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Impacts and Consequences of Victimization, GSS 2004

by Kathy AuCoin and Diane Beauchamp

Highlights

- According to the GSS, there were over two million violent incidents in Canada in 2004 against persons 15 years of age and over of which one-quarter resulted in an injury. Approximately 24% of these injurious incidents resulted in the victim seeking medical attention, while for 20% of incidents victims required bed rest.
- Slightly less than a third of injurious violent incidents resulted in victims having their day-to-day activities disrupted for a period of one day (31%), while in 27% of incidents the disruption lasted two to three days. In 18% of incidents, victims were unable to carry-out their daily activities for more than two weeks.
- A majority of household and property-related incidents resulted in a loss of under \$500 (60%), while for 15% of incidents losses of more than \$1,000 were reported.
- A majority of incidents impacted victims emotionally (78%), while a minority of incidents did not affect victims at all (21%). Overall, a larger proportion of victims of non-violent incidents felt angry (41%) relative to victims of violent incidents (32%). Regardless of the type of victimization one-fifth of victims felt upset and expressed confusion and/or frustration as a result of their victimization.
- Results from the GSS found that a larger proportion of victims of violence (32%) reported sleeping problems than non-victims (17%). In addition, a larger proportion of female victims (37%) of violent victimization reported experiencing sleeping problems relative to their male counterparts (28%).
- According to the GSS, just under one-third of victims of violence (30%) installed new locks or security bars, whereas this was the case for one-tenth of non-victims (10%).
- Overall, victims were found to feel less safe than non-victims. For example, a smaller proportion of victims of violent incidents (37%) reported feeling very safe walking alone after dark than did non-victims (46%).
- Just under one-fifth (18%) of women who had been victims of violence reported feeling very safe walking alone after dark, which was a much lower proportion than that reported by their male counterparts (49%).



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Introduction

Nearly three out of ten Canadians 15 years of age and older were victimized in some manner in the year leading up to the 2004 General Social Survey on victimization (GSS). The impact and consequences of these victimizations can involve physical injury, financial loss, and property damage, as well as psychological and emotional after-effects. Criminal victimization may also affect victim's families and friends as well as society as a whole. Moreover, research to date has found that crime witnesses, who may not suffer immediate physical and/or economic consequences as a direct result of a crime incident, may suffer from trauma, anxiety and heightened levels of stress as a result of their experience (Kilpatrick et al., 1997).

The impact of criminal victimization may be shaped by a number of variables: sex of the victim, age, a victim's prior history of victimization or that of persons known to the victim, overall perceptions of crime, the type and severity of crime experienced, and the relationship between the victim and the offender. For example, research has found that victims of property crime are not as traumatized as victims of violent crime, yet they still experience elevated levels of fear, depression, hostility and sleep problems that can last for a long period of time (Norris, et al., 1997). In addition, women have been found to report higher levels of fear as a result of being a victim of crime relative to men (Kilpatrick and Acierno, 2003).

Measuring the overall cost to society, as a result of victimization, is difficult at best. Defining what and how to measure the many different costs associated with victimization is just one of the many barriers to undertaking such a study. Short-term and long-term, direct and indirect costs to victims, their families, and society are just a few of the many factors that would need to be considered to complete such a costing exercise.

Using the 2004 GSS, the present analysis describes some of the direct and indirect impacts of crime, including physical, economic, emotional/psychological and societal costs. Where feasible, the analysis breaks down victim categories by violent (robbery, physical and sexual assault), non-violent (personal and household-related incidents of theft or attempted theft) and witnesses of crime (see Textbox 1 for a definition of a crime witness and the Methodology section for descriptions of violent and non-violent incidents). Where possible, gender differences are considered.

This analysis shows that not only do victims incur physical, emotional and financial costs as a direct result of their victimization, but that their perceptions of their neighbourhoods and personal safety and their opinions concerning the police system are affected by their prior victimization experience. The analysis highlights the fact that regardless of crime experiences, women tend to express more fear related to crime than men and when women are victims of crime the impact on their emotions, their use of precautionary measures and their sense of security seems to be greater relative to men.

Textbox 1: Witnesses of crime

The GSS asked respondents whether or not they had come into contact with police during the previous 12-month period for various reasons including as a witness to a crime. Those that responded "yes" to this question and **had not** been a victim of any other crime during the same time period were placed in the victim category "crime witness". The value of including this group in the analysis is to represent those that may not be directly touched by the crime – but whose perceptions of the criminal justice system and crime levels may be altered as a consequence of what they saw. What is not clear from the GSS data is what type of crime respondents had witnessed and who the victim was. Both of these factors may influence how witnesses are impacted by what they saw.

Physical consequences of violent incidents

More than one-quarter of violent incidents resulted in physical injury

According to the 2004 GSS, there were over two million violent incidents in Canada against persons 15 years of age and older. One-quarter of these incidents resulted in an injury. Equal proportions of physical assault (31%) and robbery incidents (30%) resulted in an injury, while incidents of sexual assault were less likely to involve a physical injury (7%). There was no significant difference between female and male victims of violent crime and their likelihood of being injured (23% for women and 27% for men) (Table 1).

Among incidents involving injuries, 24% were serious enough to require the victim to seek medical attention, whereas 20% of incidents resulted in the victim requiring bed rest. Similar to the level of injury there was no significant difference in the proportion of incidents involving men and women seeking medical assistance or staying in bed as a result of their injury (Table 1).

Despite the fact that many injuries were not serious enough for victims to seek medical attention, about 4 out of 10 injured victims (39%) had difficulty carrying out daily activities for most or all of the day. Overall, a larger proportion of incidents involving injured women resulted in the victim having difficulty carrying out daily activities (46%) relative to incidents involving men (33%). Of those incidents involving a physical assault, 40% of women and 30% of men had their daily activities disrupted.

Just under one-third of violent incidents involving an injury (31%) resulted in the loss of one day from daily activities, while 27% of injurious violent incidents resulted in a loss of two to three days. A further 7% of incidents resulted in a loss of a week, and an additional 18% resulted in victims finding it difficult to carry out their everyday activities, for more than two weeks because of the injury thus adding stress to the victim, their family and their financial situation.

Among violent incidents that did not involve an injury, disruptions of daily activities were experienced in one-fifth of incidents. A larger proportion of these disruptions lasted for a day (43%) followed by two to three days (18%).

Economic costs of violent and non-violent incidents

Personal economic losses incurred as a result of being a victim of crime may consist of several different types of expenses including direct financial losses, property losses and damage to property, medical costs, lost wages due to absenteeism, monies spent on purchasing locks and security systems, and possible long-term counseling costs to cope with the emotional and psychological after-effects of the victimization.

Insurance claims offset total cost of household and property-related losses

In order to capture the financial costs of household and property-related incidents, respondents were asked to report on the dollar value of the items that were stolen and/or damaged during the incident experienced during the previous 12-months. Overall, more than 8 out of 10 incidents resulted in losses. The majority of incidents resulted in losses of under \$500 (60%), while in 15% of household and property-related incidents losses of more than \$1,000 were reported (Figure 1).

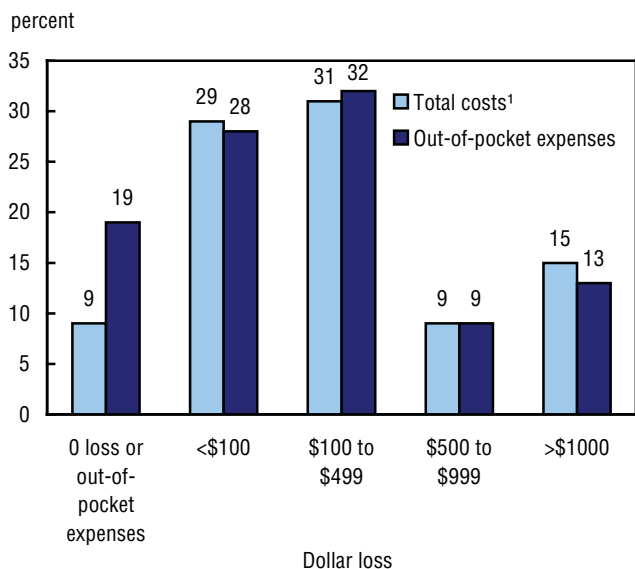
Overall, the proportion of all household and property-related incidents that resulted in no out-of-pocket losses doubled to 19% from 9% when taking into account incidents that obtained monies through compensation (Figure 1).

Of those incidents in which the respondent had insurance and submitted a claim (19% of household or property-related incidents), more than 7 out of 10 received monetary compensation (72%).

In addition to direct losses, property and household incidents are also costly when considering the time lost to replace damaged and/or stolen goods, or to wait for service or insurance agents. More than 6 out of 10 property and household-related incidents resulted in disruptions of the victim's day-to-day activities that

Figure 1

Losses associated with household and property-related incidents most often less than \$500 dollars, 2004



1. Includes out of pocket cost.

Notes: Includes break and enter, motor vehicle theft, theft of personal property, theft of household property, and vandalism. Includes attempts. The percent represent household and property incidents. Percentages does not add up to 100% as *Don't knows/not stated* are not included.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

exceeded 6 hours. A larger percentage of these non-violent incidents resulted in victims losing one day (38%) of normal activities, followed by 18% of incidents resulting in two days of disruption and a further 12% of incidents resulting in three days of disruption.

Societal costs of meeting the needs of victims

The cost of victimization is not only felt by victims and their immediate families but by society as a whole. Many victims find it difficult to carry out daily activities and their contribution to society can be diminished, resulting in a broader societal loss. Friends and family of the victim may also be adversely affected by the victimization and may not be able to fully participate in their day-to-day activities. Furthermore, additional societal costs are incurred with helping victims and their families deal with the aftermath of crime. The combined costs of victim services, crime prevention and offender processing represent some of the financial costs borne by society (see Textboxes 2 and 3 for more information on measuring societal costs of crime).

Victims rely on informal support systems

Victims may seek assistance from both formal and informal support mechanisms to help cope with their victimization. Informal services include people that victims may seek advice from or talk to about their experiences, while a formal support

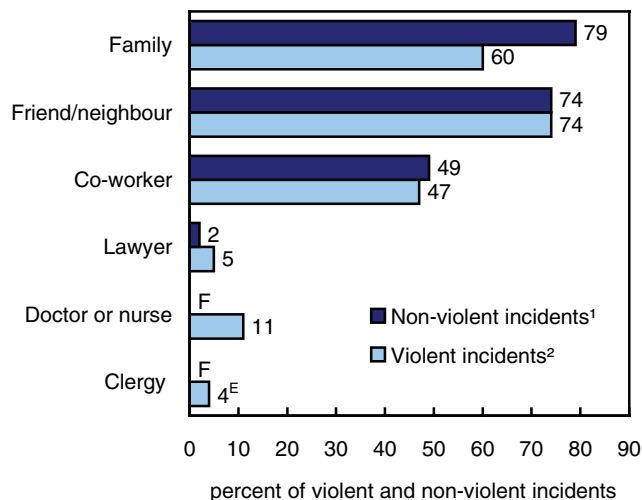
system is an agency that is specifically designed to meet the needs of victims such as shelters, counselors, victim service agencies, and crisis centres.

Overall, informal support systems were used more frequently than formal systems. In 8 out of 10 non-violent incidents, victims turned to a family member, while this was the case for 6 in 10 violent incidents. While victims may seek professional services to deal with their victimization they may also speak to professionals in an informal manner to understand how they can be helped. In just over one-tenth (11%) of violent incidents, victims turned to a doctor or nurse, while in 5% of violent incidents a lawyer was consulted (Figure 2).

Formal support services were also used by victims of violent incidents – but less frequently relative to informal support mechanisms. Overall, violent incidents involving female victims (13%) were more likely to result in the use of formal services than violent incidents involving a male victim (5%^E). In just under one-tenth of violent incidents involving a female victim, counselors and psychologists were called upon. In a further 3% of incidents the services of a crisis centre or crisis lines or community/family centres (3%^E each) were employed by female victims of violence (Figure 3).

Figure 2

Victims of crime most likely to turn to family and friends, 2004



^E use with caution
^F too unreliable to be published

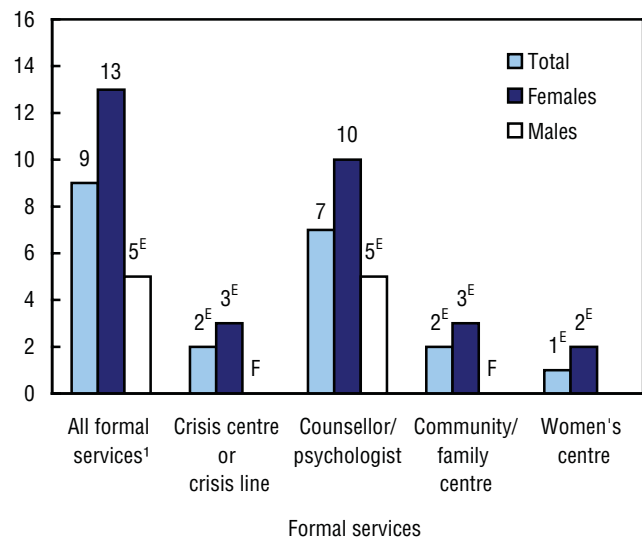
1. Includes break and enter, motor vehicle theft, theft of personal property, theft of household property, and vandalism. Includes attempts.
2. Includes robbery, attempted robbery, assault, sexual assault, excludes spousal violence.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Figure 3

Overall female victims more likely than males to use formal services, 2004

percent of violent incidents



^E use with caution

^F too unreliable to be published

1. All formal services include men's centre or men's support group, seniors' centre, women's centre, community or family centre, crisis centre or crisis line, counselor or psychologist.

Notes: Includes break and enter, motor vehicle theft, theft of personal property, theft of household property, and vandalism. Includes attempts. Percentages does not add up to 100% as *Don't knows/not stated* are not included.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Textbox 2: Tracking the costs associated with crime

Tracking the total financial and economic costs of victimization has yet to be undertaken in Canada. A comprehensive study that includes all victimization costs would need to include measures of property losses/damages, medical costs incurred during the actual incident, the costs of the long-term emotional/psychological consequences of the incident, costs of prevention, costs of the criminal justice system itself, and secondary costs associated with impacts on family and friends of the victim. Such a comprehensive study would be an exhaustive process. To date, several studies have been undertaken in order to provide a partial cost of victimization, and these include the following;

- Based on data collected through Statistics Canada surveys, it is estimated that the total financial expenditures for administering policing, courts, legal aid, prosecutions and adult corrections totalled over 12 billion dollars in 2002/2003. This total translates into \$399 per Canadian. The majority of the funding was spent on policing (61%), followed by adult corrections (22%), courts (9%), legal aid (5%) and criminal prosecutions (3%) (Kong, 2005).
- In a 2004 study, Canadian researchers attempted to derive a monetary counter for the cost of crime, taking into account the cost of pain and suffering associated with crime in Canada, by using an economic model based on: the number of incidents (by type of crime), the proportion of victims who were worried about their safety, and the value of both the perceived and actual mental distress brought about by being a victim of crime. Using data from the Uniform Crime Report (UCR Survey, 1999) and the 1999 General Social Survey, the study estimated that the cost of pain and suffering for all crimes based on 1999 GSS data was close to \$36 billion (Leung, 2004).
- Bowlus et al. (2003) recently looked at the economic costs of child abuse in Canada using data from the Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect, the 1990 Ontario Health Survey Mental Health Supplement, and the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (for 1998). They arrived at an estimate of \$15.7 billion. According to this study, victims experience significant personal and financial burdens associated with the abuse (15% of the total estimated costs). Costs for legal proceedings and therapies (both counseling and drug), were just a few of the personal costs listed. The researchers pointed out that the largest cost (70% of the total) was incurred by adult survivors of child abuse as a result of lost employment income. They noted that victims of childhood abuse experienced behavioural and learning problems, which resulted in lower levels of educational achievement, and as a result were unable to secure employment or their level of employment was somewhat low. The researchers stated that the long-term impacts of the abuse could lead to high rates of absenteeism and addictions (Bowlus, et al., 2003).

Emotional and psychological impacts of crime

The experience of being a victim of crime can evoke a wide range of emotions that can be affected by the severity of the crime, sex of the victim and prior victimization. The GSS asked respondents to describe their emotional reactions to their victimization. The majority of respondents reported some form of emotional reaction (78%), while a minority (21%) reported that the incident did not affect them that much. Further analysis show that the proportion of respondents reporting that their victimization did not affect them that much was larger among non-violent incidents (26%) relative to violent incidents (19%).

Textbox 3: Results from the Transition Home and Victim Service Surveys

Currently, Statistics Canada measures the services available for victims through two surveys: the Transition Home Survey and the Victims Services Survey. Results from these surveys look at the number of clients served on a specific “snapshot day” and provide a profile of their needs. According to the Transition Home Survey (2003/2004), between April 1, 2003 and March 31, 2004 annual admissions totalled just over 52,000 women and 36,000 children. The majority of women who use shelters are there to escape spousal abuse (Taylor-Butts, 2005). Costs associated with operating shelters in Canada amount to over \$210 million (Code, 2003).

According to the Victim Services Survey over 4,000 victims were served in system-based, community-based, police-based and court-based service agencies in 2003/04. Three-quarters of victims were victims of violent crimes, while 22% were victims of property-related crimes and non-criminal incidents (i.e. attempted suicides or traffic collisions) (Kong, 2004).

Results from the Victims Services Survey found that among the 8 criminal injuries compensation programs that responded to the survey, a total of \$70.6 million was paid out in compensation for victims, with the largest amount being paid out for lost wages (42%) (Kong, 2004).

Overall, a larger proportion of victims of non-violent incidents were left feeling angry (41%) relative to victims of violence (32%). Regardless of type of incident, one-fifth were left feeling upset, confused and/or frustrated. A notable difference between violent and non-violent incidents was the proportion of victims left fearful or shocked, almost one-fifth of violent incidents left victims fearful and in over one-tenth of violent incidents left victims shocked. By comparison fear and shock were expressed in less than one-tenth of non-violent incidents¹.

These results mirror previous research, which found that anger and fear were among the most common emotional responses to victimization. Greenberg and Ruback found that anger was more likely to be recorded amongst victims of property-related crime, while higher levels of fear were recorded amongst victims of violent crime (Greenberg and Ruback, 1992).

Females more likely to report emotional impact as a result of violence than males

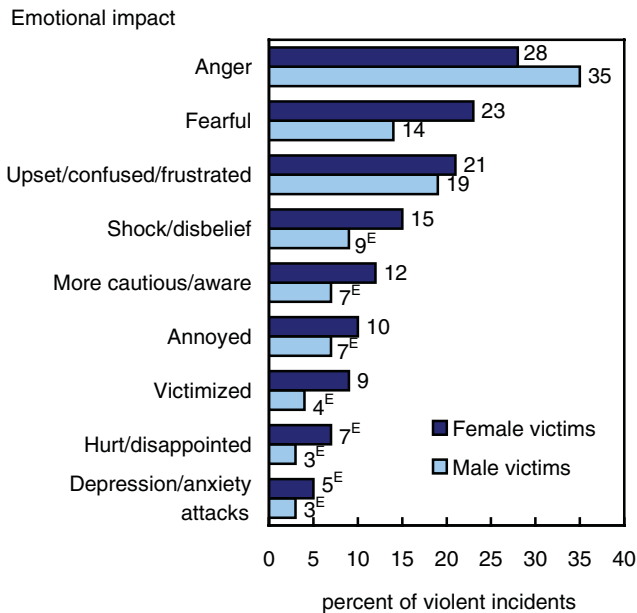
Results from the GSS indicate that emotional reactions to violent incidents differ according to the sex of the victim. One-third of violent incidents against a male victim resulted in respondents stating that they had not been emotionally affected by the incident (33%), compared to 18% of violent incidents involving a female victim. Men were more likely to report anger (35%) than were women (28%), while women were more likely than their male counterparts to be fearful (23% versus 14%), shocked (15% versus 9%^E), cautious and aware (12% versus 7%^E), and to feel victimized (9% versus 4%^E) (Figure 4).²

^E use with caution

1. Total exceeds 100% due to multiple responses.
2. Total exceeds 100% due to multiple responses.

Figure 4

Female victims of violent crimes feel anger, fear and confusion, 2004



^E use with caution

Notes: Total percentage exceed 100% due to multiple responses. Includes robbery, attempted robbery, assault, sexual assault, excludes victims of spousal sexual and physical assault.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Proportion of respondents reporting confusion and frustration highest among victims of family-related violence

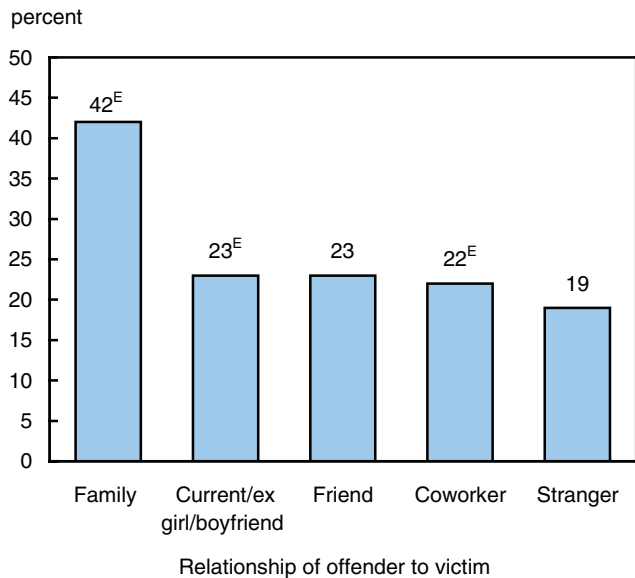
Another factor associated with the level of emotional impact is the degree of familiarity between the victim and offender. For violent incidents, those victimized by a family member were more likely to report feeling upset and confused (42%^E) compared to victims who had been assaulted by a stranger (19%), or friend (23%) (Figure 5). An individual victimized by a family member may have a harder time avoiding the offender and/or reporting the offence.

One-third of victims of violent crime report sleeping problems

Another after-effect of victimization can be sleep-related problems, possibly a result of increased stress levels, fear, depression and/or anxiety. According to the GSS, less than one-fifth of non-victims reported sleeping problems, while this was the case for one-third of victims of violence. A higher percentage of victims of violent incidents (14%) took medication in order to cope with their sleeping problems than did non-victims (9%) (Table 2).³

Figure 5

Victims of family-related violence more likely to be upset, confused and/or frustrated than those victimized by others, 2004



^E use with caution

Note: Percent represent victims feeling upset, confused and/or frustrated.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Female victims of violent crime were more likely than their male counterparts to report a sleeping problem. Almost 4 out of 10 female victims of violent crime reported sleeping problems compared to just over one-quarter of their male counterparts, while a much smaller proportion of non-victims reported such problems (20% females and 14% males).

In addition to the seriousness of the incident, multiple victimizations were associated with the reporting of sleeping problems. Overall, fewer than one-fifth of one-time victims of non-violent crime reported sleeping problems, while this was the case for more than one-quarter of those who had experienced multiple non-violent victimizations.

The experience of multiple victimizations appears to affect female victims, while having little impact on their male counterparts. Just over one-fifth of female victims (21%) who had experienced a single non-violent incident reported a sleeping problem, while this was the case for more than one-third of females who had experienced three or more household or property-related incidents (36%).

3. However, it should be noted that victims were not asked if these sleeping problems were directly associated with their victimization. Nevertheless, comparing the incidence of sleeping problems for non-victims and victims may highlight health-related problems associated with victimization.

The pattern of sleeping problems reported by those who experienced multiple violent victimizations was somewhat dissimilar from victims of repeated non-violent crime. Just over one quarter of one-time victims of violence reported a sleeping problem, while this was the case for more than one third of those victimized twice (37%). It might be expected that a sleeping problem would be reported for a higher percentage of victims of three or more violent victimizations, yet this was not the case (Figure 6).

Textbox 4: Long-term psychological impacts of victimization

Capturing the long-term psychological impacts of victimization was not the aim of the GSS survey design. However, research conducted in the United States has tracked a group of over 12,000 victims of property and violent crime over a five-year period. Victims of violent crime were found in the U.S. research to be 2.5 times more likely to report depression than non-victims, and over 1.5 times more likely to report hostility and/or anxiety. Victims of property-related crime were 1.5 times more likely than non-victims to report depression after a five-year period. The analysis took into account demographic variables as well as previous psychological differences amongst respondents (Norris, et al., 1997).

Perceptions of crime and personal safety

Perceptions of neighbourhood crime vary by type of victimization

Being a victim of a crime may lead individuals to question the overall safety of their surrounding environment and their levels of trust in relation to their home or work neighbourhoods. According to the GSS those who had experienced some form of victimization, either as a victim or as a witness to a crime, were more likely to perceive an increase in neighbourhood crime levels relative to respondents who had not experienced nor witnessed a crime (Table 3).

Repeated victimization impacts perceptions of increasing neighbourhood crime levels. More than one-third of one-time victims felt crime had increased, while half of victims who had experienced three or more victimizations felt this way (Figure 8).

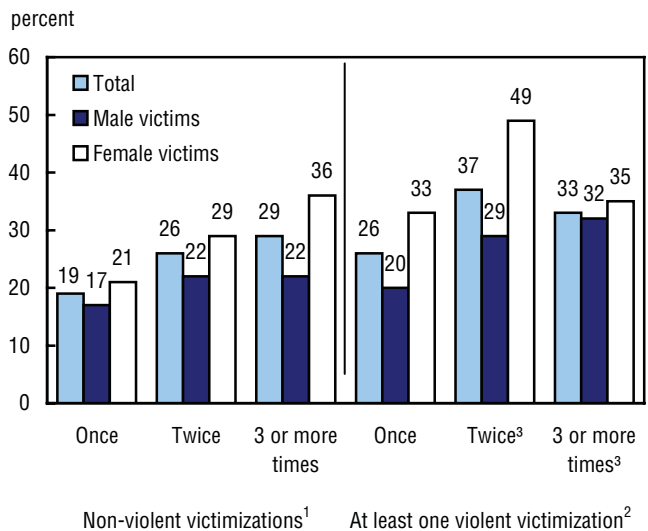
The experience of being a victim affects an individual's perceptions that crime in their neighbourhood is higher than in other areas of the country. About 18% of individuals who had been violently victimized perceived that crime was higher in their neighbourhood relative to other regions in Canada, while this was the case for 13% of victims of non-violent incidents, 11% of crime witnesses and 6% of non-victims (Table 3).

Variation in fear levels among victims and non-victims

In addition to differences in perceptions of neighbourhood crime levels victims and non-victims also differed in their levels of fear. In general, non-victims have a greater sense

Figure 6

Higher proportion of victims of violence reporting sleeping problems during the previous month, 2004



1. Includes break and enter, attempted break and enter, motor vehicle theft, attempted motor vehicle theft, theft of personal property, attempted theft of personal property, theft of household property, attempted theft of household property and vandalism.
2. Includes robbery, attempted robbery, assault, sexual assault, excludes spousal violence.
3. Of the repeat violent victimization at least one of the incidents was violent in nature while subsequent victimization could be violent or non-violent in nature.

Note: Percent represent victims with sleeping problems.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

of security relative to victims (Table 4). Of those persons who walked alone after dark, 46% of non-victims stated that they felt very safe, while the figure for victims of a violent incident was 37%.⁴ The results also indicate that there are differences between males and females with regards to feelings of safety. Of those respondents who had not been victimized, one-third of women (32%) reported feeling very safe walking alone after dark, while this was the case for more than half of men (57%). Among those who had been violently victimized the proportion of female victims reporting feeling very safe while walking alone after dark was 18%, less than half the proportion reported among male victims of violent incidents (49%) – illustrating a heightened level of fear among female victims of violent incidents (Table 4).

When asked their feelings about being home alone in the evening or at night, females were more likely than males to report feeling somewhat worried. Among non-victims, 21% of

4. Based on responses of people who walk alone after dark.

Textbox 5: Impact and consequences of spousal violence

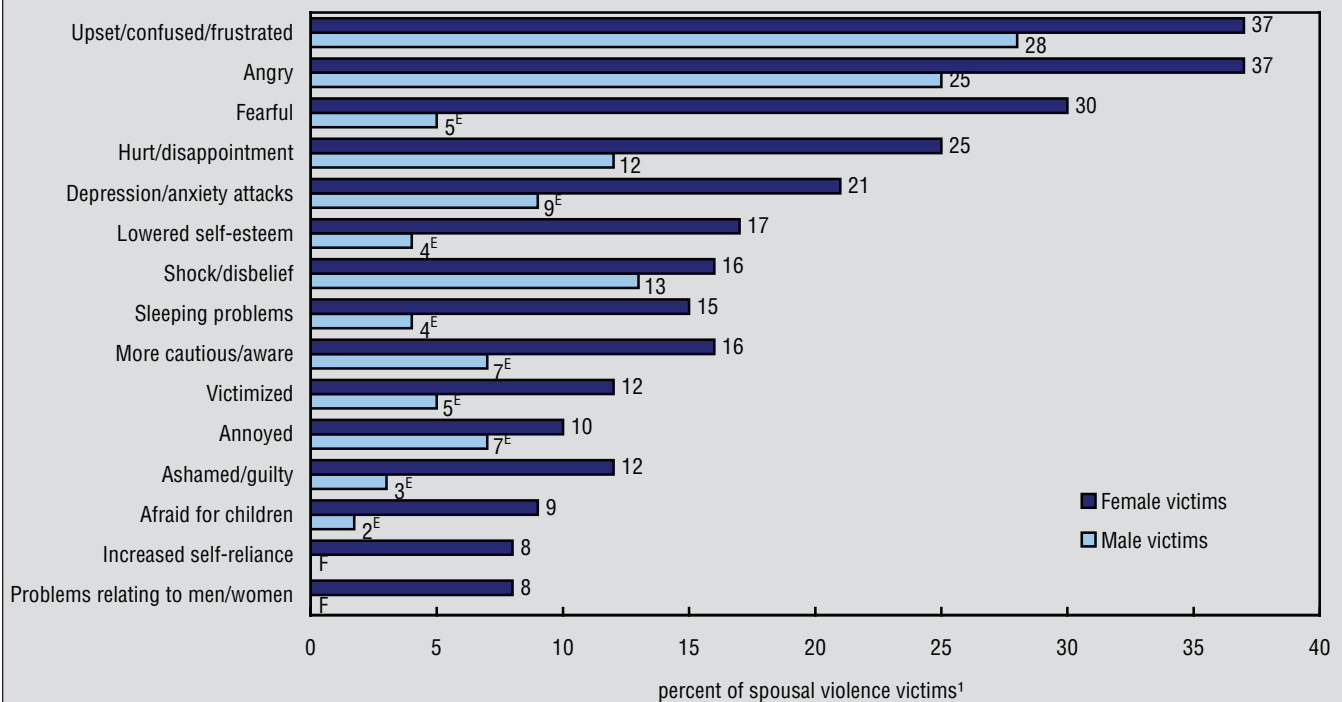
The GSS collected data on the nature and prevalence of spousal violence that occurred in the previous five years among persons in a current or previous spousal relationship. Results from the GSS showed that victims of spousal violence suffered numerous types of physical injuries including bruises (92%), cuts (40%) and fractures (7%^E). Female victims (44%) of spousal violence were more likely to suffer a physical injury than their male counterparts (19%). In addition to the physical impacts of spousal

violence, most victims reported experiencing psychological/emotional after-effects. A minority of female victims reported that the experience had little or no affect on them (6% of female and 30% of male victims), while over one-third reported feeling upset and/or confused or angry (37%). A larger proportion of female victims (30%) stated that they were fearful relative to their male counterparts (5%^E), and one-fifth of female victims experienced depression and/or anxiety attacks as a result of the violence (Mihorean, 2005).

^E use with caution

Figure 7

Emotional consequences of spousal violence



^E use with caution

^F too unreliable to be published

1. Includes women and men who experienced violence by a current or previous partner in the past 5-year period.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to multiple responses.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

females and 10% of males reported feeling somewhat worried. These proportions increased to 33% of female victims and 17% of male victims of violent crime (Table 4).⁵

When respondents were asked how they felt using public transportation alone after dark⁶, women were more likely to report feeling somewhat worried by this activity. Forty-seven percent of female non-victims compared to 23% of male non-victims felt this way. The proportion reporting feeling somewhat

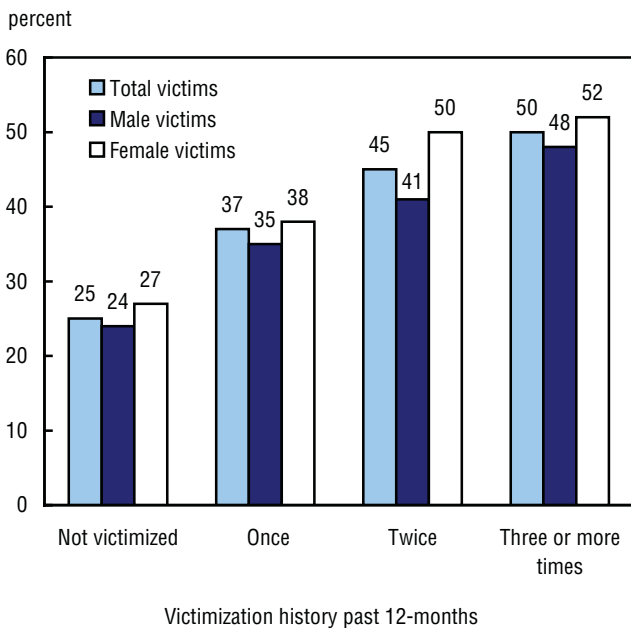
worried was much larger among respondents with a history of violent victimization (54% of females and 33% of males) or non-violent victimization (56% females and 31% males) (Table 4).

5. Based on responses of people who are home alone in the evening or night.

6. Based on responses of people who use public transportation alone after dark.

Figure 8

Victims of repeat victimization more likely to perceive neighbourhood crime increasing, 2004



Notes: Includes robbery, attempted robbery, assault, sexual assault, break and enter, attempted break and enter, motor vehicle theft, attempted motor vehicle theft, theft of personal property, attempted theft of personal property, theft of household property, attempted theft of household property and vandalism, excludes spousal violence. Percent represent respondents reporting perceived increases in neighbourhood crime.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Protective measures

Individuals often employ various strategies to protect themselves and their belongings. These behaviours vary from person to person and can be influenced by prior victimization that they or someone known to them experienced. Results from the GSS show that adopting preventative behaviours can be influenced by victimization history.⁷

The types of protective measures victims and non-victims used in the past 12-months were quite similar, in descending order of most common responses: changing one’s routine and/or avoiding certain places, installing new locks or security bars, and installing burglar alarms or motion detector lights. Very few individuals, victims or not, reported using the most extreme protective measure – obtaining a gun.

Larger proportion of victims of violent crime use protective measures than non-victims

While their overall preferences were similar, the likelihood of employing protective measures varied greatly between

victims and non-victims. A larger proportion of victims of violent victimization (52%) said that they changed their routine and/or avoided certain places, compared to victims of non-violent victimization (39%), witnesses to crime (32%) or non-victims (19%). Just under one third of victims of violence (30%) installed new locks or security bars, while this was the case for one-tenth of non-victims. In addition, a larger proportion of victims of a non-violent incident or those who had witnessed a crime stated that they used protective measures than non-victims (Table 5).

As for adopting more extreme protective measures, compared to non-victims, a larger proportion of victims of violence changed residence, moved or took a self-defence course; however, these measures were reported less often than other less extreme measures.

Differences were also evident in the proportion of men and women reporting the need to change their routine and/or avoid certain places. Among victims of violence, more than 6 out of 10 females (62%) altered their day-to-day activities, while this was the case for less than half of male victims (44%). Among victims of non-violent victimization or witnesses, the difference between females and males was not as large. As for all the other protective measures, there were no statistical significant differences between women and men.

Use of protective measures increases with repeat victimization

The number of victimizations experienced by an individual had an impact on the adoption of protective measures. Just under six out of ten respondents who had been violently victimized once (57%) adopted protective measures, while this was the case for a larger proportion of respondents who had been victimized three or more times (75%). Similarly, among victims of non-violent incidents, those who experienced three or more incidents (75%) were more likely to report adopting protective measures relative to victims who had experienced one victimization (50%) (Table 6).⁸

Victims’ perceptions of the justice system

Based on their experiences with the judicial system, victims may have different views of the justice system than non-victims. Whether they report the incident to the police, a victim’s trust and perception of the effectiveness of the judicial process for example, may be affected by their experiences.

7. The reader should note however, that respondents reported what measures they used in the previous 12 months – but did not indicate whether these measures were implemented before or after their victimization.

8. The survey did not ask respondents to state whether these measures were taken before or after their victimization but the overall patterns of behaviour exhibited by each victim group indicates a difference in behaviour that is predicated on victimization history including number and type of victimization experienced in the previous 12-month period.

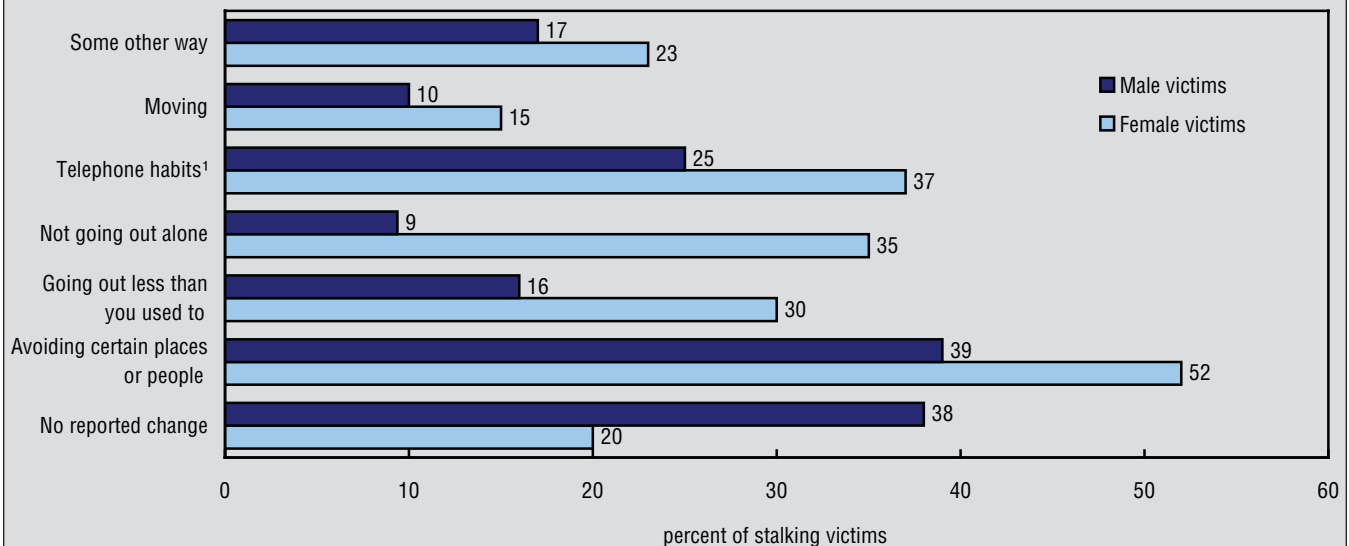
Textbox 6: Impact and consequences of stalking

The 2004 GSS measured the prevalence and nature of stalking and its impact on victims. Results from the GSS show that 9% of persons over the age of 15 had been stalked in the previous 5 years. The vast majority of these victims changed their day-to-day habits in order to cope with the stress of being stalked, and as a means of protecting themselves from encountering their stalker (80% of female victims and

62% of male victims). Avoiding certain places and people was the most frequently reported behaviour change amongst victims, followed by using telephone technologies to screen calls. Over one-third of female stalking victims (35%) chose not to go out alone, while this was the case for 9% of male victims. For 15% of female stalking victims and 10% of male victims, a move from their residence was used as a method to deal with their victimization.

Figure 9

Stalking victims change daily habits to cope with stress, 2004



1. Getting an unlisted phone number, call display, call screening or call blocking.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to multiple responses.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Prior victimization impacts perceptions of the police

Generally, non-victims perceived that the police were doing a good job. About two-thirds of non-victims stated that the police were doing a good job being approachable (67%), ensuring the safety of citizens (66%), enforcing the laws (64%), and treating people fairly (63%). In contrast, a smaller proportion of victims of a violent victimization felt that the police were doing a good job being approachable (52%), ensuring the safety of citizens (49%), enforcing the laws (43%), and treating people fairly (43%) than non-victims.

Similarly, respondents who had either been a victim of a non-violent incident or had witnessed a crime showed less positive attitudes toward the police than did non-victims, with the exception of the perception of the police being approachable. Being a victim of a crime seems to have a negative impact on one's perception of police and their effectiveness (Table 7).

Prior victimization doesn't seem to impact perceptions of criminal courts, prison or parole systems

Overall, 4 out of 10 individuals stated that the courts were doing a good job ensuring that the accused obtained a fair trial and there was no difference by victimization history. When asked about how the courts were doing in providing help to victims, one-fifth of individuals felt that the courts were succeeding. Again this did not vary by victimization history.

Respondents were also asked if they thought the prison system was doing a good job supervising and controlling prisoners. Regardless of their victimization history, about one-third of individuals agreed with this statement, while less than one-fifth of individuals believed that the prison system helped prisoners become law-abiding citizens.

According to the GSS 2004, less than one-fifth of individuals perceived that the parole system was doing a good job supervising and releasing offenders.

Conclusion

Victims of crime may suffer physical injury, financial losses as well as emotional and psychological after-effects, all of which impact their quality of life. The type and severity of crime experienced as well as the number of victimizations can influence the degree to which an individual is affected. Findings from the 2004 GSS illustrate that victims' perceptions of their neighbourhoods, their own personal safety, as well as the police are affected by their prior victimization experience. In addition, the data highlight the fact that regardless of their experiences as victims, women tend to express more elevated levels of fear than men. When women are victims of crime, the impact on their emotions, their use of precautionary measures and their sense of security seems to be of a greater magnitude relative to men.

Methodology

General Social Survey on Victimization

In 2004, Statistics Canada conducted the victimization cycle of the General Social Survey for the fourth time. Previous cycles were conducted in 1988, 1993 and 1999. The objectives of the survey are to provide estimates of the extent to which people experience incidences of eight offence types, examine risk factors associated with victimization and reporting rates to police, and measure fear of crime and public perceptions of crime and the criminal justice system.

Sampling

The 2004 GSS on victimization had a sample size of 24,000 households in the provinces that were selected using Random Digit Dialling (RDD). Once a household was chosen an individual 15 years or older was selected randomly to respond to the survey. The use of telephones for sample selection and data collection means that the 2004 GSS sample in the provinces only covers the 96% of the population that had telephone service. Households without telephones, households with only cellular phone service, and individuals living in institutions were excluded. These groups combined represented 4% of the target population. This figure is not large enough to significantly change the estimates. The response rate for the GSS Cycle 18 sample was 75%.

Data limitations

As with any household survey, there are some data limitations. The results are based on a sample and are therefore subject to sampling error. Somewhat different results might have been obtained if the entire population had been surveyed. The difference between the estimate obtained from the sample and the one resulting from a complete count is called the sampling error of the estimate. This report uses the coefficient of variation (CV) as a measure of the sampling error. Any estimate that has

a high CV (over 33.3%) has not been published because the estimate is too unreliable. An estimate that has a CV between 16.6% and 33.3% should be used with caution and the symbol 'E' is used.

The 2004 GSS collected information on

Violent Victimization

- **Sexual assault;** Forced sexual activity, an attempt at forced sexual activity, or unwanted sexual touching, grabbing, kissing, or fondling.
- **Robbery;** Theft or attempted theft in which the perpetrator had a weapon or there was violence or the threat of violence against the victim.
- **Physical assault;** An attack (victim hit, slapped, grabbed, knocked down, or beaten), a face-to-face threat of physical harm, or an incident with a weapon present.

Non-Violent Victimization

- **Theft of personal property;** Theft or attempted theft of personal property such as money, credit cards, clothing, jewellery, purse/wallet (unlike robbery, the perpetrator does not confront the victim).
- **Household victimization;** Break and entering, illegal entry or attempted entry into a residence or other building on the victim's property.
- **Motor vehicle/parts theft;** Theft or attempted theft of a car, truck, van, motorcycle, moped or other vehicle or part of a motor vehicle.
- **Theft of household property;** Theft or attempted theft of household property such as liquor, bicycles, electronic equipment, tools or appliances.
- **Vandalism;** Wilful damage of personal or household property.

Non-victims

Non-victim consists of all respondents who were not victimized in the previous 12 months, and did not come into contact with police and were not witnesses of a crime. Furthermore, they did not suffer any physical or sexual violence by a current partner or spouse nor by an ex-partner or ex-spouse. Finally they were not a victim of stalking in the past twelve months.

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Table 1

Physical consequences from violent incidents, by sex of victim, 2004

	Total violent incidents					
	Total		Male		Female	
	number ('000)	percent	number ('000)	percent	number ('000)	percent
Total incidents of violence	2,109	100	1,135	100	974	100
Injury	532	25	310	27	222	23
No Injury	1,545	73	802	71	743	76
Physical impact of injury						
Received medical attention	129	24	72	23 ^E	57	26
Stayed in bed	105	20	63	20 ^E	42	19 ^E
Difficulty carrying out every day activities for all or most of the day	206	39	103	33	103	46

^E use with caution

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Table 2

Percent of respondents who reported sleeping problems by type of victimization and sex, 2004

	Non-victim			Violent victimization			Non-violent victimization			Crime witness		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
	percent											
Sleeping problems in previous month	17	14	20	32	28	37	22	19	25	19	17	23
Medication taken to...												
Help you sleep	9	7	11	14	11	18	11	8	14	11	9 ^E	13 ^E
Help calm you down	6	4	7	10	8	11	7	5	8	6	3 ^E	9 ^E
Help you get out of depression	4	3	6	10	7 ^E	14	7	4	9	5 ^E	F	9 ^E

^E use with caution

^F amount too unreliable to be published

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Table 3

Perceptions of neighbourhood crime, by type of victimization and sex, 2004

	Non-victim			Violent victimization			Non-violent victimization			Crime witness		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
	percent											
During the last 5 years, has crime in your neighbourhood ...												
Increased	25	24	26	42	39	46	40	38	42	35	34	37
Decreased	6	7	4	6	8 ^E	4 ^E	6	6	5	7 ^E	8 ^E	F
Stayed the same	62	63	61	44	46	42	48	50	47	51	53	49
Don't know/not stated	8	7	8	7	7 ^E	8 ^E	6	6	6	6 ^E	4 ^E	9 ^E
Compared to other areas in Canada, is crime in your neighbourhood ...												
Higher	6	6	6	18	18	17	13	14	12	11	11	9 ^E
About the same	28	28	27	31	31	31	33	33	32	25	23	27
Lower	62	62	62	50	50	50	52	51	53	64	65	61
Don't know/not stated	4	3	4	2 ^E	F	F	2	2	2 ^E	F	F	F

^E use with caution

F amount too unreliable to be published

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Table 4

Feelings of safety from crime, by type of victimization and sex, 2004

	Non-victim			Violent victimization			Non-violent victimization			Crime witness		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
number ('000)												
Total number of respondents who walked alone after dark	12,634	7,176	5,458	1,132	675	457	4,517	2,563	1,954	624	385	239
percent												
Walking alone after dark¹ did you feel...												
Very safe	46	57	32	37	49	18	38	50	24	49	60	32
Reasonably safe	46	38	55	45	41	50	48	43	55	43	36	53
Somewhat unsafe	6	3	11	15	9	24	12	6	19	7	F	14 ^E
Very unsafe	2	1	2	4 ^E	F	8 ^E	2	1 ^E	3 ^E	F	F	F
Don't know/not stated	F	F	F	F	0	F	F	F	F	0	0	0
number ('000)												
Total number of respondents who stayed home alone in the evening or at night	17,357	8,361	8,996	1,282	713	569	4,069	2,087	1,982	712	408	304
percent												
Home alone in the evening or at night² were you...												
Very worried	1	1 ^E	2	3 ^E	F	5 ^E	2	1 ^E	3	F	F	F
Somewhat worried	16	10	21	24	17	33	23	15	32	15	9 ^E	24
Not at all worried	82	89	75	73	82	62	74	84	64	83	90	72
Don't know/not stated	1 ^E	F	1 ^E	F	F	0	F	F	F	F	0	F
number ('000)												
Total number of respondents who used public transportation alone after dark	3,760	1,966	1,794	595	330	265	1,628	871	757	170	86	84
percent												
Using public transportation alone after dark¹ were you...												
Very worried	4	2 ^E	6	6 ^E	F	9 ^E	6	F	10	F	F	F
Somewhat worried	35	23	47	42	33	54	43	31	56	33	24 ^E	43
Not at all worried	61	75	46	52	63	37	51	67	33	63	75	50
Don't know/not stated	F	F	F	F	F	0	F	0	F	0	0	0

^E use with caution

F amount too unreliable to be published

1. Based on responses of people who engage in these activities.

2. Based on responses of people who are home alone in the evening or night.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Table 5

Protective measures taken in the past 12 months, by type of victimization and sex, 2004

Protective measures	Non-victim			Violent victimization			Non-violent victimization			Crime witness		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
	percent											
Changed routine, activities or avoided certain places	19	16	23	52	44	62	39	33	45	32	29	37
Installed new locks or security bars	10	10	11	30	28	32	25	23	27	12	14	10 ^E
Installed burglar alarms or motion detector lights	8	8	9	16	16	15	17	17	16	14	14	14 ^E
Took a self-defence course	2	2	2	9	8	9	4	3	5	7 ^E	8 ^E	7 ^E
Obtained a dog	2	1	2	6	5 ^E	7 ^E	3	3	4	3 ^E	F	F
Changed phone number	1	1	1	8	7 ^E	9	2	2 ^E	3	F	F	F
Changed residence or moved	1	1	1	6	4 ^E	8	2	2 ^E	2	F	F	F
Obtained a gun	F	F	F	F	F	0	F	F	F	F	F	0

^E use with caution

F amount too unreliable to be published

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Table 6

Percent of victims of violent and non-violent crimes that adopted protective measures in the past 12 months, by number of victimizations and sex, 2004

Number of victimizations	Protective measures ¹					
	Victims of violent crimes			Victims of non-violent crimes		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
	percent					
Once	57	54	60	50	45	55
Twice	68	59	80	64	59	69
3 or more	75	69	82	75	71	78

1. Protective measures taken in the last 12 months to prevent crime include: changing one's routine, activities or avoided certain places; installing new locks or security bars; installing burglar alarms or motion detector lights; taking a self-defense course; changing one's phone number; obtaining a dog; obtaining a gun; or changing one's residence or moving.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Table 7

Respondents' perception of the criminal justice system, by type of victimization and sex, 2004

	Non-victim			Violent victimization			Non-violent victimization			Crime witness		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
	percent											
Is the local police doing a good job...												
Enforcing the laws	64	63	64	43	41	46	51	50	53	58	54	63
Responding promptly to calls	54	53	55	43	40	47	47	48	47	52	50	55
Being approachable	67	67	67	52	49	56	63	62	64	70	69	72
Supplying information on reducing crime	54	52	56	36	36	38	44	42	46	52	53	51
Ensuring the safety of citizens	66	66	65	49	50	48	53	54	52	58	55	62
Treating people fairly	63	64	62	43	44	40	53	54	52	57	58	56
Are the criminal courts doing a good job...												
Providing justice quickly	16	17	16	13	14	12	12	13	12	11	12 ^E	10 ^E
Helping the victim	21	21	21	19	19	19	18	17	19	24	24	24
Determining whether or not the accused is guilty	27	30	24	26	29	23	27	31	23	24	25	22
Ensuring a fair trial for the accused	44	49	39	42	46	38	47	51	42	44	48	39
Is the prison system doing a good job...												
Supervising/controlling prisoners	30	33	28	33	32	34	31	33	29	34	37	29
Helping prisoners become law abiding	19	20	18	17	15	19	16	18	14	18	21	14
Is the parole system doing a good job...												
Releasing offenders who are not likely to re-offend	17	18	15	18	19	18	16	19	14	18	18	18
Supervising offenders on parole	15	17	14	17	18	16	13	15	11	13	13	13

^E use with caution

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics

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