

# 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%).<sup>1</sup>
- More than one-third of Canadian women (39%), have experienced at least one incident of sexual assault since the age of 16.<sup>2</sup>
- Only 6% of women ever report their sexual assault to the police. The other 94% struggle silently to cope with the long-term effects.<sup>3</sup>

## 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.<sup>4</sup>
- 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.<sup>5</sup>

## 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.<sup>6</sup>

## Indigenous Women are Higher-Risk Targets for Sexual Assault

- In 1997, Health Canada found that 57% of Aboriginal women had been sexually abused.<sup>7</sup> Rates of reported sexual assault are more than three times higher for Indigenous women than non-Indigenous women in the United States.

---

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada. (2001). Canadian Crime Statistics 2000 (Catalogue 85 - 205).

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada. (2006). *Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends 2006*. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Industry.

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada. (1993). The Violence Against Women Survey (Catalogue 11 - 001E). The Daily, 1 - 9.

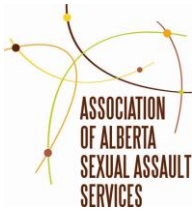
<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada. (1993). The Violence Against Women Survey (Catalogue 11 - 001E). The Daily, 1 - 9.

<sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada. (1993). The Violence Against Women Survey (Catalogue 11 - 001E). The Daily, 1 - 9.

<sup>6</sup> Moeller, T.P. and Bachmann G.A. (1993). The Combined Effects of Physical, Sexual and Emotional Abuse During Childhood: Long-term Health Consequences for Women. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 17 (5), 623 - 640.

<sup>7</sup> A Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women:

[http://www.oaith.ca/assets/files/Publications/Strategic\\_Framework\\_Aboriginal\\_Women.pdf](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.<sup>8</sup>
- Rates of reported sexual assault are more than three times higher for Indigenous women than non-Indigenous women in the United States.<sup>9</sup>
- Frontline organizations confirm that racist and sexist attitudes toward Aboriginal women continue to make them vulnerable to sexual assaults in Canadian cities.<sup>10</sup>

### 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.<sup>11</sup>
- One study states that 83% of women with an intellectual disability have been sexually assaulted.<sup>12</sup>
- It is estimated that only 20% of sexual abuse cases involving disabled people are ever reported to the police.<sup>13</sup>
- A Canadian study found that 40 to 70% of female children with developmental disabilities experience sexual abuse.<sup>14</sup>

### 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.<sup>15</sup>
- Most bisexual and heterosexual women (98.3% and 99.1%, respectively) who experienced sexual assault in their lifetime reported having only male perpetrators.<sup>16</sup>

AASAS welcomes your suggestions and recommendations about other relevant research references that could be included on this website. Please e-mail us at [mailbox@asas.ca](mailto:mailbox@asas.ca).

---

<sup>8</sup> Jodi-Anne Brzozowski, Andrea Taylor-Butts and Sara Johnson, "Victimization and offending among the Aboriginal population in Canada", *Juristat*. Vol. 26, no. 3, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of Justice. (1999). *American Indians and Crime*.

<sup>10</sup> Amnesty International. (2004). *Stolen Sisters: A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence Against Indigenous Women in Canada*.

<sup>11</sup> DAWN, Ontario, *Disabled Women's Network Ontario*, 2006).

<sup>12</sup> Johnson, I., Sigler, R. 2000. "Forced Sexual Intercourse Among Intimates," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. 15 (1.)

<sup>13</sup> DAWN, Ontario, *Disabled Women's Network Ontario*, 2006).

<sup>14</sup> Roheher Institute. (1992). *Violence and people with disabilities: A review of the literature*. *Health Canada*.

<sup>15</sup> Walters, M., Chen, J., & Breiding, M. (2010). *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Findings Based on Sexual Orientation*, *National Center for Injury Prevention and Control Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*.

<sup>16</sup> Walters, M., Chen, J., & Breiding, M. (2010). *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Findings Based on Sexual Orientation*, *National Center for Injury Prevention and Control Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*.