

Violence against Women: Sexual Violence, Intimate Partner Violence, & Marginalized Groups

Rusan Lateef

PhD Candidate, McGill University



Agenda

1. Sexual Violence

- ▶ Prevalence
- ▶ Impact of COVID-19
- ▶ Groups at risk
- ▶ Consequences
- ▶ Intersectionality
- ▶ Service experiences

2. Intimate Partner Violence

- ▶ Prevalence
- ▶ Impact of COVID-19
- ▶ Risk factors
- ▶ Consequences
- ▶ Intersectionality
- ▶ Service experiences

Definitions

- ▶ **Sexual violence** is "any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting. It includes rape, defined as the physically forced or otherwise coerced penetration of the vulva or anus with a penis, other body part or object, attempted rape, unwanted sexual touching and other non-contact forms".
- ▶ **Intimate partner violence (IPV)** refers to "behaviour by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours."

- World Health Organization¹

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Prevalence

▶ GLOBALLY²

- ▶ Lifetime prevalence: 6% of women aged 15 years and older report they have been subjected to non-partner sexual violence at least once in their lifetime.

▶ CANADA

- ▶ 30% of women and 8% of men have been sexually assaulted since the age of 15 years³
- ▶ 8 to 10% of Canadians have survived child sexual abuse^{4,5}
 - ▶ Rate of child sexual abuse is an estimated 20-25% in Canadian Indigenous populations⁶

▶ QUEBEC⁷

- ▶ 85% of sexual offence victims were female
- ▶ 62% of sexual offences were against victims under age 18 years

COVID-19

Canada

Online sexual predators eager to take advantage of greater access to kids during COVID-19, police warn



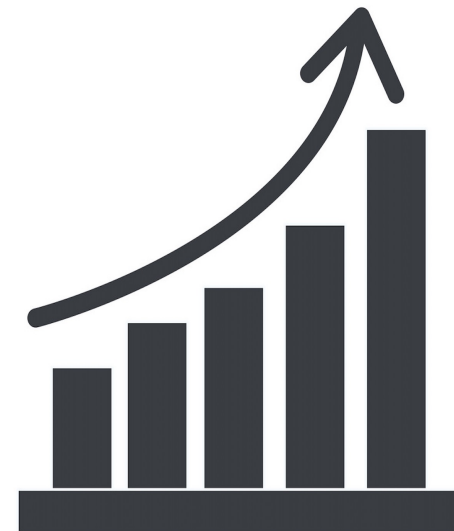
Reports of child exploitation to [Cybertip.ca](https://www.cybertip.ca) up 40 per cent in recent weeks

Increases across the board

Stephen Sauer is the director of [Cybertip.ca](https://www.cybertip.ca), a national hotline ran by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection (CCCP) to report the online sexual exploitation of children. He says they have seen about an 88 per cent increase in calls — including things like children receiving sexual messages or images from online — nationally since April 1, 2020.

COVID-19

- ▶ Increase in online child sexual exploitation. From 2019 to 2020:
 - ▶ 35% increase in making, or distribution of child pornography
 - ▶ 34% increase in possession of pornography
 - ▶ 19% increase in luring a child via a computer crimes
 - ▶ 14% increase in incidents of non-consensual distribution of intimate images



COVID-19

► Police-reported calls for service: Sexual assaults

	March to October 2019	March to October 2020	Difference from 2019 (total #)	Difference from 2019 (% change)
Total sexual assaults	15,459	12,407	- 3,052	-19.7%
Sexual assaults by non-family	10,114	7,952	- 2,162	-21.4%
Sexual assaults by family	2,751	2,477	- 274	-10%
Sexual assaults relationship type unknown	2,594	1,978	- 616	-23.7%

Groups at Risk

Who is at a greater risk of experiencing sexual violence in Canada?

- ▶ Women compared to men³
- ▶ Indigenous women⁶
- ▶ Single never-married women¹²
- ▶ Younger women (15-24 years of age)³
- ▶ Women with disabilities^{13, 14}
- ▶ Lesbian women³
- ▶ Women who had been sexually abused as children³

Consequences

- ▶ Physical health consequences
 - ▶ Obesity; eating disorders
 - ▶ Gastrointestinal problems
 - ▶ Chronic pain
- ▶ Mental health consequences
 - ▶ Depression
 - ▶ Anxiety
 - ▶ PTSD
 - ▶ Substance use
 - ▶ Sexual dysfunction

Intersectionality



Intersectionality

- ▶ Language/Acknowledgement of Sexual Abuse
 - ▶ South Asian survivors of sexual abuse in counselling preferred to not use the term “rape” or similar words to describe their abuse.¹⁸
 - ▶ In some Caribbean countries, only girls sexually abused prior to puberty were considered valid child sexual abuse victims.¹⁹
 - ▶ In a study of Latino survivors of child sexual abuse, families dismissed the need to acknowledge an experience as sexual abuse if a female child was not vaginally penetrated.²⁰
 - ▶ Acknowledgement as survivors of sexual abuse different depending on race/ethnicity
 - ▶ Historically, only White women were considered valid victims of sexual abuse²¹
 - ▶ Contemporarily, publicized discrediting of sexual violence survivors from marginalized groups²²

Intersectionality

- ▶ Barriers to disclosure
 - ▶ Cultural sexual stereotypes²³
 - ▶ Cultural taboos²⁴
 - ▶ "Code of silence"²⁵
 - ▶ Fears of secondary victimization²⁶
- ▶ Help-seeking
 - ▶ Trouble finding culturally-appropriate services ^{27, 28}
 - ▶ Lack of trust in the legal system by BIPOC survivors of sexual abuse²⁶

WATCH:
Radio-Canada:
Enquête -
The Silence is Broken

Service experiences

- ▶ **Legal system:** An intersectional analysis of child sexual abuse trials in the United States revealed that children's marginalized identities and the use of age, gender, racial, and class stereotypes were exploited by defense attorneys to diminish the credibility of sexual abuse claims by children, especially adolescents, from Black or Latinx backgrounds.²⁹
- ▶ **Support services:**
 - ▶ Sexual abuse survivors from ethnic minority groups have expressed difficulty finding support services for their respective groups and disappointment because they felt support services were not sensitive to their particular social and cultural contexts.^{27, 28}
 - ▶ Professionals and police officers require more training on working with sexual abuse survivors from marginalized groups, including those with disabilities, LGBTQ+, BIPOC, immigrants, etc.³⁰
 - ▶ Accessibility issues (ex. affordability of attending/receiving support services)³⁰



INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Prevalence

► GLOBALLY

- Lifetime prevalence: 26% of ever-married/partnered women aged 15 years and older have been subjected to physical and/or sexual IPV at least once in their lifetime.²
- Past 12-month prevalence: 10% of ever-married/partnered women aged 15 years and older have been subjected to physical and/or sexual IPV.²

► CANADA

- In 2018, 99,452 people in Canada experienced IPV. 79% of survivors were women.³¹
- 1 in 10 (10%) of Canadians have witnessed violence by a parent/guardian against another adult in the home before the age of 15 years³²
- Approximately every 6 days, a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner.³³
- Rates rising every year since 2016³⁴

COVID-19

Police-reported calls for service: Domestic Disturbances/Disputes

March to October 2019	March to October 2020	Difference from 2019 (total #)	Difference from 2019 (% change)
78,044	84,423	+ 6,379	8.2%

- Statistics Canada¹¹

CRIME

Seven women killed in 7 weeks has Quebec sounding alarm over domestic violence spike

Montreal

Quebec adding more shelter spaces, intervention workers to fight domestic violence

COVID-19

In a perfect world, addressing the problem with money might work, but Quebec is not a perfect world, she said. Systemic racism further exacerbates the issue in the shelter system.

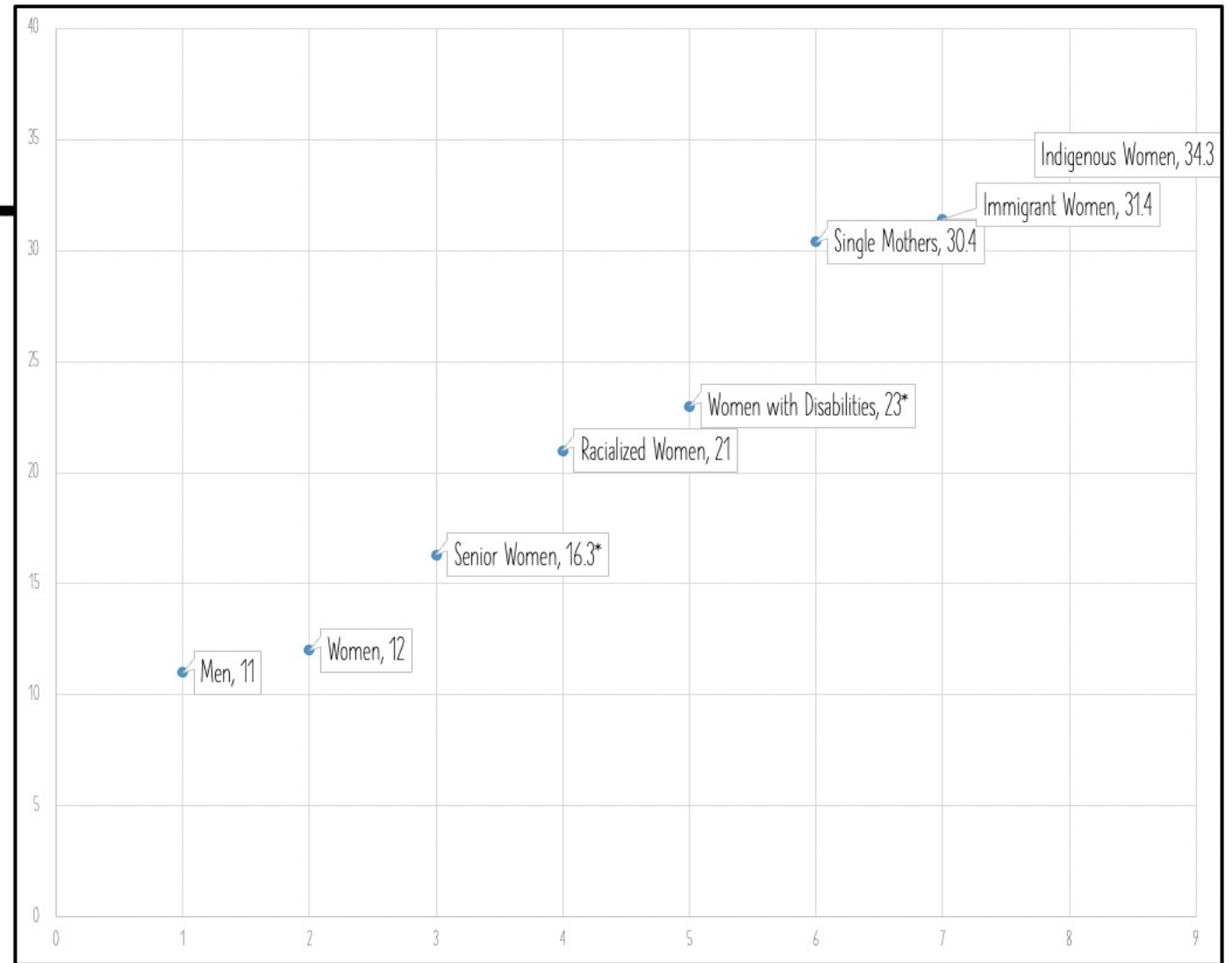
“Let these homes know that they cannot turn their backs on any woman of colour because it is a thing, it does happen with some of the shelters and homes,” she added.

Risk Factors

Based on a Quebec sample, the following factors were associated with higher risk of IPV:

- ▶ Low-income
- ▶ Women who are single parents
- ▶ Women aged 18 to 24 years had the highest rates of partner violence
- ▶ Domestic violence in family of origin
- ▶ Low levels of social support
- ▶ Male partner alcohol/drug use

Poverty as a Risk Factor – Groups at Risk



Groups at Risk

In Canada⁴¹:

- ▶ Indigenous women
- ▶ LGBTQ2 women and men
- ▶ Women with disabilities
- ▶ Women between 15 to 24 years of age
- ▶ Separated/divorced women

Consequences

- ▶ Physical health consequences⁴²
 - ▶ Physical injuries, disability
 - ▶ Chronic pain
 - ▶ Reproductive disorders; increased risk of pregnancy complications
- ▶ Mental health consequences⁴³⁻⁴⁶
 - ▶ PTSD
 - ▶ Depression
 - ▶ Suicidal ideation
 - ▶ Substance use
 - ▶ Feelings of fear, anger, frustration, cautiousness

Consequences

- ▶ Social consequences
 - ▶ Increased use of health services; poorer access to healthcare⁴²
 - ▶ Higher likelihood of housing instability⁴⁷
 - ▶ Negatively impacts employee performance and attendance⁴⁸
- ▶ Consequences for children exposed to IPV⁴⁹⁻⁵¹
 - ▶ Emotional and behavioural problems
 - ▶ PTSD symptoms
 - ▶ Delinquent behaviour; increased risk-taking behaviour in adolescence/adulthood
 - ▶ Academic difficulties
 - ▶ Negative impact of future romantic relationships

Intersectionality

- ▶ Barriers to disclosure⁵²
 - ▶ Among immigrant women: language barriers; fear of deportation
 - ▶ Maintaining family honor in many ethnic communities
- ▶ Help-seeking⁵³⁻⁵⁴
 - ▶ Among all Hispanic women, low acculturation was associated with less use of healthcare and social services, particularly among women exposed to IPV
 - ▶ Some African Americans do not trust social services that are dominated by White providers

Service experiences

- ▶ Study of 140 female IPV victims' preferences for service providers, they preferred to be screened by⁵⁴:
 - ▶ a woman
 - ▶ someone of the same race
 - ▶ a provider between 30 and 50 years old
 - ▶ without anyone else present
- ▶ Varied experiences with providers based on social identities⁵²
 - ▶ Immigrant women have reported feeling as though providers did not listen
 - ▶ Lack of interventions that are sensitive to cultural norms and values, collectivist cultures, etc.
 - ▶ There is a need for trust building and better screening by providers when working with racial/ethnic minority and immigrant women

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