



New Zealand
Crime and Victims **survey**

HELP CREATE SAFER COMMUNITIES

Topical report:
Offences against New Zealand
adults by family members

Cycle 1 (2018)

Contents

Acknowledgements	3
Key findings summary.....	4
1. Introduction	5
Offences by family members considered in this report	6
Definition of intimate partner psychological violence	7
2. How many adults experience offences by family members?	10
3. What types of offences are committed by family members?	11
4. Who experiences offences by family members?	12
5. Gender asymmetry	18
6. Factors relating to offending by family members	19
7. Health outcomes for victims of offences by family members.....	21
8. Interaction with services and experiences of support	23
9. Intimate partner psychological violence	26
10. Conclusion	32
About NZCVS.....	33
Other NZCVS reports and future reporting.....	34

Disclaimer

1. This report contains only information about people aged 15 years and above. The survey does not cover children younger than 15 years of age.
2. While all care and diligence has been taken in processing, analysing, and extracting data and information for this publication, the Ministry of Justice gives no warranty that it is error free and will not be liable for any loss or damage suffered by the use directly, or indirectly, of the information in this publication.
3. This report contains highly aggregated data. No identifiable personal data is included in the report.
4. Estimates measured in counts are rounded to the nearest thousand. Estimates measured in percentages are rounded to the nearest integer, except when it is deemed important to show more detail.
5. The NZCVS is a new survey with significant improvements in design compared with its predecessor the New Zealand Crime and Safety Survey (NZCASS). Therefore, **any direct comparison with the NZCASS results may be misleading, even for the same offence types.**
6. Though the NZCVS collects a rich level of detail about offences committed by family members, due to the relatively small number of respondents in NZCVS (Cycle 1) who had experienced such offences, many analyses were too statistically unreliable for general use and have not been published. Furthermore, many of the estimates provided in this report are subject to high error and should be used with caution.

Key findings summary

Offences by family members in the New Zealand adult population in 2018

- 79,000 adults (2.0%) experienced one or more offences by a family member.

Characteristics of adults reporting offences by family members

- Female adults (2.8%) were more than twice as likely to report offences by family members than male adults (1.2%) and more than three times as likely to report offences by an intimate partner (1.7% of females compared with 0.5% of males).
- Māori adults (4%) were at more risk of experiencing offences by family members than European adults (2%).
- 8% of adults living in a single parent household experienced an offence by a family member in the past 12 months, as had 9% of single adults who had separated from a partner in the past year.
- Separation from a partner appears to be a key risk factor for intimate partner violence. Almost one in ten (9%) single adults, who had separated from a partner in the past year, had experienced an offence by a family member. In one quarter (25%) of offences by an intimate partner, victims said that the incident related to separation.
- While there was no evidence of a statistically significant difference in offences by a family member by income or employment status, strong differences emerged by indicators of financial stress. For example, adults who could not afford a non-essential item costing \$300 (5%) in the next month were approximately five times as likely to have experienced an offence by a family member in the past 12 months than those who could afford the item (1%).

Health outcomes for victims of offences by family members

- Victims of offences by a family member (37%) exhibited moderate to high levels of psychological distress at more than four times the rate of other adults (8%).
- Victims were injured in one quarter (23%) of offences committed by a family member.

Interactions with services and experiences of support among victims of offences by a family member

- 15% said they had received medical attention.
- One in three (32%) said they had an incident that became known to Police. Victims of offences by an intimate partner (45%) were twice as likely to have an incident reported to Police than victims of offences by another family member (20%).
- One third (32%) said they had contacted or were contacted by a family violence support service.
- More than half (51%) said they had asked for help from family, whānau or friends.

Intimate partner psychological violence

- 104,000 adults who had a partner in the past 12 months (3.6%) had experienced psychological violence by an intimate partner.

1. Introduction

The New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS) [Key findings report \(Cycle 1\)](#) reported that 79,000 New Zealand adults had experienced offences committed by family members over the previous 12 months. These offences include both those reported to Police and those not reported. The current report provides more information on who experiences offences by family members, what types of offences are experienced, and what services victims interact with.

The Ministry of Justice is working to reduce family violence mainly through our input into the Joint Venture on Family Violence and Sexual Violence, our workplace family violence programme, and our training programme for frontline staff. The Ministry also helps to meet the needs of court participants and leads the development and implementation of new family violence and sexual violence laws. Producing information such as this report, is another contribution to the work of the Ministry to reduce family violence.

The offences considered in this report include physical assault, sexual assault, harassment and threatening behaviour, property damage and robbery. These offences, when committed by a family member, are forms of family violence. However, many other forms of family violence, such as economic abuse or abuse of pets of importance to someone, are not captured by the offences.

The NZCVS is an ongoing household survey that collects information on adult New Zealanders' experiences of crime. The data presented in this report is based on the first cycle of NZCVS, which collected responses in 2018. Information on offences committed by family members is collected in every cycle of the NZCVS. The NZCVS collects information on these incidents regardless of whether they were drawn to official attention.

Each cycle of the survey also includes an in-depth module that changes each cycle. In Cycle 1, we included a module on family violence, adding information on family violence victims' experiences of getting help from support organisations and from family, whānau and friends. The module also collected information on psychological violence by intimate partners.

Reflecting on the first year of interviewing (Cycle 1), this report examines the following topics:

- number of adults who experienced different offences by family members
- prevalence of offences committed by family members amongst adults in different demographic groups, family situations and socioeconomic circumstances
- level of psychological distress amongst victims of offending by family members compared to other adults
- share of offences by family members that resulted in the victim being injured
- share of victims that interacted with services such as the Police or asked for help from family, whānau or friends
- experiences of intimate partner psychological violence

While this report discusses offences committed by family members, it is important to highlight that family violence tends to occur within a pattern of behaviour. Family violence can be a one-off incident however it often includes patterns of coercive and controlling abusive behaviours intended to entrap and exert power over victims. These behaviours are often

repeated across multiple victims, with an escalating spiral of physical and other forms of violence as part of a pattern of cumulative harm.¹

The insights provided in this report can be used to inform efforts to prevent and address family violence in New Zealand. As data continues to roll in from the NZCVS in future years, evidence of any changes over time will form. As more data is accrued, it will also be possible to conduct analysis that could not be reported with one year of data due to small sample sizes, by pooling surveys. The family violence in-depth module will be repeated in Cycle 3 (2019-2020), enabling richer analysis of this important topic for New Zealand. Results from this module are expected to be available in the first half of 2021.

Information on offences by family members collected in the NZCVS

The NZCVS is a nationwide, face-to-face, annual, random-sample survey asking New Zealand adults (aged 15 and over) about incidents of crime they experienced over the last 12 months. Both incidents reported to the Police and unreported incidents are included in NZCVS. Because NZCVS is a household survey, it does not include responses from people who do not live in permanent private dwellings.² More information about the NZCVS is provided on page 33.

The data used in this report is from the first year of the NZCVS, which interviewed 8,030 New Zealand adults from March to October 2018. The survey had a response rate of 81%, meaning that the survey results are highly representative of the New Zealand population. Respondents were asked about their experiences of offences by family members (see definition below) in the 12 months before the date on which they were interviewed. The results have been weighted to closely represent the New Zealand population. More information on the survey methodology can be found in the [NZCVS Methodology Report \(Cycle 1\)](#).

Offences by family members considered in this report

The definition of *offences by family members* in this report is in line with offence coding used by Police. The following offence types are included (where the offender is a family member):¹

- physical assault
- sexual assault
- harassment and threatening behaviour
- other offences (damage to personal or household property, damage to motor vehicles and robbery).

These offences are crimes according to the Crimes Act 1961. Information is collected through the NZCVS on the number of times these incidents were experienced by respondents in the previous 12 months. Though we use the term 'offences', the information is based on survey respondents' experiences and they may not reflect incidents that have been through a formal criminal procedure.

¹ Family Violence Death Review Committee (2017). Fifth Report Data: January 2009 to December 2015. Wellington: Family Violence Death Review Committee.

² Adults living in care facilities, prisons, army barracks, boarding schools and other similar institutions or non-private dwellings are not covered by the NZCVS.

The above definition is different from that of **family violence** used in many other contexts and is not the definition used in the Family Violence Act 2018. Collection of Cycle 1 of the NZCVS was underway when the new legislation was introduced. The definition of family violence in this report is also different from those used in other crime surveys both in New Zealand and internationally, including the NZCASS. In particular, the definition used does not include all behaviours that may be considered family violence, such as economic abuse or abuse of pets of importance to someone. Nor is violence towards children (14 and under) covered. Therefore, the **offences by family members considered in this report can be seen as a subset of experiences of family violence by adult New Zealanders.**

Offences by family members can be grouped into those by an intimate partner (partner or ex-partner)³ or by another family member (Figure 1). Other family members include a parent or step-parent; parent's partner, boyfriend or girlfriend; son or daughter including in-laws; sibling or step-sibling; and other family members including extended family).

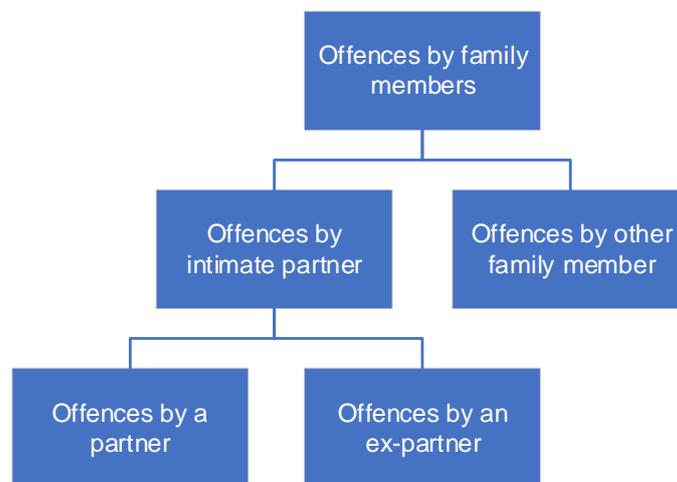


Figure 1: Offences by offender relationship

Definition of intimate partner psychological violence

The NZCVS questionnaire includes an in-depth module that changes from year to year. In Cycle 1 (2018), the module was focused on family violence. As part of this module,

Intimate partner psychological violence is defined in this report as any of the following controlling behaviours by a partner or ex-partner:

- stopping them from seeing or contacting friends, family or whānau
- following or keeping track of their whereabouts in a way that felt controlling or frightening
- stopping or controlling their access to things like their mobile phone, the Internet, or transport
- stopping them from getting healthcare when they needed it
- pressuring them into paid work they did not want to do
- stopping them from doing paid work they wanted to do.

³ A partner may include a husband, wife, partner, boyfriend or girlfriend.

respondents who had a partner in the past 12 months were asked if they had experienced intimate partner psychological violence.

Information on these behaviours is collected differently from other types of victimisation in the NZCVS. Respondents were asked whether they experienced any of the above forms of psychological violence 'frequently', 'sometimes', or 'never' in the last 12 months.

These forms of psychological violence reflect some coercive and controlling behaviours. This list does not include threats and harassment or property damage which are other forms of psychological violence as defined in the Family Violence Act 2018. However, these types of incidents are included in our main analysis of offences by family members because they are in line with the Police recording practice.

Uncertainty of estimates

Because NZCVS is a sample survey it is subject to sampling error. Estimation of standard errors of the estimates is described in the [NZCVS Methodology Report \(Cycle 1\)](#). Confidence intervals are constructed from the standard errors at the 95% level.

All observations and graphs in the report are based on data tables available from the separate Excel document located on the Ministry of Justice website. This document provides information about the error of the estimates. As a rule, we advise using caution with all count estimates with a relative standard error (RSE) between 20% and 50% and all percentage estimates with the margin of error (MOE) between 10 and 20 percentage points. All estimates with an RSE more than 50% or an MOE higher than 20 percentage points are either suppressed or aggregated. Ratio-based estimates are also suppressed or aggregated if their numerators or denominators have an RSE more than 50%.

Because a relatively small number of survey respondents had experienced offences by family members, many of the results in this report are subject to high error and must be interpreted with caution. Moreover, many of the results intended to be included in this report had to be suppressed because the margin of error was too large for general use. In future, more reliable analysis of data related to offences by family members in the NZCVS will become possible, by pooling data from multiple survey years.

Comparison of estimates by population groups

Formal statistical tests of differences in estimates across population groups are not provided in this report. The graphs in this report include confidence intervals (at the 95% level) to show the uncertainty of estimates. When confidence intervals of two estimates are not overlapping, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant difference. However, when the intervals are overlapping, the difference is unlikely to be statistically significant.

Comparison of estimates with previous victimisation surveys

The results of the 2018 NZCVS indicate that 79,000 adults were affected by offences committed by family members, significantly less than the 229,000 adults reported by the 2013 New Zealand Crime and Safety Survey (NZCASS). However, due to differences in methodology between the two surveys, it is not possible to determine the extent to which the changes reflect a real change in offences by family members. The NZCVS has improvements in design compared with NZCASS. It uses a different approach to coding offences, a different incident capping methodology, a different approach to collecting data

from highly victimised people and recording multiple incidents (introducing “cluster” victim forms), and fewer data imputations. All the above may significantly affect the accuracy of the comparison, especially when it relates to a reasonably small sample size. Analysis of offences by family members trends will be possible after more cycles of NZCVS are reported.

2. How many adults experience offences by family members?

79,000 adults experienced offending by family members in the previous 12 months

Figure 2 shows the number and percent of New Zealand adults who reported offences by family members in the previous 12 months, by offender relationship.

Overall, seventy-nine thousand adults (2.0%) were victims of offending by family members. Of those adults, a similar number experienced offending by an intimate partner (44,000) as had experienced offending by other family members (40,000).

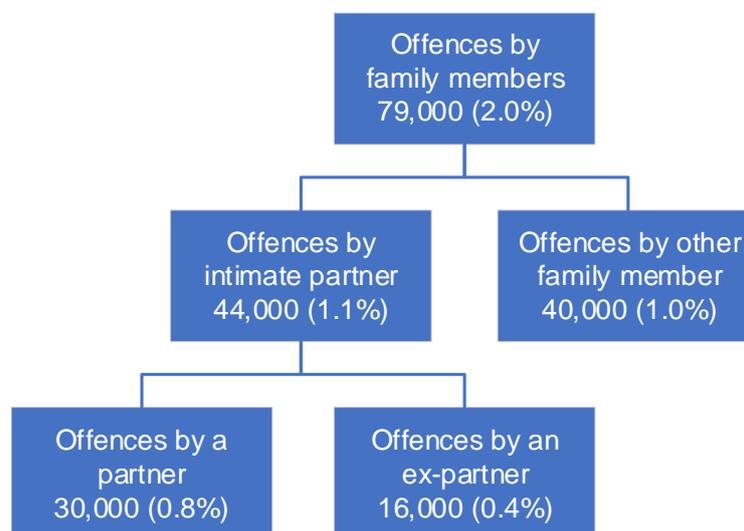


Figure 2: Number (percent) of New Zealand adults who experienced offences by family members in the past 12 months, by offender relationship

Note: These estimates are subject to error which is summarised in Sheet 1 of the data tables provided. Some individuals experienced more than one of these offences within the period, and some incidents involved more than one offender, with different relationships to the victim. Therefore, results cannot be added across groups in the above figure. Relationships might also be double-counted in some instances.⁴

⁴ In cases when a respondent reported that multiple family members were involved in a set of similar incidents, it is assumed that all incidents within the set of similar incidents involved all of the family members indicated. However, it is possible in some cases that not all family members were involved in all incidents.

3. What types of offences are committed by family members?

No statistical difference is observed in the percentage of adults experiencing different offence types by family members

More adults had experienced physical assault (0.7%) or harassment and threatening behaviour (0.7%) than had experienced sexual assault (0.4%) by a family member. However, these differences do not appear to be statistically significant (Figure 3).⁵

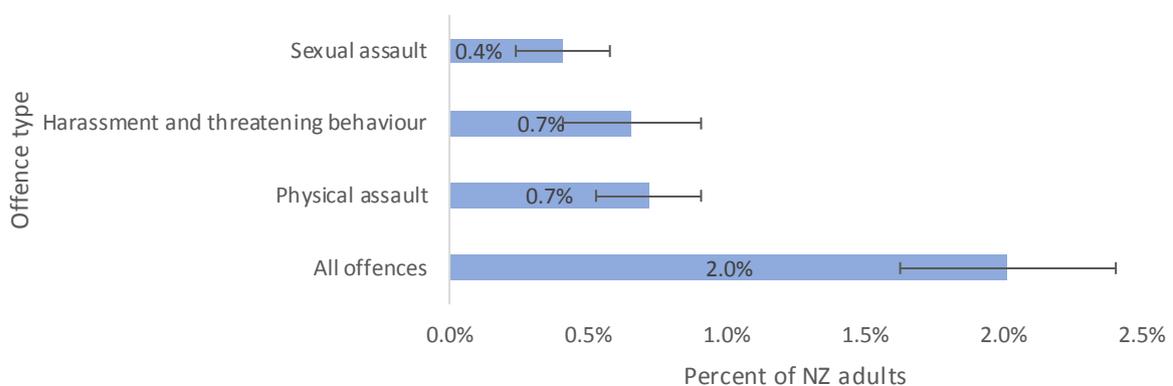


Figure 3: Percent of New Zealand adults who experienced offences committed by a family member in the past 12 months, by offence type

Note: The estimate for 'Other offence types' is not shown as the value has been suppressed due to high error. Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

We also looked at the extent to which offences committed by family members involved sexual violence, and on the other hand, the percent of all sexual violence incidents that involved a family member. Sexual violence made up one in five (19%) of all offences by a family member.⁶ One in five (21%) incidents of sexual violence were committed by a family member.⁷

As more data is accrued from further cycles of NZCVS, we will be able to provide more reliable estimates on the distribution of the types of offences committed by family members by pooling surveys.

⁵ The estimated prevalence rate of other offences by family members is not shown as it has been suppressed due to high error. Other offences include damage to motor vehicles and property damage (household), property damage (personal), and robbery.

⁶ The 95% confidence interval of this estimate ranges from 6% to 32% due to small sample sizes, so it must be interpreted with caution.

⁷ The 95% confidence interval of this estimate ranges from 5% to 36%, and so the estimate must be interpreted with caution.

4. Who experiences offences by family members?

In this section, we focus on the percentage of New Zealand adults who experienced offending by family members by a range of demographic, family, and socioeconomic factors. A full set of breakdowns by population characteristics are provided in Sheet 3 of the data tables.

Demographic groups: Women and Māori were more likely to have experienced offences by family members than other adults

Both males and females were victims of offences by family members, though females (2.8%) were affected at more than twice the rate of males (1.2%) (Figure 4).⁸ The overrepresentation of women in family violence victimisation is a recurrent finding in both New Zealand and international statistics.⁹

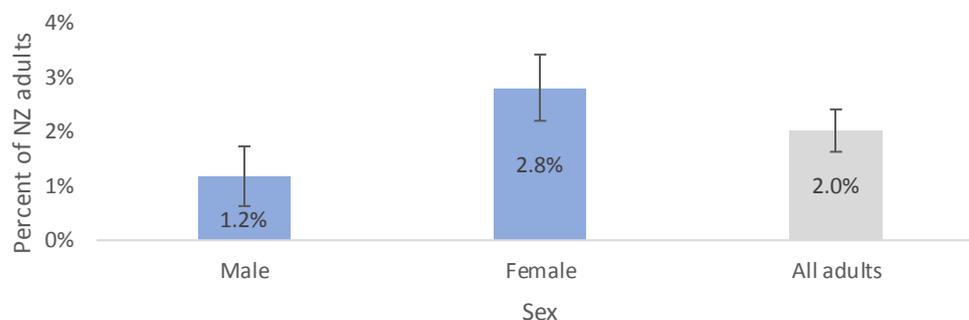


Figure 4: Percent of New Zealand adults who experienced offences committed by a family member in the past 12 months, by sex

Note: Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 5 below shows that adults of both Māori and European ethnicity experienced offending by family members, but Māori were at higher risk. We are unable to report rates of offending by family members for other ethnic groups due to small sample sizes. The overrepresentation of Māori in family violence statistics is driven by complex historical and contemporary factors, including poverty and social marginalisation.¹⁰ Differences in age structure and socioeconomic factors may explain some of the difference the rate of offending by family members among different ethnic groups. Our ability to look further into why people of different ethnicities are more or less likely to be highly victimised in this report was limited by small sample sizes. However, we do intend to start addressing these types of questions in an upcoming topical report on Māori victimisation.

⁸ The NZCVS also collects information on gender identity, with respondents being able to select 'male', 'female' or 'gender diverse'. These results are provided in Sheet 3 of the attached data tables, but the rate for the gender diverse group is suppressed due to small sample sizes.

⁹ See for example Nixon, J., & Humphreys, C. (2010). Marshalling the evidence: Using intersectionality in the domestic violence frame. *Social politics*, 17(2), 137-158; Family Violence Death Review Committee (2017). Fifth Report Data: January 2009 to December 2015. Wellington: Family Violence Death Review Committee.

¹⁰ Dobbs, T. & Eruera, M. (2014). Kaupapa Māori wellbeing framework: The basis for whānau violence prevention and intervention. Auckland, New Zealand: New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, University of Auckland.

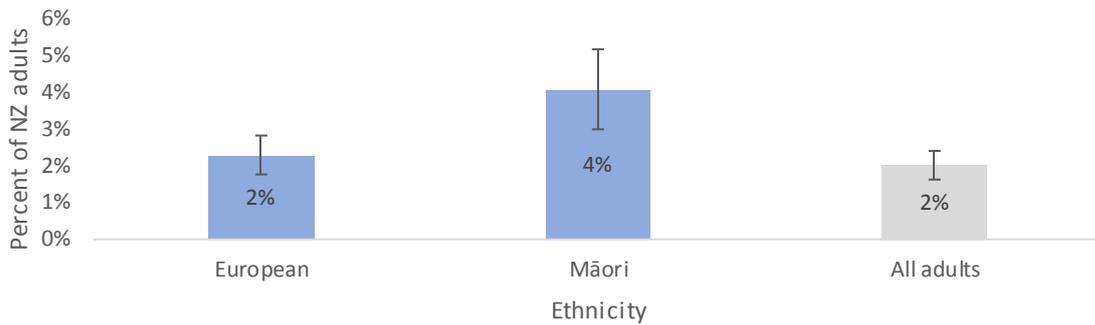


Figure 5: Percent of New Zealand adults who experienced offences committed by family members, by ethnicity

Note: Respondents could select multiple ethnicities. The estimate for 'Other' ethnicity for males is not shown as the value has been suppressed due to high error. Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

There is no clear pattern in experiences of offences by family members across age groups, though the rate of victimisation for those aged 50 years and older is statistically significantly lower than the rate for adults overall (Figure 6). Adults aged 15–29 years old and 40–49 years old both experienced higher rates of offences by family members than adults overall, but these differences do not appear to be statistically significant.

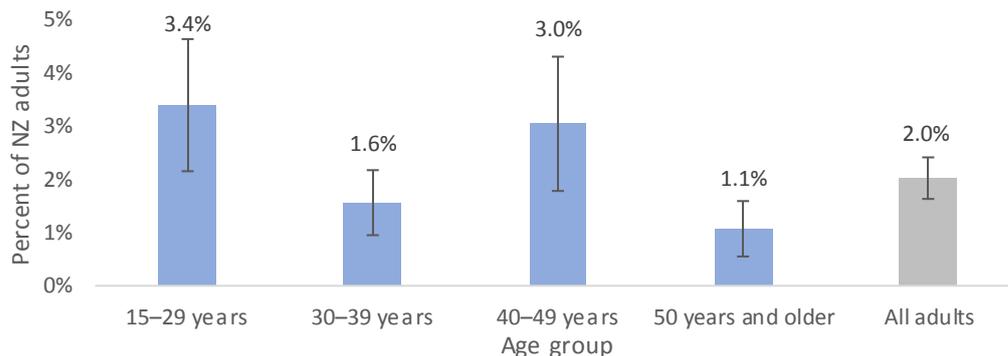


Figure 6: Percent of New Zealand adults who experienced offences committed by a family member in the past 12 months, by age group

Note: Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

Family situation: Adults living in single parent households and those who recently separated from a partner were more likely to experience offences by a family member than other adults.

To compare victimisation across adults in different family situations, we consider differences by whether someone had a partner and by the composition of the household in which someone lives.

Adults with partners (1%) were statistically significantly less likely to have experienced offences committed by family members than single adults (3%) (Figure 7).

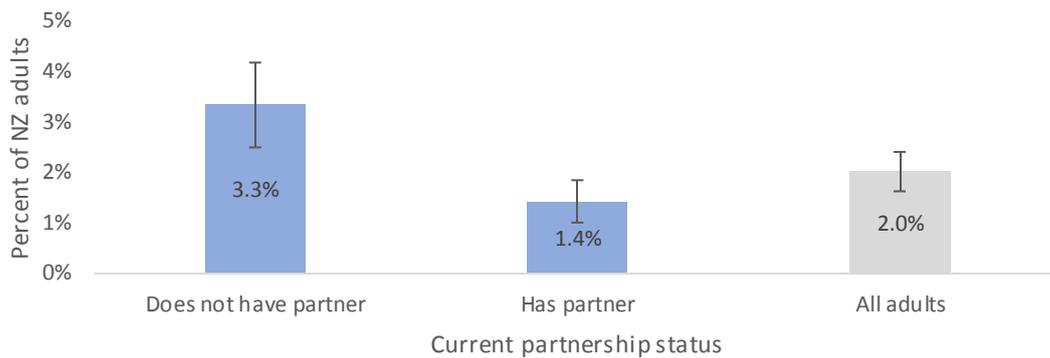


Figure 7: Percent of New Zealand adults who experienced offences committed by family members in the past 12 months, by current partnership status

Note: Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

However, Figure 8 shows that the high rate of victimisation amongst adults who do not have a current partner is driven by a high rate amongst those who have separated in the past 12 months. Single adults who had a previous partner in the past 12 months (9%) were more than three times as likely to experience offences committed by a family member than single adults overall (3%). A similar pattern is seen by these groups for offences committed by an intimate partner, though some of the information is suppressed due to high error.

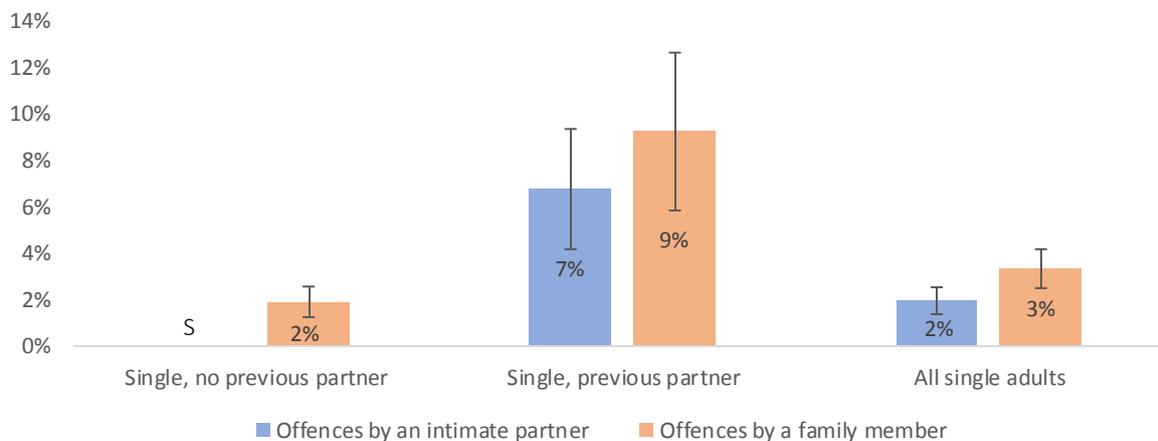


Figure 8: Percent of single New Zealand adults who experienced offences committed by a family member in the past 12 months, by previous (past 12 month) partnership status

Note: S - The estimate of offences by an intimate partner for 'Single, no previous partner' is not shown, as it has been suppressed due to high error. Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

It is important to consider that for recently separated adults, the offences could have occurred before or after the relationship ended, or at both stages. The results shown in Figure 8 suggest that separation is likely to be a key risk factor for being a victim of offences by an intimate partner. In Section 5 below, we show that in one quarter (25%) of offences committed by an intimate partner, victims said the incident related to separation.

Other research in New Zealand shows that separation from an abusive partner does not necessarily make a victim safe from further violence. A qualitative study of forty-five Auckland women who had experienced abuse from a partner concluded that abuse “may continue, or escalate, after separation”.¹¹ The study also reported that many of the women returned to the relationship after a decision to separate, due to difficulties post-separation, such as financial issues. Separation has also been documented as a risk factor for family violence homicide in New Zealand.¹²

Figure 9 shows that experiences of offences by a family member was significantly more common for adults living in single parent households (with or without other adults) (8%) compared with adults living in households made up of a couple with children (with or without other adults) (2%) or adults living alone (1%).¹³ Hence, the higher risk for single adults appears to be concentrated amongst those living with children.

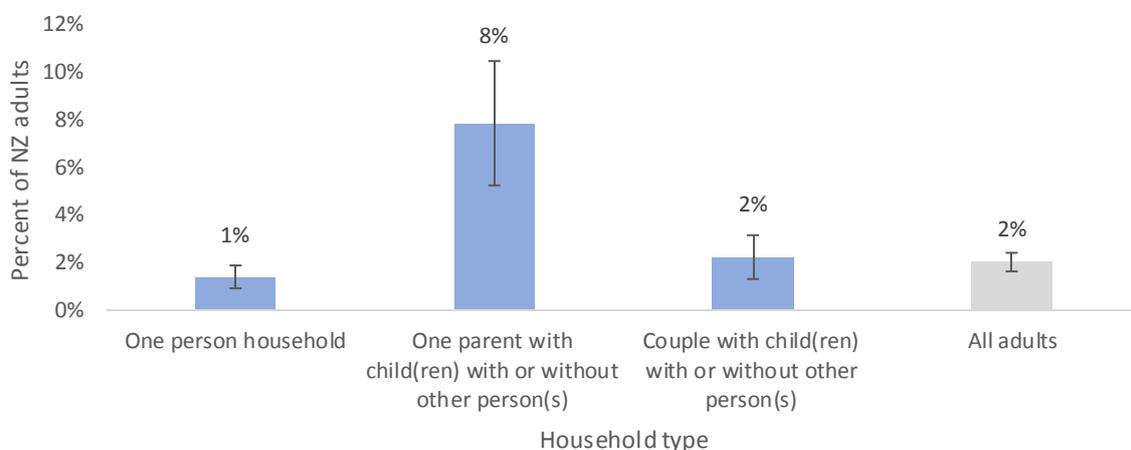


Figure 9: Percent of New Zealand adults who experienced offences by a family member in the past 12 months, by household type

Note: Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

Socioeconomic factors: Adults facing high levels of financial stress are more vulnerable to offending by family members

In this section, we show that adults of all socioeconomic groups are affected by offending by family members, and differences across most socioeconomic indicators are small and not statistically significant. Yet, there is a strong relationship between experiences of offences by family members and indicators of financial stress.

¹¹ Hand, J, V Elizabeth, H Rauwhero, S Selby, M Burton, L Falanitule and B Martin (2002) Free From Abuse: What women say and what can be done. Auckland: Public Health Promotion.

¹² Family Violence Death Review Committee (2017). Fifth Report Data: January 2009 to December 2015. Wellington: Family Violence Death Review Committee.

¹³ Note: we have combined ‘one-parent households’ and ‘one-parent households with other person(s)’ in one category. Respondents in this category could be a single-parent, or another person who lives with a single-parent and their child(ren) (including adult children of the single-parent). The prevalence rate of offences by family members amongst one-parent households is significantly higher than that for the average NZ adult, but the prevalence rate of psychological violence amongst one-parent households is suppressed due to high error.

It is shown in Figure 10 that adults living in lower income households tend to be more likely to have experienced offences committed by family members, but the differences do not appear to be statistically significant. One reason for this might be that measures of household income might not necessarily capture the adequacy of the income to meet basic needs. For example, larger households tend to face higher living costs. Future analysis might look at the relationship between experiences of offending by family members and equivalised household income, which takes into account household size and composition.

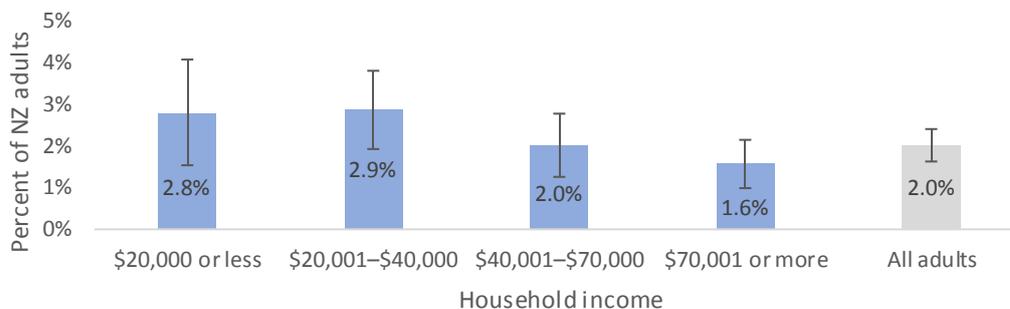


Figure 10: Percent of New Zealand adults who experienced offences committed by family members, by household income

Note: Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

There is no strong evidence of a relationship between either personal income (Figure 11) or employment status (Figure 12) and experiences of offending by family members.



Figure 11: Percent of New Zealand adults who experienced offences committed by family members, by personal income of respondent

Note: Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.



Figure 12: Percent of New Zealand adults who experienced offences committed by family members, by employment status

Note: Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

Despite observing little to no relationship between area deprivation, income, or labour force participation, there is a clear relationship between the experience of offences committed by family members and indicators of financial stress. In the NZCVS, financial stress is measured in two ways, the first (category 1), asks respondents about their ability to afford an attractive but not essential item for \$300. The second (category 2), asks respondents about their ability to afford an unexpected \$500 of extra spending within a month, without borrowing money.

The rate of having experienced offences by family members amongst adults who said they “couldn’t buy” a non-essential item costing \$300 (5%) was five times higher than that for adults who were not at all limited in their ability to purchase the item (1%) (Figure 13). This difference is statistically significant. A similar pattern can be seen for the second category of financial stress (see Table 3 in the data tables provided). That is, adults who could not afford an unexpected expense of \$500 (4%) within a month experienced offences committed by family members at twice the rate of other adults (2%).

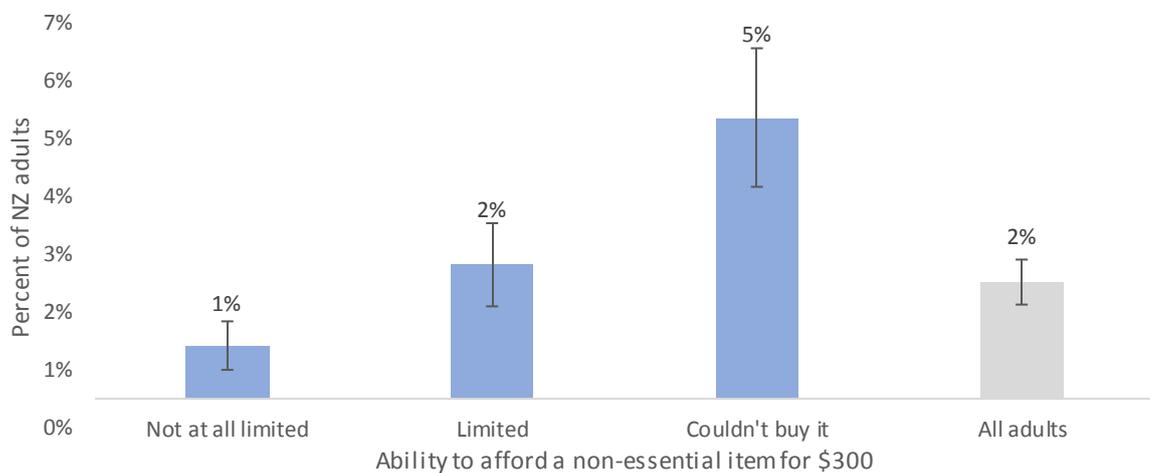


Figure 13: Percent of New Zealand adults who experienced offences committed by family members, by level of financial stress (category 1)

Note: The responses ‘A little limited’ ‘Quite limited’ and ‘Very limited’ have been aggregated due to small sample sizes. Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

The possibility that financial strain could trigger offending by family members is supported by a result in Section 5 below, that 22% of offences committed by family members were viewed by the victim as related to financial problems. Financial stress might also increase vulnerability to victimisation or be a barrier for victims to leave abusive relationships. It is also possible that there might be factors that relate to both high rates of victimisation and financial stress, such as being a single parent, without the two being directly linked.

Future work – especially once more data is accumulated from further cycles of NZCVS – could use regression to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between offending by family members, and the demographic, socioeconomic and family circumstances of an individual.

5. Gender asymmetry

Results in Section 3 showed that females were affected by offences committed by family members at twice the rate of males. We also find that women (1.7%) were affected by offences by an intimate partner at more than three times the rate of men (0.5%) (Figure 14).

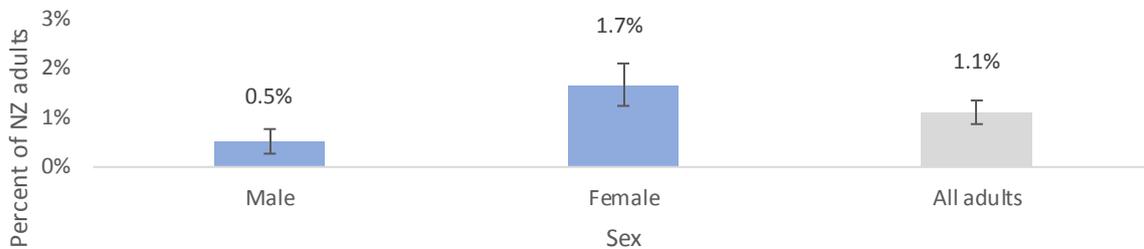


Figure 14: Percent of New Zealand adults experiencing offences committed by an intimate partner, by sex

Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

We can also consider the extent to which offending by family members is perpetrated by men or women. Figure 15 shows that significantly more adults reported experiencing offences perpetrated by a male family member (1.6%) than by a female family member (0.5%).



Figure 15: Percent of NZ adults experiencing offences committed by family members, by sex of offender(s) involved

Note: Some incidents might have involved both male and female offenders. Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

For female victims of offences by family members, it is estimated that 87% of incidents involved one or more male offenders.¹⁴ For male victims, and for victims overall, the distribution of incidents by male or female offenders cannot be reported, due to high rates of error.

¹⁴ The questionnaire asked whether the people involved were male or female, or people of both sexes. No other genders were made available as an option.

6. Factors relating to offending by family members

Argument and jealousy are common factors reported by victims as relating to offences by family members

The NZCVS questionnaire asked victims of offences by family members whether any of a set of factors were related to the incidents. The most commonly reported factors are summarised in Figure 20.

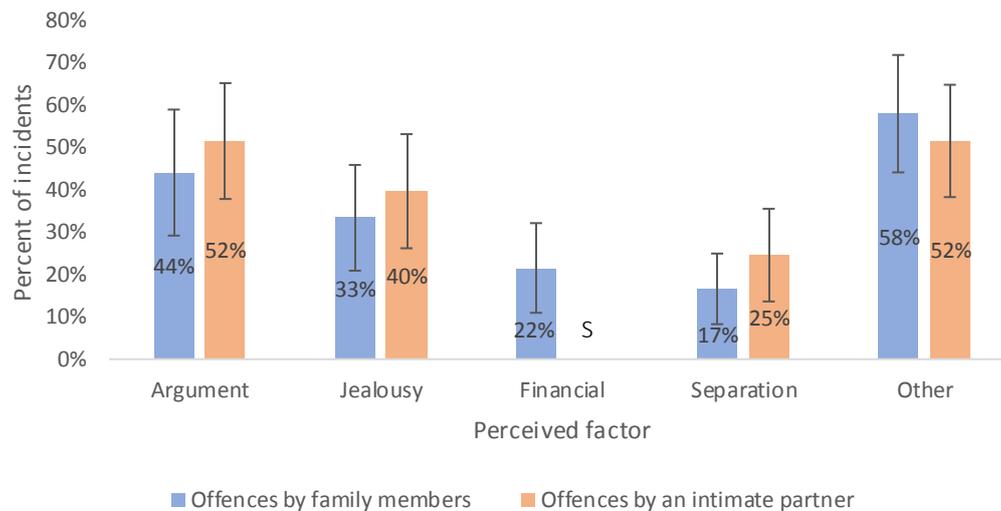


Figure 16: Most common factors related to offences committed by family members

Note: S - the estimate for 'Financial issues' in offences by an intimate partner has been suppressed. 'Other' perceived factors include children fighting, care of children, nothing in particular, no reason and other reason - individual estimates of these categories were suppressed due to high margin of error. Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

The most common factor identified was an argument, which was a factor in more than two of five (44%) offences by family members and more than half (52%) of offences by an intimate partner. Jealousy or possessiveness was the next most common factor in offences by family members (33%), and especially in those involving an intimate partner (40%).

Financial issues were noted by victims as a factor in two in ten (22%) of offences committed by family members. Separation was a factor in one quarter (25%) of incidents involving an intimate partner. These results relate to findings from Section 3, that both financial stress and separation are possible risk factors for experiencing offending committed by family members.

Victims reported that the offender(s) was under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of two of five offences committed by family members

Both New Zealand and international research finds evidence of an independent relationship between family violence and the consumption of alcohol.¹⁵ The NZCVS asks victims of offences by family members about whether the offender(s) involved in an incident was under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and whether they themselves were under the influence of

¹⁵ Social Policy Evaluation and Research Unit (2015). *Reducing the impact of alcohol on family violence* (What works paper). Wellington, New Zealand: Superu.

alcohol or drugs at the time. This information does not tell us the extent to which alcohol or drugs were a causal factor.

Figure 17 below shows that victims of offences by a family member reported that the offender(s) was under the influence of alcohol or drugs in two in five (40%) incidents. However, the confidence interval of this estimate ranges from 22% to 59%.

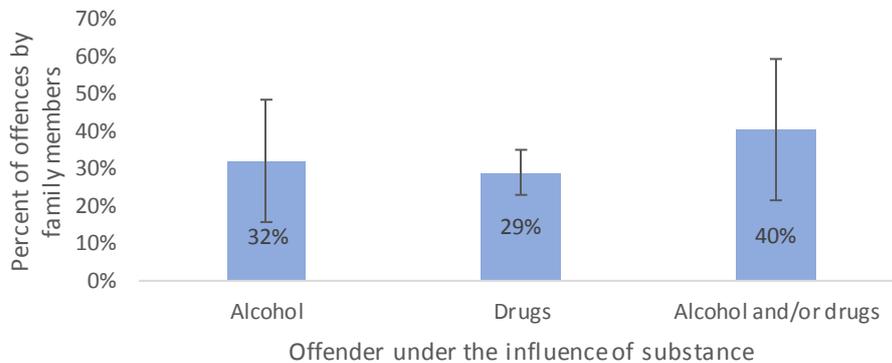


Figure 17: Percent of offences committed by family members in which the offender was under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or alcohol and drugs

Note: Whether the offender was under the influence of a substance is reported by the victim. Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

Victims reported being under the influence of alcohol or drugs themselves in 12% of offences committed by a family member and 17% of those committed by an intimate partner.

7. Health outcomes for victims of offences by family members

Adults affected by offences committed by a family member were almost five times more likely than other adults to have moderate to high levels of psychological distress

Psychological distress is collected in the NZCVS using the Kessler-6 (K6) scale. This is a short six-item scale that screens for non-specific psychological distress in the general population. The scale is intended to yield a global measure of distress based on questions about anxiety and depressive symptoms that a person has experienced in the most recent four-week period.

The scores were converted to a 'low level', 'moderate level' or 'high level' of psychological distress according to previous validation studies using the K6 (both international and New Zealand studies).¹⁶

Adults who had experienced offences committed by family members were more than four times as likely to show signs of a moderate or high level of psychological distress (37%) than other adults (8%) (Figure 18). This result signals there is a need for health services to be equipped to support victims of offending by family members.

Note that it cannot be concluded that there is a causal link between victimisation and psychological distress. Though it is likely that some of the differences by victimisation could be due to the impact of victimisation or that psychological distress could make people more vulnerable to victimisation, other differences between victims and non-victims, such as age and income, could relate to both family violence and psychological distress. Future research using NZCVS data could explore the relationship between experiences of offending by family members and psychological distress, after controlling for other factors.

¹⁶ A score of 0 to 7 is labelled as "low level" and is considered as a probable absence of mental illness in the previous 30 days. A score of 8 to 12 is labelled as "moderate level" and is considered as probable mild to moderate mental illness in the previous 30 days. A score of 13 or greater is labelled as "high level" and is considered as probable serious mental illness in the previous 30 days.

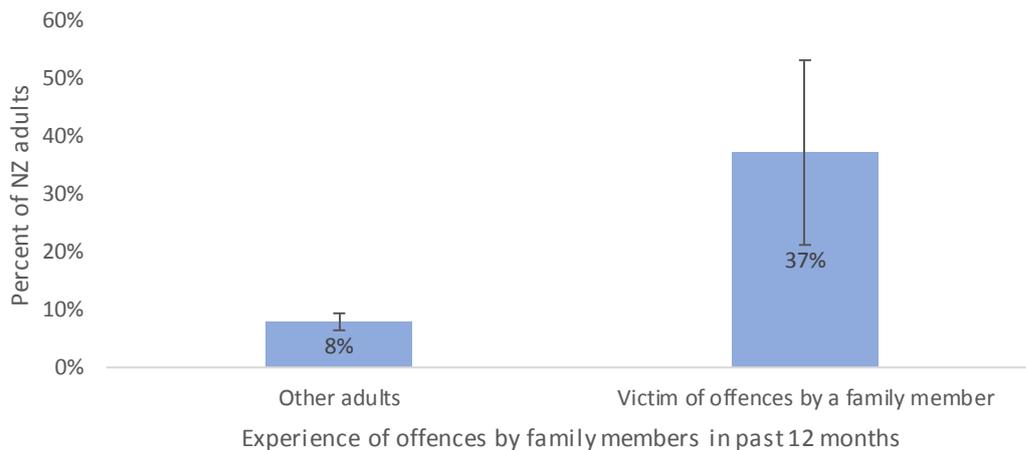


Figure 18: Percent of New Zealand adults who had moderate to high levels of psychological distress, by experience of offences committed by family members in the past 12 months

Note: Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

One quarter of offences by family members resulted in injury

Almost one quarter (23%) of offences by family members resulted in injury of the victim. Recall that some of the offence types considered might not be expected to lead to injury (e.g. harassment and threatening behaviour, damage to property).



Figure 19: Percent of offences committed by a family member that resulted in injury of the victim

Note: The 95% confidence interval for this estimate ranges from 18% to 29%.

We are unable to report the rate of injury by offence type due to small sample sizes. Over time, more detailed analysis of experiences of injury in relation to offences by family members should become possible by pooling together years of survey data.

8. Interaction with services and experiences of support

The uptake of services for family violence by victims of offending by family members is low

In this section, we consider the following four forms of interaction with services or people by victims of offending by family members:

- attention from a medical professional in relation to the offences they experienced
- reporting of the offences to Police
- contacting or contacted by a family violence support service¹⁷ in relation to a family or whānau incident¹⁸
- asking family, whānau or friends for help in relation to a family/whānau incident

Information on the latter two interactions was collected as part of the family violence in-depth module. These interactions can be considered opportunities for a victim to get help. However, it should be recognised that the experiences might not always be helpful to the victim and that not all victims might want or need help. The percentage of victims who had the above interactions are summarised in Figure 20.

Only 15% of victims of offences by family members said they had received medical attention in relation to one or more of the incidents they experienced. Respondents were asked to include medical attention for both their mental and emotional health as well as for their physical health. We are unable to report the rate of medical attention received by those who were injured as a result of an incident due to small sample sizes.

¹⁷ Support services listed in the question in the survey questionnaire include Victim Support; Women's Refuge; Rape Crisis; Citizens Advice Bureau; Lifeline Aotearoa; Family Violence website or helpline (www.areyouok.org.nz); Victims of Crime Information Line; Religious organisation (e.g. Salvation Army); Whānau Ora or other Māori organisation; Work-based professional support, e.g. employee assistance programme, in-house support team; Court services for victims; and Other government agency (not the Police).

¹⁸ Respondents are informed in the survey that "family/whānau incidents include incidents of violence, threats, intimidation or controlling behaviour by partners, ex-partners, boyfriends or girlfriends, and family or whānau members. Family members are anyone you are related to, including 'step' and 'in-law' relationships and whānau."



Figure 20: Percent of victims of offences by family members who interacted with different services or asked for help from someone they know

Note: Respondents were asked to include medical attention for their emotional and mental health as well as their physical health. Someone they know includes family/whānau, friends or neighbours. Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

One third (32%) of victims of offences by family members reported that they had at least one incident that happened to them had become known to Police. In cases where respondents said the Police found out about an incident, the NZCVS asks whether they themselves reported the incident to Police. One quarter (24%) of victims had reported an offence they had experienced by a family member to Police themselves, as opposed to being reported by someone else in the household, or Police finding out in some other way (Figure 21).

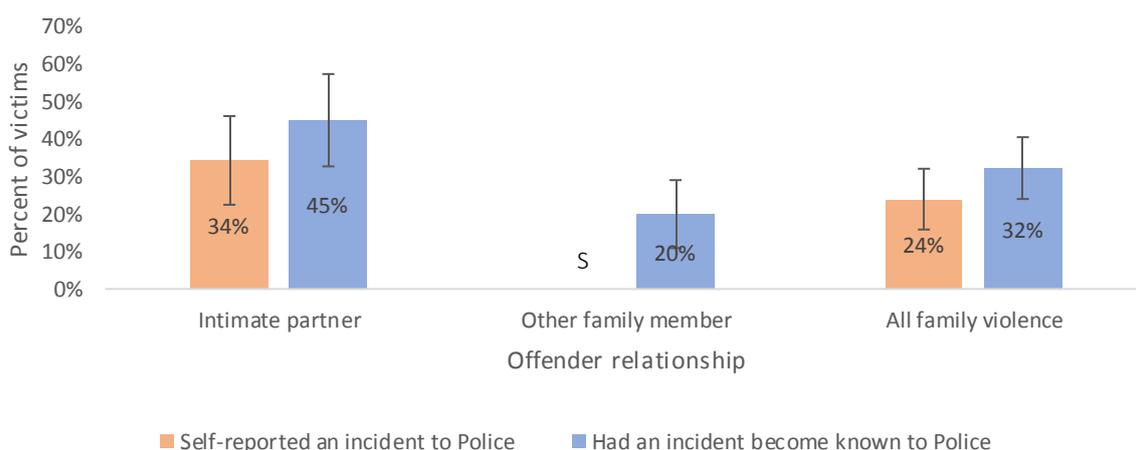


Figure 21: Percent of victims of offences by family members who experienced an incident that became known to Police, by offender relationship

Note: S - estimates of the self-reporting rate to Police for 'Other family member' is not shown as it is suppressed due to high error. Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 21 also shows that victims of offences by an intimate partner were twice as likely to have an incident become known to Police (45%) than victims of offences by another family member (20%). This finding could indicate that campaigns to raise awareness of family violence have been more successful in changing New Zealanders' attitudes towards intimate partner violence than violence by other family members.

Figure 20 above also shows that one third (32%) of victims of offences committed by family members had contacted, or were contacted by, a family violence support agency. This result does not seem to be driven by a lack of awareness of family violence support organisations, with almost all victims (94%) reporting that they were aware of at least one family violence support organisation¹⁹.

Half of all victims of offences committed by family members (51%) had asked for help from family, whānau, friends or a neighbour (Figure 20). Other studies in New Zealand have found that victims of family violence are more likely to reach out to informal sources than formal sources²⁰. This pattern indicates a need to focus attention on ways to help and empower family, whānau and friends to provide effective support to victims of family violence.

¹⁹ Respondents were asked if they were aware of any of the following organisations: Victim Support, Women's Refuge, Rape Crisis, Citizens Advice Bureau, Lifeline Aotearoa, Family Violence website or helpline (www.areyouok.org.nz) or Victims of Crime Information Line.

²⁰ For example, see the discussion on page 12 of Metzger, N., & Woodley, A. (2011). Report on giving, receiving and seeking help: The campaign for action on family violence. Available at <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/research/campaign-action-violence-research/index.html>

9. Intimate partner psychological violence

In this section of the report we examine experiences of psychological violence by intimate partners (current or ex-partners), which was collected as part of the family violence in-depth module in Cycle 1 of the NZCVS. Only adults who had a partner in the last 12 months were asked about their experiences of intimate partner psychological violence, and so we focus on this subgroup of the population in this section. For this report, intimate partner psychological violence is defined as the following controlling behaviours towards a person by their partner or ex-partner:

- stopping them from seeing or contacting friends, family or whānau
- following or keeping track of their whereabouts in a way that felt controlling or frightening
- stopping or controlling their access to things like their mobile phone, the Internet, or transport
- stopping them from getting healthcare when they needed it
- pressuring them into paid work they did not want to do
- stopping them from doing paid work they wanted to do.

Note that intimate partner psychological violence does not include threats and harassment or property damage, which are recognised as forms of psychological abuse in the Family Violence Act 2018. However, these types of incidents are examined as part of offences by family members in earlier sections of this report, as they are in line with offences recorded by Police.

More than 100,000 adults experienced intimate partner psychological violence in the past 12 months

Overall, 104,000 adults who had a partner in the past 12 months (3.6%) were victims of intimate partner psychological violence. A breakdown of types of intimate partner psychological violence is provided in Figure 22. The most common behaviour experienced was being stopped from contacting friends, family or whānau (2.4%). Further breakdowns by sex, age and ethnicity are provided in Sheet 11 of the data tables provided.

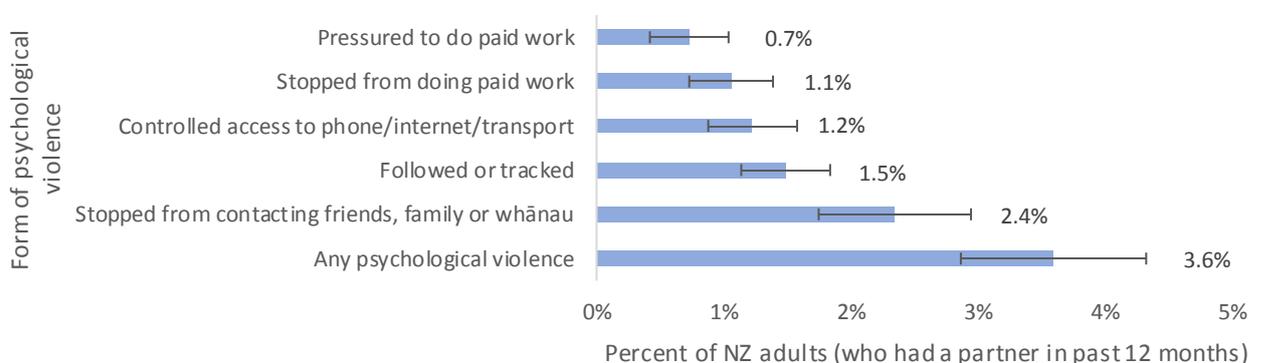


Figure 22: Percent of adults (who had a partner in the past 12 months) who experienced psychological violence in the past 12 months

Note: The estimate of 'Prevented from accessing healthcare' is not shown as the value has been suppressed due to high error. Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

Two in five victims of psychological violence (42%) had been subjected to more than one of the controlling behaviours.

Men and women equally likely to experience intimate partner psychological violence

Figure 23 shows that the rate of intimate partner psychological violence was not statistically different for men and women, at 3.3% and 3.9% respectively. This result contrasts with the finding in Section 4 that women were affected by other forms of intimate partner violence at three times the rate of men. However, the context of psychological violence and its impact on victims' sense of safety may be different for men and women²¹.

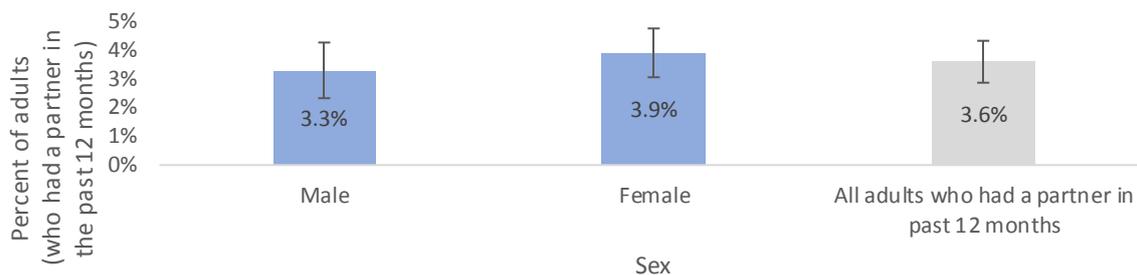


Figure 23: Percent of adults (who had a partner in the past 12 months) who experienced intimate partner psychological violence in the past 12 months, by sex

Note: Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

Psychological intimate partner violence by other demographic factors reflect similar patterns to results for offences by family members (Figures 24 to 28). Results by ethnicity and sex show that female Māori are at relatively high risk, with 8% affected by psychological intimate partner violence compared to 4% of European women (Figure 25).

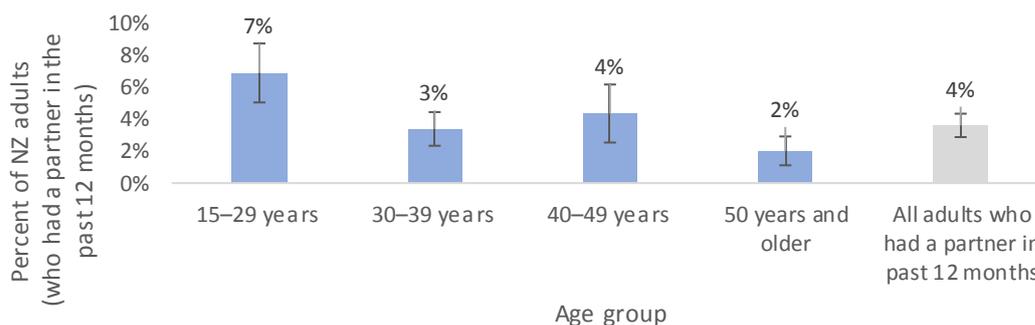


Figure 24: Percent of adults (who had a partner in the past 12 months) who experienced intimate partner psychological violence in the past 12 months, by age group

Note: Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

²¹ For a discussion of differences in experiences of family violence by gender, see Family Violence Clearinghouse Statistics Fact Sheet (2007). *Family Violence and Gender Fact Sheet*. Retrieved from <https://nzfvc.org.nz/sites/nzfvc.org.nz/files/factsheet-gender-1.pdf>

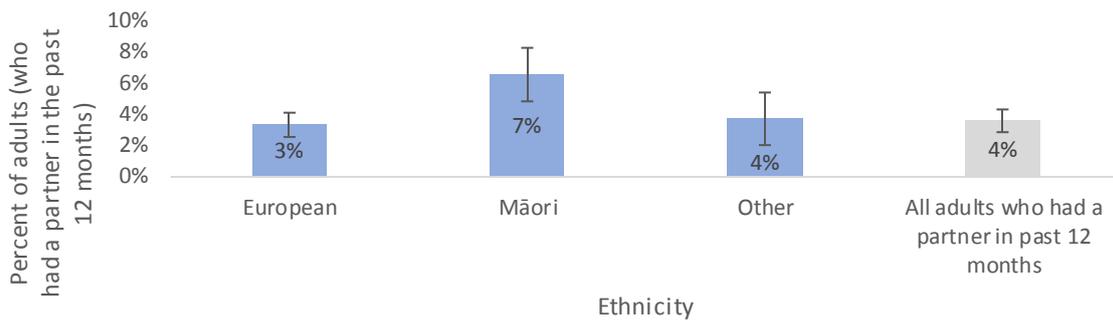


Figure 25: Percent of adults (who had a partner in the past 12 months) who experienced intimate partner psychological violence in the past 12 months, by ethnicity

Note: Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

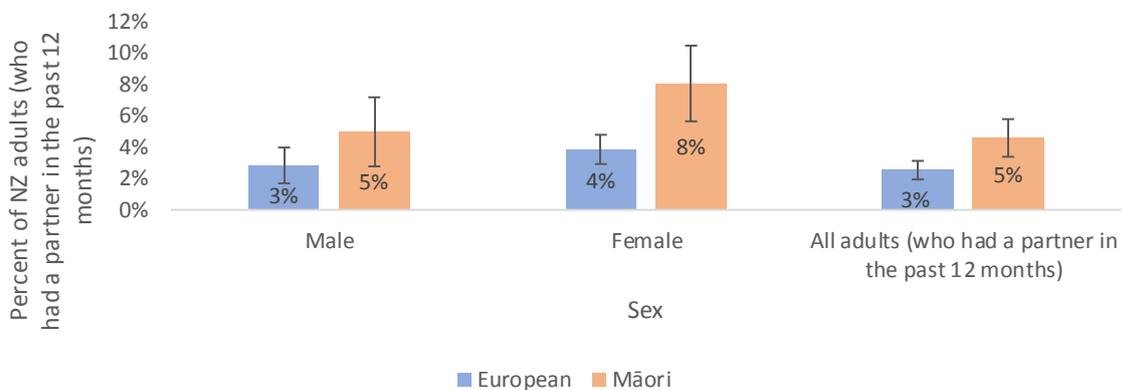


Figure 26: Percent of adults (who had a partner in the past 12 months) who experienced intimate partner psychological violence in the past 12 months, by ethnicity and sex

Note: Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

Of adults who had a partner in the past 12 months, those who did not have a current partner (14%) experienced psychological intimate partner violence at more than five times the rate of those with a current partner (3%). This finding again highlights separation as a possible risk factor in intimate partner violence.

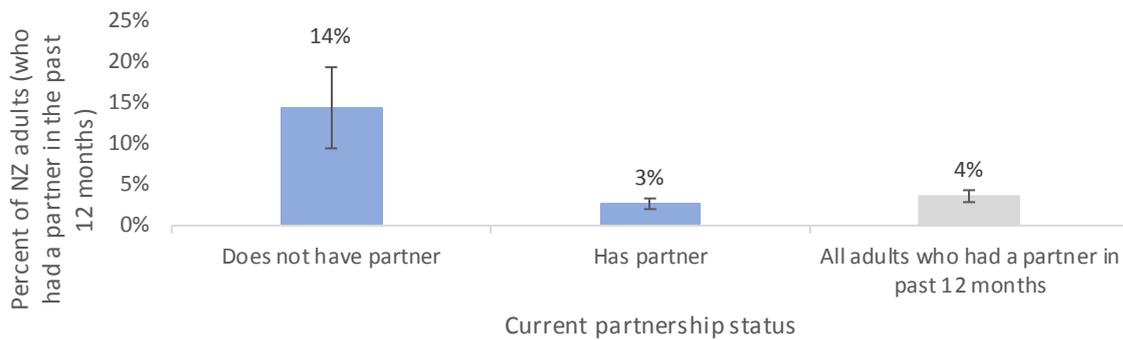


Figure 27: Percent of NZ adults (who had a partner in the past 12 months) who experienced psychological intimate partner violence, by current partnership status

Note: Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

Also, we find no clear patterns in the rate of psychological intimate partner violence by socioeconomic factors, except for a strong relationship across indicators of financial pressure. Adults who “couldn’t buy” a non-essential item for \$300 experienced psychological intimate partner violence at more than three times the rate (7%) of adults who were not at all limited to purchase the item (2%) (Figure 28).

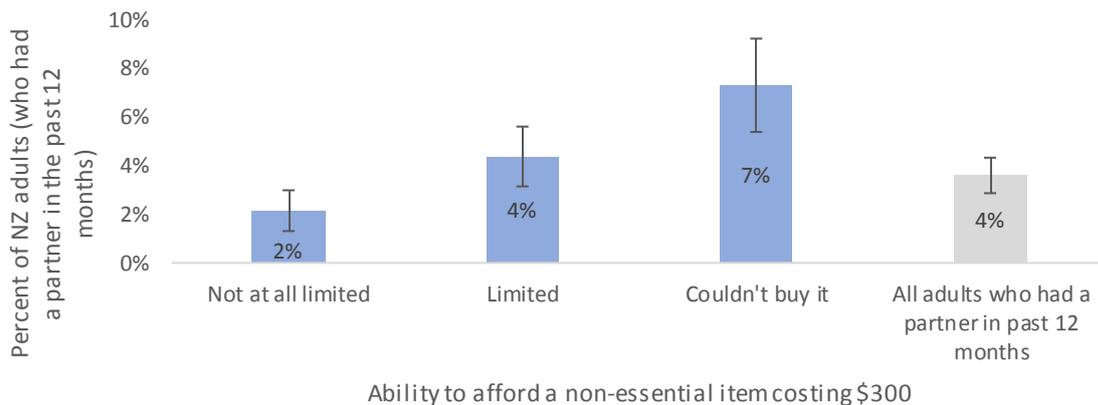


Figure 28: Percent of NZ adults (who had a partner in the past 12 months) who experienced psychological intimate partner violence, by ability to afford a non-essential item costing \$300

Note: Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

One third of victims of intimate partner psychological violence showed signs of psychological distress

One third (33%) of victims of intimate partner psychological violence showed signs of moderate or high levels of psychological distress, compared to eight percent of other adults (Figure 29). This result is notably similar to the breakdown of psychological distress by victimisation in Section 6. Note that it cannot be concluded that there is a causal link between victimisation and psychological distress.



Figure 29: Percent of New Zealand adults who had moderate to high levels of psychological distress, by intimate partner psychological violence victimisation in the past 12 months

Note: Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

One in five victims of intimate partner psychological violence had contact with a family violence support organisation

Figure 30 below summarises the percentage of victims of intimate partner psychological violence who talked to a family violence support organisation (21%) or asked for help from someone they know (34%). These rates appear lower than those for victims of offences by family members shown in Section 7, but the differences are unlikely to be statistically significant.

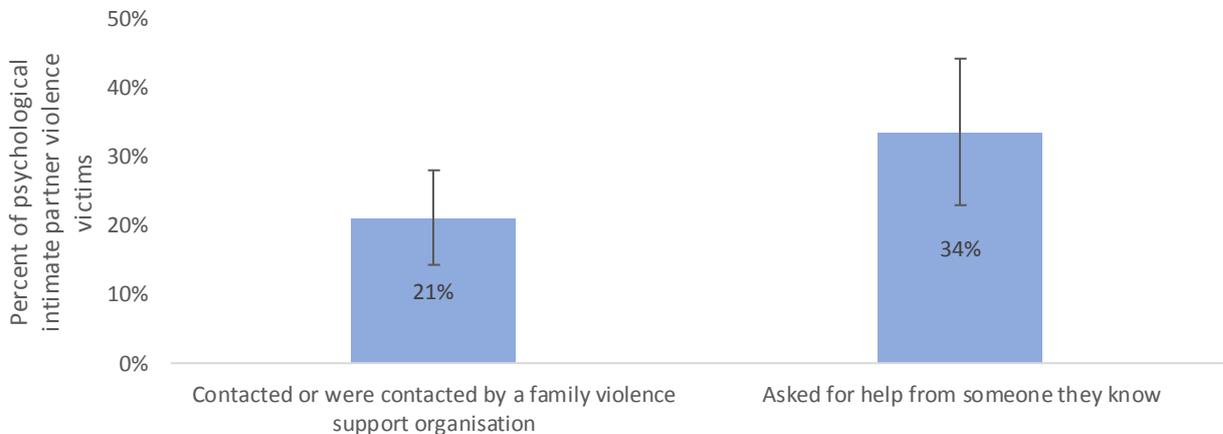


Figure 30: Percent of victims of intimate partner psychological violence victims who interacted with a family violence support organisation or asked for help from someone they know

Note: Someone they know includes family, whānau, a friend or neighbour. Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

Experiences of psychological violence by an intimate partner is more common than experiencing offences by an intimate partner

In this section, we compare, for adults who had a partner in the past 12 months, the rate of psychological intimate partner violence with experiences of specific offences by an intimate partner (physical assault, sexual assault, harassment and threatening behaviour, damage to personal or household property, damage to motor vehicles and robbery).

Of this population group, 4.2% were victims of either psychological violence or offences by an intimate partner, where the rate of psychological intimate partner violence is almost three times (3.6%) that of experiencing offences by an intimate partner (1.2%) (Figure 31). A small percentage (0.5%) were victims of both psychological violence and one of the specific offence types by an intimate partner.

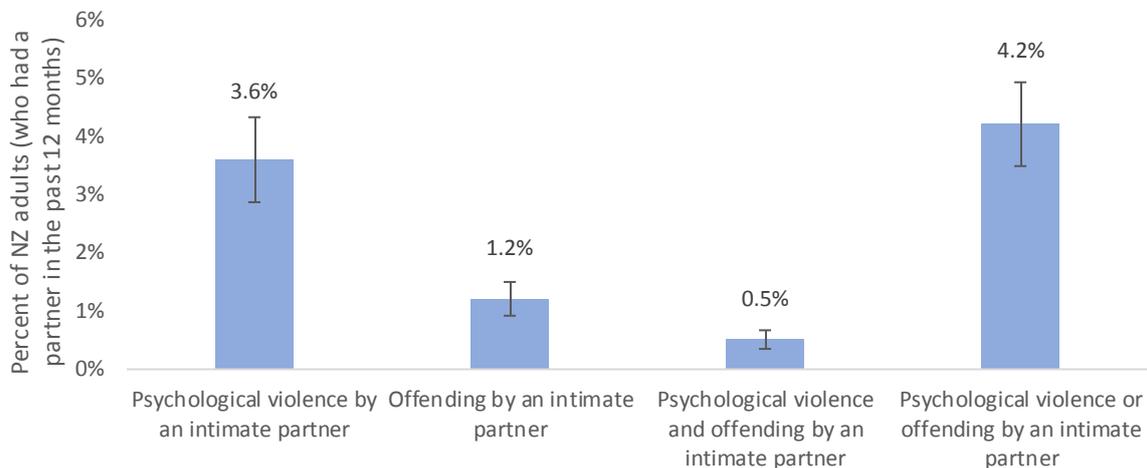


Figure 31: Percent of New Zealand adults (who had a partner in the past 12 months) who experienced psychological intimate partner violence and offences committed by an intimate partner

Note: Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.

Results in Figure 31 provide evidence to the discussion in Lievore and Mayhew (2007)²² that psychological abuse can occur independently of other forms of intimate partner violence. Moreover, New Zealand adults experienced intimate partner psychological violence (3.6%) at three times the rate of intimate partner violence that falls under one of the offence types considered (1.2%).

New Zealand is progressing toward better recognising and addressing psychological violence. The Family Violence Act 2018 updated the definition of family violence to better incorporate patterns of coercive or controlling behaviour. These results from the NZCVS suggest that the number of people who could benefit from upscaled services and prevention efforts to address psychological violence is potentially large.

It is important to emphasise that the definition of psychological intimate partner violence used in the NZCVS differs to that in the Family Violence Act, covers only a subset of all currently recognised forms of psychological violence. Therefore, the analysis in this section likely to underestimate the full extent of adults affected by psychological intimate partner violence in New Zealand.

²² Lievore, Denise & Pat Mayhew, 2007. The scale and nature of family violence in New Zealand: a review and evaluation of knowledge. Available at <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/research/scale-nature-family-violence/index.html>

10. Conclusion

This report provides insights into the extent of offending against New Zealand adults by members of their family, who is most affected, and what services victims interact with.

Many of the findings in this report echo patterns that have been observed in other research and statistics on family violence victimisation in New Zealand. For example, it is clear that women are at particular risk of experiencing offences by family members. Female adults (2.8%) were more than twice as likely to have experienced offences by family members than male adults (1.2%) and more than three times as likely to have experienced offences by an intimate partner (1.7% of females compared to 0.5% of males).

Another theme of this report that reflects existing understandings of family violence is that separation is a key risk factor. Single adults who had a previous partner in the past 12 months were more than three times as likely (9%) to have experienced offences by an intimate partner than single adults overall (3%).

This report also sheds light on the extent to which psychological intimate partner violence is a major issue in New Zealand. Despite using a narrow definition of psychological intimate partner violence, the NZCVS reveals that even more New Zealand adults were affected by it in the last 12 months than other forms of intimate partner violence that are specific offences. Additionally, it is shown that victims of psychological violence experience similar levels of psychological distress to victims of offences by family members.

Though the NZCVS collects a rich level of data about experiences of offences committed by family members, many questions have been left unanswered due to a lack of statistical reliability in the results. Indeed, many of the results included in this report are subject to high error and should be used with caution. As data continues to accumulate with each cycle of the survey, richer and more statistically reliable insights will be possible. For this reason, the family violence in-depth module has been selected to be repeated for Cycle 3 of the NZCVS, which is in the field in 2019/2020. More research possibilities about experiences of offending by family members will also become possible with the NZCVS being incorporated into the Statistics New Zealand Integrated Data Infrastructure.

About NZCVS

The NZCVS is a random, sample, nationwide, face-to-face, annual survey asking New Zealanders aged 15 years and over about incidents of crime they experienced over last 12 months. This includes both incidents reported to the Police and unreported incidents.

The first NZCVS was undertaken between March and October 2018 and achieved 8,030 interviews. The response rate was 81% which means that the survey results are representative.

Note that while the NZCVS delivers the best estimate available about a wide range of personal and household offences that are not captured elsewhere, it still does not report the total amount of crime in New Zealand. This is because the NZCVS is a sample survey²³ subject to sample errors; also, it does not cover every type of crime that someone might experience (see Table 1).

Table 1. Scope of crimes/offences covered in the NZCVS	
Covered in the NZCVS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> personal offences, either reported to the Police or not, where the respondent was the victim of the crime household offences, either reported to the Police or not, where the respondent's household was offended
Not covered in the NZCVS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> manslaughter and homicide abduction crimes against children (14 years old and under) 'victimless crime' (such as drug offences) commercial crime/white-collar crime/crimes against businesses or public-sector agencies crimes against people who do not live in permanent private dwellings crimes against people living in institutions²⁴

The NZCVS is a new survey with some significant improvements in design compared with its predecessors such as New Zealand Crime and Safety Survey (NZCASS). In particular²⁵, the NZCVS:

- has a larger annual sample
- uses a different approach to coding offences that is more consistent with the Police approach
- applies a much lower level of data imputations
- covers additional offence types (e.g. fraud, cybercrime, trespass) and
- employs a different approach for collecting data from highly victimised people (allowing similar incidents to be reported as a group).

These differences mean that direct comparison of NZCVS results with its predecessor NZCASS is potentially misleading, even within similar offence types. More detail about how the NZCVS was conducted in 2018 can be found in the NZCVS methodology report²⁶.

²³ A sample survey means that not every New Zealander gives information about their experiences; it's not a census of the population. Also, not all respondents may want to talk about their experiences, remember the incidents that they have experienced, and/or provide accurate information about incidents (deliberately or due to imperfect recall).

²⁴ Those living in care facilities, prisons, army barracks, boarding schools and other similar institutions or non-private dwellings are excluded from the NZCVS sampling and interviewing process.

²⁵ Partial list.

²⁶ See the methodology report online at www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/research-data/nzcv

Other NZCVS reports and future reporting

A number of resources are already available on the Ministry of Justice website to help access the results from the NZCVS, interpret findings, and understand the research.

The technical aspects of the research are discussed in detail in the methodology report available from <https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/NZCVS-2018-Methodology-Report-Year-1-fin.pdf>.

For the topline report summarising the initial findings of the NZCVS Cycle 1 (2018) go to <https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/NZCVS-2018-Topline-report.pdf>

The NZCVS Cycle 1 (2018) core report (the most comprehensive, full size report) is available from <https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/NZCVS-A4-KeyFindings-2018-fin-v1.1.pdf> .

The NZCVS Cycle 1 (2018) key findings only report (short version) is available from <https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/NZCVS-List-of-key-findings-Y1-fin.pdf> (without infographics) or <https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/NZCVS-A4-KeyFindings-2018-fin.pdf> (with infographics).

A standalone set of infographics supporting the core report may be downloaded from <https://www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/research-data/nzcvs/resources-and-results/>.

Data tables (aggregated data) that support the core report are available from <https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/NZCVS-Core-report-2018-tables-fin.pdf> (in pdf format) or <https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/NZCVS-Core-report-2018-tables-fin.xlsx> (excel spreadsheet).

NZCVS data (only those records obtaining respondents' consent) is now incorporated in the Statistics New Zealand Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI).

An overview of important findings is available at <https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/NZCVS-topical-report-Important-findings-Cycle-1-2018-v1.1-fin.pdf>.

A topical report focussed on *highly victimised people* is available from <https://www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/research-data/nzcvs/resources-and-results/> .

Some additional documents are also available from <https://www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/research-data/nzcvs/resources-and-results/> .

If you have any feedback or questions about NZCVS results, please email us on nzcvs@justice.govt.nz.