



## MEASURING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: STATISTICAL TRENDS – KEY FINDINGS

This fact sheet provides an overview of key statistical data included in *Measuring violence against women: Statistical trends* (2013). The full report can be accessed at [www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2013001/article/11766-eng.pdf](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2013001/article/11766-eng.pdf).

### Violence against Aboriginal Women

#### Key Facts

- **Consistent with previous research findings, Aboriginal women in Canada have a higher rate of victimization compared to non-Aboriginal women, both in relation to spousal and non-spousal violence.**
- **Data indicate that Aboriginal women experience higher rates and more severe forms of intimate partner and spousal violence. Aboriginal women are also disproportionately represented as homicide victims in Canada.**
- **Explanations for these findings include broader socio-economic issues affecting Aboriginal communities, such as loss of culture, residential school experiences, economic and social inequalities and demographic differences, in particular, the fast-growing, young population.**

#### *Prevalence and severity*

*It must be noted that due to a lack of consistent reporting of Aboriginal status by police services, analysis on the victimization of Aboriginal women is largely limited to self-reported data from the General Social Survey (GSS).*

- In general, Aboriginal women have a greater likelihood of victimization than the rest of the female population in Canada. According to the 2009 GSS, the rate of self-reported violent victimization of Aboriginal women in the provinces was about 2.5 times higher than the rate for non-Aboriginal women. This was the case for spousal violence, as well as violence perpetrated by other family members, friends, acquaintances and strangers.
- The higher likelihood of injury and fear among Aboriginal female victims reported through the 2009 GSS may be partly related to the nature of spousal violence: Aboriginal women more often report the most severe forms of violence, including being sexually assaulted, beaten, choked, or threatened with a gun or a knife.
- According to the 2011 Homicide Survey, between 2001 and 2011, at least 8% of all murdered women aged 15 years and older were Aboriginal, double their representation in the Canadian population (4%).

- Aboriginal women accounted for at least 11% of dating homicide victims and at least 10% of non-intimate partner homicide victims. The proportion of Aboriginal women killed by a spouse (4%) was similar to their representation in the total population.
- The disproportionately high number of Aboriginal women in Canada who have gone missing or been murdered has been identified as a serious issue at both the national and international levels (Department of Justice Canada, 2010).<sup>i</sup> However, quantifying the prevalence of this issue can be difficult, since data from the Homicide Survey do not include cases of missing women. As well, it must be noted that the Aboriginal identity of homicide victims was unknown in 50% of all homicide cases in the survey data used for *Measuring Violence against Women: Statistical Trends*.

### *Impacts*

- The severity of violence experienced by Aboriginal women and their non-Aboriginal counterparts also differs. For self-reported spousal violence, Aboriginal female victims were more likely to incur injuries as a result of the incident. Nearly 59% of Aboriginal female spousal violence victims reported injury, while the rate was 41% among non-Aboriginal female victims.
- Aboriginal female victims were also more likely to indicate that they feared for their lives as a result of spousal violence (52% versus 31% of non-Aboriginal female victims).

### *Responses*

- While Aboriginal women differed from non-Aboriginal women in their risk of being victimized, the likelihood of reporting victimization to police did not. Approximately four in 10 Aboriginal women victimized by their spouse indicated that police were contacted, which was not significantly different from the proportion for non-Aboriginal women.
- Likewise, among non-spousal violent incidents involving Aboriginal women, about one-quarter were reported to the police, similar to the proportion for non-Aboriginal women.

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<sup>i</sup> Department of Justice Canada, October 29, 2010. "Government of Canada Takes Concrete Action Regarding Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women." *News Release*. Vancouver.