

PREVALENCE

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REPORTING RATES

Sexual violence is the least likely crime to be reported to police. Research suggests that only 9% of all sexual violence offences are reported to police.

There are a number of reasons why sexual violence has an extremely low reporting rate, many survivors consider the offence to be a private matter and [Ministry of Justice](#) research indicates that



just under half (43%) of sexual offences were not reported for this reason.

STATISTICS

Sexual violence is considered highly prevalent in New Zealand and can have a serious and long-impact on the physical and mental health of survivors. However, there is no one definitive number that provides the true rate of sexual violence in New Zealand; rather the following statistics provide an indication of the prevalence of sexual violence in New Zealand:

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

A cohort study of New Zealand children spanning from birth till the age of 25 found that sexual abuse was reported by 16% or around 1 in 6 people before the age of 18. Read the study [here](#). A World Health Organisation multi-country study found rates of child sexual abuse in New Zealand for adult women to be 28% (in rural setting) and 23% (in urban settings), or around 1 in 4 women. This was higher than any of the other 10 countries in the multi-country study. Read the study [here](#).

Recent international research indicates that 1 in 6 boys will experience some form of sexual abuse before the age of 16.

The Youth 2000 Survey found that 26% of female students, and 14% of male students, reported unwanted sexual contact which was defined as being touched sexually or being made to do sexual things that they did not want to.

Of those who had experienced unwanted sexual contact most said it was 'not bad' or 'a little bad'. However, 18% of these male students and nearly twice as many of these female students (38%) reported that last time they had experienced unwanted sexual contact it was bad (pretty bad, really bad or very bad).

Only 39.9% of young people who had experienced sexual abuse had disclosed the experience to someone else.

In the Youth 2000 Survey it was reported that 13.1% of students stated they had received unwanted sexual messages, most commonly by mobile phone (52.0%), the internet (43.9%) or letters or notes (4.1%)



Ministry of Women’s Affairs research suggests that survivors of childhood sexual abuse are twice as likely as non-victims to be sexually assaulted later in life.

WOMEN AND MEN

The 2006 Crime and Safety Survey found that approximately 29 percent of women and 9 percent of men experience unwanted and distressing sexual contact over their lifetime. Sexual offences were the fifth most common offence disclosed in the survey.

In the New Zealand National Survey of Crime Victims 2001 victimisation was often experienced more than once, even within a relatively short period of time. This is supported by Ministry of Women’s Affairs research which found that at least 50% of girls and women who are sexually assaulted are likely to be sexually revictimised.

The New Zealand National Survey of Crime Victims 2001 also indicated that the rates of sexual violence were higher still for young women (26% of 17- 24 year olds) and for Māori women (23%).

Almost half of the survivors who had been sexually assaulted said they were ‘very much’ or ‘quite a lot’ affected by the most recent sexual abuse experience. This research indicated that the sexual offences measured by the survey were most likely to be thought of as not being crimes with 60% of survivors considering sexual violence as something that was ‘wrong but not crime’ and ‘something that just happens’.

OFFENDERS

In the New Zealand National Survey of Crime Victims 2001 almost all of the survivors said the offender was male and the majority stated that they already knew their offender(s).

This is in keeping with statistics from The National Collective of Rape Crisis for the years 1992-1996 which found that 92.6% of survivors knew the offender.

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