



Violence Against Women Fact Sheet

Last Updated: April 2008

Woman Abuse and Justice System

- Women are more likely than men to be the victims of the most severe forms of spousal assault, as well as spousal homicide, sexual assault and stalking.
Source: *Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends*, Statistics Canada, 2006.
- Women are about 8 times more likely than men to experience violence in relationships, especially choking, threats with a weapon and sexual assault. In 2004, these types of assaults accounted for 254,000 women in Canada.
Source: *Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile*, Statistics Canada, 2006
- 4 out of five people murdered by their spouses are women murdered by men.
Source: http://www.metrac.org/programs/info/prevent/you_have.htm
- Victims' decisions to report the violence to criminal justice and social services depend on a variety of factors, some of which include fear of the offender, shame and embarrassment, and regional availability of services. The majority of victims of spousal assault and over 90% of sexual assault victims did not seek support from the criminal justice system.
Source: *Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends*, Statistics Canada, 2006.
- In 1983, Ontario introduced mandatory charging in cases of domestic assault. This meant that the police were required to lay appropriate charges whenever they felt there was sufficient evidence, whether or not the woman wanted charges laid. Over the next few years, this became a Canada-wide approach to dealing with violence against women.
Source: <http://www.justice.gc.ca/en/ps/rs/rep/2001/rr01-5a.pdf>
- In 2006, Amendments to the *Children's Law Reform Act* require judges to consider family violence when hearing custody and access cases.
Source: http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/English/90c12_e.htm#BK23
- In 2006, Family law arbitrations in Ontario are to be conducted using only Canadian and Ontario law while ensuring that other principles and rules – including religious principles – will have no legal effect and will amount to advice only.
Source:
http://www.ontla.on.ca/hansard/committee_debates/38_parl/session2/gengov/pdfG011.pdf

Sexual Assault

- Sexual assault is one of the most under-reported crimes. Fewer than 10% of sexual assaults are reported to the police.
Source: *Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends*, Statistics Canada, 2006.
- 6 % of sexual assaults on women are reported to police.
Source: http://www.womanabuseprevention.com/html/sexual_assault.html
- Rates of sexual assault and other violent crimes are higher on reserves than in other areas of Canada.
Source: *Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends*, Statistics Canada, 2006.
- In 1983, it became illegal for a man to rape his wife in Canada.
Source: <http://www.wavaw.ca/informed.php>

Young Women

- Women under 25 years of age make up the highest risk group related to violence, especially if they try to leave an abusive relationship. Young women are at the greatest risk of assault by intimate partners, as well as spousal homicide and sexual assault.
Source: Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women, 2002, *Assessing Violence Against Women: A Statistical Profile*.
- In a study, over 49 percent of female students in high school had been emotionally abused, 14.5 percent reported being physically forced into sex, and 9.1 percent had been physically assaulted.
Source: DeKeseredy, WS, and Schwartz, MD, February 1998, *Measuring the Extent of Woman Abuse in Intimate Heterosexual Relationships: A Critique of the Conflict Tactics Scales*, National Resource Center on Domestic Violence.
- Girls and women between the ages of 16 and 24 are the most vulnerable to domestic violence, experiencing the highest per capita rates of non-fatal intimate partner violence.
Source: US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001, "Intimate partner violence and age of victim, 1993-1999."

Aboriginal Women

- In 2003 Aboriginal people were three times more likely to be victims of spousal violence than were those who are non-Aboriginal. In addition, 54% of Aboriginal women reported experiencing severe and potentially life threatening violence compared to 37% of non-Aboriginal women.
Source: Statistics Canada, 2005.

- Over the last two decades, some 500 indigenous women in Canada have been murdered or are missing and feared dead.
Source: Native Women's Association of Canada, 2004.
- 24% of Aboriginal women, compared with 18% of Aboriginal men, said that they had suffered violence from a current or previous spouse or common-law partner in the five-year period up to 2004.
Source: Statistics Canada, 2005.
- Up to 75% of survivors of sexual assaults in Aboriginal communities are young women under 18 years old. 50% of those are under 14 years old, and almost 25% are younger than 7 years old.
Source: METRAC, 2001.
- Eighty-two percent of all federally sentenced women report having been physically and/or sexually abused. This percentage rises to 90% for Aboriginal women.
Source: Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, 2006.
- According to police statistics, rates of spousal violence and spousal homicide are higher for Aboriginal women than for non-Aboriginal women or Aboriginal men. The severity and impact of spousal violence are also greater for Aboriginal women.
Source: Statistics Canada, 2006.
- Racialized and sexualized violence is violence perpetrated against Aboriginal women because of their gender and Aboriginal identity. This type of violence typically occurs in the public sphere, where societal indifference often leaves Aboriginal women at greater risk.
Source: Status of Women Canada, 2005.

Visible Minority and Immigrant Women

*Visible minority status was defined as persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour. The visible minority population includes those who self-identify as Chinese, South Asian, Black, Arab/West Asian, Filipino, Southeast Asian, Latin American, Japanese, Korean and Pacific Islander.

- Visible minority women report lower five-year rates of spousal violence than non-visible minority women (4% versus 8% respectively);
Source: General Social Survey (GSS) on victimization conducted by Statistics Canada, 2004.
- Rates of spousal violence declined for visible minority women between 1999 and 2004, whereas they remained stable for other women; and
Source: General Social Survey (GSS) on victimization conducted by Statistics Canada, 2004.

- Since 1990, there was no difference between the estimated rate of spousal violence for recent immigrants who arrived in Canada and longer term immigrants (5% for both groups of women).
Source: General Social Survey (GSS) on victimization conducted by Statistics Canada, 2004.

Francophone Women

It is difficult to find reliable stats on Francophone women who are abused, since the numbers are hidden among the general stats on violence.

What we can prove is that francophone women are poorer and more isolated, therefore more susceptible of being victims of abuse:

- In general 61.5% of women are working in Ontario compared to 59.2% of Francophone women.
Source: Office of Francophone Affairs, 2005
- A greater proportion of Francophone women working in Ontario earn less than \$30,000 a year at 62.1%, compared to women in general at 57.2%.
Source: Office of Francophone Affairs, 2005.

Bilingualism in shelters:

- In 2004, of the 344 Canadian shelters running, only 24% offered bilingual services.
Source: Clearinghouse on Family Violence, 2004.