

Sexual Abuse Statistics

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Wider Experiences of Sexual Violence in Aotearoa New Zealand

- The New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (Ministry of Justice, 2021) findings estimated that more than one in five (23%) New Zealand adults experience sexual assault in their lifetime.
 - More than one in three adult females (35%) had experienced one or more incidents of sexual assault in their lifetime.
 - 12% of adult males had experienced one or more incidents of sexual assault in their lifetime.
 - One in five females (21%) and one in 19 males (5%) had experienced forced intercourse (or attempts) in their lifetime.
- The New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (Ministry of Justice, 2021) estimated that about 76,000 adults had been sexually assaulted in the previous 12 months in 2019/2020, which equates to approximately one in 50 adults (1.9%).
 - These 76,000 adults experienced 168,000 sexual assault offences: there were around four sexual assaults for every 100 adults.
 - Females were three times as likely as males to have experienced sexual assault during the previous 12 months (2.8% compared with 0.9%). About three-quarters of sexual assaults were against females (131,000 out of 168,000).
 - Almost two thirds of sexual assaults were perpetrated by someone who the survivor had already known. In the previous 12 months, more than a quarter of sexual assaults were perpetrated by a family member of the survivor.

Child Sexual Abuse in Aotearoa New Zealand

- Oranga Tamariki (2021) reported that female children and young people are far more likely to report as victims of sexual assault and related offences, and account for approximately 86% of all reported victims of sexual assault and related offences for people aged under 20.
- In a 2007 study using retrospective report from a random sample of 2,855 women aged 18–64 years old (Fanslow et al., 2007), 23.5% of women in Auckland and 28% in Waikato reported having been sexually touched or made to do something sexual that they did not want to do prior to the age of 15 years old. In this sample, Māori girls were twice as likely to experience child sexual abuse than non-Māori girls.
- In an Otago-based community sample of women (Anderson et al., 1993), approximately 90% of childhood sexual abuse victimisation was perpetrated by someone known to them. About 70% were subjected to genital contact.

- Results from the 2019 New Zealand Family Violence Survey (2,887 participants; 1464 female, 1423 male) found that 26% of female respondents and 11% of male respondents experienced sexual abuse before age 15 (Fanslow et al., 2021).

Young Peoples Experiences of Sexual Violence in Aotearoa New Zealand

- In a Youth2000 Survey Series study with a representative sample of 8,500 students from secondary schools throughout New Zealand (Clark et al., 2012), 20% percent of female and 9% of male secondary school students reported that they had ever been touched in a sexual way or been made to do unwanted sexual things.
 - Over half (55%) of the students who reported unwanted sexual contact reported that it happened when they were 14 years or younger.
 - 84% of students had been victimised by a peer, i.e. a boyfriend/girlfriend (40%), a friend (30%), or a young person that they knew (14%).
 - However, only a small proportion (3%) of students reported forcing someone to do sexual things that they did not want to do. Males were twice as likely to report this than females. Between 2001 and 2012, the proportion of young people who reported that they had forced someone to do sexual things decreased from 6% to 3%.
- 56% of students had not told anyone: 71% of male students; 53% of female students; 61% of younger students (12-15 years); 52% of older students (16-18 years). Of the students who had told someone about their unwanted sexual experience, 69% had told a friend and 38% had told a parent.
- In a Youth2000 Survey Series study with a sample of 9,699 New Zealand secondary school students (Fleming et al., 2007), one in five students reported unwanted sexual contact. At 17 years old, 24% of female students and 14% of male students reported that they had ever been touched in a sexual way or made to do sexual things that they did not wish to do.
- A Youth 2000 Survey Series publication (Clark et al., 2010) focused on a sample of 335 Alternative Education students aged 13-15, and reported that:
 - 20% had experienced unwanted sexual behaviour from another person.
 - Of those, 11% were male and 41% were female.
 - 59% had previously disclosed their experience.
- Almost one in five adults aged 15–19 experienced sexual assault at least once during their lives (Ministry of Justice, 2021).
 - Males aged 15–29 were at a much higher risk than males aged 30–64 (2.3% compared with 0.6%).
 - Females aged 15–19 are more than four times the national average to be victimised (9% compared with 2%).

- 9% of females aged 15–19 and around 6% of females aged 20–29 had been sexually assaulted in the previous 12 months (2019/2020).

Tertiary Student Experiences of Sexual Violence in Aotearoa New Zealand

- Preliminary findings suggest that approximately one in three tertiary students had experienced sexual violence while in study (Stewart, 2019).
- The Thursdays in Black (2017) Students' Survey findings reflect the experiences of 1,403 respondents.
 - 83% of students experienced sexual harassment during their tertiary studies.
 - 53% experienced some forms of sexual assault during their time in tertiary education.
 - 29% of male respondents experienced some forms of sexual assault during their time in tertiary education.
 - 57% of female respondents experienced some forms of sexual assault during their time in tertiary education.
 - 61% of people who identified with a minority sexuality experienced some forms of sexual assault during their time in tertiary education.
 - 67% of people who identified with a minority gender experienced some forms of sexual assault during their time in tertiary education.
 - When discussing sexual assault, respondents outlined sexual assault being perpetrated by someone intimately known to them and taking place within familiar social or living spaces.
- A New Zealand university campus study (Beres et al., 2020) found that more than one in four (28%) students reported experiencing some form of sexual assault while at university, including 15% who reported experiences that meet a definition of rape.
 - 30% of cisgender female respondents reported experiencing at least one form of sexual assault.
 - Queer cisgender females were more likely to report experiencing sexual assault (38%) compared with straight cisgender females (30%).
 - Sexual assault was twice as frequent among queer cisgender male respondents (23%, over one in five) compared to straight cisgender male respondents (10%).
 - Male perpetrators were reported in 98.2% for female victims, 22.2% for male victims and 6/8 of gender diverse victims. Of the queer respondents who reported victimisation 97.6% of queer female victims and 12/21 of queer male victims reported

male perpetrators. It can be inferred that 77.8% of male survivors were victimised by a non-male perpetrator.

- Of those who reported experiencing any type of sexual assault, 41% told no one about their experience and 42% told one supporter. 1.6% reported their experience to the university sexual violence support service.

Māori Experiences of Sexual Violence in Aotearoa New Zealand

- Pihama et al. (2016) explains that sexual violence within Māori understandings is an absolute violation of the mana of the person and the collective mana of whānau, hapū and iwi. It is a violent transgression against a person's whakapapa that reaches back to past generations and has direct impacts on future generations.
- Pihama et al. (2016) state that sexual violence is a violation of te whare tangata (that is the house of the people) which has physical and psychological impacts as well as causing cultural and spiritual distress.
- Māori suffer higher rates of victimisation than any other ethnic group in Aotearoa (Morris & Reilly, 2003).
- In a study using retrospective report from a random sample of 2,855 women aged 18–64 years old (Fanslow et al., 2007), Māori girls were twice as likely to experience child sexual abuse than non-Māori girls.
- Te Puni Kōkiri – Ministry for Māori Development (2017) cited that of the reports of concern to Oranga Tamariki between 2009 to 2012, 37% of children who were found to be sexually abused were Māori.
- About 3 in 100 Māori adults (3.2%) were victims of adult sexual assault, compared with about 2 in 100 adults overall (1.9%) (Ministry of Justice, 2021).
- Thirty percent of Māori adults experienced sexual abuse/assault during their lifetime, with 20% experiencing forced intercourse and 30% experiencing non-consensual sexual touches (Ministry of Justice, 2019).

SOGISC (sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics) Experiences of Sexual Violence in Aotearoa New Zealand

- The Counting Ourselves study (Veale et al., 2019), with a sample including 1178 trans or non-binary peoples, found that:
 - almost 1 in 3 (32%) of transgender and non-binary people had experienced sexual violence.
 - almost half of the participants (47%) reported that someone had tried to have sex with them against their will.
 - trans women (23%), trans men (33%) and non-binary (38%) participants reported someone having had sex with them against their will.

- only 2% of these people received support from a specialist sexual violence service at the time, and 9% received support from a specialist sexual violence service later.
- participants who had someone have sex with them against their will since age 13 were twice as likely to have attempted suicide in the past year (18%) than participants who did not report this (9%).
- The New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (Ministry of Justice, 2021) reported that people with diverse sexualities were more than five times as likely as heterosexual peoples to have been a victim of sexual assault in the previous 12 months (2019/2020). About 1 in 11 people with diverse sexualities (9.2%) were victims of sexual assault in the previous 12 months compared with 1 in 60 heterosexual people (1.7%). People with diverse sexualities were victims of about 2 out of every 10 sexual assaults (36,000 out of 168,000).

Peoples with Disabilities Experiences of Sexual Violence in Aotearoa New Zealand

- The Thursdays in Black (2017) Students' Survey findings reflect the experiences of 1,403 tertiary student respondents.
 - 90% of those who considered themselves to have a disability experienced some forms of sexual harassment during their time in tertiary education.
 - 65% of the participants who considered themselves to have a disability had experienced some forms of sexual assault during their time in tertiary education, of which: 48% of those with a sensory disability; 61% of those with a physical disability; 64% of those with a learning disability; 68% of those with a mental illness.
- 65% of disabled participants in the *Counting Ourselves: The health and wellbeing for trans and non-binary people in Aotearoa New Zealand* survey (Veale et al., 2019) reported that someone tried to have sex with them against their will, and 49% of disabled participants reported that someone had sex with them against their will.
- Roguski (2013) identified two forms of sexual harm experienced by people with disabilities:
 - Family/whānau perpetrated sexual harm. In this instance, participants related a sense of extreme violation and a heightened sense of vulnerability. Because of their physical disabilities, they had not been able to avoid the perpetrator and were, thus, unable to escape.
 - Abuse within residential services. Within this context, care workers and clients were cited as perpetrators.
- Compared to non-disabled women, disabled women are more likely to be subjected to physical and sexual abuse, have experienced greater levels of violence and suffered abuse for a longer period of time. ¹⁴

- A New Zealand Human Rights Commission investigation (Mirfin-Veitch and Conder, 2017) found that people with disabilities were victimised in State care, experiencing high levels of unwanted sexual touching, sexual coercion, threats of sexual harm, and abuse of authority positions. Recurring experiences of sexual violence was a common theme.
- In the Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura – Outing Violence study (Dickson, 2017), more than half of the people with disabilities responding had been touched in places they did not want to be touched or been pressured to be sexual in ways they did not want during otherwise consenting sexual encounters, with at least one in five people experiencing these behaviours from three or more people.
- More than one in three SOGISC disabled respondents had experienced sexual violence from a stranger, which is significantly higher than other research on stranger rape in New Zealand (Dickson, 2017).

Technology-facilitated Sexual Abuse in Aotearoa New Zealand

- Netsafe (2019) reports that nearly 5% of New Zealand adults have experienced image based sexual violence (IBSA).
 - IBSA is more common among young adults, especially those aged under 30.
 - Men and women were equally as likely to experience IBSA online, but the nature of the experiences differ.
 - Among those who have had someone threaten to or share their intimate pictures or videos online, this was most commonly done by an ex-partner (40%).
- In comparison, the Australian Office of the eSafety Commissioner (2017) reported that one in ten (11%) Australian adults have experienced their nude/sexual image being shared without consent.
 - One in five women aged 18-45 have experienced their nude/sexual image being shared without consent.
 - Women are twice as likely to have their nude/sexual images shared without consent than men.
 - Women are considerably more likely to report negative personal impacts as a result of image-based abuse.
 - In many cases, perpetrators were friends of the victim. The research shows that abuse is also being inflicted by those other than ex-partners, contrary to common understanding of 'revenge porn'.
 - Women are more likely to experience image-based abuse at the hands of a former intimate partner than men.
- Netsafe (2017) found that 18% of youth aged 14-17 have received unsolicited nude images.

- Of girls aged 14-17, 20% have received unsolicited nude images.
- Of boys aged 14-17, 17% have received unsolicited nude images.
- Nearly 1 in 4 Māori teens have received unsolicited nude or nearly nude content.
- Teens with disabilities have been more likely to be asked for nude content of themselves, and receive unsolicited nude images than their abled-bodies peers.

Attitudes and Beliefs about Sexual Violence

- The 2019 Gender Attitudes Survey (National Council of Women of New Zealand) found that 25% of respondents thought that 'rape happens when a man's sex drive is out of control'.
- The 2019 Gender Attitudes Survey (National Council of Women of New Zealand) found that 35% of respondents thought 'false accusations [of sexual violence] are common'.
- 8% of sexual violation cases reported were classified as false complaints. Authors noted that this category may have been used inappropriately for cases where there was insufficient evidence or the victim withdrew (Triggs et al., 2009).
- False allegations have only accounted for between 2% and 8% of all allegations (Lisak et al., 2010; Lonsway et al., 2009).

Sexual violence in the Aotearoa New Zealand Criminal Justice System

- Sexual assaults have the lowest likelihood of being reported to the Police (8%). 92% of sexual assaults are not reported to Police (Ministry of Justice, 2021).
 - The reasons "shame/embarrassment/further humiliation" and "fear of reprisals/would make matters worse" were significantly more likely to be given for not reporting sexual assault.
- Ministry of Justice (2019) found that of the sexual violence victimisations reported to Police in 2014-2018, less than one-third (31%) result in Police charging the perpetrator. Of these, 11% result in conviction, with 6% being imprisonment. This has been stable for ten years (Trigg et al., 2009).
- Attrition is the proportion of reported sexual violence victimisations that do not progress through the criminal justice system to a conviction. Ministry of Justice (2019) say that the proportion of reported sexual violence victimisations that progress to court and subsequently to a conviction is low, meaning victims may feel they do not get justice. By early 2019, 11% of reported victimisations that occurred in 2014-2018 had resulted in a perpetrator being convicted; no perpetrator was convicted for 89% of reported victimisations.

- The Ministry of Justice (2019) suggests that if only 10% of sexual violence victimisations are reported to Police, for every 100 victimisations only three results in a perpetrator being charged, and only one results in a conviction.

Sexual Violence Convictions in Aotearoa New Zealand

- The investigation and court process takes a long time. Only one-fifth (21%) of victimisations with a charge outcome received the outcome within six months of reporting, whilst for half (51%) it took up to a year in total to receive a charge outcome. Most charges (87%) had an outcome after a total of two years, and for the remaining 13% of victimisations it took two years or more. (Ministry of Justice, 2019)
- More than half of reported sexual violence victimisations in 2014-2018 related to children and young people. Of reported sexual violence victimisations, almost two-thirds (61%) occurred when the victim was a child or young person under 17 years old. More than half (53%) were reported when the victim was an adult. (Ministry of Justice, 2019)
- Ministry of Justice (2021a) data shows that between 2011/12 – 2020/21, 13,825 people were charged with sexual offences. 6,152 people (44%) were charged with sexual violation.
 - Between 2011/12 – 2020/21, 7,428 people were convicted of a sexual offence. 2,561 people were convicted of sexual violation.
 - Of these sexual offence convictions, 98.2% were male, 1.5% were female, and 0.3% were unknown.
 - Of these sexual offence convictions, 48.6% were Pākehā, 32.5% were Māori, 11.9% were Pacific Peoples, 6.5% were Asian, 2.7% were 'Other', and 2.6% were unknown.
 - Of these sexual offence convictions, 11% were 19 or younger, 28.2% were 20–29, 23.8% were 30–39, 18.1% were 40–49, 9.9% were 50–59, 6.8% were 60 years and older, and 2.2% were unknown.
 - This means that statistically, the most common offender is male, Pākehā, and aged between 20-29.
- In 2020/2021, two-thirds (66%) of all charges for sexual offences were for offences against children (under 16 years) (3,893 charges). Of the charges with a child victim, 46% were convicted (1,795 charges).
 - In 2020/2021, over half (52.8%) of all convictions for sexual offences were for offences against children (under 16 years) (386 convictions).
- In 2020/21, 52% of convicted people were sentenced to imprisonment. 85% of people convicted of sexual violation were sentenced to imprisonment.