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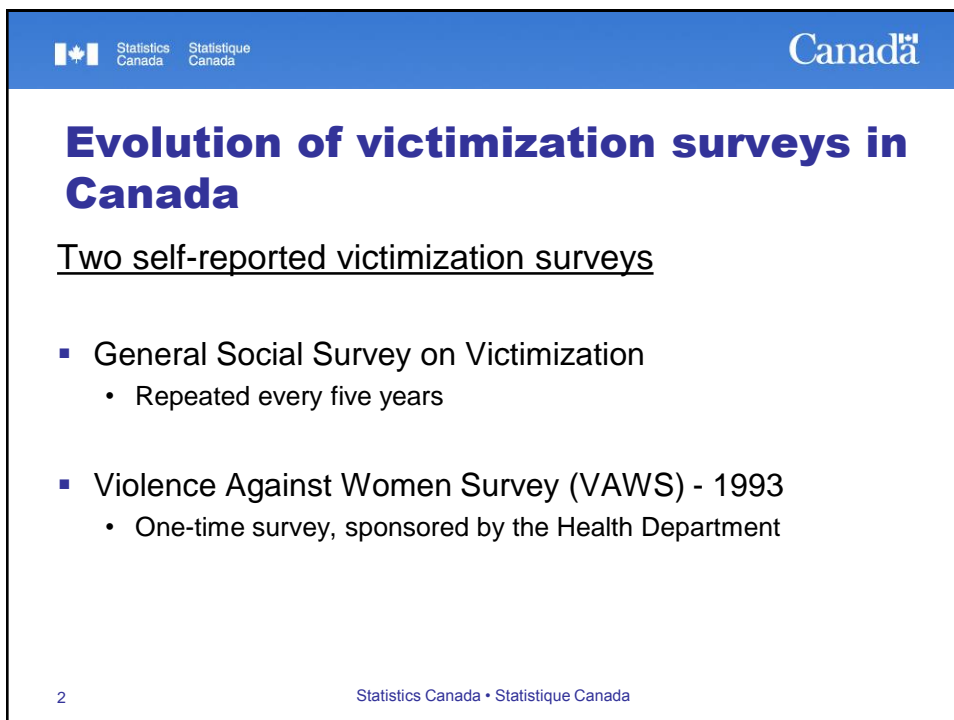
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Measuring violence against women and men through victimization surveys

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Evolution of victimization surveys in Canada

Two self-reported victimization surveys

- General Social Survey on Victimization
 - Repeated every five years
- Violence Against Women Survey (VAWS) - 1993
 - One-time survey, sponsored by the Health Department

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The General Social Survey (GSS)

- The GSS is Canada's leading population-based survey instrument on social trends and emerging issues.

- Each year, it focuses on a different topic:
 - Victimization
 - Time Use
 - Caregiving and care-receiving
 - Families
 - Social Identity
 - Giving, Volunteering and Participating



The GSS on Victimization

- Conducted every five years since 1988.

- Target population: women and men aged 15 years and older in Canada, excluding full-time residents of institutions.

- Interviews currently conducted by phone
 - 19,422 interviews obtained (2009)
 - 61.6% response rate (2009)



Improvements to the GSS with each victimization cycle

- 1988: First general victim survey
- 1993: Better measures of sexual assault
- 1999: Special modules to measure spousal violence, now repeated with every victimization cycle
- 2004: Special module on criminal harassment/stalking
- 2009: Cybercrime and experiences of victimization before the age of 15
- 2014: Expansion of questions on victimization in childhood and new questions on dating violence, sexual violence, witnessing spousal violence as a child



Developing spousal violence questions on the GSS

- Special module on spousal violence introduced in 1999
- Series of questions recognize the unique nature of spousal violence (e.g., often repetitive over time)
- Includes questions on financial and emotional abuse
- Questions are now part of the core content, repeated every five years
- Direct result of the 1993 Violence Against Women Survey



1993 Violence Against Women Survey (VAWS)

- One-time sample survey, designed to fill data gaps
- The target population for the VAWS was all women 18 years of age and over in Canada, excluding:
 - those living in the northern territories
 - full-time residents of institutions.
- Interviews conducted by phone
 - 12,300 interviews obtained
 - 54% response rate



1993 VAWS (cont'd)

First-ever Canadian indicators of:

- Spousal violence against women
 - Prevalence
 - Severity
 - Risk factors
 - Reporting to police
- Other forms of violence against women
 - Dating violence
 - Threats and violence by strangers
 - Sexual harassment



Lessons learned from VAWS

- The importance of early and transparent consultation with stakeholders and potential critics to ensure the utility and relevance of the data.
- The need to:
 - use recognized definitions for measuring social phenomenon (e.g., Criminal Code),
 - continue to capture spousal violence within an existing survey structure, and
 - look at both sides of the coin: women and men, while ensuring comparability and accuracy of results



Impact of integrating spousal violence modules within the GSS

No discernible impact on prevalence rates

- In 1999, the GSS on Victimization found that 3% of women were victims of spousal violence in the previous 12 months, equal to the proportion of women reporting spousal victimization (3%) to the 1993 VAWS.

Impact of integrating modules within the GSS (cont'd)

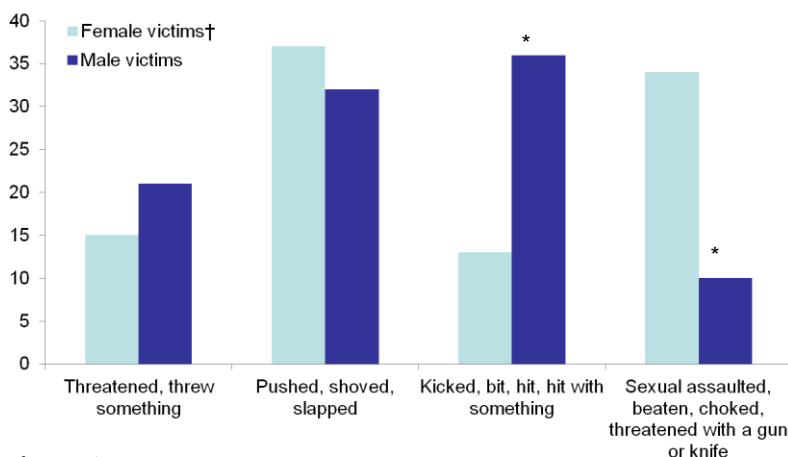
Improved gender-based analysis to better inform policies and programs

- Gender is relational - women cannot be viewed in isolation, but their experiences must be contextualized and understood in relation to men.
- In Canada, it has been found that while the prevalence rates of spousal violence against women and men are similar, the severity differs

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Women more likely to experience severe forms of spousal violence, 2009



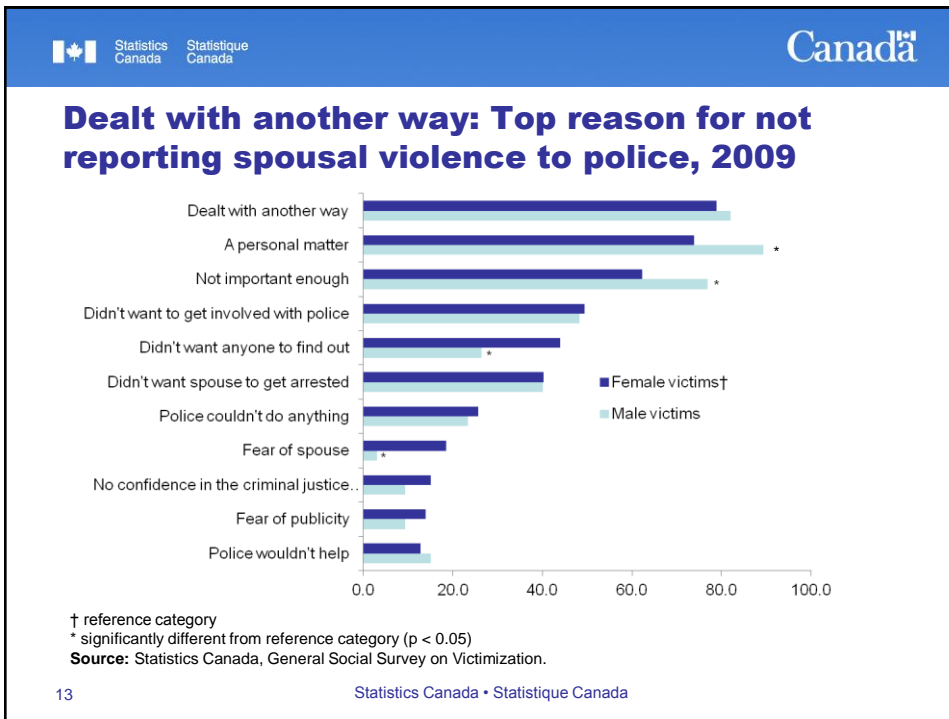
† reference category

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Victimization.

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- Looking towards the possibility of internet-based collection for victimization**
- Other cycles of GSS have begun mixed mode collection, with both telephone and internet-based options
 - Two concerns with online data collection for the GSS on victimization:
 - Safety and security of victims (primarily spousal violence victims)
 - Impact on trend analysis
 - A pilot survey is currently testing the feasibility of internet-based collection for victimization. This survey incorporates a security safeguard (i.e., escape button)
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Enhancing existing data holdings

- Record linkage
- Linking population-based data with administrative data to further strengthen analysis and address information gaps.



Questions/Comments?