



New Zealand
Crime and Victims **survey**

HELP CREATE SAFER COMMUNITIES

Survey findings - Cycle 4 report

**Section 5 – *Sexual violence
and violence by family
members***

June 2022

Results drawn from Cycle 4 (2020/21) of the
New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey

ISSN 2744-3981

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3. This report contains highly aggregated data. No identifiable personal data is included in the report.
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5. Unfortunately, due to an error in data collection, this report does not include over 200 interviews from the Hawke's Bay area. Survey results were revised, amended and re-weighted to maintain accuracy and avoid bias.

Published in June 2022 by the Ministry of Justice

Justice Centre, 19 Aitken Street

DXSX10088, Wellington, New Zealand

ISSN: 2744-3981

Suggested citation

Ministry of Justice. 2022. *New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey. Cycle 4 survey findings. Descriptive statistics. June 2022. Results drawn from Cycle 4 (2020/21) of the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey.* Wellington: Ministry of Justice.

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This report contains many graphs and infographics that help to visualise key facts and findings. Only those graphs that support the key findings are included. All observations and graphs in the report are based on the **data tables** that accompany this report, which are available on the [NZCVS resources and results web page](#).

If you are reading the report for the first time, it is recommended that you refer to “Cycle 4 Core report - Section 2 – About this report” to help with understanding and presentation of results.

Topic	Key findings
Sexual assault	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 2% of adults experienced sexual assault – ranging from threats and unwanted touching to forced sexual intercourse – in the previous 12 months (pooled data). • The current year figure (Cycle 4) did not change significantly from the base year (Cycle 1) or the previous year (Cycle 3). • Sexual assault affected adults in all population groups, but some more than others. Compared to the national average, the following groups were more than twice as likely to be a victim of sexual assault: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • people identifying as bisexual (16%) and people with diverse sexualities (gay, lesbian, bisexual or other) (11%) • adults aged 15–19 (5%) and 20–29 (4%) • adults who were separated (5%) and those who had never been married, in a civil union, or in a de facto relationship (4%) • adults who were not working because they were studying (4%) • adults living in a multi-person household (5%) (eg, flatting situations). • Young females were at particularly high risk of sexual assault, with 9% of females aged 15–19 and 7% of females aged 20–29 affected in the previous 12 months. • Sexual assault victimisation was strongly associated with psychological distress, low ratings of life satisfaction, and a poor feeling of safety. • About two thirds (63%) of sexual assaults were perpetrated by an intimate partner, other family member, or someone else the victim already knew. • Almost half of all sexual assaults happened in residential locations.
Offences by family members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 2.1% of New Zealand adults had experienced one or more offences by family members in the previous 12 months (pooled data). • Offending by intimate partners has decreased significantly between the previous year (Cycle 3) and current year (Cycle 4), driven by a significant decrease in offending by current partners (as opposed to ex-partners). This rate decreased significantly both between the base year and the current year and between the previous year and the current year. • Almost three-quarters of offences by family members were perpetrated by intimate partners. • For every 10 offences by family members, approximately four were physical violence, three were threats and harassment, two were sexual assaults, and one was property damage.

- Females were almost four times as likely as males to have experienced offending by an intimate partner (2.1% compared with 0.6%) and nearly twice as likely to have experienced offending by another family member (1.1% compared with 0.6%).
- The following population groups had a prevalence rate of offences by family members of 6% or higher:
 - adults who identified as bisexual (8.6%)
 - adults who were separated (11.2%)
 - adults living in a one-parent-with-child(ren) household (8.5%)
 - adults living in a household with four or more children (7.3%)
 - adults living in a government rental accommodation (6.6%).
- The prevalence rate for Māori females was just over double that for females overall (6.9% compared with 3.1%), and the rate for Māori males was about three times that for males overall (3.4% compared with 1.2%).
- Being a victim of offending by family members was strongly associated with high levels of psychological distress (12.4%), lower ratings of life satisfaction (5.8%), and a poor feeling of safety (5.1%).
- Victims were injured in 28% of offences by family members and received medical attention in relation to 16%.
- Offenders were under the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs in about half of all offences by family members (52%).
- In Cycle 4, one in six adults (17%) knew someone who had experienced a family incident during the previous 12 months, and 59% had further involvement in order to support the other person or people.

Lifetime experience of sexual assault and intimate partner violence

- In Cycle 4, about 26% of adults had experienced any sexual assault in their lifetime. This was significantly higher than in Cycle 3, though it has remained stable since the base year.
- In pooled data, the prevalence rate of lifetime sexual assault was 24%.
 - About 35% of females and 12% of males had experienced sexual assault in their lifetime.
 - Sexual assault started at a young age, with 18% of adults aged 15–19 affected so far during their lives.
- About 18% of adults who have ever had a partner had experienced IPV in their lifetime, with no statistically significant change from the base year or the previous year.
 - About 23% of females and 10% of males who have ever had a partner had experienced IPV in their lifetime.
- Disabled adults were at elevated risk of having experienced any sexual assault or IPV during their lifetime, especially when controlling for age (45% compared with 29% of all adults).

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5 Sexual violence and violence by family members

What is included in this section?

This section looks at the following measures of victimisation:

- the number of incidents of sexual violence and/or violence by family members experienced by adults (aged 15+) (**incidence**)
- the number of offences of sexual violence and/or violence by family members per 100 adults (**incidence rate**)
- the number of adults who have experienced sexual violence offences and/or offences by family members once or more (**prevalence**)
- the percentage of adults who have experienced sexual violence offences and/or offences by family members once or more (**prevalence rate**).

The offences covered in this section were concentrated over a relatively small number of survey respondents.¹ To make the results as reliable as possible, we calculated all estimates using pooled data (Cycles 1–4) except to compare overall measures of victimisation over time, where we compared the current year (Cycle 4) with the base year (Cycle 1) and previous year (Cycle 3). Having now accumulated four years of NZCVS data, the analysis for this section was able to go into more detail about some factors not previously reported. However, many estimates were still subject to high levels of uncertainty.

Not all types of family violence and sexual violence against adults are covered in the NZCVS. Instead, we report on **sexual assaults** (not necessarily by family members) and **offences by family members**. What is covered by these measures is explained in the corresponding sections below.

Prior to starting field work for the NZCVS Cycle 4, we added to the survey questionnaire a set of questions related to behaviours used to coerce or control a person and cause cumulative harm. Responses received in relation to these **controlling behaviours** are also analysed in this section. While in this report we provide only a high-level description of the prevalence of controlling behaviour, more detailed analysis is expected in a stand-alone report.

We will show later in this report that large proportions of both sexual assaults and offences by family members are not reported to the Police (see section 7). The NZCVS enhances our understanding of that picture by covering both reported and unreported offences. The survey

¹ In the pooled dataset there were 664 respondents who experienced sexual assault in the previous 12 months, and 723 who experienced offences by a family member.

also provides more detailed information about victims that is often not available in administrative data sources, such as their ethnicity and their disability status.

5.1 Sexual assault

Sexual violence includes any sexual behaviour towards a person without their consent. The NZCVS collects information about experiences of **sexual assault**, covering some forms of sexual violence.

Sexual assault measured in the NZCVS includes experiences in the previous 12 months of:

- forced sexual intercourse (and attempts)
- being forced to perform a sexual act (and attempts)
- unwanted sexual touching (and attempts)
- threats to do something of a sexual nature.

Sexual assaults by any perpetrators, including intimate partners, are included.

Acts of sexual violence not included in the measure of sexual assault include behaviours like indecent exposure, sending unwanted sexual messages, sharing sexual photos of someone without their consent, or forcing someone to watch pornography.

What did we find?

- About 2% of adults experienced sexual assault – ranging from threats and unwanted touching to forced sexual intercourse – in the previous 12 months (pooled data).
- The current year figure (Cycle 4) did not change significantly from the base year (Cycle 1) or the previous year (Cycle 3).
- Sexual assault affected adults in all population groups, but some more than others. Compared to the national average, the following groups were more than twice as likely to be a victim of sexual assault:
 - people identifying as bisexual (16%) and people with diverse sexualities (gay, lesbian, bisexual or other) (11%)
 - adults aged 15–19 (5%) and 20–29 (4%)
 - adults who were separated (5%) and those who had never been married, in a civil union, or in a de facto relationship (4%)
 - adults who were not working because they were studying (4%)
 - adults living in a multi-person household (5%) (eg, flatting situations).
- Young females were at particularly high risk of sexual assault, with 9% of females aged 15–19 and 7% of females aged 20–29 affected in the previous 12 months.
- Sexual assault victimisation was strongly associated with psychological distress, low ratings of life satisfaction, and a poor feeling of safety.
- About two thirds (63%) of sexual assaults were perpetrated by an intimate partner, other family member, or someone else the victim already knew.
- Almost half of all sexual assaults happened in residential locations.

Around 2% of adults were sexually assaulted in the previous 12 months

Table 5.1 summarises the scale of sexual assault victimisation using pooled data. The estimates reveal that about 78,000 adults had been sexually assaulted in the previous 12 months. This was equivalent to 1.9% of the adult population, or about one in 50 adults.

In total, these adults experienced 176,000 sexual assault offences. There were around four sexual assaults for every 100 adults in the population.

Table 5.1 Sexual assault victimisation in the previous 12 months (pooled data)

Sexual assault	Estimate
Total number of adults victimised once or more	78,000
Percentage of adults victimised once or more	1.9%
Total number of offences	176,000
Number of offences per 100 adults	4.3



Almost 1 in 50 adults were subject to **sexual assault** during the previous 12 months (1.9%).

About 7% of all victims of crime during the previous 12 months had been affected by sexual assault. Sexual assault made up about 8% of all offences recorded in the NZCVS.

No significant change in the rate of sexual assault since base year (Cycle 1) or since previous year (Cycle 3)

There were no statistically significant changes in the prevalence rate or incidence rate of sexual assault between the base year and the current year or between the previous year and the current year (Figures 5.1 and 5.2).²

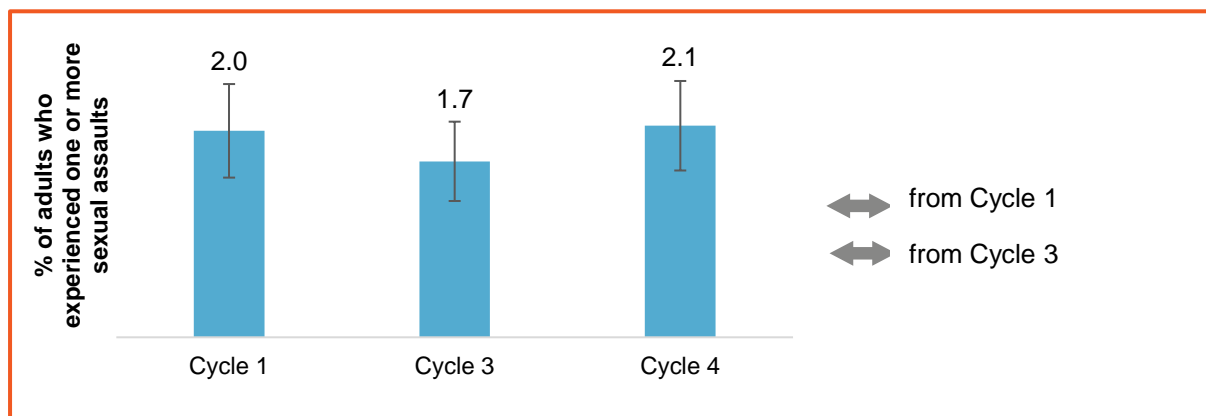


Figure 5.1 Percentage of adults who experienced one or more sexual assaults in the previous 12 months (Cycles 1, 3 and 4)

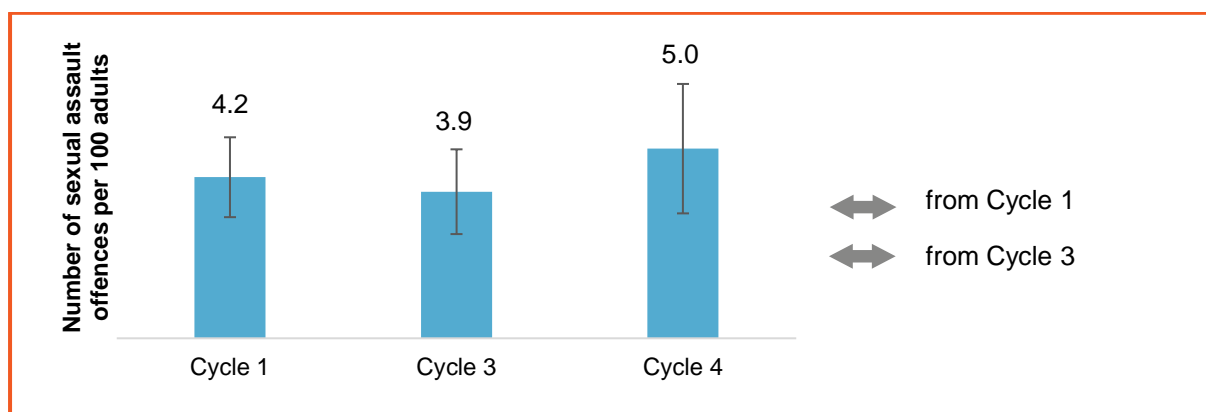


Figure 5.2 Number of sexual assault offences per 100 adults (Cycles 1, 3 and 4)

² These results were also presented in section 3.

Some population groups were disproportionately affected

This section focuses mostly on the percentage of adults in different population groups who experienced sexual assault victimisation in the previous 12 months. Information on the number of victims, the number of incidents, and the rate of incidents per 100 adults, by population group, is also provided in the [data tables](#) that accompany this report.

The results reveal that sexual assaults occur across all population groups. However, some population groups were more likely to be a victim of sexual assault than the national average. These groups included:

- females
- people with diverse sexualities, especially those identifying as bisexual
- those aged 15–29
- Māori
- those who did not have a partner within the last 12 months
- those who were separated
- those who had never been married or in a civil union
- those living in a multi-person household (eg, a flatting situation)
- those living in an “other multi-person household”
- those not working but studying
- those renting a privately owned accommodation
- those with a personal income less than \$20,000
- those experiencing financial stress.

Figure 5.3 summarises the percentage of adults who were victims of sexual assault, by key personal factors.

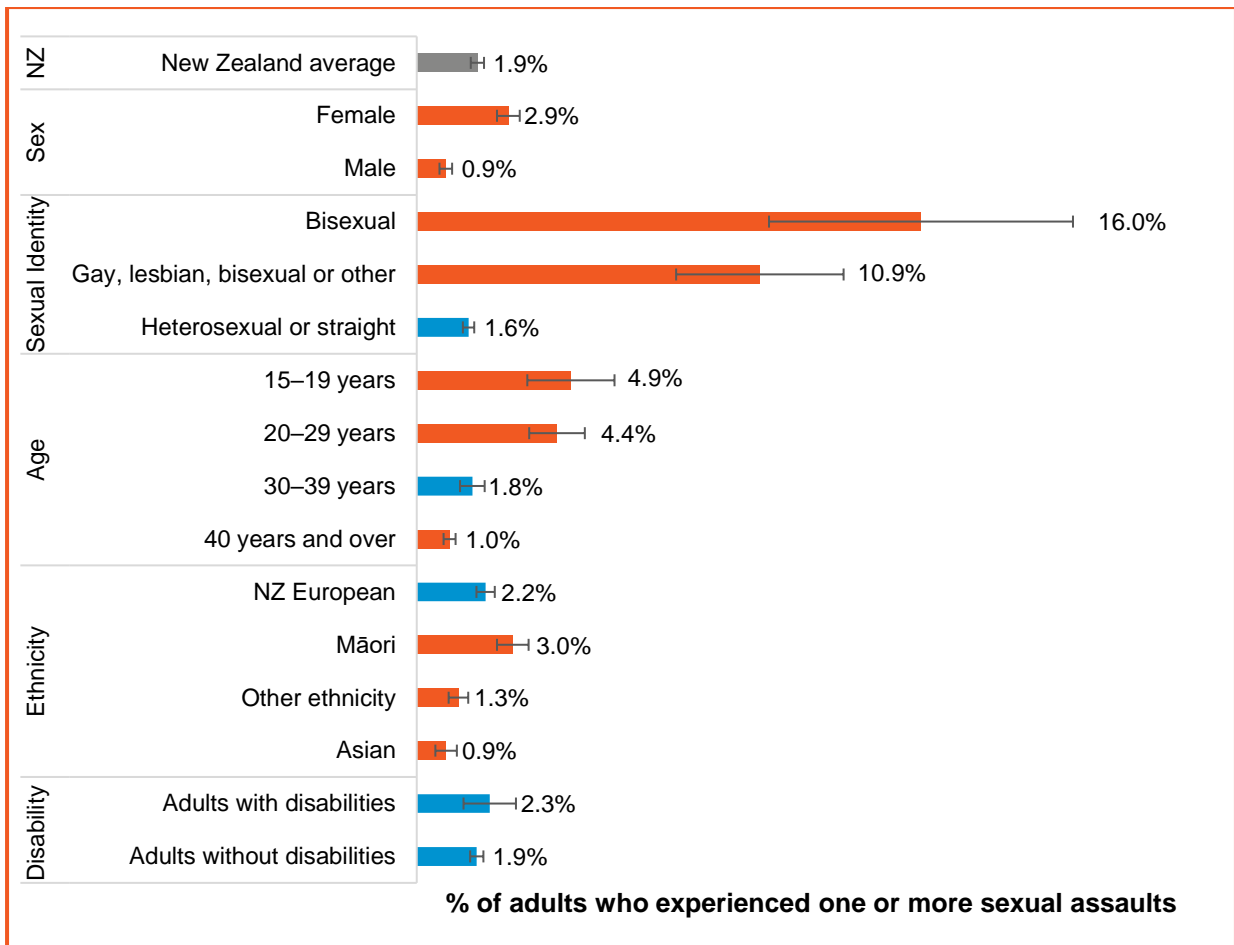
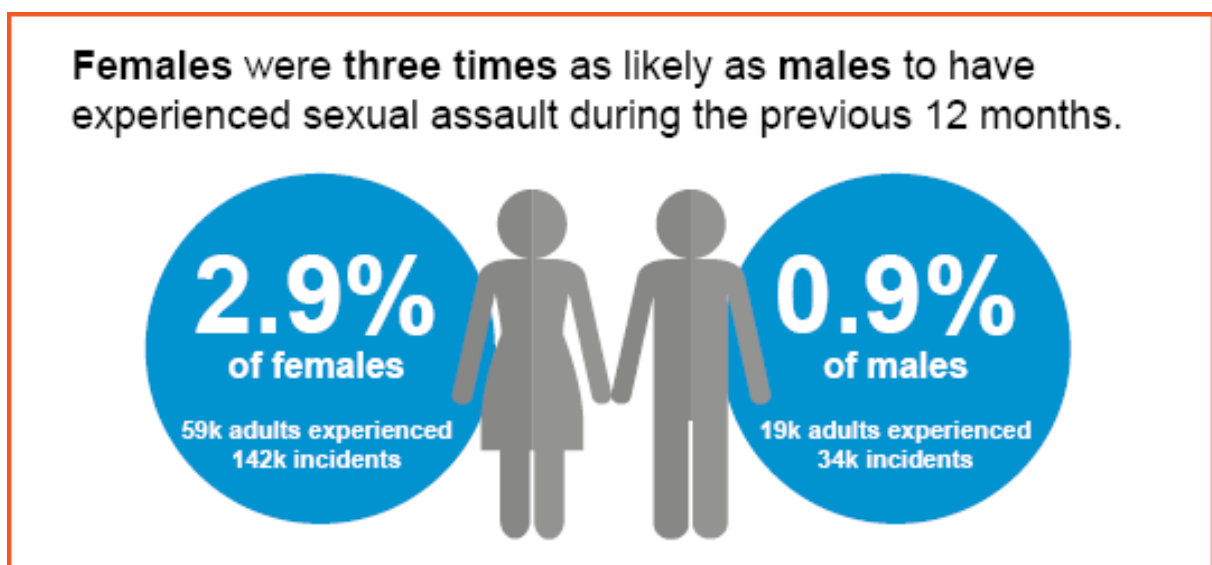


Figure 5.3 Percentage of adults who experienced one or more sexual assaults in the previous 12 months, by personal factor (pooled data)

Both males and females experienced sexual assault, but females were at higher risk. Females were three times as likely as males to have experienced sexual assault during the previous 12 months (2.9% compared with 0.9%).

Over three-quarters of sexual assaults were against females (142,000 out of 176,000).



Although the NZCVS collects information on gender, the sample size for people with diverse genders was too small to provide reliable results.

Adults with diverse sexualities were more than six times as likely as heterosexual adults to have been a victim of sexual assault in the previous 12 months. About 1 in 9 adults with diverse sexualities (10.9%) were victims of sexual assault in the previous 12 months compared with about 1 in 60 heterosexual adults (1.6%).

Adults with diverse sexualities were victims of about 2 out of every 10 sexual assaults (40,000 out of 176,000).



Young adults (aged 15–19) were at high risk of sexual assault. Prevalence rates of sexual assault were higher in younger age groups, with 4.9% of adults aged 15–19 affected compared with 1.0% of those aged 40+.

These results demonstrate that a large proportion of sexual violence occurred in young adulthood. More information is needed on the prevalence of sexual violence in children under the age of 15, who are not covered by the NZCVS.

Out of the total 176,000, about 90,000 sexual assaults (51%) were against adults aged 15–29 (Figure 5.4). About 32,000 (18%) were against adults aged 30–39, and another 54,000 (31%) were against adults aged 40+.

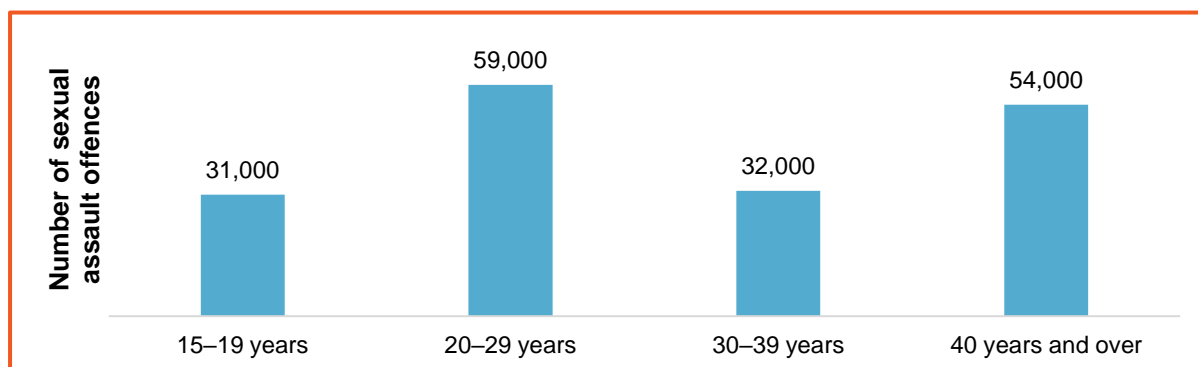


Figure 5.4 Total number of sexual assault offences, by age of victims (pooled data)

The NZCVS does not cover adults living outside of residential housing, such as in aged-care facilities. More research is needed to gauge the scale of sexual violence against vulnerable people in these contexts, including older people and disabled people.

Māori were at significantly higher risk of sexual assault than the national average, while Asians were at significantly lower risk. About 3 in 100 Māori adults (3.0%) were

victims of sexual assault, compared with less than 1 in 100 Asian adults (0.9%) and about 2 in 100 adults overall (1.9%). The prevalence rate of sexual assault for New Zealand Europeans (2.2%) and Pacific peoples (1.9%) was similar to the national average.

Differences in prevalence rates of sexual assault across ethnic groups may partially be driven by age differences across those groups. For example, the makeup of the Māori population is younger than the overall adult population. Table 5.2 looks at differences in sexual assault prevalence rates by both ethnicity and age to understand this further.

The prevalence of sexual assault for disabled adults was similar to the national average, even though this group tends to be older. Of disabled adults, 2.3% were a victim of sexual assault during the previous 12 months. This was not significantly different from non-disabled adults (1.9%) or the general adult population (1.9%).

We showed above that older adults tend to be safer from sexual assault than younger adults. Because disabled adults in the NZCVS tend to be older than other adults, it is useful to look at differences by disability status, within similar age groups.

When looking only at the population aged 15–64, disabled people were at twice the risk of sexual assault compared to non-disabled people (4.5% compared with 2.2%). This difference was statistically significant.

As the NZCVS accumulates more data in future years, more reliable analysis of sexual assault victimisation of disabled adults should become possible.³

Adults who were separated and adults who had never been married or in a civil union were at elevated risk of sexual assault. Figure 5.5 presents the percentage of adults who experienced sexual assault in the previous 12 months, by factors relating to their relationship status and household.

³ Many results about sexual assault for subgroups of the disabled population were too unreliable to report. This included results by age groups (eg, 15–29) and by sex.

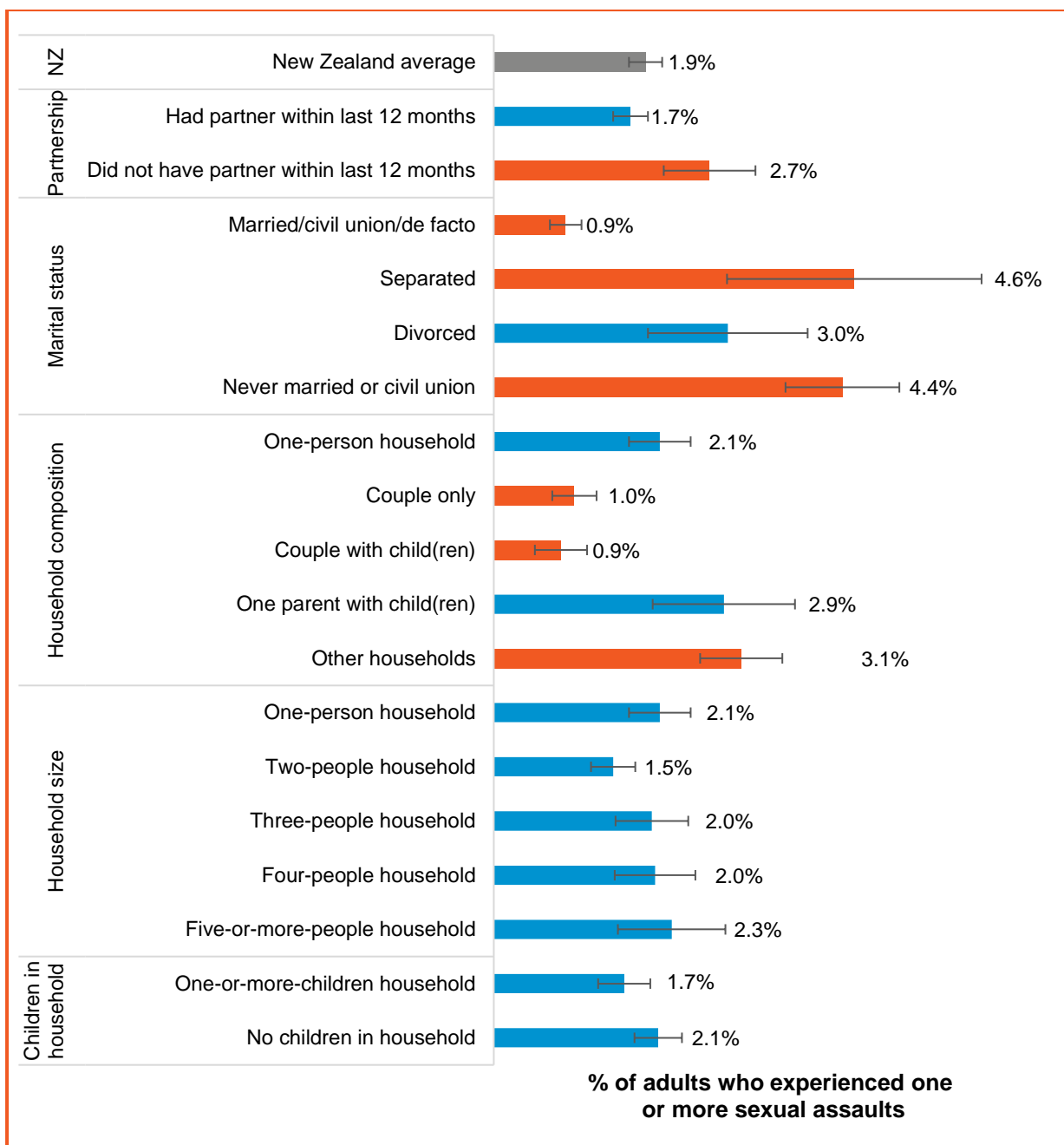


Figure 5.5 Percentage of adults who experienced one or more sexual assaults in the previous 12 months, by household and relationship factors (pooled data).

Note: The results for adults who were widowed or surviving their partner are suppressed due to high uncertainty.

One in 58 adults who had a partner during the previous 12 months (1.7%) were victims of sexual assault during that time. In contrast, one in 37 adults who did not have a partner in the previous 12 months (2.7%) had experienced sexual assault. This difference was statistically significant.

Adults who had never been married or in a civil union were at relatively high risk of sexual assault (4.4%), as were those who were separated (4.6%). On the other hand, those who were married, in a civil union, or in a de facto relationship at the time of the survey were at relatively low risk of experiencing sexual assault (0.9%).

The prevalence rate of sexual assault for adults in a one-person household (2.1%) or in a one-parent-with-child(ren) household (2.9%) was not significantly different from the national average (1.9%). The prevalence rate for adults living in a couple-only household (1.0%) and for adults living in a couple-with-child(ren) household (0.9%) was relatively low.⁴

Adults living in “other households” were victims of sexual assault at a significantly higher rate than the national average (3.1% compared with 1.9%). These households include related and/or unrelated people. For example, this could include flatting arrangements, two siblings living together, or one person with a boarder.

Although prevalence rates of sexual assault among adults who were separated and those living in a one-parent-with-child(ren) household were very high, they made up a relatively small proportion of all victims. Out of the estimated 78,000 victims of sexual assault, 8,000 were separated and, similarly, 7,000 lived in one-parent-with-child(ren) households. Those who had never been married or in a civil union (39,000) and those who were married, in a civil union, or in a de facto relationship (24,000) made up relatively larger shares of all victims.

Adults under financial pressure were more vulnerable to sexual assault. Figure 5.6 summarises the percentage of adults who experienced sexual assault in the previous 12 months across economic factors. There were significant differences within each economic factor, except household income.

⁴ This group mostly includes parents but can include adults (aged 15 or older) who live with their parent(s).



Figure 5.6 Percentage of adults who experienced one or more sexual assaults in the previous 12 months, by economic factor (pooled data)

Note: Adults who were retired are not included in the graph because the result is suppressed due to high uncertainty.

Adults who were not working because they were studying were at relatively high risk of sexual assault (4.2%). This group did not include students who were in employment so is not representative of all adult students. However, this finding does suggest those in school or other education were at increased risk.

Adults living in private rental accommodation (2.7%) were significantly more likely to be a victim of sexual assault than adults living in a house owned by one or more of the residents (1.5%). Both were significantly different from the New Zealand average. Adults living in government rental accommodation (2.6%) were also victims at a higher rate, but the difference from the New Zealand average was not statistically significant. These differences might partially be driven by age differences in the population who rent compared with those who own their own homes.

Adults with lower personal income tended to be at higher risk of being a victim of sexual assault. Adults with an income of \$20,000 or less were at significantly higher risk than the

New Zealand average, while those with an income of \$60,000 or more were at significantly lower risk. This pattern may be at least partially driven by age.

Adults facing high levels of financial stress were at increased risk of sexual assault. Of those adults who could not afford an unexpected expense of \$500, 3.0% were affected in the previous 12 months, and these adults were at significantly higher risk than the New Zealand average. This compares with 1.7% of those who could afford the expense.⁵

Although the risk of sexual assault was higher for adults experiencing financial stress, it is worth noting that many victims were not in this situation. In total, 20,000 out of 78,000 victims of sexual assault (26%) said they would not be able to afford an unexpected expense of \$500, while 57,000 could afford it.

Sexual assault affected people living across the country. There are no significant differences between locations, types of urbanisation and deprivation quintiles.

Two-dimensional breakdowns reveal elevated risk of sexual assault for young females

We showed above that females were three times as likely as males to have experienced sexual assault in the previous 12 months (2.9% compared with 0.9%).

Table 5.2 shows the prevalence rate of sexual assault separately for males and females, by sexual identity, age, and ethnicity. Most of these estimates were subject to high levels of uncertainty, and some are suppressed because they were too unreliable for general use. Nonetheless, they reveal particularly high-risk groups within the female population.

One in eight females with diverse sexualities (12.5%) had experienced sexual assault during the previous 12 months, compared with about one in 12 males with diverse sexualities (8.4%). Both females and males with diverse sexualities experienced higher rates of sexual assault than the national average, but the difference between females and males was not statistically significant.

Young females were at particularly high risk of sexual assault. Around 9% of females aged 15–19 and around 6.7% of females aged 20–29 had been sexually assaulted in the previous 12 months.

The prevalence rate of sexual assault was significantly higher for Māori males compared to the New Zealand average (1.9% compared with 0.9%). It was also significantly higher for Māori females than for females overall (4.0% compared with 2.9%).

⁵ Similarly, 3.0% of adults who could not afford a non-essential item for \$300 had been a victim of sexual assault, compared with 1.1% of those who would not be at all limited in affording it.

Table 5.2 Percentage of adults who experienced one or more sexual assaults in the previous 12 months, by sex and population group (pooled data)

Population group		Percentage of adults who experienced one or more sexual assaults		
		Females	Males	Difference between females and males
New Zealand average		2.9	0.9‡	^
Sexual identity	Heterosexual	2.5	0.7‡	^
	Gay, lesbian, bisexual or other	12.5‡*	8.4‡*	–
Age	15–29 years	7.3*	2.4‡*	^
	15–19 years	8.8‡*	Ŷ	–
	20–29 years	6.7‡*	2.5‡*	^
	30–64 years	2.3	0.6‡	^
Ethnicity	New Zealand European	3.4	1.0‡	^
	Māori	4.0*	1.9‡*	^
	Other ethnicity	1.9‡*	0.8‡	^

^ Statistically significant difference between females and males.

‡ Use with caution. The numerator and/or denominator of the ratio-based estimate has a relative sampling error between 20% and 50%. Statistics should be used with caution because they may be too variable for certain types of reporting.

* Statistically significant difference from the New Zealand average, or the relevant total, at the 95% confidence level.

Ŷ = Suppressed because the numerator and/or denominator of the ratio-based estimate has a relative sampling error greater than or equal to 50%, which is considered too unreliable for general use.

Table 5.3 summarises the prevalence rates of sexual assault for adults of different age groups (15–29 and 30–64), by sexual identity and ethnicity. Results for adults aged 65+ are not shown because of a high margin of error.

Both younger and older adults with diverse sexualities were significantly more likely to have been victims of sexual assault than adults overall in the respective age groups.

Both younger and older Māori adults were more likely to have been victims of sexual assault than the New Zealand average of the same age. However, only the rate for older Māori adults (aged 30–64) was statistically significant.

On the other hand, adults of “other” ethnicities (ie, other than New Zealand European or Māori) were significantly less likely to have experienced sexual assault than the national

average, within both age groups. Therefore, age differences do not seem to explain why ethnic minority groups have a relatively lower prevalence rate of sexual assault.

Table 5.3 Percentage of adults who experienced one or more sexual assaults in the previous 12 months, by age and population group (pooled data)

Population group		Percentage of adults who experienced one or more sexual assaults		
		Adults aged 15–29	Adults aged 30–64	Difference between age ranges
New Zealand average		4.6	1.5	^
Sexual identity	Heterosexual	3.8	1.3	^
	Gay, lesbian, bisexual or other	15.3 ^{‡*}	7.8 ^{‡*}	–
Ethnicity	New Zealand European	6.0 [‡]	1.8	^
	Māori	5.7 [‡]	2.3 ^{‡*}	^
	Other ethnicity	2.9 ^{‡*}	0.6 ^{‡*}	^

^ Statistically significant difference between adults aged 15–29 and adults aged 30–64.

‡ Use with caution. The numerator and/or denominator of the ratio-based estimate has a relative sampling error between 20% and 50%. Statistics should be used with caution because they may be too variable for certain types of reporting.

* Statistically significant difference from the New Zealand average, or the relevant total, at the 95% confidence level.

Sexual assault is associated with poor wellbeing outcomes

Figure 5.7 summarises the percentage of adults who experienced sexual assault in the previous 12 months by three wellbeing outcomes: psychological distress, life satisfaction, and perceptions of safety. Adults with poorer wellbeing on these measures were at significantly higher risk of sexual violence victimisation – however, this does not indicate causality because the poor wellbeing outcomes may have been caused by the victimisation.

Most victims showed low levels of psychological distress. Of the 78,000 victims of sexual assault, 56,000 (72%) had low, 12,000 (15%) had moderate, and 9,000 (12%) had high levels of psychological distress.

Similarly, 20,000 (26%) had a low life-satisfaction score (between 0 and 6 out of 10) and 16,000 (21%) had a low feeling-of-safety score (between 0 and 6 out of 10).

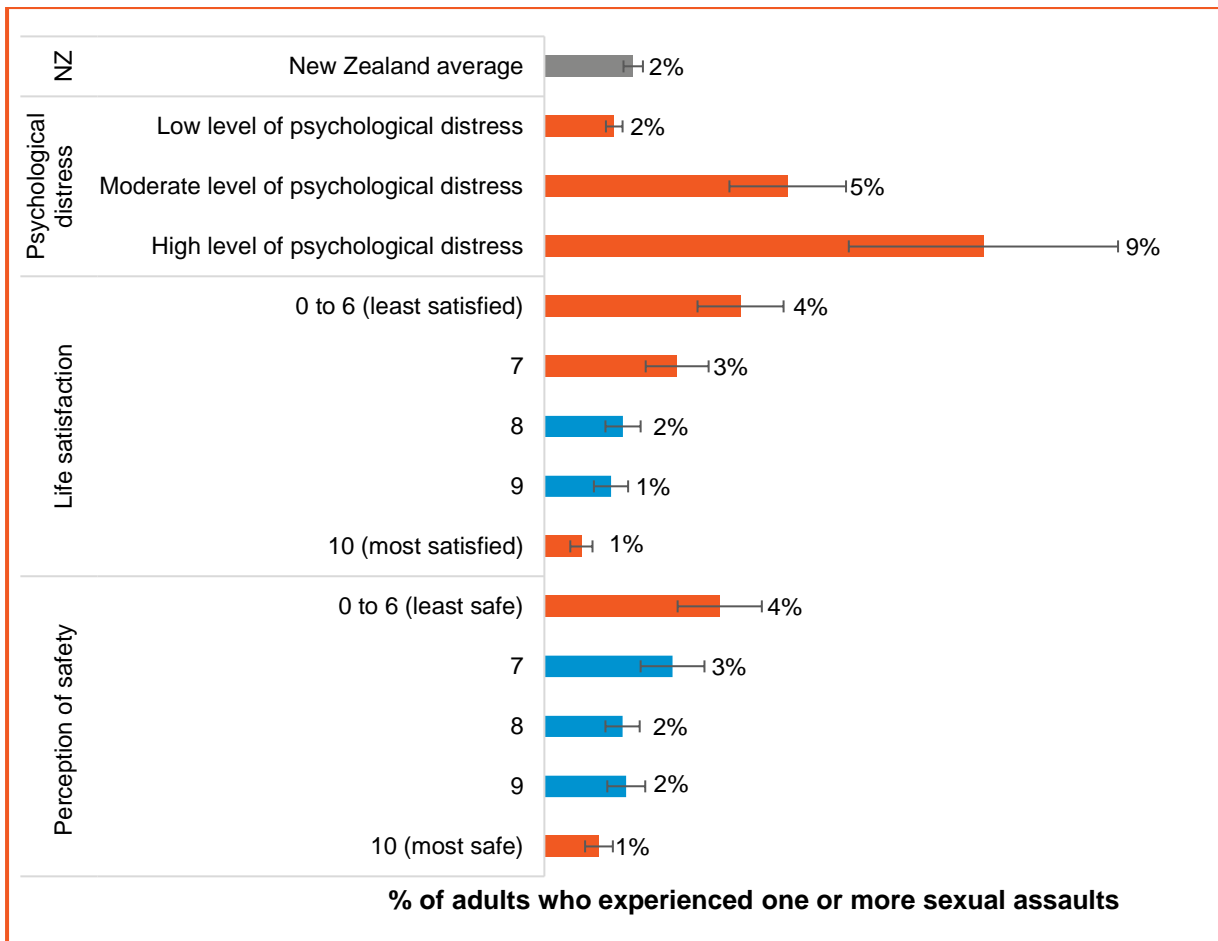


Figure 5.7 Percentage of adults who experienced one or more sexual assaults in the previous 12 months, by wellbeing outcome (pooled data)

Most sexual assaults were experienced by highly victimised adults

Just over two-thirds of sexual assaults were against adults who had experienced four or more crimes in the past 12 months. In total, this group of highly victimised adults experienced 120,000 out of all 176,000 sexual assaults.

More than half of sexual assaults were perpetrated by a family member or someone else the victim already knew

Out of 176,000 sexual assaults in the previous 12 months, about 45,000 (26%) were perpetrated by family members (Table 5.4), compared with 122,000 (69%) sexual assaults by non-family members.

Of those 45,000 sexual assaults perpetrated by family members, the majority involved an intimate partner (41,000). This included current partners (25,000) and ex-partners (16,000).

Almost 40% of sexual assaults were perpetrated by someone the victim knew who was not a family member (66,000). Overall, about 63% of sexual assaults were perpetrated by a family member or someone else the victim knew.

Over a third of sexual assaults (65,000) were perpetrated by a stranger.

For a number of offences within the “know person” group (37,000), respondents said the perpetrator had another relationship to them that did not fit the categories in the survey. They were able to specify these relationships, but further analysis of the responses is needed. This group may, for example, include someone they had just met or someone they were dating.

Table 5.4 Number of sexual assault offences and victims during the previous 12 months, by offender relationship to victim (pooled data)

Offender relationship to victim	Number of offences	Number of victims
Family member	45,000 [#]	16,000 [#]
• Intimate partner	41,000 [#]	14,000 [#]
– Current partner	25,000 [#]	9,000 [#]
– Ex-partner	16,000 [#]	6,000 [#]
• Other family member	S	S
Non-family member	122,000	64,000
• Known person	66,000 [#]	34,000
• Stranger	65,000	36,000
Not answered	S	S
Total sexual assaults	176,000	78,000

[#] Use with caution. Percentage has a margin of error greater than or equal to 10 and less than 20 percentage points, or the count estimate/mean has a relative sampling error greater than or equal to 20% and less than 50%. Statistics should be used with caution because they may be too variable for certain types of reporting.

S = Suppressed because the percentage has a margin of error greater than or equal to 20 percentage points, or the count estimate/mean has a relative sampling error greater than or equal to 50%, which is considered too unreliable for general use.

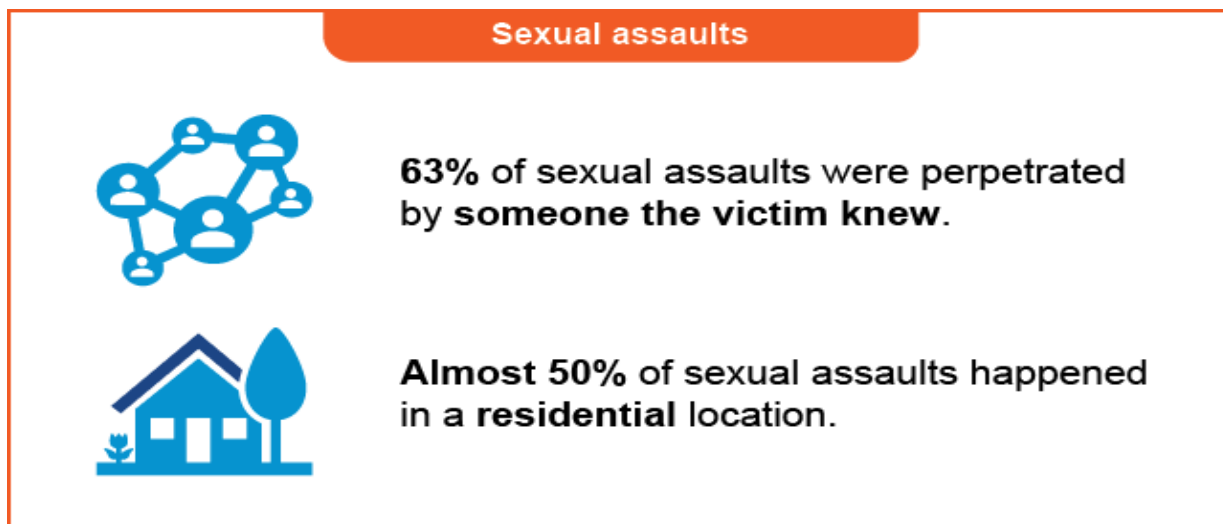
Almost half of sexual assaults took place in residential settings

The following list describes the number of sexual assaults, out of a total of 176,000, that happened in different places:

- 83,000 in residential locations
- 56,000 in business or retail locations, including 43,000 in a restaurant, café, bar, pub, or nightclub and 6,000 in an office, factory, or warehouse
- 18,000 in public places, including 12,000 on the street or a road.

These results imply that just under half of all sexual assaults happened in residential locations, about 32% in business or retail locations, and about 10% in public places.

The number of sexual assaults taking place in other locations cannot be reported because the estimates were too unreliable.



5.2 Offences by family members

Family violence is a term that describes any violent or abusive behaviour perpetrated by a family or whānau member. In the Family Violence Act 2018, family violence is defined as any behaviour that is coercive, controlling or that causes cumulative harm. This includes a wide range of behaviours, some which are criminal offences and some not.

The following measure from the NZCVS of **offences by family members** covers some types of family violence that are criminal offences. These offences represent particular incidents, which do not capture the repeated and ongoing nature of family violence for many victims.

Offences by family members measured in the NZCVS includes episodes in the previous 12 months of physical violence; sexual assault; threats and harassment; and property damage where the perpetrator was a family or whānau member of the victim.

Family and whānau members include current partners, ex-partners, and any other family or whānau members. Offences perpetrated by individuals with other close relationships to the victim, such as caregivers, are not included in this measure.

Notes:

1. Physical violence includes assault and robbery. Property damage includes property damage (personal), property damage (household), and damage to motor vehicles.
2. The Ministry of Justice piloted new questions in Cycle 4 of the NZCVS that cover a wider range of patterns of behaviour that make up family violence. High-level results can be found in section 5.4, and further results will be released in a report later this year.

What did we find?

- About 2.1% of New Zealand adults had experienced one or more offences by family members in the previous 12 months (pooled data).
- Offending by intimate partners has decreased significantly between the previous year (Cycle 3) and current year (Cycle 4), driven by a significant decrease in offending by current partners (as opposed to ex-partners). This rate decreased significantly both between the base year and the current year and between the previous year and the current year.
- Almost three-quarters of offences by family members were perpetrated by intimate partners.
- For every 10 offences by family members, approximately four were physical violence, three were threats and harassment, two were sexual assaults, and one was property damage.
- Females were almost four times as likely as males to have experienced offending by an intimate partner (2.1% compared with 0.6%) and nearly twice as likely to have experienced offending by another family member (1.1% compared with 0.6%).
- The following population groups had a prevalence rate of offences by family members of 6% or higher:
 - adults who identified as bisexual (8.6%)
 - adults who were separated (11.2%)
 - adults living in a one-parent-with-child(ren) household (8.5%)
 - adults living in a household with four or more children (7.3%)
 - adults living in a government rental accommodation (6.6%).
- The prevalence rate for Māori females was just over double that for females overall (6.9% compared with 3.1%), and the rate for Māori males was about three times that for males overall (3.4% compared with 1.2%).
- Being a victim of offending by family members was strongly associated with high levels of psychological distress (12.4%), lower ratings of life satisfaction (5.8%), and a poor feeling of safety (5.1%).
- Victims were injured in 28% of offences by family members and received medical attention in relation to 16%.
- Offenders were under the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs in about half of all offences by family members (52%).
- In Cycle 4, one in six adults (17%) knew someone who had experienced a family incident during the previous 12 months, and 59% had further involvement in order to support the other person or people.

Around 2% of adults were a victim of an offence by a family member in the previous 12 months

Table 5.5 summarises the scale of offending by family members. There were 87,000 adults affected by one or more offences by a family member in the previous 12 months (Table 5.5). This is equivalent to about one in 50 adults (2.1%).



In total, those adults were harmed by 237,000 offences by family members. For every 100 adults in New Zealand, there were about six offences by a family member over the previous 12 months.

Table 5.5 Offences by family members in the previous 12 months (pooled data)

Offences by family members	Estimate
Total number of adults victimised once or more	87,000
Percentage of adults victimised once or more	2.1%
Total number of offences	237,000
Number of offences per 100 adults	5.8

About 7% of all victims of crime in the previous 12 months were affected by offences by family members. Offences by family members made up about 10% of all offences recorded in the NZCVS.

No significant changes in rates of offending by family members since the base year

The prevalence rate of offences by family members for Cycle 4 (1.7%) has decreased since Cycle 3 (2.1%), but this difference is not statistically significant (Figure 5.8). The number of incidents per 100 adults also decreased from Cycle 3 to Cycle 4 (6.5 compared to 4.8), but the difference is not statistically significant (Figure 5.9).

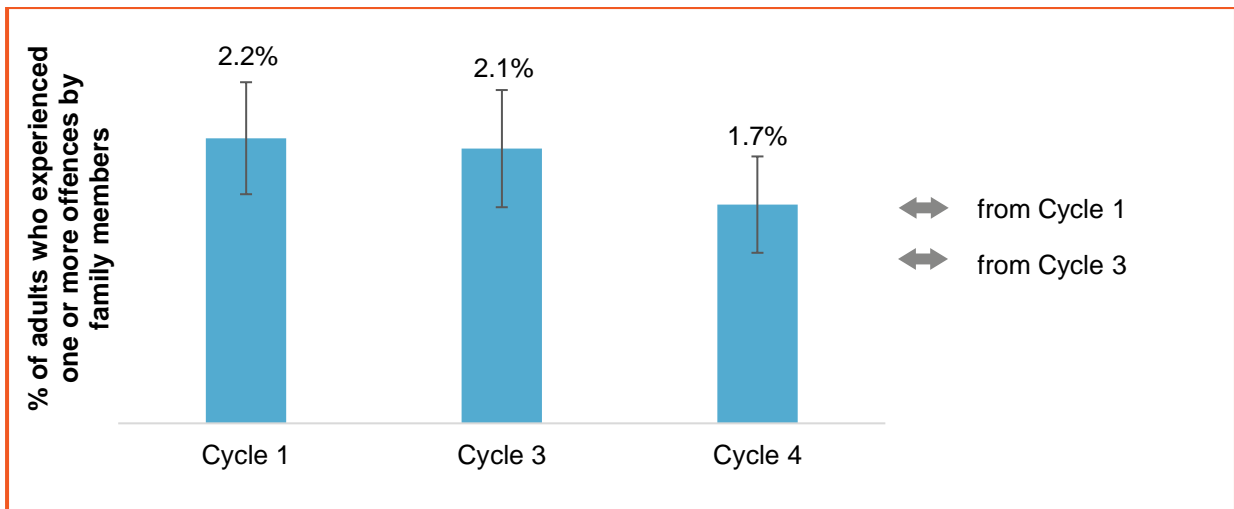


Figure 5.8 Percentage of adults who experienced one or more offences by family members in the previous 12 months, by cycle

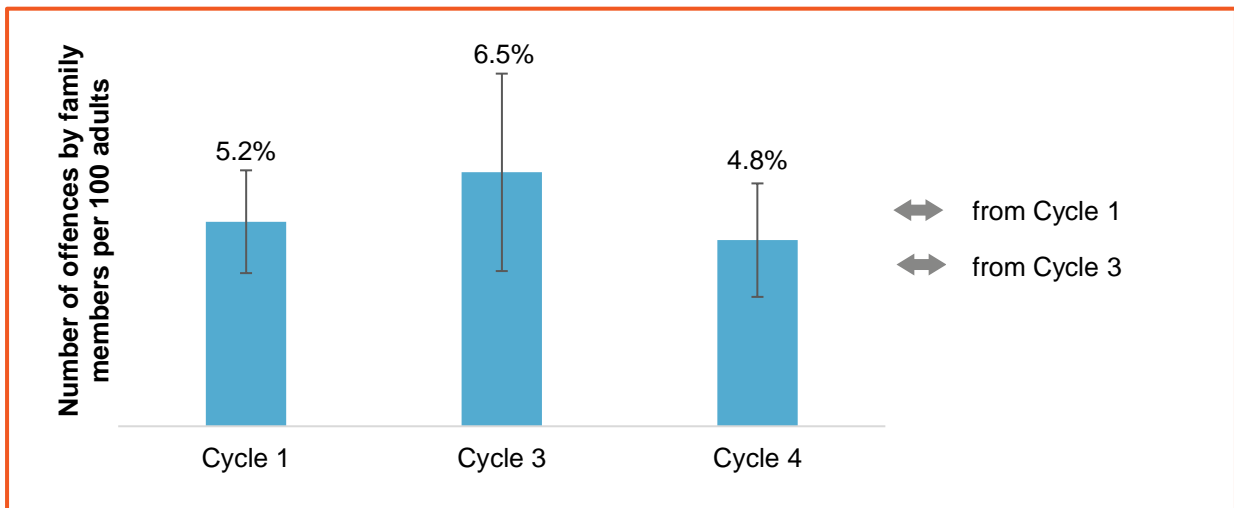


Figure 5.9 Number of offences by family members per 100 adults in the previous 12 months, by cycle

Intimate partners were responsible for almost three-quarters of offences by family members

Of 237,000 offences by family members during the previous 12 months, almost three-quarters (172,000) were perpetrated by an intimate partner. This included 96,000 offences by current partners and 76,000 by ex-partners (Figure 5.10).

Close to 30% of offences were perpetrated by other family or whānau members (71,000).

Note that some offences may have involved more than one family member. This explains why adding the number of offences perpetrated by each group adds up to more than the total number of offences.

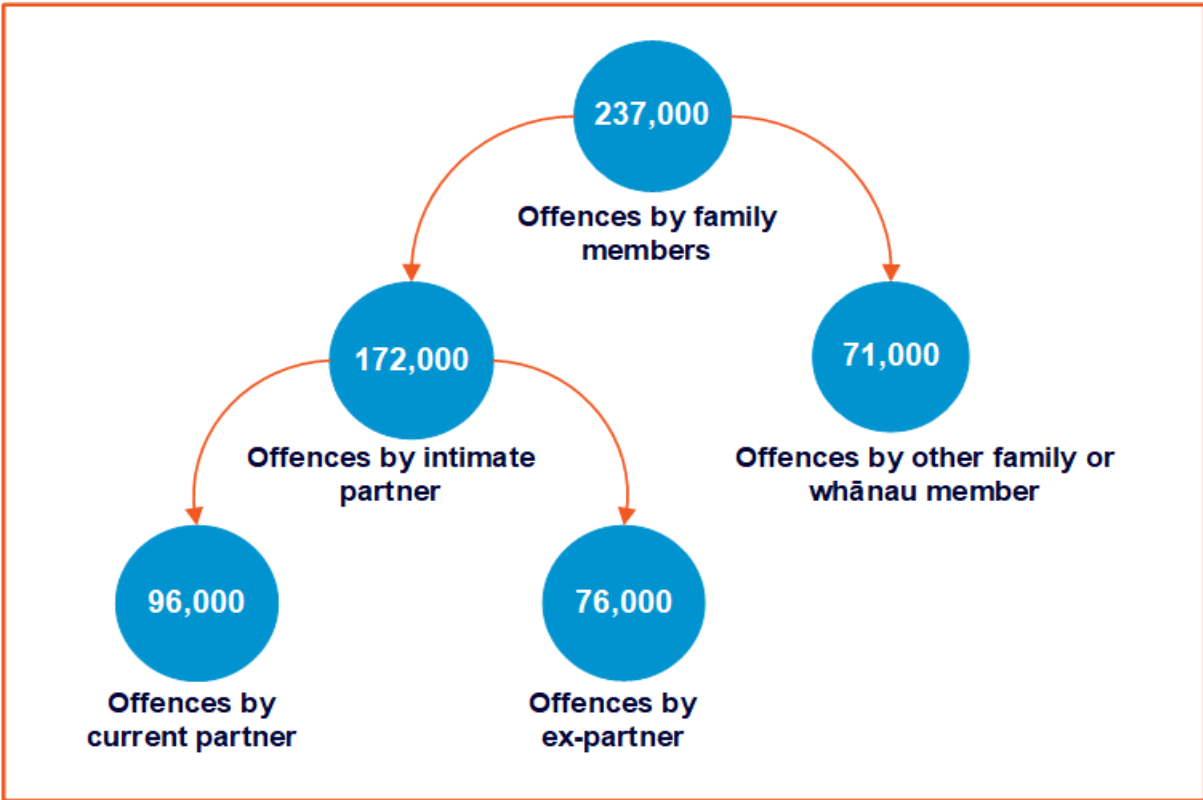


Figure 5.10 Number of offences by family members in the previous 12 months, by offender relationship (pooled data)

Physical violence and threats and harassment made up the majority of offences by family members

Figure 5.11 shows the makeup of offences by family members across different offence types. These results show that for every 10 offences by family members, roughly four were physical violence, three were threats and harassment, two were sexual assaults, and one was property damage.

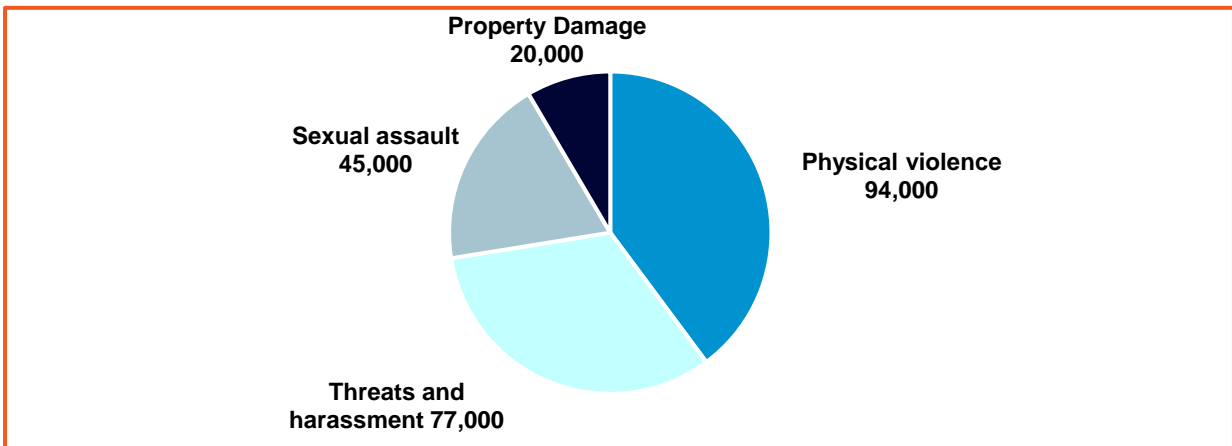


Figure 5.11 Number of offences by family members in the previous 12 months, by offence group (pooled data)

Note: Physical violence includes robbery and assault (excluding sexual assault). Property damage includes property damage (personal), property damage (household), and damage to motor vehicles.

We can also look at the number of victims who had experienced different types of offences. Figure 5.12 shows that nearly half of victims of offending by family members had experienced physical violence (40,000 out of 87,000).

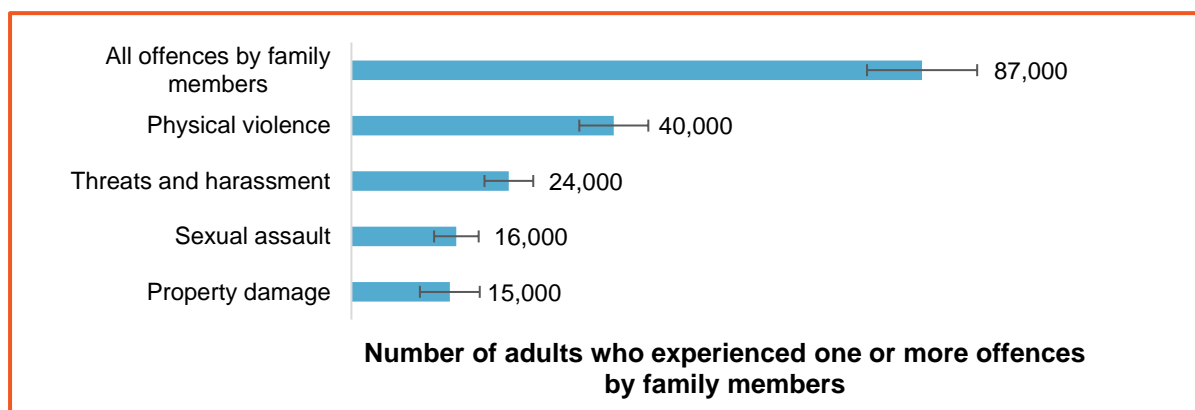


Figure 5.12 Number of adults who experienced one or more offences by family members in the previous 12 months, by offence group (pooled data)

Notes: Physical violence includes robbery and assault (excluding sexual assault). Property damage includes property damage (personal), property damage (household), and damage to motor vehicles. Some victims may experience multiple offences of different types.

About one-quarter of sexual assaults were perpetrated by a family member, including intimate partners

We showed in section 5.1 that about 45,000 out of 176,000 sexual assaults were perpetrated by family members, or just over 25%. Most of those sexual assaults by family members were perpetrated by intimate partners (41,000 out of 45,000).

Sexual assault against adults

Around 1 in 4 sexual assaults were perpetrated by a family member.

Almost 20% of offences by family members were sexual assaults.

Family members include partners, ex-partners, and other family or whānau members. Most sexual assaults by family members involved a partner or ex-partner.

Females were three and a half times as likely as males to be a victim of offending by an intimate partner

Females were 3.5 times as likely as males to have experienced one or more offences by an intimate partner (2.1% compared with 0.6%) (Figure 5.13). Intimate partners include both current partners and ex-partners.

Females were also nearly twice as likely as males to have been a victim of offences by another family member (1.1% compared with 0.6%).

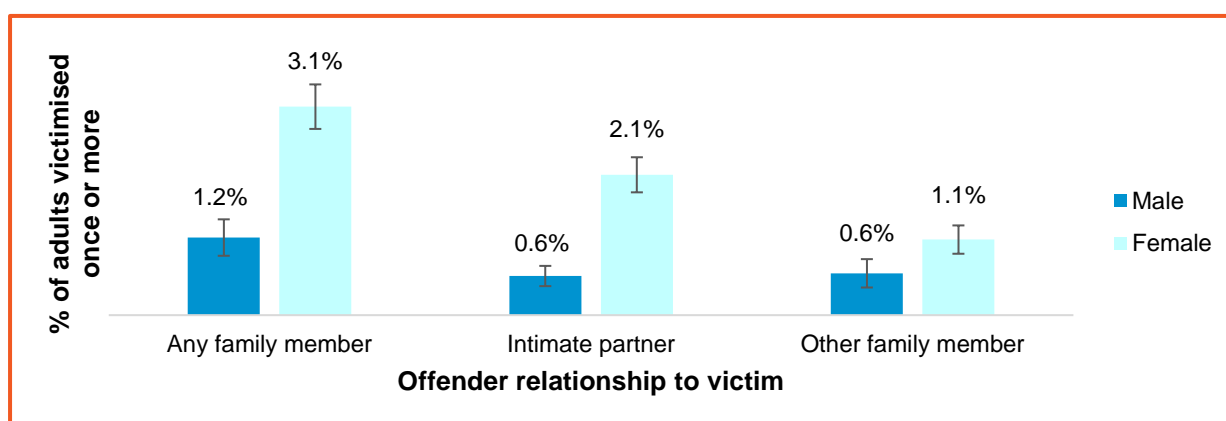


Figure 5.13 Percentage of adults who experienced one or more offences by intimate partners or other family members in the previous 12 months, by sex (pooled data)

We also looked at further demographic breakdowns, separately for offences by intimate partners and offences by other family members. These generally followed the same patterns as offending by family members overall, which are discussed in the next section. The results are available in the [data tables](#) that accompany this report.

Offending by family members affected some population groups more than others

This section looks at the percentage of adults in different population groups who were affected by offending by family members.

Females, people who identify as bisexual, 20–29-year-olds, Māori, disabled adults, individuals living in areas with high deprivation, and those facing economic disadvantage were all more vulnerable to offending by family members than the general population. Adults living in a household with four or more children and those living in rented (government and private) housing were also at comparatively high risk. Additionally, adults who were separated, those experiencing high levels of psychological distress and those living in a one-parent-with-child(ren) household were some of the higher risk groups.

Figure 5.14 shows the percentage of adults in different demographic groups who were a victim of offences by a family member in the previous 12 months.

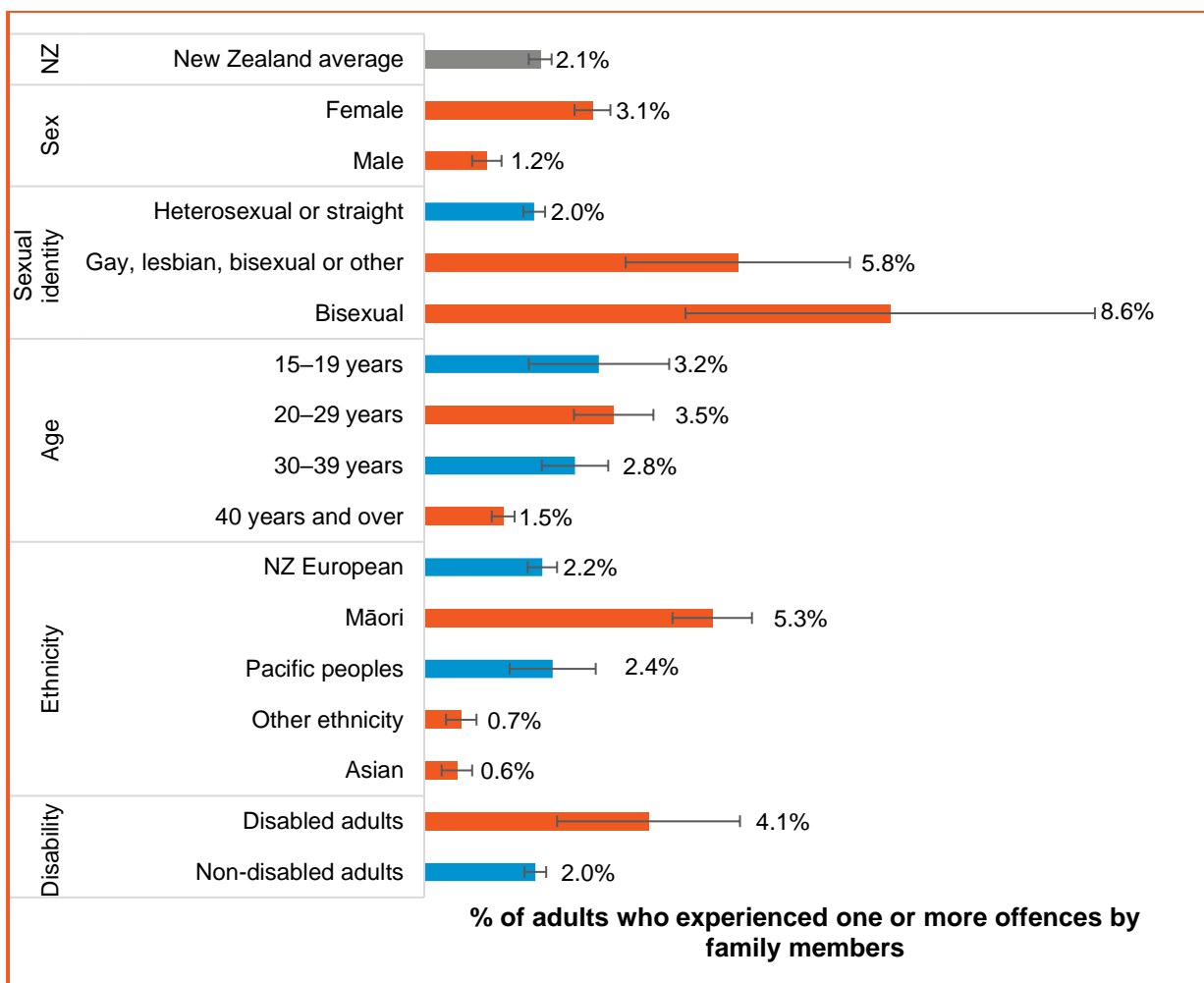


Figure 5.14 Percentage of adults who experienced one or more offences by family members in the previous 12 months, by personal factor (pooled data)

Females were over 2.5 times as likely as males to experience offending by family members. The prevalence rate for females was 3.1%, compared with 1.2% for males.

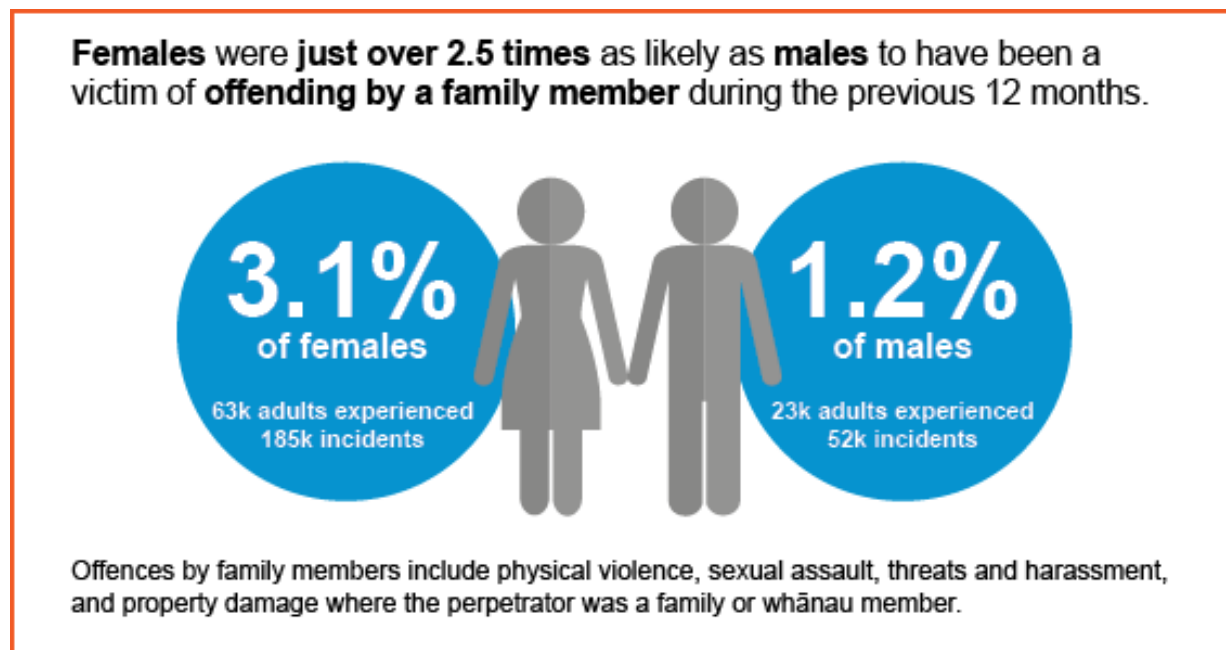
Females made up almost three-quarters of all victims of offences by family members (Table 5.6). Of all 87,000 victims, 63,000 were female; they experienced 185,000 of the total 237,000 offences.

Table 5.6 Prevalence and incidence of offences by family members in the previous 12 months, by sex (pooled data)

Sex	Total number of victims	Total number of offences
Male	23,000 [#]	52,000 [#]
Female	63,000	185,000
All adults	87,000	237,000

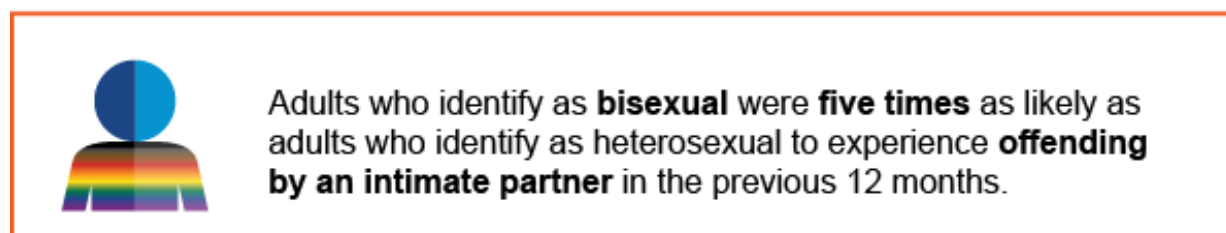
[#] Use with caution. Percentage has a margin of error greater than or equal to 10 and less than 20 percentage points, or the count estimate/mean has a relative sampling error greater than or equal to 20% and less than 50%. Statistics should be used with caution because they may be too variable for certain types of reporting.

Although the NZCVS collects information on gender, in Cycle 4 as in previous years, the sample size for people with diverse genders was too small to provide reliable results.



People with diverse sexualities were nearly three times as likely as heterosexual people to experience offences by family members. The prevalence rate for people with diverse sexualities was 5.8%, compared with 2.0% for heterosexual people. Adults identifying as bisexual were one of the highest risk groups, having a prevalence rate of 8.6%. This is about 1 in 12 adults who identify as bisexual.

People with diverse sexualities were over three times as likely as heterosexual people to have experienced intimate partner violence (IPV) over the previous 12 months, and adults identifying as bisexual were almost five times as likely as heterosexual people to experience IPV.



Offending by family members affected adults of all ages but was most prevalent in younger adults. Adults aged 15–19 experienced offences by family members at a higher rate than the general population, but the difference is not statistically significant (3.2% compared with 2.1%). Adults aged 20–29 were affected at a significantly higher rate than the general population (3.5%).

Adults aged 30–64 were victims of offending by family members at about the same rate as the national average (2.2%).

Less than 1% of adults aged 65+ (0.8%) experienced offences by family members, which was significantly lower than the national average. However, the NZCVS only covers adults living in residential housing.

Māori were disproportionately affected by offending by family members. Compared with 2.1% of adults in the overall population, 5.3% of Māori adults were victims of offending by a family member in the previous 12 months. The rates for New Zealand Europeans (2.2%) and Pacific peoples (2.4%) were similar to the New Zealand average. On the other hand, adults of other ethnicities were at significantly lower risk (0.7%).

Overall, New Zealand Europeans made up the largest group of victims and experienced the largest number of offences, followed by Māori (Table 5.7).

Table 5.7 Prevalence and incidence of offences by family members, by ethnicity (pooled data)

Ethnicity	Total number of victims	Total number of offences
New Zealand European	61,000	161,000
Māori	33,000	95,000 [#]
Pacific peoples	7,000 [#]	17,000 [#]
Other ethnicity	5,000 [#]	S
All adults	87,000	237,000

[#] Use with caution. Percentage has a margin of error greater than or equal to 10 and less than 20 percentage points, or the count estimate/mean has a relative sampling error greater than or equal to 20% and less than 50%. Statistics should be used with caution because they may be too variable for certain types of reporting.

S = Suppressed because the percentage has a margin of error greater than or equal to 20 percentage points, or the count estimate/mean has a relative sampling error greater than or equal to 50%, which is considered too unreliable for general use.

After accounting for age differences, disabled adults were more than three times as likely as non-disabled adults to experience offences by family members. The age-standardised estimate is presented in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8 Percentage of adults who experienced offences by family members during the previous 12 months, by disability (standardised by age) (pooled data)

Population group	Percentage of adults victimised once or more
New Zealand average	2.1%
Disabled adults (standardised by age)	6.9% ^{‡*}
Non-disabled adults (standardised by age)	2.0%

[‡] Use with caution. The numerator and/or denominator of the ratio-based estimate has a relative sampling error between 20% and 50%. Statistics should be used with caution because they may be too variable for certain types of reporting.

* Statistically significant difference from the New Zealand average, or the relevant total, at the 95% confidence level.

Age-standardised estimates are reweighted as if they had the same age structure as the overall adult population (see the [methodology report](#) for more detail). This is helpful because disabled people tend to be older than the general population, and older adults were at relatively lower risk of offending by family members.

The results reveal that if the disabled adult population had the same age structure as the general adult population, 6.9% would have been victims of offences by family members in the previous 12 months. This was significantly higher than the national average of 2.1%.

On the other hand, if non-disabled adults had the same age structure as the general adult population, 2.0% would have been victims of offences by family members in the previous 12 months. This was not significantly different from the national average of 2.1%.

In other words, after accounting for age differences, disabled adults were more than three times as likely as non-disabled adults to have experienced offences by family members over the previous 12 months.

After accounting for age differences



disabled adults were more than three times as likely as the New Zealand average to have been a victim of **offending by family members** in the previous 12 months.

Offences by family members include physical violence, sexual assault, threats and harassment, and property damage where the perpetrator was a family or whānau member.

Being separated, living in a household with four or more children or in a one-parent-with-child(ren) household were some key risk factors for being a victim of offending by family members. Figure 5.15 summarises the percentage of adults who experienced an offence by a family member in the previous 12 months, by relationship and household factors.

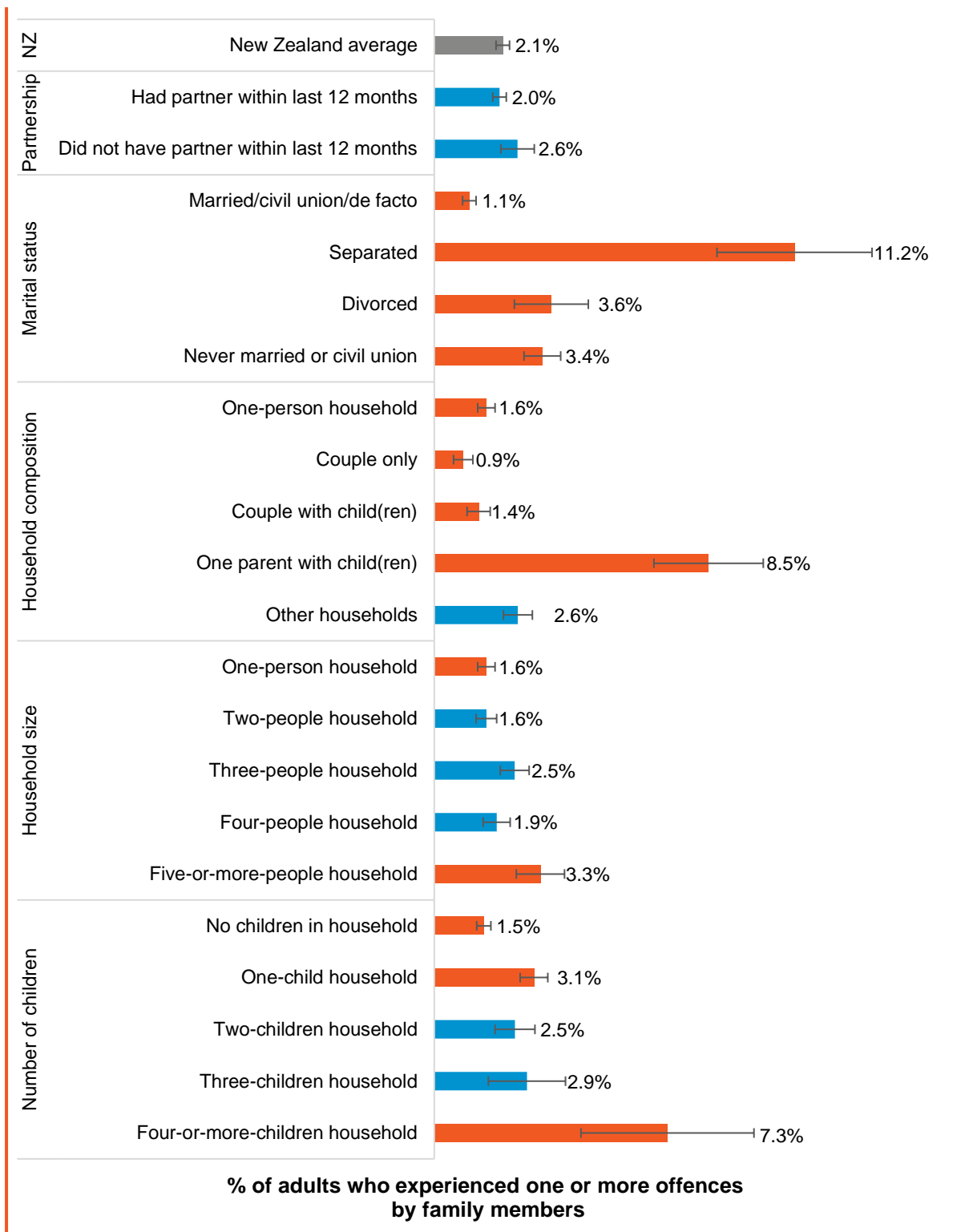


Figure 5.15 Percentage of adults who experienced one or more offences by family members in the previous 12 months, by relationship and household factors (pooled data)

Note: Results for adults who were widowed or surviving a partner are suppressed due to high uncertainty.

There were significant differences by marital status, household size and composition and by number of children in a household. Adults who were separated (11.2%) or divorced (3.6%) at

the time of the survey or had never been married or in a civil union (3.4%) experienced significantly higher rates of offending by family members than the New Zealand average.



There was a slight association between household size and experiencing offending by family members. Adults living in a one-person household were significantly less likely to be a victim of offending by family members than the New Zealand average (1.6% compared to 2.1%), and adults living in a household with five or more people were significantly more likely to experience offending (3.3% compared to 2.1%).

Adults living in a household without children were at lower risk than those living in a household with children. The risk for adults increased with the number of children in their household. Adults living in a household with four or more children were much more likely to have been victimised than those living in a household with no children (7.3% compared with 1.5%). Additionally, adults living in a one-parent-with-child(ren) household (8.5%) were at higher risk than the New Zealand average.

Offending by family members affected people across the country but was more common in neighbourhoods with high levels of deprivation

There was a clear association between neighbourhood deprivation and prevalence rates of offences by family members (Figure 5.16). Adults living in the most deprived neighbourhoods (3.2%) were more than twice as likely to be affected as adults in the least deprived neighbourhoods (1.4%); this was statistically significant.

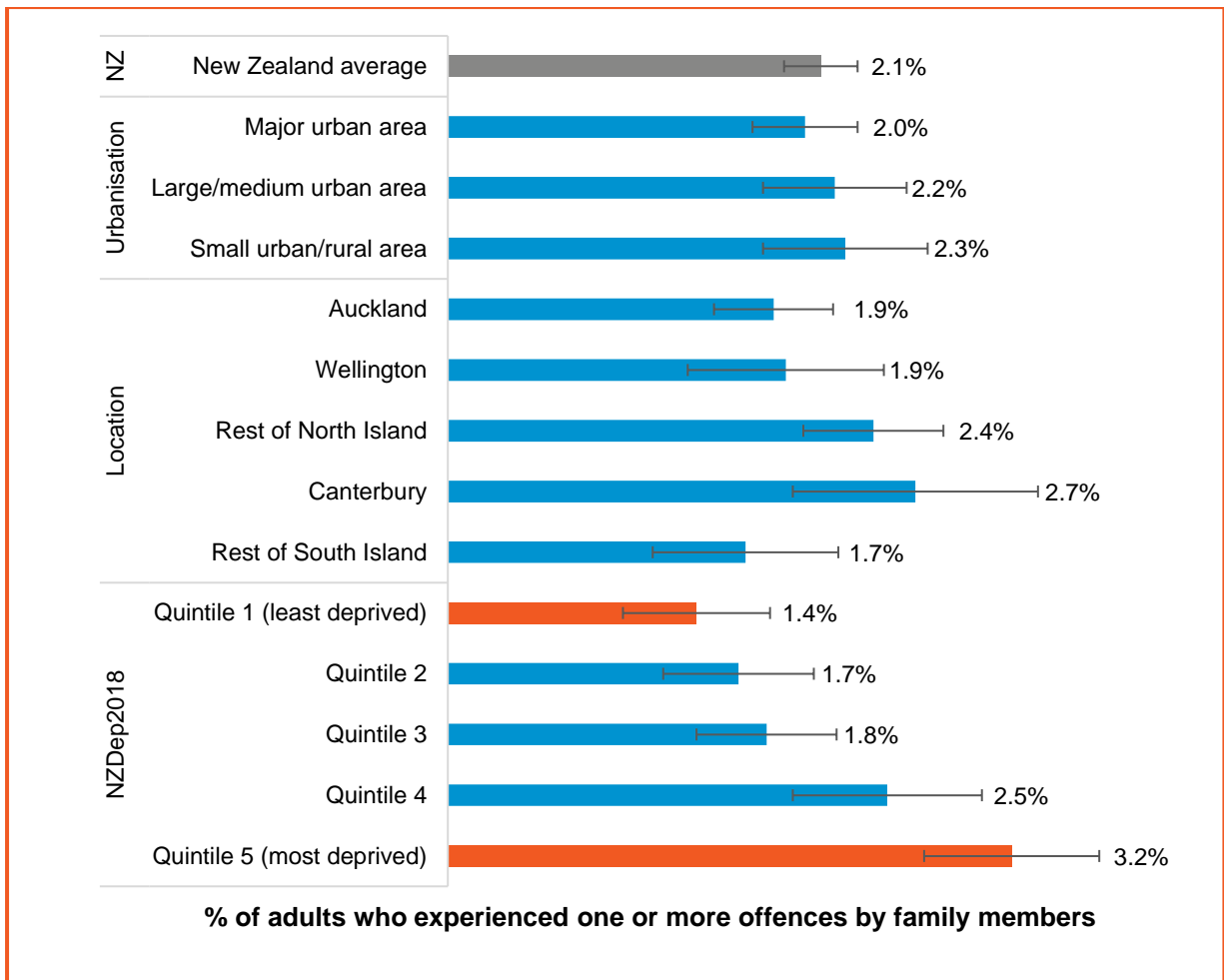


Figure 5.16 Percentage of adults who experienced one or more offences by family members in the previous 12 months, by geographic factor (pooled data)

Low income and financial stress were risk factors for offending by family members

Figure 5.17 shows adults in all economic situations were affected, but those in poorer economic situations were more vulnerable. Adults who were unemployed (4.7%), not working because of home or caring duties (4.9%), not employed and studying (3.9%), and not employed and not seeking work (5.0%) were significantly more likely than the New Zealand average (2.1%) to be a victim of offending by family members. On the other hand, retirees were significantly less likely to have been affected (0.7%).

Adults living in private rental accommodation (2.9%) or in government housing (6.6%) were at significantly higher risk than adults who own a home (1.5%) and the New Zealand average (2.1%).

Adults with higher personal income and higher household income were at lower risk. Those with a personal income of \$60,000 or more were significantly less likely to have been a victim than the New Zealand average (1.2% compared with 2.1%). Those with a personal income of \$20,000 or less were significantly more likely to be a victim than the New Zealand average (2.9% compared to 2.1%). Adults living in a household with an income of \$40,000 or

less were at significantly higher risk (3.0%) than the New Zealand average, while those living in a household with an income of \$100,000 or more were at significantly lower risk (1.3%).

Adults who could not afford an unexpected expense of \$500 within a month (4.9%) were three times as likely to be a victim of offending by family members as those who could afford the expense (1.6%).

Financial pressure is likely to be a constraint on many victims of offences by family members. In total, 33,000 victims out of 87,000 victims said they could not afford an unexpected expense of \$500 within a month.

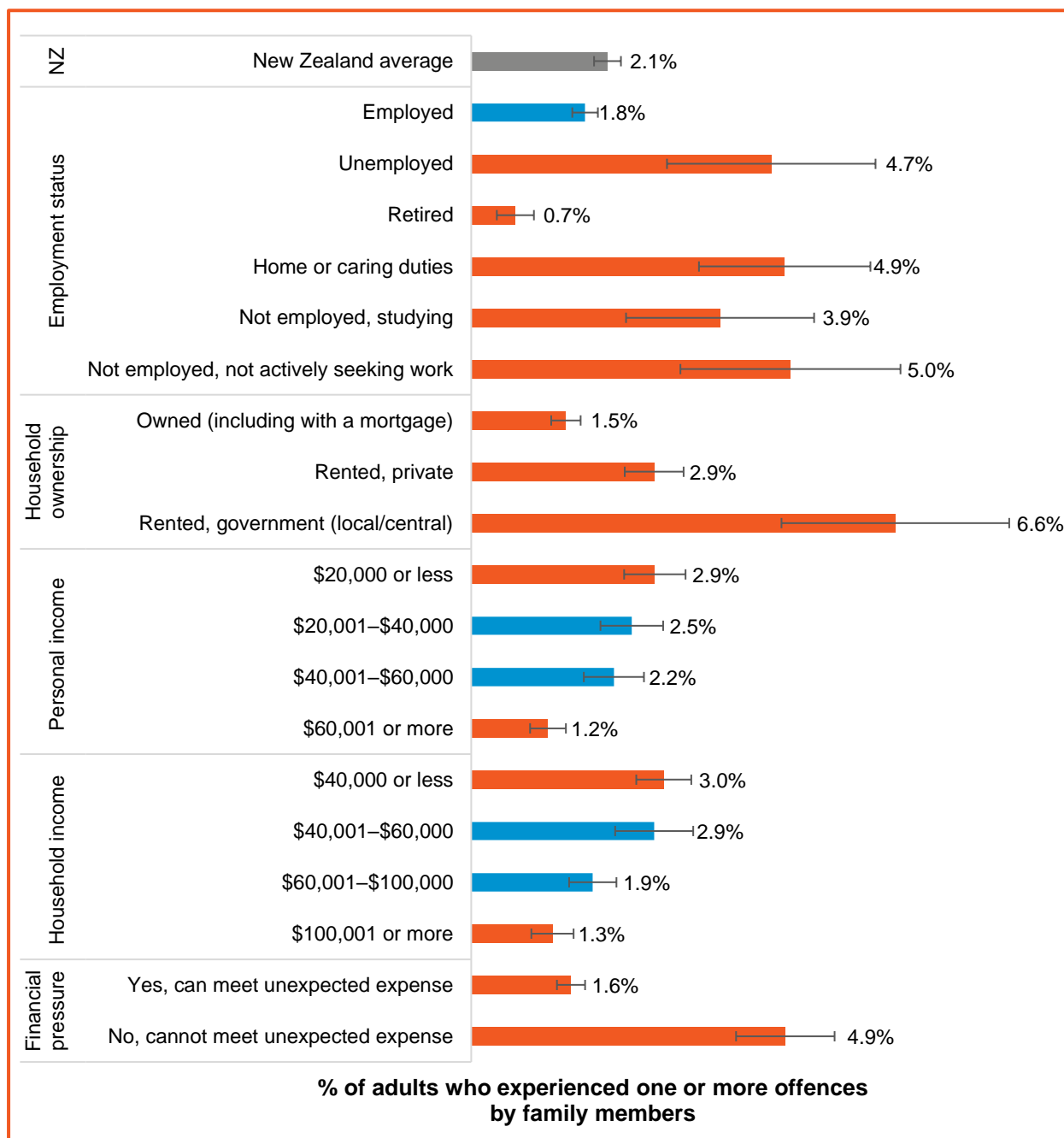


Figure 5.17 Percentage of adults who experienced one or more offences by family members in the previous 12 months, by economic factor (pooled data)

Females are at higher risk of experiencing offences by family members across multiple demographic factors

We showed above that females were at greater risk than males of being victims of offences by family members (3.1% compared with 1.2%). Table 5.9 summarises the prevalence rate of offences by family members separately for males and females, across several personal and household factors.

Young females were at relatively high risk, especially those aged 20–29 (5.5%).

Māori females were at more than double the risk of females in the general population (6.9% compared with 3.1%). Similarly, Māori males were at three times the risk of males in the general population (3.4% compared with 1.2%).

Females who were separated (14.9%) or divorced (5.1%) at the time of the survey are at considerably higher risk of offending by family members than females in the general population (3.1%). Females living in a one-parent household with children were three times as likely as females in the general population (9.4% compared with 3.1%) to be victimised. The estimates for males were too unreliable to report.

Females living in a household with children were at more than twice the risk of females living in a household with no children (4.6% compared with 2.1%). On the other hand, males living in a household with children (1.4%) were at a similar risk as males living in a household without children (1.0%).

Table 5.9 Percentage of adults who experienced one or more offences by family members in the previous 12 months, by sex and population group (pooled data)

Population group		Percentage of adults victimised once or more		
		Female	Male	Difference between females and males
New Zealand average		3.1	1.2‡	^
Age	15–29 years	5.0*	2.1‡	^
	15–19 years	3.7‡	§	–
	20–29 years	5.5‡*	§	–
	30–64 years	3.2	1.1‡	^
	65 years and over	1.1‡*	§	–
Ethnicity	New Zealand European	3.1	1.2‡	^
	Māori	6.9*	3.4‡*	^
	Other ethnicity	1.8‡*	§	–
Marital status	Married/civil union/de facto	1.6‡*	0.6‡*	^
	Separated/divorced	9.7‡*	§	^
	Separated	14.9‡*	§	–
	Divorced	5.1‡*	§	–
	Widowed/surviving partner	§	§	–
	Never married or civil union	4.8*	2.2‡	^
Household composition	One-person household	2.3*	0.8‡	^
	One parent with child(ren) and other person(s) household	9.4‡*	§	–
	Couple-only household	1.2‡*	0.6‡*	–
	Couple-with-child(ren) household	2.2‡	0.6‡	^
	Other households	3.6	1.7	^
	No children in household	2.1*	1.0‡	^
Children in household	Children in household	4.6*	1.4‡	^

^ Statistically significant difference between females and males.

‡ Use with caution. The numerator and/or denominator of the ratio-based estimate has a relative sampling error between 20% and 50%. Statistics should be used with caution because they may be too variable for certain types of reporting.

* Statistically significant difference from the New Zealand average, or the relevant total, at the 95% confidence level.

Ŝ = Suppressed because the numerator and/or denominator of the ratio-based estimate has a relative sampling error greater than or equal to 50%, which is considered too unreliable for general use.

Table 5.10 shows the prevalence rate of offences by family members separately for two age groups (15–29 and 30–64), across several demographic and household factors. Estimates are not shown for those aged 65+ because most of the breakdowns were too unreliable to report.

The risk of victimisation for older adults was significantly lower than for young adults for New Zealand Europeans, but not for Māori. New Zealand Europeans aged 15–29 were significantly more likely than those aged 30–64 to have been a victim of offences by family members in the previous 12 months (4.1% compared with 2.2%). However, the differences across these age groups for Māori was smaller and not statistically significant (6.8% compared with 5.4%).

Having had a partner in the previous 12 months was a risk factor for young adults, but a protective factor for older adults. Adults aged 15–29 who had a partner in the previous 12 months were at higher risk of offences by family members than those of the same age who had not had a partner (4.1% compared with 2.0%). However, this pattern was reversed for adults aged 30–64 (1.8% compared with 4.3%).

Separation was an especially big risk factor for young adults. Almost a quarter (23%) of adults aged 15–29 who were separated or divorced had experienced one or more offences by family members in the previous 12 months.⁶ This was almost seven times the risk of all adults in this age group. Adults aged 30–64 with this marital status were also at elevated risk, but to a lesser extent (8%).

⁶ The margin of error around this estimate means it was likely to fall between 14% and 32%.

Table 5.10 Percentage of adults who experienced one or more offences by family members in the previous 12 months, by age and population group (pooled data)

Population group		Percentage of adults victimised once or more		
		Adults aged 15–29	Adults aged 30–64	Difference between age ranges
New Zealand average		3.4	2.2	^
Ethnicity	New Zealand European	4.1‡	2.2	^
	Māori	6.8‡*	5.4*	–
	Other ethnicity	1.5‡*	1.1‡*	–
Partnership	Had partner within previous 12 months	4.1‡	1.9	^
	Did not have partner within previous 12 months	2.0‡	4.3‡*	^
Marital status	Married/civil union/de facto	1.8‡*	1.1‡*	–
	Separated/divorced	22.8‡*	7.9‡*	^
	Separated	24.2‡*	10.6‡*	^
	Divorced	Ŷ	5.1‡*	–
	Widowed/surviving partner	22.4‡*	Ŷ	–
	Never married or civil union	3.3‡	3.8‡*	–

^ Statistically significant difference between adults aged 15–29 and adults aged 30–64.

‡ Use with caution. The numerator and/or denominator of the ratio-based estimate has a relative sampling error between 20% and 50%. Statistics should be used with caution because they may be too variable for certain types of reporting.

* Statistically significant difference from the New Zealand average, or the relevant total, at the 95% confidence level.

Ŷ = Suppressed because the numerator and/or denominator of the ratio-based estimate has a relative sampling error greater than or equal to 50%, which is considered too unreliable for general use.

Being a victim of offending by family members was associated with poor wellbeing outcomes

Adults with high and moderate levels of psychological distress, adults with low life satisfaction, and adults with a low feeling of safety were at increased risk of experiencing offending by family members (Figure 5.18). There are two possible explanations for this result: first, this could mean that being a victim of offending by family members leads to poorer wellbeing outcomes in some victims. Second, it is possible that adults with poor wellbeing measures share factors and experiences that make them more vulnerable to victimisation.



Figure 5.18 Percentage of adults who experienced one or more offences by family members in the previous 12 months, by wellbeing outcome (pooled data)

Even though the rates of offences by family members were very high for adults with moderate or high psychological distress, most victims showed low levels of psychological distress. Of the 87,000 victims of offences by family members, 62,000 had low, 13,000 had moderate, and 11,000 had high levels of psychological distress.

Similarly, 28,000 had a low life-satisfaction score (between 0 and 6), and 22,000 had a low feeling-of-safety score (between 0 and 6).

A large proportion of offences by family members happened to highly victimised adults (ie, those who had experienced four or more crimes in the previous 12 months). In total, this group experienced almost three-quarters of offences by family members (176,000 out of 237,000).

Many victims were injured or received medical attention

Across all types of offences by family members, 28% of offences resulted in the victim being injured.⁷

⁷ This estimate was subject to high uncertainty, with the 95% confidence interval ranging from 20% to 37%.

Of all offences by family members that resulted in the victim being injured, about 86% involved bruises, a black eye, cuts, and/or grazes. About 23% of injuries were caused by strangulation or other internal injuries. Estimates relating to broken bones were too unreliable to report.

Victims had attention from a medical professional in relation to 13% of offences.⁸ This included any attention for physical, emotional, and/or mental health.

Offenders were under the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs in about half of all offences by family members⁹

It is important to note that substance use is understood to exacerbate the risk of family violence offending and victimisation.¹⁰ Substance use by victims can also affect their ability to get help and to live free from violence. Victims of family violence may also increase their use of alcohol and other drugs as a coping mechanism.

Offenders were under the influence of alcohol in 37% of offences by family members and under the influence of other drugs in 38% of offences. When looking at both alcohol and other drugs, offenders were under the influence of these substances in about half of offences by family members (52%).

Victims reported that they themselves were under the influence of alcohol during 14% of offences by family members, or under the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs during 20% of offences. Information about how often they were under the influence of drugs other than alcohol was too unreliable to report.

For 12% of offences by family members, victims said it had led them to increase their use of alcohol and/or other drugs. Other self-reported impacts of incidents are provided in the [data tables](#). These may underestimate the cumulative harm of family violence because they are asked in relation to individual incidents.

One in six adults knew someone else who experienced a family or whānau incident in the previous 12 months

From Cycle 3 of the NZCVS, respondents were asked whether they knew someone who had experienced a family or whānau incident in the previous 12 months.

Respondents were asked to consider incidents of **violence, threats, intimidation or controlling behaviour by their partners, ex-partners, boyfriends or girlfriends, and family or whānau members.**¹¹

⁸ This estimate was subject to high uncertainty, with the 95% confidence interval ranging from 6% to 19%.

⁹ Estimates in this section are subject to high uncertainty.

¹⁰ Social Policy Evaluation and Research Unit. 2015. *Reducing the impact of alcohol on family violence* (What works paper). Wellington: Superu. <https://thehub.swa.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/What-works-Alcohol-Violence.pdf>

¹¹ They were told that family members include anyone they are related to, including “step” and “in-law” relationships and whānau.

In Cycle 4, 17% of New Zealand adults said they knew of someone who had experienced a family or whānau incident in the previous 12 months. This is equivalent to about one in six adults. This is similar to what was reported in Cycle 3. This result provides support for campaigns to equip community members with knowledge about how to provide appropriate support to people impacted by family violence.



1 in 6 adults knew someone else who had experienced a family or whānau incident during the last 12 months.

Family or whānau incidents include violence, threats, intimidation, or controlling behaviour by their partners, ex-partners, boyfriends or girlfriends, and family or whānau members.

Adults in some communities were especially likely to know of someone who had experienced a family or whānau incident. About 1 in 3 adults with diverse sexualities (38%) and about 1 in 4 Māori adults (26%) knew someone who had faced this kind of situation in the previous 12 months.

Adults who were separated or divorced (24%) and those living in a one-parent-with-child(ren) household (24%) were also significantly more likely to know of someone who had experienced a family or whānau incident than the New Zealand average.

Those adults who said they were aware of someone affected by a family or whānau incident were asked if they had any further involvement (ie provided some sort of support) after learning about what had happened. More than half (59%) said they did so. Further breakdowns are provided in the [data tables](#) accompanying this report.

5.3 Lifetime experience of sexual assault and intimate partner violence (IPV)

The measures of sexual assault and offences by family members discussed above are about experiences during the 12 months before the interview. In this section we look at measures of sexual assault and IPV across people's lifetimes.

What did we find?

- In Cycle 4, about 26% of adults had experienced any sexual assault in their lifetime. This was significantly higher than in Cycle 3, though it has remained stable since the base year.
- In pooled data, the prevalence rate of lifetime sexual assault was 24%.
 - About 35% of females and 12% of males had experienced sexual assault in their lifetime.
 - Sexual assault started at a young age, with 18% of adults aged 15–19 affected so far during their lives.
- About 18% of adults who have ever had a partner had experienced IPV in their lifetime, with no statistically significant change from the base year or the previous year.
 - About 23% of females and 10% of males who have ever had a partner had experienced IPV in their lifetime.
- Disabled adults were at elevated risk of having experienced any sexual assault or IPV during their lifetime, especially when controlling for age (45% compared with 29% of all adults).

Almost one-quarter of adults experienced forced intercourse or unwanted sexual touching in their lifetime

The lifetime measure of sexual assault covers forced intercourse and unwanted touching, including attempts of these acts. Unlike the past 12-month measure, it does not ask if a victim was forced to perform other sexual acts or received threats of a sexual nature.

Results from pooled data reveal that almost a quarter of adults (24%) had experienced one of these forms of sexual violence in their lifetime (Figure 5.19). More than 1 in 7 adults (14%) had experienced forced intercourse (including attempts).

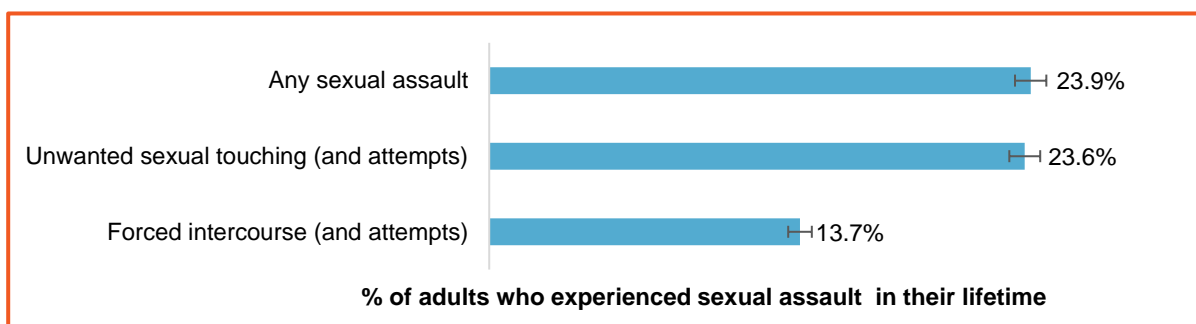


Figure 5.19 Percentage of adults who had experienced sexual assault in their lifetime, by type (pooled data)

Note that for the lifetime data, different to the past 12-month measure, responses of “don’t know” or “don’t wish to answer” are assumed to be an experience of sexual assault and included in these estimates.

Lifetime prevalence of sexual assault has not changed significantly since Cycle 1

The lifetime prevalence rate of sexual assault in the New Zealand adult population increased significantly from 23% in the previous year to 26% in the current year (Figure 5.20).

However, the current prevalence rate was not significantly different from the rate in the base year (23%) or from the rate in Cycle 2 (24%).

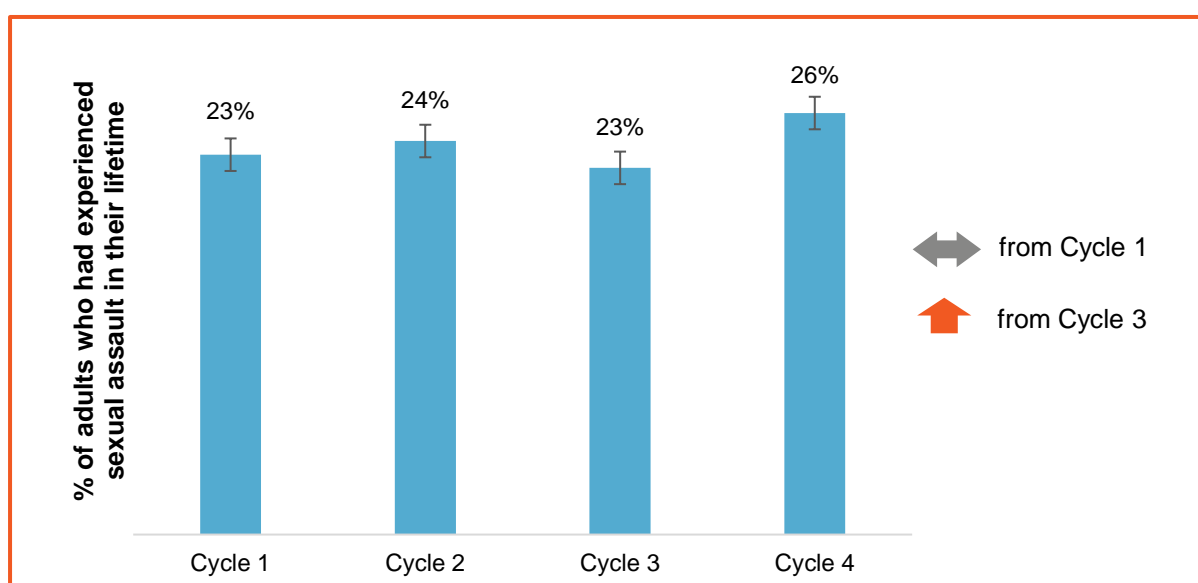


Figure 5.20 Percentage of adults who had experienced sexual assault in their lifetime, by cycle

There were significant increases in the prevalence rate from the previous year to the current year for adults experiencing non-consensual sexual touches (22% compared with 26%, respectively) and forced intercourse (13% compared with 15%, respectively). The prevalence rate of adults experiencing forced intercourse in the current year was also significantly higher than in the base year.

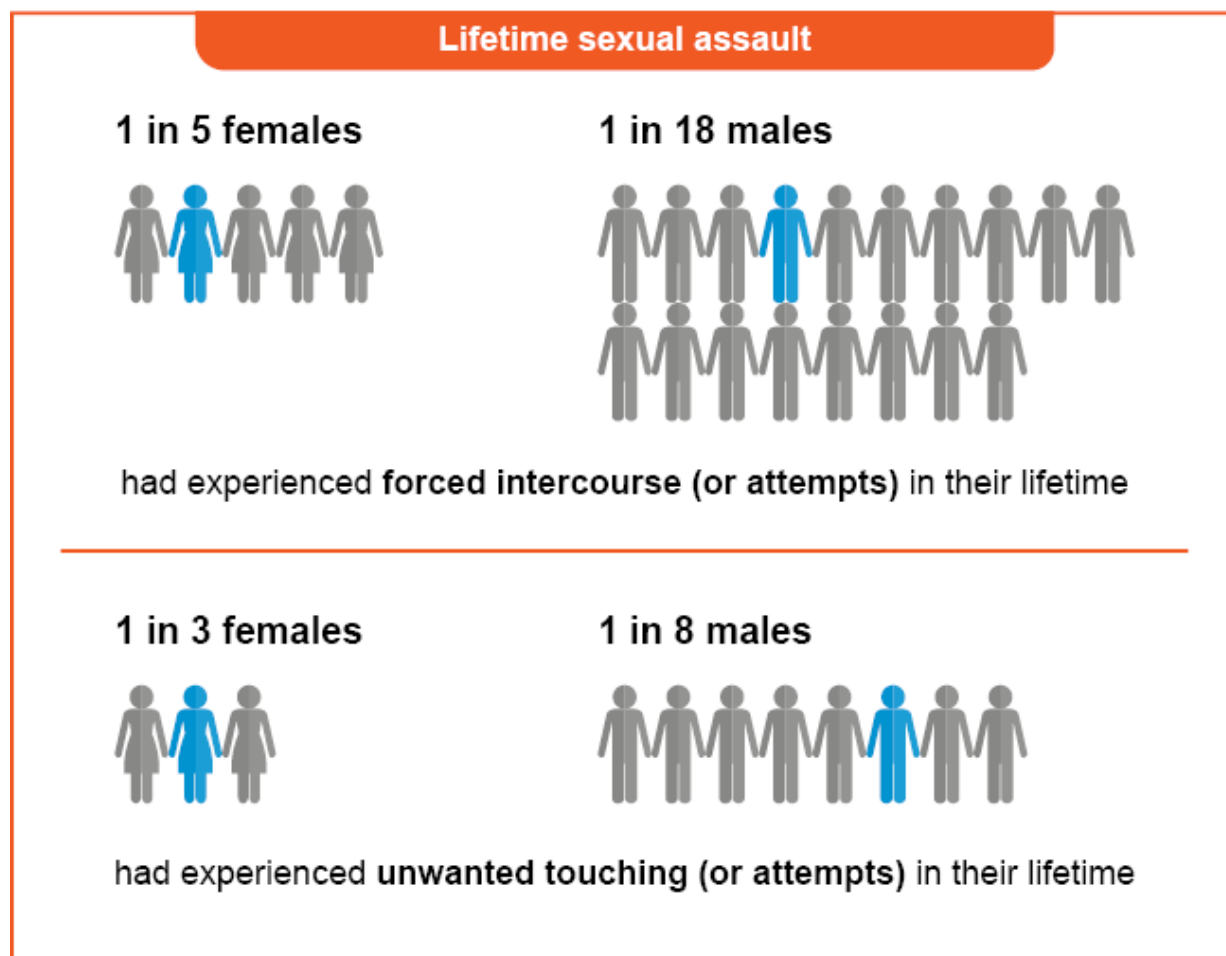
One in five females experienced forced sexual intercourse in their lifetime

Lifetime prevalence of sexual assault was much higher for some population groups than others. Differences across population groups are provided in the [data tables](#) that accompany this report. The data tables also present population breakdowns of lifetime sexual assault separately for forced intercourse and unwanted touching.

The lifetime prevalence rate for females experiencing sexual assault was significantly higher than for males (35% compared with 12%).

One in five females (22%) and 1 in 18 males (6%) had been a victim of forced intercourse (or attempts) in their lifetime.

Having experienced unwanted touching (and attempts) was even more common, for both males and females. One in three females (35%) and 1 in 8 males (12%) had experienced unwanted touching (or attempts) during their lifetime.



Young adults were at risk of sexual assault

Almost 2 in 10 adults aged 15–19 (18%) had been subject to sexual assault in their lifetime. One in four females aged 15–19 (28%) and 1 in 9 males of the same age (11%) had been affected.



Disabled adults were at elevated risk of lifetime sexual assault

Disabled adults were significantly more likely than non-disabled adults to have been subject to sexual assault in their lifetime (30% compared with 24%). This means that disabled adults were about 25% more likely to have experienced sexual assault than other adults.

After standardising by age, the lifetime sexual assault prevalence rate for disabled adults was 37%, which is significantly higher than the rates for non-disabled adults (23%) and the New Zealand average (24%).¹²

One in six adults who have ever had a partner had experienced IPV in their lifetime

The measure of lifetime IPV covers deliberate use of force or violence, and threats to use force or violence, by a partner or ex-partner. Unlike the past 12-month measure, it does not cover sexual assault (subject to a separate question), harassment, or property damage (unless covered by violence and threats of violence). Also different to the past 12-month measure, all incidents reported by the NZCVS respondents were counted without further coding of the incident as an offence.¹³ Results were analysed for adults who have ever had a partner.

Results from pooled data reveal that 1 in 6 adults (17%) who have ever had a partner had experienced IPV their lifetime (Figure 5.21). Of adults who had ever had a partner and experienced lifetime IPV, 14% had experienced deliberate use of force or violence and 13%

¹² Estimates that are standardised by age are adjusted as if they had the same age structure as the general adult population.

¹³ A brief description of the coding process is provided in the [NZCVS Cycle 4 methodology report](#).

had experienced threats of force or violence. This implies that adults who experienced one type of IPV may have experienced the other as well.

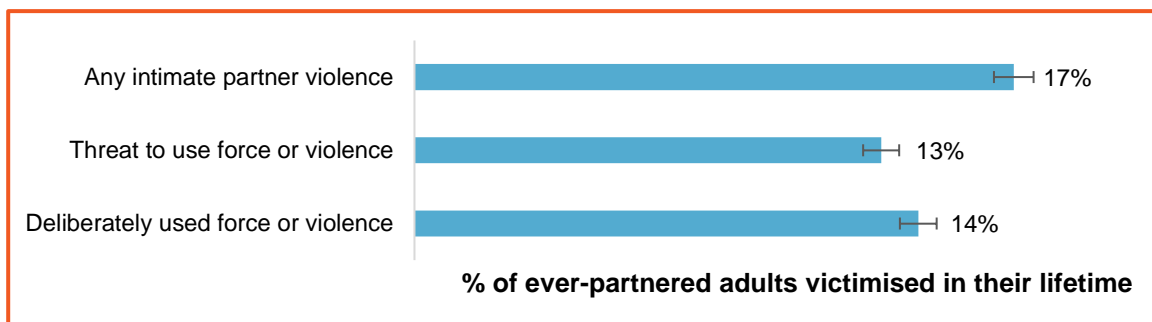


Figure 5.21 Percentage of ever-partnered adults who had experienced IPV in their lifetime (pooled data)

Lifetime experience of IPV has been stable since Cycle 1

Figure 5.22 presents the prevalence rate of lifetime IPV for Cycles 1, 3 and 4. The estimates for Cycle 4 and Cycle 3 have increased since Cycle 1, but the change is not statistically significant. Though not statistically significant, there has been a consistent increase in lifetime IPV over the four NZCVS cycles.

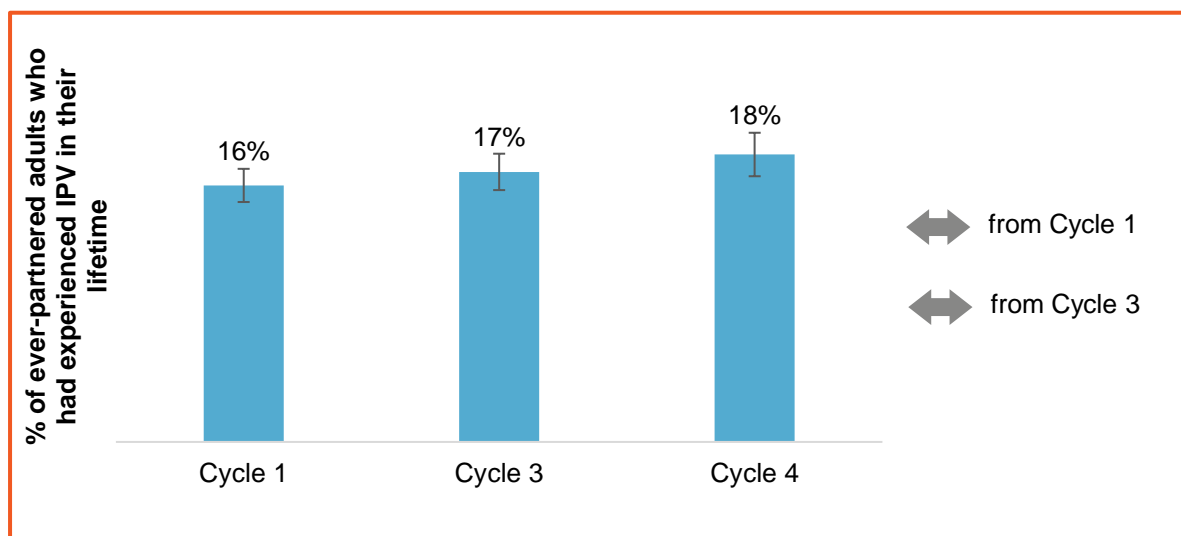


Figure 5.22 Percentage of ever-partnered adults who had experienced IPV in their lifetime (Cycles 1, 3 and 4)

Almost one in four females experienced IPV in their lifetime

Differences in the prevalence rate of lifetime IPV across population groups are provided in the [data tables](#) that accompany this report, including separate analysis for males and females. The data tables also present population breakdowns of lifetime IPV separately for experiences of force or violence and threats of force or violence.

Overall, 23% of females and 10% of males had experienced one of the forms of IPV in their lifetime.

One in five females who have ever had a partner (20%) had experienced force or violence by an intimate partner. About 1 in 5 (20%) had also experienced threats of violence by an intimate partner. This compares with 1 in 13 males who have ever had a partner (8%) experiencing force or violence, and 1 in 17 (6%) experiencing threats of violence.



Disabled adults were at elevated risk of lifetime IPV

Disabled adults were significantly more likely than other adults to have experienced IPV in their lifetime (25% compared with 16%). This means that disabled adults were about 52% more likely to have experienced IPV than other adults.

After standardising by age, the lifetime IPV prevalence rate for disabled adults was 32%, which is significantly higher than the rates for non-disabled adults (16%) and the New Zealand average (17%).¹⁴

¹⁴ Estimates that are standardised by age are adjusted as if they had the same age structure as the general adult population.

5.4 Prevalence of controlling behaviours and impacts

This section looks at aspects of family violence, previously defined in section 5.2, that are not necessarily offences and therefore not covered by the analysis in section 5.2. New questions were introduced in Cycle 4 to capture experiences of controlling behaviours by family members – that is, patterns of behaviour used to coerce or control a person and/or cause cumulative harm.

The questions reflect ways that controlling behaviours can be expressed in a family or whānau relationship.¹⁵ They were designed to fill gaps in prevalence measures of family violence – as it is defined in the Family Violence Act 2018 – that are not covered by offences measured in the NZCVS.

The first set of questions were designed to **capture harms** caused by a perpetrator's behaviour. This was in recognition that controlling behaviours are highly diverse, but what matters is the intent behind the behaviours and the impact they have on the person's life.

Respondents were asked if they had experienced any of the following in the last 12 months because of how a partner, ex-partner, or other family or whānau member behaved, or how they thought they might react:

- changed your routine, behaviour, or appearance
- were unable to contact family or whānau or friends
- felt ashamed or bad about yourself
- felt your spiritual power/mana was stamped on, or your spirituality/wairua was attacked
- worried about your own safety or wellbeing
- worried about the safety of your child or dependents
- worried about the safety of a pet
- feared false accusations could lead you to lose contact with your children
- feared damage to your reputation, or the reputation of your family or whānau.

The second set of questions was included to capture particular forms of **controlling behaviours** used by a perpetrator, such as financial abuse.

Respondents were also asked if a partner, ex-partner, or other family or whānau member had done any of the following in the last 12 months:

- kept track of where you went, or who you spent time with
- monitored or restricted your access to your phone, the Internet, transport, etc

¹⁵ Questions were answered with a frequency scale. If a respondent selected "All of the time", "Most of the time", "Some of the time" or "A little of the time", then they were counted as having experienced harm or controlling behaviour. Residual answers were excluded.

- made it difficult for you or your children to get healthcare or medication
- pressured you into work or study, or pressured you not to work or study
- monitored or controlled your money, or pressured you to take on debt, or sign legal documents
- made it difficult to access or use birth control or contraception
- forced you to use alcohol and/or other drugs, or to use more than you wanted to
- threatened legal action unless you did what they wanted.

What did we find?

- 18% of adults had experienced at least one of the harms because of a partner, ex-partner, or family or whānau member's behaviour.
 - The most common harm experienced was “being made to feel ashamed or bad about yourself”, with 11% of adults experiencing this.
- 13% of adults experienced at least one controlling behaviour by a partner, ex-partner, or family or whānau member.
 - The most prevalent controlling behaviour by a partner, ex-partner or family or whānau member was “kept track of where you went, or who you spent time with”, with 10% of adults experiencing this.

18% of adults experienced harm because of behaviour by a partner, ex-partner, or family or whānau member

Figure 5.23 shows that 18% of adults experienced at least one harm because of the behaviour of a partner, ex-partner, or other family or whānau member in the last 12 months. The most common harm experienced was having “been made to feel ashamed or bad about yourself” (11%), followed by “had to change your routine, behaviour or appearance” (10%).

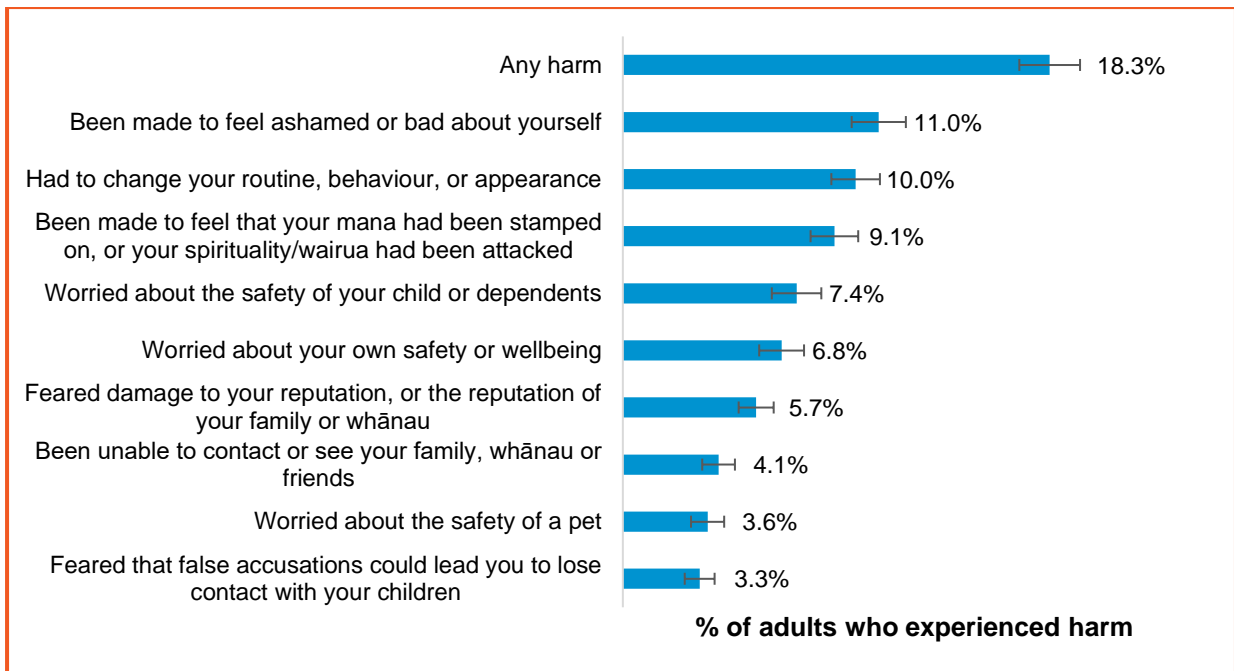


Figure 5.23 Percentage of adults who experienced harm because of the behaviour of a partner, ex-partner or family or whānau member in the last 12 months (Cycle 4)

Figure 5.24 shows 13% of adults experienced at least one controlling behaviour by a partner, ex-partner, or family or whānau member in the last 12 months. The most common controlling behaviour experienced was someone “kept track of where you went, or who you spent time with”, with 10% of adults experiencing this.

Further research is needed to explore patterns in the experiences of these behaviours and harms, including where respondents report multiple behaviours and/or harms and how frequently they were experienced. Analysis of this data will be presented in a topical report later this year.

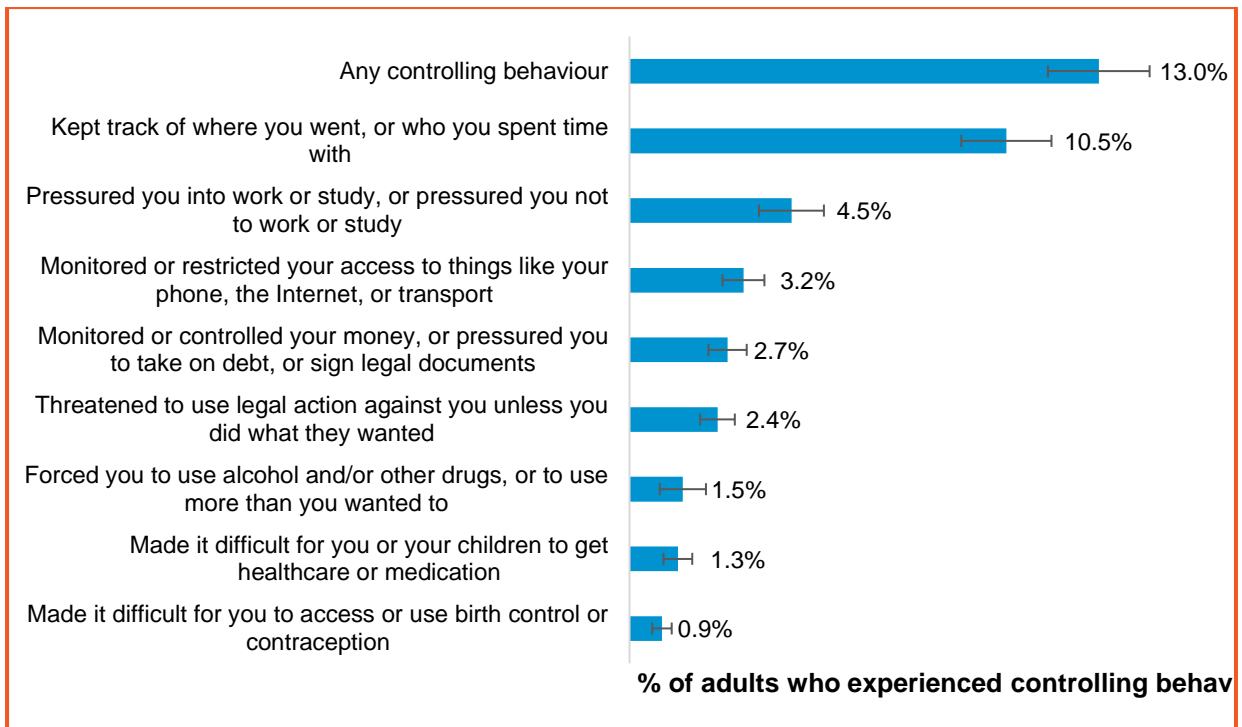


Figure 5.24 Percentage of adults who experienced controlling behaviours by a partner, ex-partner or family or whānau member in the last 12 months (Cycle 4)