

## **Measuring gender-based violence in Canada**

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### Abstract

Quantifying the nature and extent of gender-based violence is a key step to assessing progress in gender equality. It provides decision-makers with the tools required to develop and evaluate measures designed to reduce or eliminate violence directed at women and men. Within the Canadian context, gender-based crime analysis has been able to illustrate how violence against women differs from violence against men, notably who is most often the perpetrator, where this victimization occurs, the risk and severity of particular offences, the impact of victimization, the use of social services, and levels of reporting to police.

Two sources of information of crime and victimization have been essential in this gender-based analysis: police-reported administrative surveys and the population-based self-report victimization survey. Both complementary national data sources are able to shed light on the nature and extent of violence against women and men, due to their capacity for disaggregation by age and sex.

This presentation will provide an understanding of these national data sources, and their evolution over time. Included in this discussion will be an overview of the contribution of the 1993 Violence against Women Survey in laying the foundation for new spousal violence questions within the national General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization. The GSS on Victimization is repeated every five years and asks Canadians aged 15 years and older about their experiences of victimization, whether or not reported to police. The advantages and disadvantages of using this population-based survey are discussed, alongside the role and limitations of using administrative police records. Particular emphasis will be placed on the need to continually identify and address data gaps, and to maintain ongoing and extensive engagement with stakeholders and data users.

The most recent analytical findings on the prevalence and trends in violence against both women and men will also be presented, along with a discussion on trends in reporting to police. For the latter, data from the GSS will be used to explore the characteristics of violence that goes unreported to the police, which is particularly important for crimes that tend to have high levels of underreporting, namely sexual assault and spousal violence.

The presentation will conclude with a discussion of future data improvements for gender-based crime analysis in Canada. Both enhancing existing surveys and linking records within and across surveys will be presented as two solid approaches to strengthening analysis and addressing information gaps.