



## *Fact Sheet on Sexual Assault*

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

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

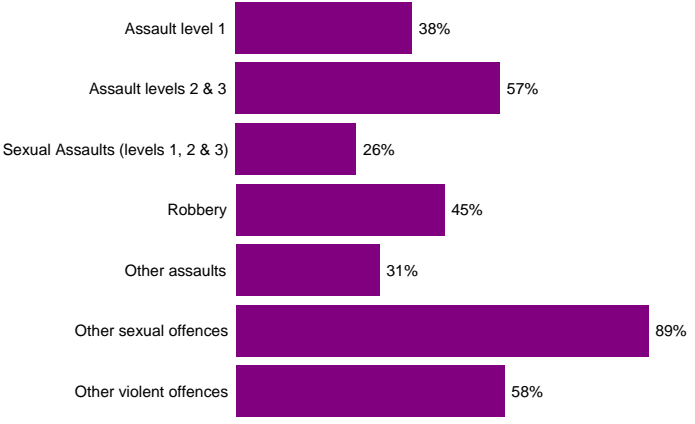
- 31,000 Nova Scotians indicated that they were victims of sexual assault in 2004. In that year, Nova Scotia's rate of sexual assault was 40 per 1,000 population aged 15 and over.
- Between 1999 and 2004, the sexual assault rate increased in only two provinces in Canada: Nova Scotia and Manitoba.
- Eighty-four per cent of Canadians who reported being sexually assaulted in the 12 months prior to the survey were women, while 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; Forty-four per cent of victims are under the age of 25.
- Eighty-eight per cent 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 2005, 840 sexual offences were reported to police in Nova Scotia. These comprised 8 per cent of all violent offences reported to police in the province.
- Nova Scotia's rate of police-reported sexual assaults in 2005 was 83 per 100,000 population. The national rate was 72 per 100,000 population.
- In more than three quarters of cases reported to Halifax Regional Police in 2005, victims of sexual offences knew the accused. The accused was a stranger in only 23 per cent of such cases.

- In 2005, only 26 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.
- The proportion of sexual assaults that result in the laying of a charge is lower in Nova Scotia than in most other provinces.

*Percentage of Sexual Assaults and Other Violent Offences Where Charge is Laid Nova Scotia, 2005*



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

- Conviction rates for sexual assault are substantially lower than they are for other violent offences. In 2003/04, the conviction rate for sexual assaults in Nova Scotia was 22 per cent, while for other violent offences it was 38 per cent.
- Acquittal rates for sexual assaults in Nova Scotia have risen over the past decade while acquittal rates for other violent offences have remained stable. In 2003/04, the acquittal rate for sexual assaults was 23 per cent. For other violent offences it was 8 per cent.

**Sexual Violence and Diverse Populations**

There is little information available about rates of sexual violence in particular populations such as Aboriginal, Immigrant, GLBT 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/pubs2005\\_06/sexualassaultstatsDec05.pdf](http://women.gov.ns.ca/pubs2005_06/sexualassaultstatsDec05.pdf)

**Sources:**

1. Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004
2. Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.