



MEASURING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: STATISTICAL TRENDS – KEY FINDINGS

This fact sheet provides an overview of key statistical data included in *Measuring violence against women: Statistical trends* (2013). The full report can be accessed at www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2013001/article/11766-eng.pdf.

Violence against Girls

Key Facts

- **Violence against girls can begin before adolescence. Sexual crimes are by far the most common offence against girls under the age of 12.ⁱ**
- **Violence against younger girls is often perpetrated in the home by family members. As girls enter their teenage years and broaden their activities, contacts and independence, the risk of victimization from people outside the family, such as dating partners, increases.**
- **Males are most often identified as the perpetrators of violence against younger girls, both for family violence and stranger-perpetrated violence. For older girls, casual acquaintances, including female peers, replace family members as the type of perpetrators most often responsible for violence.**

Violence against girls under the age of 12

- In 2011, approximately 8,200 girls under the age of 12 were victims of violent crime, similar to the number of boys in this age group who were victims.
- Just over half of the recorded violent crimes against girls under the age of 12 were committed by a relative (56%), including a parent (biological, adoptive, step or foster), sibling, uncle, aunt or other extended family member. Just under one-quarter (23%) were perpetrated by a casual acquaintance, 10% by a stranger, 5% by a friend and 5% by an authority figure.ⁱⁱ
- Over the previous three years, the rate of police-reported physical violence against young girls has remained stable.
- Sexual crimes were the most common offence against young girls. Forty-seven percent of all police-reported violent crimes against girls under 12 were sexual in nature, much higher than the corresponding share of violent crimes against women aged 18 and over (7%).

- Sexual offences were more commonly perpetrated against girls than boys; according to police-reported data, sexual offences accounted for a higher proportion of violent offences against girls than against boys under the age of 12.
- Unlike trends for older females, the rate of sexual assault against young girls has decreased over the past three years. However, child-specific sexual offences, such as luring a child over the internet and invitation to sexual touching, have increased for children in recent years.
- Although girls in this age group are still at high risk for sexual violence (with 29% of all violent crimes perpetrated against female youth being sexual offences), the most common type of crime perpetrated against teenage girls was physical assault (47%). Other common forms of violence included uttering threats (11%) and criminal harassment (5%).
- In 2011, the overall rate of police-reported violence against teenage girls was 8% higher than for teenage boys, partly due to girls' higher risk of sexual violence: teenage girls were eight times more likely than teenage boys to be the victims of sexual violence.

Violence against teenage girls

- According to 2011 police data, girls aged 12 to 17 were violently victimized at a rate nearly six times higher than that for younger girls, and almost twice as high as the rate for adult women.
- While younger girls experience violence most often from family members, girls in their teens face new and different types of violent victimization. In this age group, casual acquaintances (34%) replace family members as the type of perpetrators most often responsible for violence (24%). More than a third of all police-reported violence perpetrated by casual acquaintances involved female peers.

ⁱ Statistics in this fact sheet are based on police-reported data only, unless stated otherwise. It must be noted, however, that incidents of victimization against young children are less often reported to police. Young children are either not developmentally capable of contacting police or have limited contact with those outside the home.

ⁱⁱ See also Sinha, M. (2012). Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile. Juristat. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002 (www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2012001/article/11643-eng.pdf)