FACT SHEET: Women Sexual Abuse and Sexual Assault

Canadian Women Endure Sexual Assault in Large Numbers
- Women make up the vast majority of victims of sexual assault (86%) and other types of sexual offences (78%).
- More than one-third of Canadian women (39%), have experienced at least one incident of sexual assault since the age of 16.
- Only 6% of women ever report their sexual assault to the police. The other 94% struggle silently to cope with the long-term effects.

Canadian Women Cope with the Risk of Sexual Assault Daily
- 83% of Canadian women fear walking to their cars in a public garage after dark alone.
- 75% of Canadian women fear waiting for or using public transportation.
- 60% of Canadian women fear walking alone in their own neighbourhood.
- 39% of Canadian women fear being at home alone.

Sexual Assault is a Major Societal Problem Right Here in Alberta
- A shocking 58% of Alberta women have experienced at least one incident of sexual or physical assault since the age of 16.

Girls Endure Long-Term Impacts of Sexual Abuse
- When sexually molested as girls, adult women are more likely than non-victims to suffer from both physical and psychological problems.
- Abusive and manipulative offenders may target these women as victims in adult relationships because of their vulnerability.

Indigenous Women are Higher-Risk Targets for Sexual Assault
- In 1997, Health Canada found that 57% of Aboriginal women had been sexually abused. Rates of reported sexual assault are more than three times higher for Indigenous women than non-Indigenous women in the United States.

---

7 A Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women: http://www.oaith.ca/assets/files/Publications/Strategic_Framework_Aboriginal_Women.pdf
• Studies have suggested that sexual assaults against Aboriginal women are not only more frequent, they are also often particularly brutal.  
 8
• Rates of reported sexual assault are more than three times higher for Indigenous women than non-Indigenous women in the United States.  
 9
• Frontline organizations confirm that racist and sexist attitudes toward Aboriginal women continue to make them vulnerable to sexual assaults in Canadian cities.  
10

Women with Disabilities are Targets for Sexual Assault
• The risk of sexual abuse among persons with disabilities is at least 150% of individuals of the same sex and similar age without disabilities.  
11
• One study states that 83% of women with an intellectual disability have been sexually assaulted.  
12
• It is estimated that only 20% of sexual abuse cases involving disabled people are ever reported to the police.  
13
• A Canadian study found that 40 to 70% of female children with developmental disabilities experience sexual abuse.  
14

Bisexual and Lesbian Women Affected by Sexual Assault
• A 2010 prevalence study based in the United States found that the lifetime occurrence of sexual assault by any perpetrator was 13.1% for lesbian women and 46.1% for bisexual women.  
15
• Most bisexual and heterosexual women (98.3% and 99.1%, respectively) who experienced sexual assault in their lifetime reported having only male perpetrators.  
16

AASAS welcomes your suggestions and recommendations about other relevant research references that could be included on this website. Please e-mail us at mailbox@aasas.ca.

---