reform in Canada: The success and limits of legislation." *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*. Vol. 42, no. 3. p. 258-270.

Thompson, M., D. Sitterle, G. Clay and J. Kingree. 2007. "Reasons for not reporting victimizations to the police: Do they vary for physical and sexual incidents?" *Journal of American College Health*. Vol. 55, no. 5. p. 277-282.

United Nations. 2006. *World Report on Violence Against Children*. Geneva. United Nations Publishing Services.

Weiss, K. G. 2009. "Boys will be boys' and other gendered accounts: An exploration of victims' excuses and justifications for unwanted sexual contact and coercion." *Violence Against Women*. Vol. 15, no. 7. p. 810-834.

Weiss, K. G. 2010. "Too ashamed to report: Deconstructing the shame of sexual victimization." *Feminist Criminology*. Vol. 5, no. 3. p. 286-310.

Weiss, K. G. 2011. "Neutralizing sexual victimization: A typology of victims' non-reporting accounts." *Theoretical Criminology*. Vol. 14, no. 4. p. 1-23.

## Notes

1. Physical assault, also referred to as common or major assault, includes level 1 assault, level 2 assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm and level 3 aggravated assault. Between 2009 and 2014, the average annual rate of physical assault in Canada was 640.6 incidents per 100,000 population, which is approximately ten times higher than the rate of sexual assaults (62.1).

2. The most serious violation is the most serious crime that took place during the incident and is used to represent the incident. See the "Key concepts and definitions" section for a full definition. In the case of sexual assault, only offences deemed less serious than sexual assault would be captured in the same incident where sexual assault was the most serious violation. Analysis of offence and accused characteristics is most representative when looking only at incidents where the offence was the most serious in the incident. For this reason, subsequent analyses are based on incidents where sexual assault was reported as the most serious violation. Incidents are based on pooled Uniform Crime Reporting Survey micro-data for each individual year, and will not match data from CANSIM tables as these depict aggregate-based data.

3. Rate per 100,000 is based on Uniform Crime Reporting Survey aggregate data and population counts for each individual year, then pooled to deduce the overall rate over the six-year period.

4. Based on the most serious weapon present during the commission of the sexual assault. Physical force and threats of injury are typically included in the definition of weapon presence on the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey, however it is separated from traditional physical object weapons (e.g., knife, gun) for the purposes of this analysis. Excludes incidents where the presence of a weapon was unknown (14%). Note that the weapon and physical injury fields on the UCR are not the same as the definition for sexual assault levels as laid out in the *Criminal Code*.

5. Police are responsible for laying charges in most provinces except British Columbia, Quebec, and New Brunswick, where charges are laid by the Crown. For the sake of simplicity, this report primarily refers to 'charges laid by police'.

6. Of the 19% of sexual assault incidents that were cleared otherwise, the most common reasons for clearance included: victim requested that charges not be laid (39%), departmental discretion (25%), and where the incident was deemed beyond control of the department for policy or procedural reasons (25%).

7. Includes parents, other immediate family (brother or sister of the victim or step/half/foster/adopted siblings), and any extended family related to the victim either by blood or by marriage except for the victim's spouse (e.g., can also include grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, sister/brother-in-law, parents-in-law, etc.).

8. Contrary to other *Juristat* articles, this report defines child victims as those aged 13 and younger in order to align with the definition of pedophilia which is used to characterize sexual assaults elsewhere in this paper.

9. Unknown relationship between the accused and victim is based on the records that were imputed, that is, initially reported as unknown relationship type by police but was manually populated during Uniform Crime Reporting Survey processing using the nearest-neighbour approach by matching incidents based on a number of similarities on other variables. For the purposes of this portion of the analysis, the relationship imputation was undone and the initial unknown relationship incidents were kept as a measure of police investigation unknowns.

10. In addition, location type of the incident was unknown for 5% of sexual assaults (versus 1% of physical assaults), most serious weapon present was unknown for 15% (versus 5%), level of physical injury to the victim was unknown for 14% (versus 5%), and relationship between the victim and the accused was unknown for 9% of sexual assault victims (versus 8% of physical assault victims).

11. A census metropolitan area (CMA) consists of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a major urban core. A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000 of which 50,000 or more live in the urban core. To be included

in the CMA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the central urban area, as measured by commuting flows derived from census data. A CMA typically comprises more than one police service.

12. This can include small towns, rural and more remote areas across 800 cities or townships spread out across Canadian provinces and territories that had a police-reported sexual assault between 2009 and 2014.

13. Private property as defined by the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey does not account for whether the victim and the accused were alone during the criminal incident. Presence of third party witnesses or social environment at the time of a criminal incident is not collected on the UCR. In other words, although most sexual assaults occur on private property, it is not known how many of these happened in private with only the victim(s) and the accused present or if they took place on private property while others were present.

14. Open areas include streets, roads or highways (7%), parking lots (2%), transit bus/bus shelters (1%), subway/subway stations (1%), other public transportation and connected facilities (1%), and other open areas (5%).

15. Commercial spaces include commercial dwelling units (motel or hotel rooms, bed and breakfast accommodations, short term rental units) (2%) or other commercial or corporate places (locations where the principal purpose is to conduct legitimate business for profit, including building or warehouse surrounding areas) (5%).

16. School property includes junior kindergarten through to grade 13 schools or equivalent, whether during supervised or unsupervised activities, as well as university, college or business school campuses.

17. Other location types include other non-commercial/corporate places (4%), bars or restaurants (2%), hospitals (0.7%), correctional institutions (0.3%), convenience stores (0.2%), gas stations (0.2%), religious institutions (0.2%), banks or other financial institutions (0.1%), construction sites (0.1%), and homeless shelters/mission locations (0.1%). Approximately 5% of sexual assault incidents were reported as taking place in an unknown location type. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

18. Captures the most serious weapon present during the commission of the sexual assault. Physical force (most serious weapon present in 95% of incidents) involves the use of the accused body strength intended to cause bodily harm or death (e.g., choking, pushing or punching). Threats (0.5% of incidents) include any gesture or vocal indication that conveys to the victim a threat that is construed to imply that death or injury is possible. These proportions exclude incidents where it was unknown whether a weapon was present or not (14%).

19. Weapons are defined as any physical object used or that could be used as a weapon, excluding physical force and threats. The most common weapon present was a knife or other piercing/cutting instrument (29%), followed by a club or blunt instrument (7%). Over half (55%) of incidents reported as having a weapon present involved a weapon 'not otherwise specified'.

20. Injuries are defined on the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey as: 1) no injuries—no visible physical injury at the time of the incident though weapons or physical force were used; 2) minor physical injury—physical injury that required no professional medical treatment or only some first injury aid (e.g., band aid, ice, etc.); and 3) major physical injury—physical injury that is more than “trifling” or “transient” in nature and that injury required professional medical attention at the scene or transportation to a medical facility.

21. Victim physical injury level is reported as unknown when the extent of injuries to the victim could not be determined by police though weapons or physical force that were used against the victim.

22. Among sexual assaults reported by police between 2009 and 2014, incidents involving youth accused aged 12 to 17 were less likely to be charged than incidents involving adult accused (56% versus 73%).

23. Females accused of sexual assault were less likely than their male counterparts to be charged by police (55% versus 69%). Of sexual assault victims where an accused was identified, those victimized by an intimate partner (77%) or a stranger (74%) were among the most likely to see their assailant charged by police, while victims sexually assaulted by a casual acquaintance (63%) or a friend (61%) were among the least likely to see their perpetrator charged.

24. Victims include all victims of sexual assault reported by police between 2009 and 2014, whether or not an accused was identified in connection with the incident, and irrespective of whether a charge was laid, unless otherwise specified.

25. If all victims are considered irrespective of whether there was an accused formally identified by police or a charge laid, 81% of victims were sexually assaulted by someone known to them and 19% were victimized by a stranger.

26. Casual acquaintance includes social relationships which are neither long-term nor close (includes known, by sight only, etc.).

27. Includes parents (natural father, mother, or the legal guardian of the victim), other immediate family (natural brother or sister of the victim or step/half/foster/adopted sibling), and any extended family related to the victim either by blood or by marriage except for a victim's spouse (e.g., grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, sister/brother-in-law, parents-in-law, etc.). This category includes children that are step/half/foster/adopted and therefore assume the same relationships to the extended family as a 'natural offspring', and step-parent (step-father or step-mother, legal guardian (excluding an adoptive father or mother) and a spouse (including a common-law spouse) of the victim's biological or adoptive parent). A small proportion of cases where the family-related accused was identified as the step-child (1%) or the child (0.3%) of the victim

was observed; however, it may be the case that these relationships were reported in the opposite relationship direction intended.

28. Requires that the accused be at least one year older in age than the victim at the time of the incident. All analysis that considers accused and victim characteristics together is limited to sexual assault incidents where there was a single accused and a single victim associated with the incident. Incidents with more than one victim or accused are excluded in order to avoid the methodological issue of confounding characteristics for incidents with multiple persons involved. These exclusions represent 13% of sexual assault victims and 3% of accused charged with sexual assault.

29. Sexual offences included in this calculation: sexual assault level 1, 2 and 3; sexual interference; invitation to sexual touching; sexual exploitation; making sexually explicit material available to children; luring a child via a computer; incest corrupting morals of a child; anal intercourse; bestiality; voyeurism; non-consensual distribution of intimate images; and other sexual violations. Excludes prostitution, commodification of sexual activity, or human trafficking offences.

30. A similar proportion of male and female child victims were sexually assaulted by a family member (47% and 53%, respectively), and by a stranger (4% and 5%).

31. Classifying physical assaults as pedophilia would not apply given that physical assault is not a crime of a sexual nature. However, for reference, 2% of physical assaults involved a victim who was 13 years of age and younger, an accused who was 16 years of age and older, and at least a five year age gap between them.

32. When a relationship between the victim and the accused is family-related, categories include: parent (natural father or mother of the victim, the legal guardian), other immediate family (natural brother or sister of the victim or step/half/foster/adopted family brother or sister), extended family related to the victim either by blood or by marriage except for a victim's spouse (e.g., grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, sister/brother-in-law, parents-in-law, etc.). This category includes children that are step/half/foster/adopted and therefore assume the same relationships to the extended family as a 'natural offspring', and step-parent (step-father or step-mother, legal guardian (excluding an adoptive father or mother) and a spouse (including a common-law spouse) of the victim's biological or adoptive parent). A small proportion of cases where the family-related accused was identified as the step-child (1%) or the child (0.3%) of the victim was observed; however, it may be the case that these relationships were reported in the opposite relationship direction intended.

33. When a child victim is concerned, a casual acquaintance can and may often include someone who was known to the older family members or guardians of the child.

34. Other types of relationships include friend (6%), neighbour (3%), intimate partner (3%), or business relationship, criminal relationship, roommate, or reverse authority figure (collectively representing approximately 1%).

35. Includes 14% by a parent and 10% by a step-parent.

36. For male-against-female sexual assaults, 15% were perpetrated by a family member other than a parent, as were 16% for female-against-female sexual assaults and 14% for female-against-male sexual assaults.

## Detailed data tables

**Table 1**  
**Police-reported sexual assault offences, by province or territory, Canada, 2009 to 2014**

Province and territory	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		2009 to 2014	
	number	rate	total number	average rate <sup>1</sup>										
Newfoundland and Labrador	361	69.9	368	70.5	324	61.7	375	71.2	311	58.9	303	57.3	2,042	64.9
Prince Edward Island	64	45.7	61	43.1	74	51.4	74	50.9	85	58.4	59	40.4	417	48.3
Nova Scotia	695	74.1	681	72.3	700	74.1	673	71.2	650	68.9	615	65.3	4,014	71.0
New Brunswick	572	76.3	591	78.5	553	73.2	490	64.7	462	61.1	434	57.5	3,102	68.5
Quebec	4,279	54.6	4,301	54.2	3,804	47.5	3,999	49.5	3,895	47.8	3,647	44.4	23,925	49.6
Ontario	7,145	55.0	7,741	58.9	7,839	59.1	7,921	59.1	7,663	56.5	7,512	54.9	45,821	57.3
Manitoba	1,272	105.2	1,446	118.4	1,461	118.4	1,460	116.8	1,402	110.8	1,433	111.9	8,474	113.6
Saskatchewan	1,182	114.2	1,151	109.5	1,154	108.2	1,047	96.3	1,064	96.2	1,117	99.5	6,715	103.8
Alberta	2,248	61.1	2,707	72.5	2,791	73.6	2,855	73.4	2,787	69.5	2,814	68.3	16,202	69.8
British Columbia	2,630	59.6	2,874	64.4	2,718	60.4	2,542	56.0	2,437	53.2	2,276	49.1	15,477	57.0
Yukon	74	219.4	67	193.7	64	180.8	77	212.8	76	208.6	79	213.6	437	204.8
Northwest Territories	187	433.4	187	432.1	183	420.7	174	398.6	176	401.1	150	341.1	1,057	404.3
Nunavut	212	650.3	201	602.6	195	570.2	183	526.9	188	530.5	192	532.1	1,171	567.4
<b>Canada</b>	<b>20,921</b>	<b>62.2</b>	<b>22,376</b>	<b>65.8</b>	<b>21,860</b>	<b>63.7</b>	<b>21,870</b>	<b>62.9</b>	<b>21,196</b>	<b>60.3</b>	<b>20,631</b>	<b>58.0</b>	<b>128,854</b>	<b>62.1</b>

1. Average rates are calculated by dividing the sum of police-reported sexual assault incidents for 2009 to 2014 for a given province or territory by the sum of population counts for 2009 to 2014, multiplied by 100,000 population.

**Note:** Sexual assault offences include sexual assault level 1, level 2, and level 3. Counts are based on aggregate provincial data, and are based on the most serious violation in the incident. One incident may involve multiple violations. Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population. Populations are based upon July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

**Table 2**  
**Police-reported sexual assault offences, by census metropolitan area, Canada, 2009 to 2014**

Census metropolitan area <sup>1</sup>	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		2009 to 2014	
	number	rate	total number	average rate <sup>2</sup>										
St. John's	117	61.1	126	64.3	101	50.5	126	62.5	99	48.7	110	53.6	679	56.7
Halifax	310	78.7	317	79.6	354	88.0	339	83.3	306	74.6	306	74.0	1,932	79.7
Moncton <sup>3</sup>	96	70.9	85	61.7	98	70.0	96	67.7	82	57.4	73	47.2	530	62.1
Saint John <sup>3</sup>	115	78.9	130	88.8	112	76.2	74	50.4	85	58.1	79	61.8	595	69.2
Saguenay	123	84.2	101	68.8	81	48.5	122	72.9	66	39.4	49	29.2	542	56.3
Québec	341	45.4	437	57.4	363	47.1	385	49.4	408	51.8	356	44.8	2,290	49.3
Sherbrooke	104	56.2	116	61.9	101	53.1	128	66.4	120	61.5	99	50.1	668	58.2
Trois-Rivières	76	50.6	81	53.4	76	49.8	72	46.9	99	64.2	64	41.3	468	51.0
Montréal	1,860	49.0	1,865	48.5	1,704	43.8	1,702	43.2	1,687	42.3	1,631	40.4	10,449	44.5
Gatineau <sup>4</sup>	156	51.4	134	43.3	151	47.8	174	54.4	114	35.3	135	41.4	864	45.5
Ottawa <sup>5</sup>	304	32.7	396	42.2	371	39.0	390	40.5	489	50.1	529	53.6	2,479	43.2
Kingston	97	60.8	120	74.5	116	71.4	157	96.1	151	91.9	116	70.2	757	77.5
Peterborough	74	61.7	79	65.3	81	66.8	82	67.5	107	87.8	77	63.1	500	68.7
Toronto	2,393	43.1	2,720	48.2	2,733	47.6	2,784	47.8	2,645	44.7	2,767	46.2	16,042	46.3
Hamilton	346	49.1	451	63.6	445	62.1	415	57.2	422	57.4	455	61.1	2,534	58.4
St. Catharines–Niagara	208	47.2	235	53.2	221	49.9	290	65.3	236	53.0	141	31.5	1,331	50.0
Kitchener–Cambridge–Waterloo	342	66.7	319	61.6	344	65.7	308	58.2	298	55.8	350	65.0	1,961	62.1
Brantford	131	94.6	120	86.1	134	95.5	102	72.2	125	87.6	111	77.3	723	85.5
Guelph	62	50.5	64	51.5	95	75.6	100	78.6	84	65.5	71	54.9	476	62.8
London	266	54.8	290	59.4	264	53.7	274	55.2	304	60.7	191	37.8	1,589	53.5
Windsor	202	61.4	198	60.3	197	60.0	195	59.2	163	49.4	170	51.4	1,125	56.9
Barrie	117	59.2	132	65.9	102	50.2	126	61.3	124	59.6	142	67.4	743	60.6
Greater Sudbury	118	71.4	118	71.6	129	78.3	123	74.6	135	81.8	113	68.6	736	74.4
Thunder Bay	93	77.6	102	85.1	93	77.5	91	75.8	107	87.8	93	76.5	579	80.1
Winnipeg	708	93.4	731	95.5	747	96.3	734	92.8	713	88.9	721	91.2	4,354	93.0
Regina	164	77.2	148	68.4	142	64.3	140	61.5	150	64.2	159	66.6	903	66.9
Saskatoon	231	87.2	228	83.9	222	79.8	230	79.7	233	78.3	233	76.3	1,377	80.7
Calgary	585	47.8	653	52.4	668	52.7	666	50.9	700	51.2	638	45.1	3,910	49.9
Edmonton	602	51.5	961	80.7	1,012	83.5	1,044	83.8	1,003	77.8	1,014	76.2	5,636	75.8
Kelowna	100	56.1	122	67.3	144	78.9	109	59.0	80	42.9	56	29.5	611	55.4
Abbotsford–Mission	69	40.4	81	46.9	66	37.9	57	32.3	60	33.7	78	43.2	411	39.0
Vancouver	1,112	48.3	1,221	52.1	1,050	44.2	1,046	43.4	1,082	44.4	1,093	44.1	6,604	46.0
Victoria	164	47.1	193	54.9	172	48.8	135	38.0	178	49.7	179	49.5	1,021	48.0
<b>Canada</b>	<b>20,921</b>	<b>62.2</b>	<b>22,376</b>	<b>65.8</b>	<b>21,860</b>	<b>63.7</b>	<b>21,870</b>	<b>62.9</b>	<b>21,196</b>	<b>60.3</b>	<b>20,631</b>	<b>58.0</b>	<b>128,854</b>	<b>62.1</b>

1. A census metropolitan area (CMA) consists of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a major urban core. A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000 of which 50,000 or more live in the urban core. To be included in the CMA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the central urban area, as measured by commuting flows derived from census data. A CMA typically comprises more than one police service. Census metropolitan area (CMA) populations have been adjusted to follow policing boundaries. The Oshawa CMA is excluded from this table due to the incongruity between the police service jurisdictional boundaries and the CMA boundaries.

2. Average rates are calculated by dividing the sum of police-reported sexual assault incidents for 2009 to 2014 for a given CMA by the sum of population counts for 2009 to 2014, multiplied by 100,000 population.

3. Part way through 2013, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police revised policing boundaries for rural detachments in New Brunswick. This resulted in a change in the CMA boundaries that are determined for the purpose of reporting crime statistics. As such, 2013 data for the New Brunswick CMAs of Saint John and Moncton are not comparable to previous or future years. Further, data from 2014 onward are not comparable to years prior to 2014.

4. Gatineau refers to the Quebec part of the Ottawa–Gatineau CMA.

5. Ottawa refers to the Ontario part of the Ottawa–Gatineau CMA.

**Note:** Counts are based upon the most serious violation in the incident. One incident may involve multiple violations. Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population. Populations are based upon July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division. Counts are based on aggregate provincial data, which represents 99% of police services in Canada.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

**Table 3**  
**Relationship types between victims of sexual assault incidents with a charge laid and their assailant, by victim group type, Canada, 2009 to 2014**

Victim type	Distribution of relationship types							Total
	Intimate partner <sup>1</sup>	Parent <sup>2</sup>	Other family <sup>3</sup>	Casual acquaintance percent	Authority figure <sup>4</sup>	Stranger	Other <sup>5</sup>	
<b>Peer age group<sup>6</sup></b>								
Male victims	8	...	25	34	3	7	22	100
Female victims	37	...	9	28	1	11	14	100
<b>Pedophile group<sup>7</sup></b>								
Male victims	0	16	32	20	14	6	13	100
Female victims	3	24	32	19	7	5	9	100
<b>Other victims<sup>8</sup></b>								
Male victims	4	7	18	27	13	12	19	100
Female victims	16	8	13	26	4	18	15	100
<b>Overall</b>								
Male victims	4	8	24	26	12	9	18	100
Female victims	21	8	15	25	3	13	14	100

... not applicable

- Intimate partner relationships include spouses, separated/divorced partners, boyfriend or girlfriends, ex-boyfriend or ex-girlfriends, and any other intimate relationship types.
- Parents include natural father or mother of the victim, the legal guardian, or step-parent of the victim.
- Other family includes natural brother or sister of the victim or step/half/foster/adopted family brother or sister, child or step-child, and extended family (all others related to the victim either by blood or by marriage, e.g., grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, sister/brother-in-law, parents-in-law, etc.).
- Authority figure includes a person who is in a position of trust or authority and is not a family member.
- Other relationship types include friends, business relationships, criminal relationships, neighbours, roommates, or reverse authority figures.
- Peer age group includes victims sexually assaulted by someone who was within five years of the victim's age (whether older or younger) at the time of the incident and if the accused does not meet the criteria for a pedophile.
- Pedophile age group includes victims aged 13 years and younger who were assaulted by someone who was 16 years of age and older, and where there was an age difference of at least five years between the victim and the accused as per the clinical definition of pedophilia.
- Other victims include those who had an age difference with their assailant that did not fall under either peer age group or pedophile group sexual assault.

**Note:** Proportions are calculated out of 100% for each victim group type and sex group displayed on a horizontal row. Includes police-reported sexual assaults where a charge was laid by police on the incident, and where a single victim matched to a single accused. Excludes incidents where the sex of the victim was unknown (<1%). Proportions of 0 are not true zeros due to rounding. Numbers may not add up to totals due to rounding.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.