

## LEARN MORE 2

### **Sexual violence is the most underreported crime in Canada.**<sup>1</sup>

- Unlike other crimes of a violent nature, sexual assault is for the most part unreported.<sup>2</sup>
- Less than 10% of sexual assaults are reported to the police.<sup>3</sup> This percentage is closer to 6% according to Toronto Police.<sup>4</sup> Since the incidence of sexual violence has remained essentially unchanged for decades when reporting increases, it is generally thought to be due to increased comfortability.
- Date rape has the lowest reporting rate of all forms of sexual assault. It is estimated that only 1% of all date rapes are reported to police.<sup>5</sup>
- Male and female victims showed no significant difference in their likelihood of reporting sexual assaults.<sup>6</sup>
- The Toronto Police Sex Crimes Unit provides a summary of reasons for not reporting incidents of sexual assault:
  - belief that the police could do nothing about it (50% of women gave this reason);
  - concern about the attitude of both police and the courts toward sexual assault (44%);
  - fear of another assault by the offender (33%);
  - fear and shame (64%).<sup>7</sup>
- About 85% of sexual assault cases reported to the police are recorded as a crime.<sup>8</sup>
- Estimates suggest less than half of these crimes result in a suspect being charged, and about 25% of those initially charged with sexual assault are convicted of sexual assault.<sup>9</sup>
- 2,824 Prosecuted - <50% of suspects were prosecuted
- 1,046 Convicted - 25% of those initially charged are convicted of sexual assault (see the [Attrition Pyramid](#))
- Charges are less likely to be laid and conviction rates are lower, for sexual offences than for other types of violent crime.<sup>10</sup>
- Using data from Statistics Canada, Holly Johnson found that few sexual assaults lead to convictions:  
“If attrition is calculated from the estimated 460,000 sexual assaults that occurred in one year and follow through to the 1,406 offenders who were convicted in criminal court, the result is that 0.3% of perpetrators of sexual assault were held accountable and 99.7% were not.”<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Penwill, Kathryn. “Reality Check: How Rape Mythology in the Legal System Undermines the Equality Rights of Women who are Sexual Assault Victims.” Commissioned for Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes. 2008. June 26, 2014 Available at: [http://aocvf.ca/documents/Reality\\_Check\\_VF\\_WEB.pdf](http://aocvf.ca/documents/Reality_Check_VF_WEB.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> R v Seaboyer, [1991] 2 SCR 577. June 25, 2014 from <http://leaf.ca/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Seaboyer-judgment.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Brennan, S. & Taylor-Butts, A. (2008). *Sexual Assault in Canada, 2004 and 2007*. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada, Minister of Industry. June 25, 2014 from: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85f0033m/85f0033m2008019-eng.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Toronto Police Sex Crimes Unit (2014), retrieved May, 2014 at: <http://www.torontopolice.on.ca/sexcrimes/sas/statistics.php>

<sup>5</sup> Toronto Police Sex Crimes Unit (2014), retrieved May, 2014 at: <http://www.torontopolice.on.ca/sexcrimes/sas/statistics.php>

<sup>6</sup> Brennan, S. & Taylor-Butts, A. (2008). *Sexual Assault in Canada, 2004 and 2007*. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada, Minister of Industry. June 25, 2014 from: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85f0033m/85f0033m2008019-eng.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Solicitor General of Canada, "Canadian Urban Victimization Survey," Bulletin 4: Female Victims of Crime. Ottawa, 1985, found on Toronto Police Sex Crimes Unit (2014), retrieved May, 2014 at: <http://www.torontopolice.on.ca/sexcrimes/sas/statistics.php>

<sup>8</sup> Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), (2010). *Human Trafficking in Canada: A Threat Assessment, Canada*. Available at: <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/pubs/ht-tp/htta-tpem-eng.htm>

<sup>9</sup> Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), (2010). *Human Trafficking in Canada: A Threat Assessment, Canada*. Available at: <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/pubs/ht-tp/htta-tpem-eng.htm>

<sup>10</sup> Brennan, S. & Taylor-Butts, A. (2008). *Sexual Assault in Canada, 2004 and 2007*. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada, Minister of Industry. Retrieved June 20, 2014 from: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85f0033m/85f0033m2008019-eng.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> Johnson, H. (2011). Limits of a criminal justice response: Trends in police and court processing of sexual assault. Pg 14 Retrieved March 31, 2012 from: [http://www.ruor.uottawa.ca/fr/bitstream/handle/10393/19876/21-Johnson--Limits\\_of\\_a\\_Criminal\\_Justice\\_Response.pdf?sequence=32](http://www.ruor.uottawa.ca/fr/bitstream/handle/10393/19876/21-Johnson--Limits_of_a_Criminal_Justice_Response.pdf?sequence=32)