

Female offenders in Canada, 2017

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Female offenders in Canada, 2017: Highlights

- In 2017, females accounted for one in four (25%) individuals accused in police-reported criminal incidents in Canada.
- Between 2009 and 2017, the rate of females accused of a *Criminal Code* offence decreased 15%, from 1,534 to 1,311 accused females per 100,000 population. In comparison, a larger decrease (-22%) for male accused was noted over this period.
- Rates of offending among females were highest among those aged 18 to 24 (2,803 accused per 100,000 population) and tended to decline with age—a pattern that is similar to that of male accused.
- Overall rates of female offending were highest in the territories—Nunavut (26,009 females per 100,000 population), Northwest Territories (21,847) and Yukon (10,375)—followed by the provinces of Saskatchewan (4,763) and Manitoba (3,426).
- When looking at all types of crime (excluding *Criminal Code* traffic offences), property crime accounted for the largest proportion (35%) of crime for which females were accused, while drug violations (7%) and other federal statutes (4%) accounted for the smallest.
- Assault (levels 1, 2 and 3) made up the vast majority (70%) of violent crimes committed by females. Of this proportion, most (76%) were level 1 assault.
- Homicides committed by females were more likely to involve a victim who was a family member than those committed by males (54%, versus 30%).
- In 2017, the rate of Aboriginal females accused of homicide was 27 times higher than the rate among non-Aboriginal females (5.4 versus 0.2 accused persons per 100,000 population). In comparison, the rate of Aboriginal males accused of homicide was almost 12 times higher than their non-Aboriginal counterparts (23.1 versus 2.0 accused persons per 100,000 population).
- Around one in five (21%) cases completed in adult criminal court in 2015/2016 involved a female accused. Adult females were less likely than their male counterparts to be found guilty by the courts for violent crimes (40% versus 52%).

Female offenders in Canada, 2017

by Laura Savage

Previous research has shown that females account for a smaller proportion of offenders in Canada, and the rate at which females are accused of committing a crime is lower than the rate among males (Hotton Mahoney 2011; Kong and AuCoin 2008). Compared to the amount of research on male criminality, relatively little is known about the nature and extent of female offending (Liddell and Martinovic 2013).

To gain a better understanding of female offending in Canada, this *Juristat* article presents the most recent data from the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey, the Homicide Survey, the General Social Survey (GSS) on Canadians' Safety (Victimization) and the Integrated Criminal Courts Survey (ICCS).

Text box 1

Age groups and definitions

For this *Juristat* article, "youth" are those aged 12 to 17 and "young adults" are those aged 18 to 24. Adults aged 25 and older are categorized into the following age groups: 25 to 34 years, 35 to 44 years, 45 to 54 years, 55 to 64 years and 65 to 89 years.¹ Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population aged 12 to 89 years. Any rates referring specifically to youth are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population aged 12 to 17 years.

Accused: An accused person is someone who police services have identified in connection with a criminal incident based on evidence linking the accused to the crime.

Most serious violation: Individuals accused of crime are categorized by the most serious violation occurring in the police-reported incident in which they are accused. In incidents with multiple accused involving multiple violations, each individual in the incident will be coded with the most serious violation even if this was not the violation(s) that the person was accused of. It is therefore possible that the most serious violation is not the offence for which an individual was accused, but one committed by another accused in the incident. Moreover, in this type of incident, any charges against the accused may be for less serious offences in the incident.

Drug offences: Include offences under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* such as importation, exportation, trafficking, production and possession of drugs or narcotics. Examples include cannabis/marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and other drugs such as crystal meth, PCP, LSD and ecstasy.

Violent offences: Involve the use or threatened use of violence against a person, including homicide, attempted murder, assault, sexual assault, and robbery. Robbery is considered a violent offence because, unlike other theft offences, it involves the use or threat of violence. See Table 2 for a list of selected offences in this category.

Property offences: Involves an unlawful act to gain property, but does not involve the use or threat of violence against the person. Includes offences such as break and enter, theft and mischief. See Table 2 for a list of selected offences in this category.

Other *Criminal Code* offences: Include crimes such as disturbing the peace and offences against the administration of justice, such as failure to comply with an order, failure to appear and breach of probation.

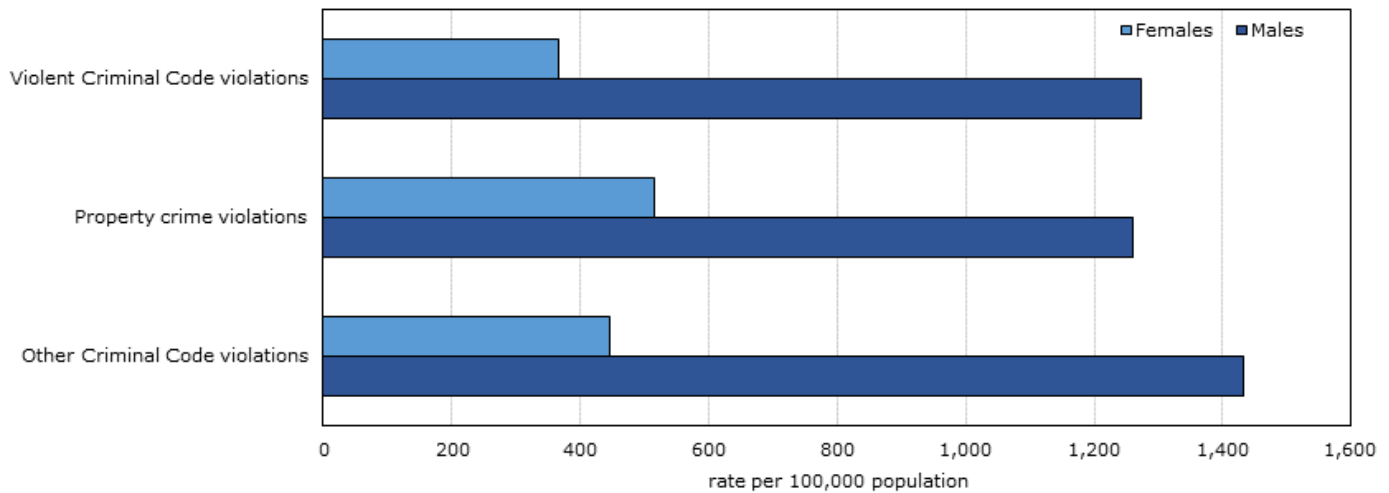
Females account for one in four persons accused of police-reported crimes

In 2017, there were 942,777 persons aged 12 years and older accused in a police-reported criminal incident, with females representing one in four (25%) accused persons.² Property crime accounted for the largest proportion (35%) of crimes for which females were accused, while drug offences (7%) and other federal statutes (4%) accounted for the smallest. One-quarter (25%) of offences that females were accused of were violent. In contrast, the most common crimes for which males were accused were other *Criminal Code* offences (32%), and males were accused of violent crime slightly more often than females (28%).³

Rates of offending were higher among males than females for all three *Criminal Code* violation types (offences excluding drug offences and other federal statutes), with the greatest difference in rate being for other *Criminal Code* offences (1,432 versus 447 per 100,000 population, respectively) (Chart 1).

Chart 1

Persons accused of violating the *Criminal Code*, by sex of the accused and violation type, Canada, 2017



Note: Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population aged 12 to 89 years. Populations based on July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division. Accused persons aged 90 years and older are excluded from analyses due to possible instances of miscoding of unknown age within this age category. Excludes cases where the sex of the accused is unknown. Counts are based on the most serious offence within a violation. Excludes *Criminal Code* traffic violations, drug violations and other federal statutes.

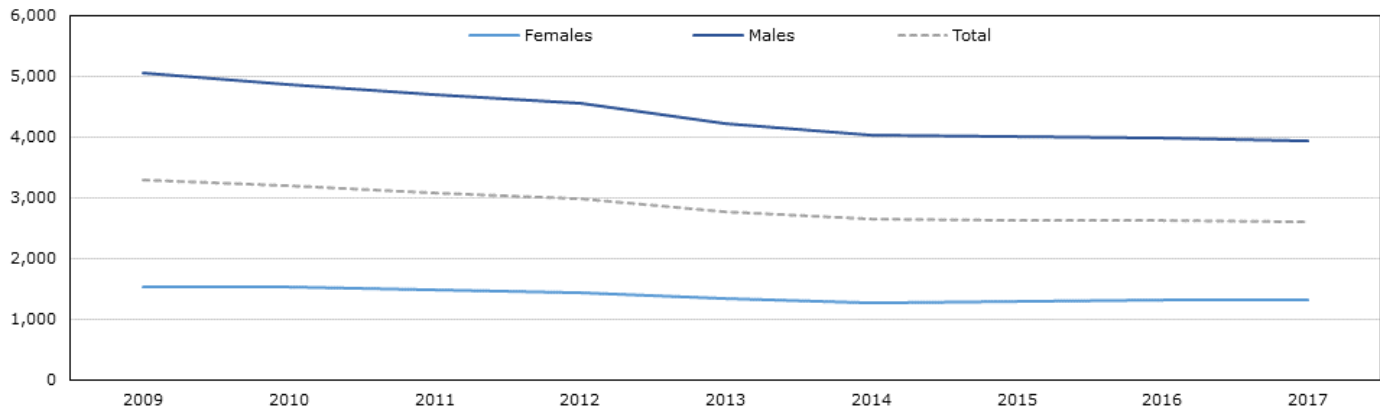
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Between 2009 and 2017, the rate of females accused of a *Criminal Code* offence decreased 15%, from 1,534 to 1,311 accused per 100,000 females aged 12 to 89, respectively (Chart 2).^{4, 5} This decline was less pronounced, however, than the decline in rate for males (-22%). As a result, over this period, the proportion of females accused of *Criminal Code* offences increased slightly from 24% to 25%.

Chart 2

Rates of accused for *Criminal Code* offences, by sex and year, Canada, 2009 to 2017

rate per 100,000 population



Note: Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population aged 12 to 89 years. Populations based upon July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division. Accused persons aged 90 years and older are excluded from analyses due to possible instances of miscoding of unknown age within this age category. Excludes accused where the sex or the age was unknown. Excludes traffic *Criminal Code* violations, drug violations and other federal statutes. Based on the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, Trend Database, which, as of 2009, includes data for 99% of the population in Canada. As a result, numbers may not match those presented elsewhere in the report.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, Trend database.

The rate of violent crime among females declined 19% between 2009 and 2017, from 443 to 360 accused females per 100,000 population, respectively. The proportion of females accused of violent crime has remained relatively stable over this period (around 23%) (data not shown).

Rates of female accused of crime highest in the territories and prairies

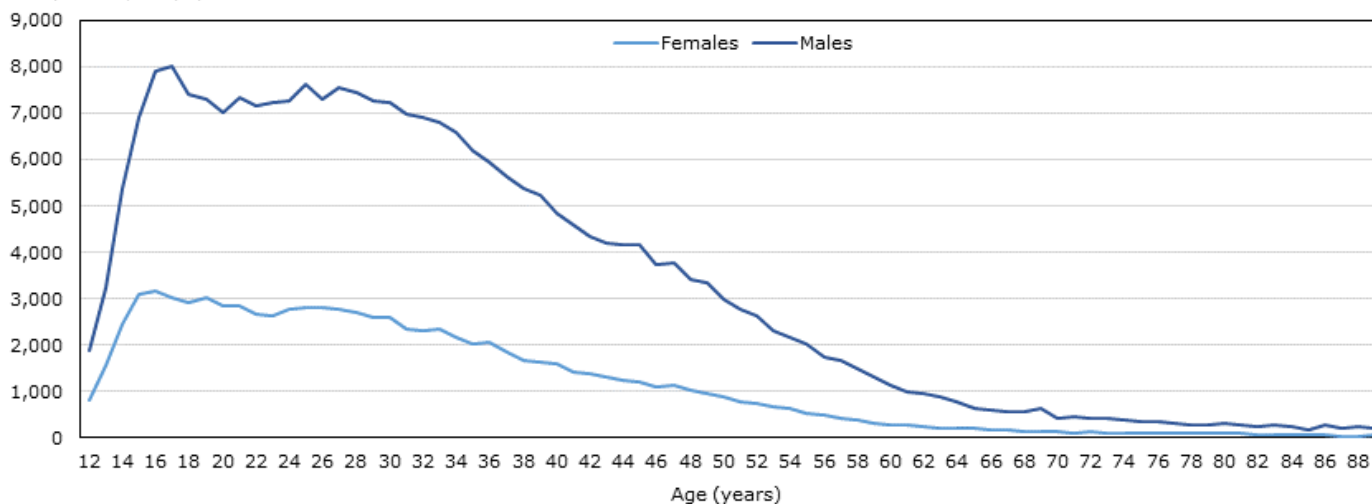
In 2017, rates of female accused were highest in the territories—Nunavut (26,009 per 100,000 females), Northwest Territories (21,847) and Yukon (10,375)—followed by the provinces of Saskatchewan (4,763) and Manitoba (3,426). Rates of male accused were also highest in the territories and the prairie provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba (see Appendix table).

Police-reported violent crime and property crime rates higher among younger women

Overall, females had a rate nearly four times lower than males when it came to being accused of a violent offence in 2017 (366 females versus 1,274 males per 100,000 population). Among accused persons overall, the rate of violent crime was highest among youth and then decreased with age—a finding that is consistent with previous research showing that rates of offending typically peak at age 16 for females and age 17 for males (Chart 3). This pattern was evident among females specifically, with rates of offending highest among youth (773 accused females per 100,000 population aged 12 to 17) (data not shown).

Chart 3
Rate of offending, by sex and age of the accused, Canada, 2017

rate per 100,000 population



Note: Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population aged 12 to 89 years. Populations based upon July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division. Excludes accused persons where the sex or age was unknown. Excludes *Criminal Code* traffic violations, drug violations and other federal statutes. While police may identify children under the age of 12 as accused in criminal incidents, children cannot be charged with an offence under the *Criminal Code*.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

In addition to younger women having higher rates than adult women, there were different patterns noted for some offences. For example, of all females accused of sexual assault level 1, 31% were youth. Similarly, female youth represented 59% of all females accused of non-consensual distribution of intimate images. Likewise, when looking at youth accused, female accused accounted for a greater proportion of accused persons than they did among adults. For example, of all youth accused of indecent or harassing communications, 41% were female (compared to 36% of adult accused).

Among females accused of property crime, the rate of offending was highest for youth aged 12 to 17 (1,096 accused per 100,000 youth) and declined as offenders' age increased (Table 1). This pattern was found among both female and male accused. Regardless of age group, rates of property crime among females were less than half that of males (Table 1).

While the most common property offence for females across all age groups was shoplifting \$5,000 and under (191 accused per 100,000 females), female youth were over-represented as accused in specific property *Criminal Code* offences (Table 2). In particular, 40% of females accused of arson and 20% of females accused of motor vehicle theft were youth.

Assault accounts for the majority of violent crime

Of the 210,946 females aged 12 and older accused of committing a *Criminal Code* offence in 2017, over one in four (28%) were accused of a violent *Criminal Code* offence. Overall, for both female and male accused persons, assault (levels 1, 2 and 3) made up the majority of violent crime. In 2017, 19% of all persons accused of a *Criminal Code* violation⁶—and 60% of all persons accused of a violent violation specifically—were related to assault (levels 1, 2 and 3). This proportion was slightly higher among female accused, with almost three-quarters (70%) of violent crime involving a female accused being related to assault, most of which were level 1 (Table 2).

Rates for male accused were notably higher for some offences like sexual assault and sexual violations against children,⁷ where males accounted for over 95% of accused for these offences. In contrast, females were accused of sexual assault (levels 1, 2 and 3) far less frequently than males, as they accounted for 3% of persons accused of this violation in 2017 (Table 2). However, the difference was not as great for other offences. For example, female accused accounted for over one-

third (37%) of indecent or harassing communications violations and over one-quarter (27%) of level 1 assault violations. As was the case overall, the proportion of females accused of assault decreased as the level of severity increased (Table 2).

Females accused of violent crime most often victimized somebody they knew

Most females accused of violent crime knew their victim. In 2017, in cases where there was a single victim and a single accused,⁸ females most often victimized an intimate partner (36%)⁹ or a casual acquaintance¹⁰ (22%). For over one in ten (12%) female accused, the victim was a stranger—a proportion similar to male accused (15%). Males also most commonly victimized an intimate partner (41%) or a casual acquaintance (19%) (data not shown).¹¹

Like all violence, family-related violence has adverse long- and short-term effects for the victim that can seriously increase the risk of mental illness, substance use, social isolation and further victimization—however, violence in the context of a familial relationship can have even more adverse effects for the victim (Burczycka and Conroy 2018; Taylor-Butts 2015).¹² One-third (33%) of female violent crime was family violence-related—a similar proportion to their male counterparts (31%).

Rate of females accused of violent crime highest in the territories, lowest in Prince Edward Island

Across the provinces and territories, trends in rates of female accused of violent crime tended to follow patterns of crime in general, in that rates in the territories were highest. In 2017, among the provinces specifically, the rate of female accused was highest in Manitoba (1,004 per 100,000 population) and lowest in Prince Edward Island (246) (data not shown).¹³

The large majority (77%) of accused persons identified by police in violent crimes were males. However, the proportion of females accused of violent crime was slightly higher in Yukon (33% of all accused), the Northwest Territories (29%) and Manitoba (29%) than elsewhere in Canada (23%).

Text box 2

Police-reported crime among female youth

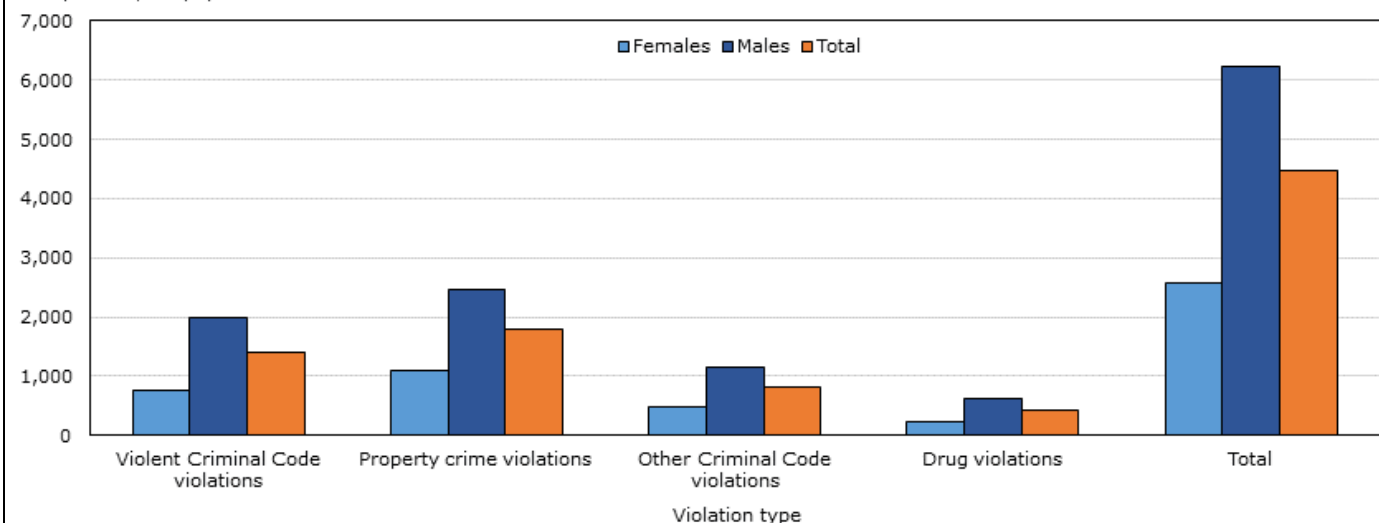
Research shows that the majority of offenders commit their first crime as a youth (Allen and Superle 2016; Farrington et al. 2012). Marked by a period of transition from childhood into adulthood, adolescence is a distinct period of development and offending tends to peak during this stage of life (Smith 2011).

Police-reported data for *Criminal Code* and drug violations from the 2017 Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey show that the rate of offending among female youth was 2,578 accused per 100,000 female youth (Text box 2 chart). Female youth were less likely than male youth to be accused of committing a violation in 2017, with rates at least half of their male counterparts for each violation type (Chart 3).

Text box 2 chart

Rate of youth offending, by violation type and sex of accused, Canada, 2017

rate per 100,000 population



Note: Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population aged 12 to 17 years. Children under age 12 cannot be charged with an offence under the *Criminal Code*. Populations based on July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division. Excludes cases where the sex of the accused is unknown. Counts are based on the most serious offence within a violation.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Text box 2 — end

Police-reported crime among female youth

Police-reported data show that the overall rate of females accused of property crimes in 2017 was highest among youth aged 12 to 17, with a rate of 1,096 per 100,000 females (Table 1). This was slightly higher than the rate for females aged 18 to 24 (1,043 per 100,000) and almost 18 times higher than the rate for females aged 65 to 89 (61 per 100,000). Property crime was also highest among male youth aged 12 to 17 (2,469 accused per 100,000 males)—a rate that was 22 times higher than their counterparts aged 65 to 89 (112) (Table 1).

Female youth accused of committing a property crime were most commonly accused of the following crimes: shoplifting \$5,000 and under (48%), mischief (21%) and theft \$5,000 and under (11%) (data not shown).

Of all females, youth had the highest rate of violent offending (773 accused per 100,000 female youth). Level 1 assault (53%), uttering threats (15%) and level 2 assault (11%) were the violent offences that female youth were most frequently accused of committing.

There were 4,402 completed criminal charges for violent crime in 2015/2016 involving a female youth. With consideration given to lower levels of maturity, youth in Canada who are accused of, and subsequently charged with, committing a criminal offence are tried under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, with rare exceptions. Four in ten (40%) charges resulted in a guilty verdict—a proportion slightly lower than male youth (44%). Over half (57%) of charges involving a female youth were stayed or withdrawn, compared to 51% for male youth.¹⁴ The remaining charges involving a female youth were acquitted or resulted in the accused being found not criminally responsible (Statistics Canada 2017a).

The rate of homicide involving a female accused relatively stable since 2007

While generally accounting for a small proportion of police-reported crime in Canada, homicide is considered to be the most serious criminal offence. Between 2007 and 2017, there were 6,089 people accused of homicide, with the vast majority (89%) being male—a finding that has remained stable since this information was first collected in 1961 (David 2017).

According to the Homicide Survey, there were 679 females accused of homicide during this period, marking an average of 62 per year—compared with an average of 492 males per year—and corresponding to a rate of 0.4 accused per 100,000 females (Table 3).

Between 2007 and 2017, Manitoba recorded 677 homicides overall, translating into an average annual rate of 5.8 homicides per 100,000 population—the highest provincial rate. With regard to females specifically, there were 104 females accused of homicide in Manitoba over this period, translating into an average annual rate of 1.8 accused females per 100,000 population.¹⁵ Females accounted for 15% of all persons accused of homicide in Manitoba during this period—a higher proportion than what was seen nationally (11%) (Table 4).

Compared to males, females accused of homicide are more likely to be young adults

Overall, rates for individuals accused of homicide were highest among those aged 18 to 24 (5.4 accused persons per 100,000 population)—driven mostly by males in this cohort. In contrast, among females, accused rates for homicide were similar across the 12 to 17, 18 to 24, 25 to 34 and 35 to 44 age groups (Table 5).

Compared to their male counterparts, females aged 18 to 24 and 25 to 34 accounted for a larger proportion of females accused of homicide between 2007 and 2017. Over one-half (56%) of females accused of homicide were in these age groups (Table 5).

For almost one-third of females accused of homicide, the victim was a spouse or dating partner

Overall, the vast majority (84%) of accused persons knew their victim. This was the case for 93% of homicides reported between 2007 and 2017 where the accused was female. In particular, three in ten (30%) homicides perpetrated by a female accused involved a victim who was either her spouse or dating partner—a notably higher proportion than their male counterparts (18%) (Table 6).¹⁶

Family homicides were also far more common among female accused compared to males, with 54% involving her spouse, parent, child or other family member.¹⁷ This was the case for 30% of homicides involving a male accused (Table 6).

Rate of Aboriginal females accused of homicide 27 times higher than the rate for non-Aboriginal females

In general, Aboriginal people tend to be over-represented as offenders in the criminal justice system and as victims of crime—a finding that can be tied to intergenerational trauma, colonization, racism and discrimination, as well as lack of funding and culturally appropriate alternatives to imprisonment (Friedland 2009; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015). Previous research suggests that the higher victimization rates among Aboriginal people were related to the presence of risk factors such as homelessness, drug use, experiencing childhood maltreatment or having fair or poor mental health (Boyce 2015).

Between 2007 and 2017, 49% of the females accused of homicide were identified as Aboriginal—a proportion almost double that of their male Aboriginal counterparts (28%). In 2017 specifically, the rate of Aboriginal females accused of homicide was 27 times higher than the rate of non-Aboriginal females (5.4 per 100,000 Aboriginal females, versus 0.2 per 100,000 non-Aboriginal people).¹⁸ Aboriginal males also had a higher rate of being accused of homicide than their non-Aboriginal counterparts (23.1 per 100,000 Aboriginal people versus 2.0 per 100,000 non-Aboriginal people) (data not shown).

Text box 3

Measuring female offending using self-reported victimization data

Collecting information on self-reported experiences of victimization is valuable for exploring the nature and extent of female offending given that not all crimes are brought to the attention of the police (Perreault 2015). Used as a complement to police-reported statistics, the General Social Survey (GSS) on Canadians' Safety (Victimization) asks Canadians aged 15 and older about experiences of victimization for eight offence types which are categorized into three distinct groups: violent victimization, household victimization and theft of personal property. Results from 2014—the most recent data available—show that approximately one in five (19%) Canadians aged 15 and older had been a victim of at least one type of crime in the 12 months preceding the survey.

The GSS on Victimization also asks respondents about characteristics of any incidents they experienced, including information on the number of offenders and the perceived sex and age of the offender(s). According to the 2014 GSS on Victimization, just over one in six (15%) victims of violence in incidents involving a single offender identified the offender as female. Furthermore, the female perpetrator was perceived to be between the ages of 25 and 34 in almost three in ten (28%) violent incidents. It has been shown that only 5%^E of sexual assaults are reported to the police. Since the GSS on Victimization includes sexual assaults not reported to the police—and since sexual assaults are almost exclusively perpetrated by males—this increases the proportion of males among offenders identified in the self-reported data. On the other hand, these numbers exclude some crimes more commonly perpetrated by females, such as criminal harassment or indecent or harassing communications.

While both the GSS on Victimization and the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey are used to measure crime, methodological and conceptual differences exist between the two surveys. As such, direct comparisons should not be made between the surveys (see Wallace et al. 2009 for more information).

One in five completed adult criminal court cases involved a female accused

Previous research has shown that females are less likely than males to be charged with a criminal offence and less likely to go to court when they are charged (Hotton Mahoney et al. 2017; Rotenberg 2017).

The Integrated Criminal Court Survey (ICCS) collects information on Canadian criminal court cases in both youth courts and adult criminal courts, including information on types of offences and sentencing outcomes. According to the ICCS, approximately one in five (21%) cases completed in adult criminal court in 2015/2016 involved a female accused.¹⁹ The proportion of females was similar for both youth and adult offenders, and the proportion of charges completed in youth court involving a female youth was similar to that observed in adult criminal courts (19%).²⁰

Less than half of court cases involving a female accused resulted in a guilty finding

In 2015/2016, there were 74,424 completed adult criminal court cases related to violent crimes, with 13,316 of these (18%) involving a female (Table 7).²¹ Criminal court cases for violent crimes involving an adult female accused were less likely than those with male accused to result in guilty decisions (40% versus 52%).

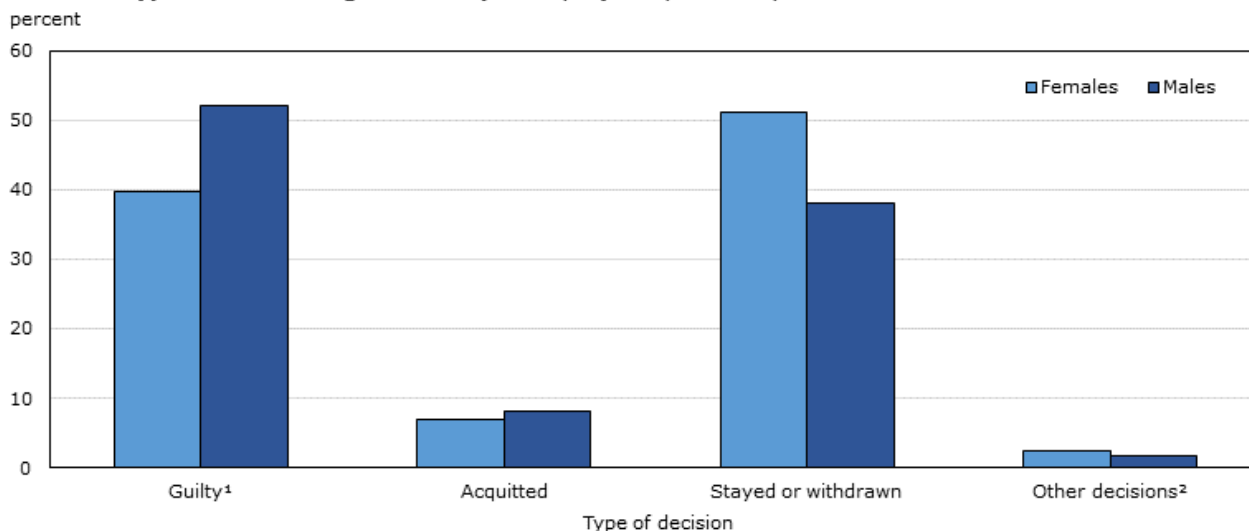
Regardless of the type of violent offence, cases involving an adult male accused tended to result in a guilty decision more often than for female accused, with the exception of sexual assault cases, where the proportions convicted were similar

among females and males (Table 7).²² Larger differences were observed for criminal harassment cases, where about one-quarter (26%) of cases involving a female were found guilty, compared with half (50%) for males. (Table 7).

Violent crimes more likely to end in a guilty decision for males, stayed or withdrawn for females

In 2015/2016, while criminal court cases involving a male accused most commonly ended with findings of guilt (52%), cases with female accused were most commonly stayed or withdrawn (51%)²³ (Chart 4).

Chart 4
Decision type for crimes against the person, by sex, Canada, 2015/2016



1. Includes guilty of the charged offence, of an included offence, of an attempt of the charged offence, or of an attempt of an included offence. This category also includes guilty pleas, and cases where an absolute or conditional discharge has been imposed.

2. Includes final decisions of found not criminally responsible and waived out of province or territory. This category also includes any order where a guilty decision was not recorded, the court's acceptance of a special plea, cases which raise Charter arguments and cases where the accused was found unfit to stand trial.

Note: Excludes youth. A case that has more than one charge is represented by the charge with the "most serious offence". Crimes against the person include homicide, attempted murder, robbery, sexual assault, other sexual offences, major assault, common assault, uttering threats and criminal harassment. Data excludes information from municipal courts in Quebec due to the unavailability of data. See Statistics Canada data table 35-10-0027-01.

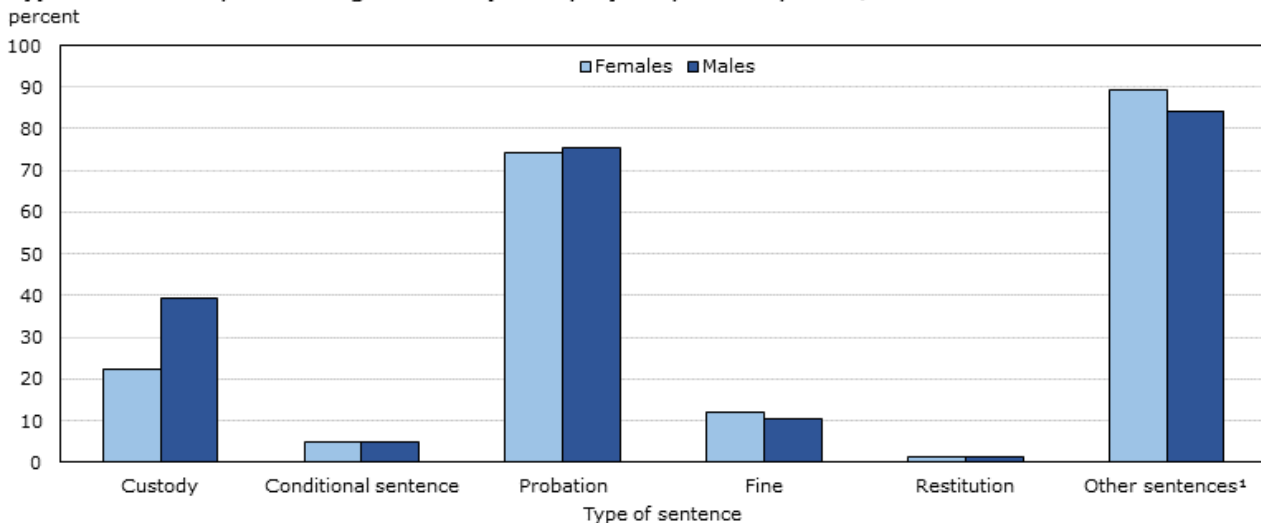
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Integrated Criminal Courts Survey.

Research suggests that cases involving a female accused are less likely to result in multiple charges and that females are more likely to be first-time offenders, giving the courts the opportunity to divert these females out of the criminal justice system (Kong and AuCoin 2008).

Females less likely than males to be sentenced to custody for violent crimes

In 2015/2016, adult female offenders who received a guilty decision for violent crimes were almost half as likely as their male counterparts to receive a custodial sentence (22% versus 39%) (Chart 5). In relation to males, females were slightly more likely to receive a monetary fine (12% versus 10%) or another type of sentence (e.g., an absolute or conditional discharge, a suspended sentence or a community service order) (89%, versus 84% for males) (Chart 5).

Chart 5
Type of sentence, crimes against the person, by sex, Canada, 2015/2016



1. Other sentences include absolute discharge, prohibition, seizure, forfeiture, compensation, pay purchaser, essays, apologies, counseling programs and conditional discharge.

Note: Excludes youth. A case that has more than one charge is represented by the charge with the "most serious offence". Crimes against the person include homicide, attempted murder, robbery, sexual assault, other sexual offences, major assault, common assault, uttering threats and criminal harassment. Cases can have more than one sentence and, as such, totals may not add up to 100%. Information on the sex of the accused is not available from Manitoba. See Statistics Canada data table 35-10-0030-01.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Integrated Criminal Courts Survey.

The *Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA)* provides for more age-appropriate responses to youth crime, acknowledging that extrajudicial measures which do not involve the formal court system "are often the most appropriate and effective way to address youth crime [and] allow for effective and timely interventions focused on correcting offending behaviour" (*YCJA* 2003). The *YCJA* aims to divert youth offenders involved in less serious types of crime with extrajudicial measures, and, as a result, reduce "the over-reliance on incarceration for non-violent young persons." At the same time, the *YCJA* reserves the most serious intervention for the most serious crime (*YCJA* 2003).

In accordance with *YCJA* principles, a smaller proportion of youth than adults were sentenced to custody, and the gap between female and male youth was smaller than it was among adults (12% of female youth and 20% of male youth). Instead, approximately two-thirds (67%) of youth who received a guilty decision were sentenced to probation—this proportion was slightly higher for males (68%) than females (62%) (Statistics Canada 2017b).

Summary

This *Juristat* article uses data from multiple surveys to provide information on female offending in Canada. Results from the 2017 Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey show that females offend at a rate much lower than males, regardless of whether they are a youth or an adult. In 2017, females accounted for 25% of all persons accused of a criminal offence and 23% of all accused of a violent violation. Between 2009 and 2017, the rate of females accused of violent crime has decreased 19%, from 443 to 360 females per 100,000 population, respectively. Similar to males, most violent crimes involving a female were assault (levels 1, 2 and 3—70%), with most (76%) being level 1 assault, and this was also one of the violent crimes for which the proportion of female offenders was highest (27% of accused), just behind indecent or harassing communications (37% of accused being females).

Between 2007 and 2017, there were 679 females accused of homicide. In 2017 specifically, there were 70—one fewer than in 2016. However, the overall rate of females accused of homicide has remained consistent year-over-year since 2007. Between 2007 and 2017, Manitoba recorded the highest provincial rate of females accused of homicide (1.8 accused per 100,000 females).

In 2015/2016, criminal court cases involving adult females were less likely than those involving adult males to receive a guilty verdict for crimes against the person (40% versus 52%). Of cases with a guilty verdict, those involving females were about half as likely as those involving males to receive a custodial sentence (22% versus 39%). This disparity was similar among youth cases that resulted in a conviction (12% for females versus 20% for males).

Survey description

This report uses data from multiple surveys: the 2017 Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, the 2017 Homicide Survey, the 2014 General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization) and the 2015 Integrated Criminal Courts Survey.

Uniform Crime Reporting Survey

The Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey was developed in 1962 with the cooperation and assistance of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. UCR Survey data reflects reported crime that has been substantiated through police investigation from all separate federal, provincial and municipal police services in Canada. Information on all criminal incidents that are reported to police in Canada is collected by Statistics Canada through the annual UCR Survey. The UCR Survey collects detailed information on many aspects of crime, including the number of criminal incidents, the clearance status of those incidents, as well as information about the accused when an accused person has been identified. For the purpose of this analysis, *Criminal Code* traffic violations and other federal statute violations are excluded.

Homicide Survey

The Homicide Survey collects police-reported data on the characteristics of all homicide incidents, victims and accused persons in Canada.

Integrated Criminal Courts Survey

The Integrated Criminal Courts Survey (ICCS) is administered by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics at Statistics Canada in collaboration with provincial and territorial government departments responsible for criminal courts in Canada. The survey collects statistical information on adult and youth court cases involving *Criminal Code* and other federal statute charges. The primary unit of analysis is a case. A case is defined as one or more charges against an accused person or company that were processed by the courts at the same time and received a final decision. A case combines all charges against the same person having one or more key overlapping dates (date of offence, date of initiation, date of first appearance, date of decision, or date of sentencing) into a single case.

General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization)

In 2014, Statistics Canada conducted the victimization cycle of the General Social Survey (GSS) for the sixth time. Previous cycles were conducted in 1988, 1993, 1999, 2004 and 2009. 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. This report is based on Cycle 28 of the GSS on Victimization conducted in 2014. The target population was persons aged 15 and over living in the Canadian provinces and territories, except for people living full-time in institutions. Once a household was selected and contacted by phone, an individual 15 years or older was randomly selected to respond to the survey.

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Notes

^E use with caution

1. Accused persons aged 90 and older are excluded from the analysis due to the possible miscoding of age within this age category.
2. Excludes *Criminal Code* traffic violations. Excludes accused persons where the age or sex was unknown. While police may identify children under age 12 as accused in criminal incidents, they cannot be charged with an offence under the *Criminal Code*.
3. Other *Criminal Code* violations include *Criminal Code* violations that are not covered under violent, property, or drug offences (e.g., possession of weapons, failure to comply with order, breach of probation, failure to appear).
4. All rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population aged 12 to 89 years. Populations are based on July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division.
5. Based on the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, Trend Database, which, as of 2009, includes data for 99% of the population in Canada.
6. Includes crimes against the person, crimes against property and other *Criminal Code* offences. Excludes traffic violations, violations related to the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* and other federal statutes.
7. Includes, for example, sexual interference, invitation to sexual touching, corrupting morals of a child and luring a child via a computer.
8. Incidents with more than one accused and/or more than one victim are excluded from analyses that cross victim and accused characteristics in order to avoid the methodological issue of confounding characteristics for incidents with multiple accused or victims.
9. Includes current and former dating partners and spouses, and other intimate relationships.
10. A casual acquaintance is defined as someone with whom the accused has a social relationship that was neither long-term nor close, or someone the victim knew by sight only.
11. The relationship between the victim and the accused is based on cases where there is a single victim and a single accused. Other relationship categories include a parent, a child, a sibling, a friend and all other family members related by blood, marriage (including common-law) or adoption (e.g., grandparents, grandchildren, nephews, nieces, cousins and in-laws).
12. For the purpose of this *Juristat*, family violence refers to violent *Criminal Code* offences perpetrated by a family member that come to the attention of the police. Family members include spouses, parents, children, siblings and other extended family.
13. It is important to note that caution should be exercised when interpreting rates in provinces and territories with small populations given the fact that small changes in female offending would greatly impact rates.
14. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. Less than 1% of court cases involving a female youth in 2015/2016 resulted in an acquittal or another decision for violent crime.
15. Rate per 100,000 is based on Homicide Survey aggregate data and population counts for each individual year, then pooled to deduce the overall rate over the ten-year period.
16. In cases where there are multiple accused persons, the relationship is based on the closest accused-victim relationship.

17. Includes all other family members related by blood, marriage (including common-law) or adoption, and siblings. Excludes dating and other intimate partners.
18. Aboriginal identity of accused persons is reported by police to the Homicide Survey and includes First Nations, Inuit, Métis and unspecified Aboriginal identity. Percentages include unknowns.
19. Excludes *Criminal Code* traffic offences.
20. Excludes cases where the sex was unknown.
21. Includes homicide, attempted murder, robbery, sexual assault, other sexual offences, major assault, common assault, uttering threats and criminal harassment.
22. There were 40 sexual assault court cases involving a female accused, with 18 resulting in a guilty verdict (45%). This is in comparison to 2,564 sexual assault cases involving a male accused, of which 1,138 (44%) resulted in a guilty finding.
23. This category includes stays, withdrawals, dismissals and discharges at preliminary inquiry as well as court referrals to alternative or extrajudicial measures and restorative justice programs. These decisions all refer to the court stopping criminal proceedings against the accused.

Detailed data tables

Table 1
Persons accused of property offences, by age group and sex of accused, Canada, 2017

Age group of accused (years)	Females		Males		Total	
	number	rate	number	rate	number	rate
12 to 17	12,273	1,096	29,219	2,469	41,492	1,801
18 to 24	16,845	1,043	39,641	2,311	56,486	1,696
25 to 34	23,481	922	55,579	2,175	79,060	1,550
35 to 44	14,478	596	36,785	1,523	51,263	1,058
45 to 54	8,846	353	22,772	906	31,618	630
55 to 64	3,999	158	9,642	386	13,641	271
65 and older	1,930	61	3,041	112	4,971	85
Total	81,852	515	196,679	1,260	278,531	884

Note: Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population aged 12 to 89 years. Populations based on July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division. Accused persons aged 90 years and older are excluded from analyses due to possible instances of miscoding of unknown age within this age category. Excludes cases where the sex of the accused is unknown. Counts are based on the most serious offence within a violation.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Table 2
Persons accused of police-reported crime for selected offences, by sex of the accused, Canada, 2017

Type of offence	Female accused		Male accused		Total accused	
	number	rate	number	rate	number	rate
Total offences	236,841	1,490	705,936	4,523	942,777	2,993
Total <i>Criminal Code</i> offences¹	210,946	1,327	619,087	3,966	830,033	2,635
Total violent crime	58,115	366	198,850	1,274	256,965	816
Homicide ²	69	0	450	3	519	2
Other violations causing death ³	13	0	52	0	65	0
Attempted murder	80	1	546	3	626	2
Sexual assault—all levels	307	2	10,624	68	10,931	35
Sexual assault level 3, aggravated	3	0	94	1	97	0
Sexual assault level 2, weapon or bodily harm	21	0	259	2	280	1
Sexual assault, level 1	283	2	10,271	66	10,554	34
Other sexual violations	199	1	5,065	32	5,264	17
Sexual violations specific to children ⁴	173	1	4,530	29	4,703	15
Sexual violations not specific to children ⁵	26	0	535	3	561	2
Assault—all levels	40,403	254	114,102	731	154,505	490
Assault level 3, aggravated	597	4	2,760	18	3,357	11
Assault level 2, weapon or bodily harm	9,060	57	27,608	177	36,668	116
Assault level 1	30,746	193	83,734	536	114,480	363
Other assaults ⁶	2,678	17	6,368	41	9,046	29
Firearms—use of, discharge, pointing	151	1	1,385	9	1,536	5
Robbery ⁷	1,806	11	10,705	69	12,511	40
Forcible confinement, kidnapping or abduction ⁸	316	2	3,204	21	3,520	11
Trafficking in persons	45	0	191	1	236	1
Extortion	164	1	957	6	1,121	4
Intimidation ⁹	200	1	1,031	7	1,231	4
Criminal harassment	2,852	18	10,464	67	13,316	42
Uttering threats	6,499	41	28,376	182	34,875	111
Indecent/harassing communications	1,806	11	3,126	20	4,932	16
Non-consensual distribution of intimate images	165	1	750	5	915	3
Other violent <i>Criminal Code</i> violations ¹⁰	362	2	1,454	9	1,816	6
Total property crime	81,852	515	196,679	1,260	278,531	884
Breaking and entering ¹¹	4,784	30	26,479	170	31,263	99
Possession of stolen property ¹²	4,011	25	13,750	88	17,761	56
Trafficking in stolen goods	179	1	704	5	883	3
Theft of motor vehicle ¹³	2,633	17	9,653	62	12,286	39
Theft over \$5,000 ¹⁴	403	3	1,350	9	1,753	6
Theft of \$5,000 or under ¹⁵	9,422	59	26,625	171	36,047	114
Shoplifting ¹⁶	30,375	191	39,854	255	70,229	223
Fraud	8,734	55	18,601	119	27,335	87
Identity theft	214	1	575	4	789	3
Identity fraud	880	6	2,057	13	2,937	9
Mischief ¹⁷	19,956	126	55,858	358	75,814	241
Arson	261	2	1,173	8	1,434	5
Total other <i>Criminal Code</i> offences	70,979	447	223,558	1,432	294,537	935
Weapons violations ¹⁸	2,031	13	12,539	80	14,570	46
Prostitution ¹⁹	17	0.1	46	0.3	63	0.2
Disturb the peace	14,863	94	36,896	236	51,759	164
Administration of justice ²⁰	50,465	318	158,590	1,016	209,055	664
Other violations ²¹	3,603	23	15,487	99	19,090	61

See notes at the end of the table.

Table 2 — end
Persons accused of police-reported crime for selected offences, by sex of the accused, Canada, 2017

Type of offence	Female accused		Male accused		Total accused	
	number	rate	number	rate	number	rate
Drug offences	17,464	110	69,328	444	86,792	276
Possession—cannabis	7,160	45	33,317	213	40,477	128
Trafficking, production or distribution—cannabis	1,217	8	5,273	34	6,490	21
Possession, trafficking, production or distribution—other drugs ²²	9,087	57	30,738	197	39,825	126
Other federal statute violations	8,431	53	17,521	112	25,952	82
<i>Youth Criminal Justice Act</i>	1,064	7	3,015	19	4,079	13
Other federal statutes ²³	7,367	46	14,506	93	21,873	69

1. Includes violent crime, property crime and other *Criminal Code* offences. Excludes drug offences and other federal statutes.
2. Includes 1st degree murder, 2nd degree murder, manslaughter and infanticide. Homicide data are extracted from the Homicide Survey database. In general, the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR) counts any adult and youth charged for the year in which the charge was laid. The homicide totals, which come from the Homicide Survey, count any adult or youth charged with a homicide that occurred in the reference year, regardless of when the charge was laid.
3. Includes criminal negligence causing death and other related violations causing death.
4. Includes sexual interference, invitation to sexual touching, sexual exploitation, making sexually explicit material available to children, parent or guardian procuring sexual activity, householder permitting sexual activity, luring a child via a computer, agreement or arrangement - sexual offence against child and bestiality in the presence of, or incites, a child.
5. Includes sexual exploitation of a person with a disability, incest, corrupting morals of a child, anal intercourse, bestiality - commit or compel person, voyeurism and other sexual violations.
6. Includes unlawfully causing bodily harm, assault against peace officer - level 1, assault against peace officer with a weapon or causing bodily harm - level 2, aggravated assault against peace officer - level 3, criminal negligence causing bodily harm and other assaults.
7. Includes robbery and robbery to steal a firearm.
8. Includes abduction under 14, not by a parent or guardian, abduction under 16, removal of children from Canada, abduction under 14 contravening a custody order, abduction under 14 by a parent or guardian, forcible confinement and kidnapping.
9. Includes intimidation of a justice system participant or a journalist and intimidation of a non-justice participant.
10. Includes conspiracy to commit murder, trap likely to or causing bodily harm, hostage-taking, explosives causing death/bodily harm, arson, failure to comply with mandatory safeguards in relation to medical assistance in dying, forging or destroying documents related to assistance requests with criminal intent and other violent violations.
11. Includes breaking and entering, breaking and entering to steal a firearm and break and enter to steal a firearm from a motor vehicle.
12. Includes possession of stolen property, possession of stolen goods over \$5,000 and possession of stolen goods \$5,000 or under.
13. Theft of a motor vehicle over \$5,000, motor vehicle theft and theft of a motor vehicle \$5,000 or under.
14. Includes theft over \$5,000 and theft over \$5,000 from a motor vehicle.
15. Includes theft \$5,000 or under and theft \$5,000 or under from a motor vehicle.
16. Includes shoplifting over \$5,000 and shoplifting \$5,000 or under.
17. Includes mischief, mischief in relation to cultural property, hate-motivated mischief relating to property used by identifiable group, and mischief relating to war memorials.
18. Includes possession of weapons, weapons possession contrary to order, weapons trafficking, unauthorized importing or exporting of firearms, firearms documentation or administration, unsafe storage of firearms, firearm transfers or serial numbers, and other offensive weapons.
19. Includes living off the avails of prostitution of a person under 18, communicating to provide sexual services for consideration, obtaining or communicating with a person under 18 for purpose of sex, stopping or impeding traffic for the purpose of offering, providing or obtaining sexual services for consideration and other prostitution offences.
20. Includes failure to comply with order, escapes or helps to escape from lawful custody, prisoner unlawfully at large, failure to appear, breach of probation and other offences against the administration of law and justice.
21. Includes offences such as counterfeiting, child pornography, indecent acts, and terrorism.
22. Includes all other drugs listed under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CSDA)*, such as cocaine, methamphetamine or ecstasy (MDA), heroin and opioids such as Fentanyl, barbiturates, LSD, and "date rape" drugs. Trafficking and production of other drugs includes the possession, production, selling or importing of anything (such as precursors) with the knowledge that it will be used in the production or trafficking of a controlled substance (as defined in section 2(1) of the *CSDA*).
23. Includes violations related to the *Bankruptcy Act*, the *Income Tax Act*, the *Canada Health Act*, the *Customs Act*, the *Competition Act*, the *Excise Act*, the *Firearms Act*, the *National Defence Act* and other federal statutes.

Note: Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population aged 12 to 89 years. Populations based on July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division. Includes accused persons between the ages of 12 and 89 years. Excludes cases where the sex of the accused is unknown. Counts are based on the most serious offence within a violation.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Table 3
Persons accused of homicide, by sex of accused and year, Canada, 2007 to 2017

Year	Female accused		Male accused		Total accused	
	number	rate	number	rate	number	rate
2007	58	0.40	500	3.57	558	1.97
2008	53	0.37	504	3.50	557	1.94
2009	64	0.44	535	3.72	599	2.00
2010	66	0.44	524	3.61	590	2.01
2011	59	0.39	555	3.78	614	2.07
2012	59	0.39	492	3.31	551	1.83
2013	56	0.37	441	2.93	497	1.64
2014	59	0.38	421	2.77	480	1.56
2015	64	0.41	523	3.41	587	1.90
2016	71	0.45	456	2.94	527	1.68
2017	70	0.44	459	2.93	529	1.67

Note: Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population aged 12 years and older. Populations based on July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division. Excludes cases where the sex of the accused is unknown.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

Table 4
Persons accused of homicide, by province and territory and sex of accused, Canada, 2007 to 2017

Province and territories	Females		Males		Total	
	number	rate	number	rate	number	rate
Newfoundland and Labrador	3	0.1	37	1.5	40	0.8
Prince Edward Island	2	0.3	4	0.6	6	0.4
Nova Scotia	20	0.4	151	3.4	171	1.9
New Brunswick	7	0.2	93	2.6	100	1.4
Quebec	59	0.2	686	1.8	745	1.0
Ontario	227	0.3	1,823	2.9	2,050	1.6
Manitoba	104	1.8	573	9.9	677	5.8
Saskatchewan	53	1.0	417	8.2	470	4.6
Alberta	114	0.6	892	4.8	1,006	2.7
British Columbia	70	0.3	660	3.0	730	1.7
Yukon	3	1.8	13	7.5	16	4.7
Northwest Territories	6	3.1	25	12.3	31	7.8
Nunavut	11	8.1	36	24.5	47	16.6
Canada	679	0.4	5,410	3.3	6,089	1.8

Note: This table calculates average annual numbers and rates and is therefore not directly comparable with other analytical products. Annual populations are based on July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division. Excludes cases where the sex of the accused is unknown.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

Table 5
Persons accused of homicide, by age group and sex of accused, Canada, 2007 to 2017

Age group of the accused (years)	Females		Males		Total	
	number	rate	number	rate	number	rate
12 to 17	60	0.5	482	3.5	542	2.0
18 to 24	153	0.9	1,809	9.8	1,962	5.4
25 to 34	226	0.9	1,542	5.9	1,768	3.4
35 to 44	139	0.5	729	2.8	868	1.7
45 to 54	72	0.2	509	1.8	581	1.0
55 to 64	22	0.1	198	0.8	220	0.4
65 and older	7	0.0	141	0.5	148	0.3
Total	679	0.4	5,410	3.3	6,089	1.8

Note: Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population aged 12 years and older. This table calculates average annual numbers and rates and is therefore not directly comparable with other analytical products. Annual populations are based on July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division. Excludes cases where the sex of the accused is unknown.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

Table 6
Homicides by closest accused-victim relationship and sex of closest accused, Canada, 2007 to 2017

Relationship of the accused to the victim	Female accused		Male accused	
	number	percent	number	percent
Spouse ¹	122	23	559	13
Dating or other intimate partner ²	38	7	216	5
Parent ³	93	17	179	4
Child ⁴	27	5	270	6
Other family ⁵	48	9	312	7
Close friend	17	3	339	8
Stranger	35	7	778	18
Other ⁶	153	29	1,774	40
Unknown	4	...	34	...
Total	537	100	4,461	100

... not applicable

1. Includes current and former legally married and common-law spouses.

2. Includes current and former boyfriends and girlfriends, extra-marital lovers and other intimate relationships.

3. Includes biological, step, adoptive and foster parents.

4. Includes biological, step, adoptive and foster children.

5. Includes all other family members related by blood (e.g., siblings), marriage (including common-law) or adoption.

6. Includes neighbours, casual acquaintances, authority figures, reverse authority figures, business relationships, criminal relationships, and "other" relationships.

Note: Analysis of accused-victim relationships is based on solved homicides (i.e., homicides for which police have identified an accused person) where there is a single victim and a single accused. Percentages exclude unknowns.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

Table 7
Criminal Code offences involving an adult resulting in a guilty verdict, Canada, 2015/2016

Type of offence	Females			Males		
	number of total cases	number found guilty	percent found guilty	number of total cases	number found guilty	percent found guilty
Crimes against the person	13,316	5,280	40	61,108	31,755	52
Homicide	31	12	39	172	84	49
Attempted murder	19	4	21	158	27	17
Robbery	379	189	50	2,701	1,663	62
Sexual assault	40	18	45	2,564	1,138	44
Other sexual offences	85	40	47	3,269	1,929	59
Major assault	3,739	1,655	44	13,062	7,241	55
Common assault	6,446	2,338	36	21,759	10,698	49
Uttering threats	1,829	796	44	12,597	6,818	54
Criminal harassment	392	100	26	2,531	1,272	50
Other crimes against the person	356	128	36	2,295	885	39
Crimes against property	20,988	10,385	49	54,902	35,619	65
Theft	11,390	5,900	52	21,796	14,884	68
Break and enter	1,115	603	54	7,601	5,473	72
Fraud	3,438	2,108	61	7,234	4,851	67
Mischief	2,066	872	42	9,591	5,325	56
Possession of stolen property	2,799	807	29	7,398	4,130	56
Other property crimes ¹	180	95	53	1,282	956	75

1. Includes crimes related to the administration of justice, such as fail to appear, breach of probation, unlawfully at large, failure to comply with order and other administration of justice offences.

Note: A case that has more than one charge is represented by the charge with the "most serious offence". Excludes cases where the sex of the accused is unknown. See Statistics Canada data table 35-10-0027-01.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Integrated Criminal Courts Survey.

Appendix table
Persons accused of police-reported crime, by province and territory and sex, Canada, 2017

Province and territory	Females		Males		Total	
	number	rate	number	rate	number	rate
Newfoundland and Labrador	3,493	1,473	9,002	3,926	12,495	2,679
Prince Edward Island	592	882	1,656	2,576	2,248	1,710
Nova Scotia	6,088	1,421	16,781	4,085	22,869	2,725
New Brunswick	2,929	963	9,978	3,334	12,907	2,139
Quebec	35,180	972	126,093	3,517	161,273	2,238
Ontario	66,775	1,070	207,279	3,447	274,054	2,236
Manitoba	18,977	3,426	44,484	8,075	63,461	5,744
Saskatchewan	22,618	4,763	54,621	11,267	77,239	8,049
Alberta	43,427	2,429	120,501	6,575	163,928	4,528
British Columbia	27,668	1,300	94,424	4,522	122,092	2,896
Yukon	1,690	10,375	3,932	23,200	5,622	16,915
Northwest Territories	3,880	21,847	10,139	54,397	14,019	38,515
Nunavut	3,524	26,009	7,046	47,952	10,570	37,425
Canada	236,841	1,490	705,936	4,523	942,777	2,993

Note: Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 population aged 12 to 89 years. Populations based on July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division. Includes accused persons between the ages of 12 and 89 years. Excludes cases where the sex of the accused is unknown. Excludes *Criminal Code* traffic violations.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.