



Fact Sheet on Sexual Assault

What we know about sexual assault in the population

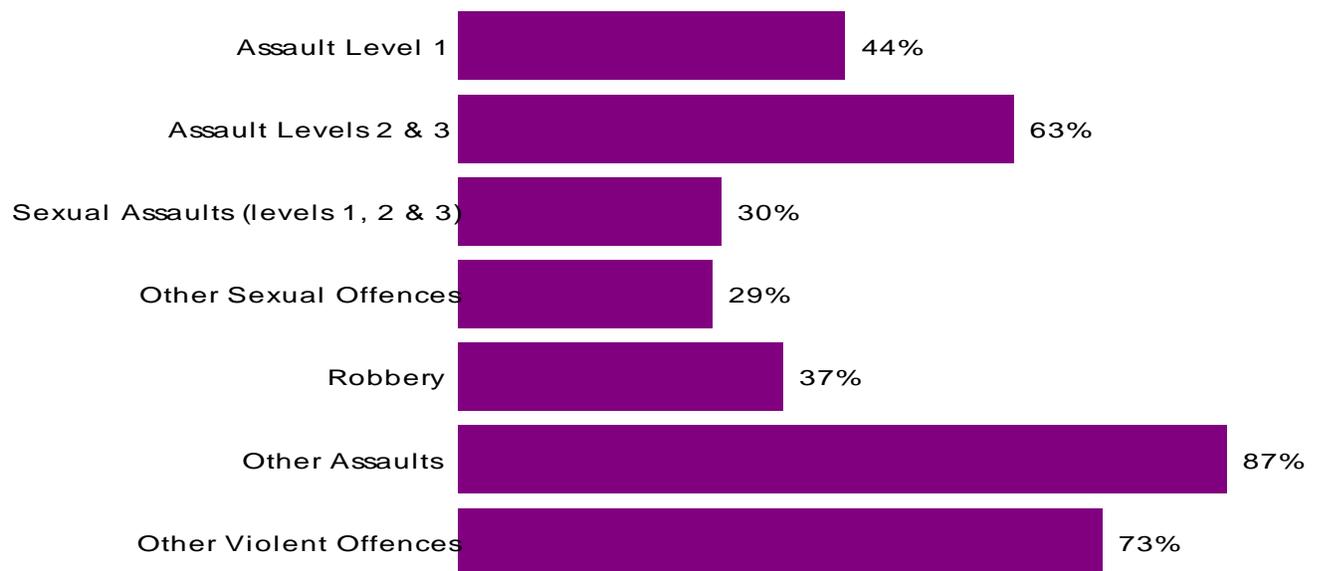
According to the 2004 *General Social Survey (GSS)*¹:

- 31,000 Nova Scotians indicated that they were victims of sexual assault in 2004 – a rate of 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 per cent of Canadians who reported being sexually assaulted in the 12 months prior to the survey were women; 16 per cent were men.
- Ninety-one per cent of those accused of sexual assault were male.
- The largest proportion of victims of sexual assault are young: 44 per cent of victims are under 25 years old.
- In Canada, 88 per cent of sexual assaults are not reported to police. Compared to other violent victimization, sexual assault survivors are much less likely to report the crime.

What we know about sexual assaults that are reported to police²

- In 2007, 765 sexual offences were reported to police in Nova Scotia. These comprised 7.7 per cent of all violent offences reported to police in the province.
- Nova Scotia's rate of police-reported sexual assaults in 2007 was 75 per 100,000 population. The rate for Canada was 65 per 100,000 population.
- In 65 per cent of cases reported to Halifax Regional Police in 2007, victims of sexual offences knew the accused; in 28 per cent they did not.
- In 2007, 30 per cent of reported sexual assaults in Nova Scotia resulted in the laying of a charge against the accused, down from 56 per cent 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 43 per cent.

Percentage of Sexual Assaults and Other Violent Offences Where Charge is Laid, Nova Scotia 2007



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

- In 2007, the proportion of sexual assaults that resulted in the laying of a charge was lower in Nova Scotia than in all other provinces and territories in Canada.
- Conviction rates for sexual assault have typically been lower than conviction rates for other violent offences over the last number of years. However, in 2006/07, the conviction rate for sexual assaults in Nova Scotia was almost identical (49 versus 50 per cent) to the one for other violent offences.
- Acquittal rates for sexual assaults in Nova Scotia have consistently been higher than acquittal rates for other violent offences. In 2006/07, the acquittal rate for sexual assaults was 13 per cent while for other violent offences it was 6 per cent.

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.

Updated November 2009. Sources: 1. Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004. 2. Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS). For detailed statistics on sexual assault in Nova Scotia, visit: <http://women.gov.ns.ca/>.