



## *Fact Sheet on Sexual Assault* (updated 03-08)

### **What we know about sexual assault in the population**

According to the 2004 *General Social Survey* (GSS)<sup>1</sup>:

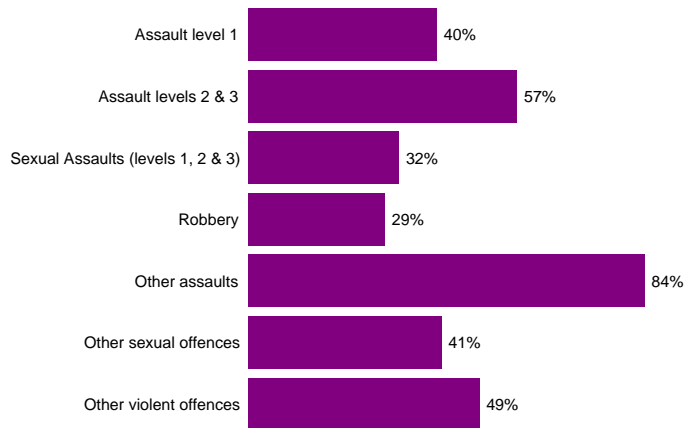
- 31,000 Nova Scotians indicated that they were victims of sexual assault in 2004. In that year, Nova Scotia's rate of sexual assault was 40 per 1,000 population aged 15 and over.
- Between 1999 and 2004, the sexual assault rate increased in only two provinces in Canada: Nova Scotia and Manitoba.
- Eighty-four percent of Canadians who reported being sexually assaulted in the 12 months prior to the survey were women, while 16 percent were men.
- Ninety-one percent of those accused of sexual assault were male.
- The largest proportion of victims of sexual assault are young; Forty-four percent of victims are under the age of 25.
- Eighty-eight percent of sexual assaults in Canada do not get reported to police. In comparison to other forms of violent victimization, victims of sexual assault are much less likely to report the crime to police.

### **What we know about sexual assaults that are reported to police<sup>2</sup>**

- In 2006, 867 sexual offences were reported to police in Nova Scotia. These comprised 8.2 percent of all violent offences reported to police in the province.
- Nova Scotia's rate of police-reported sexual assaults in 2006 was 82 per 100,000 population. The rate for Canada was 68 per 100,000 population.
- In close to 70 percent of cases reported to Halifax Regional Police in 2006, victims of sexual offences knew the accused. The accused was a stranger in 26 percent of such cases.

- In 2006, 32 percent of reported sexual assaults in Nova Scotia resulted in the laying of a charge against the accused, down from 56 percent in 1993.
- In comparison, the proportion of other violent offences that resulted in the laying of a charge remained relatively stable during this period, averaging around 42 percent.
- In 2006, the proportion of sexual assaults that result in the laying of a charge was lower in Nova Scotia than in all other provinces and territories.

*Percentage of Sexual Assaults and Other Violent Offences Where Charge is Laid Nova Scotia, 2006*



Source: Statistics Canada, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics

- Conviction rates<sup>3</sup> for sexual assault are typically lower than they are for other violent offences. In 2005/06, the conviction rate for sexual assaults in Nova Scotia was 38.6 percent, while for other violent offences it was 49.5 percent.
- Acquittal rates for sexual assaults in Nova Scotia have consistently been higher than acquittal rates for other violent offences. In 2005/06, the acquittal rate for sexual assaults was 14.9 percent. For other violent offences it was 5.8 percent.

## Sexual Violence and Diverse Populations

There is little information available about rates of sexual violence in particular populations of women such as Aboriginal, Immigrant, lesbians and women with disabilities. The 2004 GSS indicates that rates of overall violent victimization are significantly higher among the Aboriginal population (319 versus 101 people per 1,000 population) and that Aboriginal women, in particular, are at high risk of victimization with rates that are three and a half times higher than that of non-Aboriginal women.

For more detailed statistics on sexual assault in Nova Scotia, please visit our website at: <http://women.gov.ns.ca>

### Sources:

1. Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004
2. Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS).
3. Please note that the CCJS has recently changed its concept of "case" to more closely reflect court processing. This has resulted in substantial changes to court data case counts which should not be compared to case counts in prior releases. For more detailed information about these changes, please go to our website.