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Central
Statistics
Office

Sexual Violence Survey 2022

Social Care Conference

11/04/2024

Overview

- Background
- Definitions
- Headline data
- Methodology
- Next steps



Background

- Report of the Scoping Group on Sexual Violence Data 2018
 - A key recommendation and supported by Government decision:
“...A comprehensive national survey on the prevalence of sexual violence, with a substantial number of participants should be undertaken...”
 - Prevalence not incidence survey
- Memorandum of Understanding with Dept of Justice signed Jan 2019
 - Official statistics, embedded in workplan for repeat in 10 years time

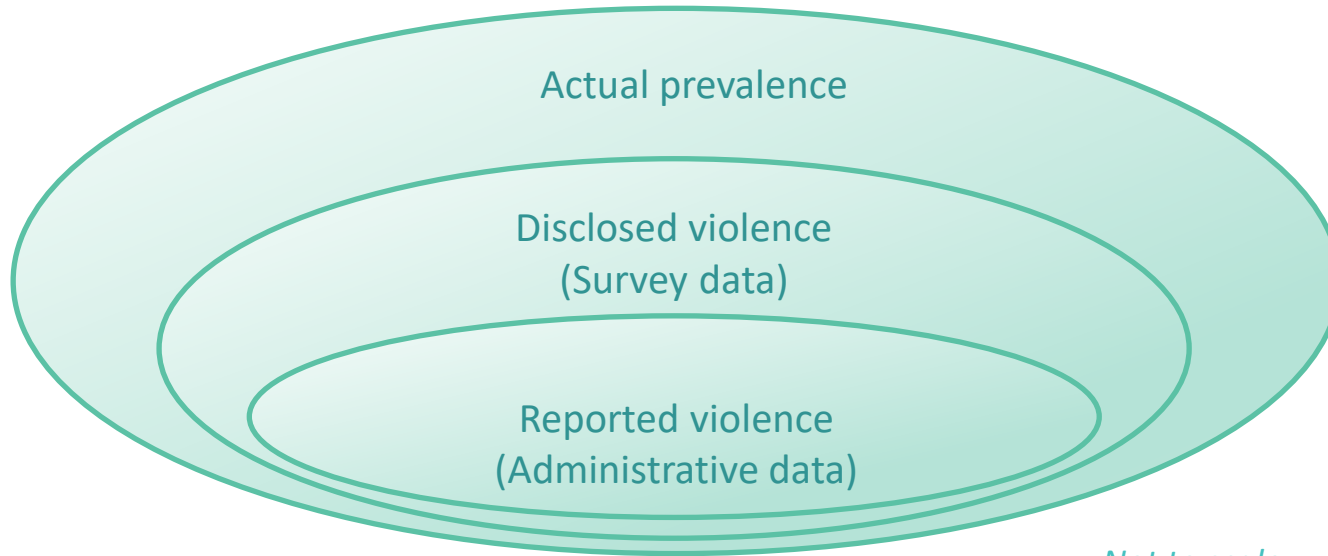


Sexual violence definition

- Sexual violence is defined in this survey as a range of non-consensual experiences, from non-contact experiences to non-consensual sexual intercourse (based on national & international research).
- “Violence” is sometimes associated with the use of force but can also mean having a marked or powerful effect on someone. This includes:
 - a teenager persuading a friend to watch a pornographic video on their phone when they didn’t want to see it
 - someone being persuaded to undress or pose in a sexually suggestive way for photographs as a child
 - a woman having their breasts unwantedly touched in a nightclub
 - a man being threatened in order to have intercourse with him
 - someone who had sexual intercourse while they were asleep



How to measure....



Not to scale

Adapted from source: EUROSTAT, EU survey on gender-based violence against women and other forms of inter-personal violence (EU-GBV) – first results – 2022 edition, p. 5 (available at <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-statistical-reports/w/ks-ft-22-005>)



Key observations

- Surveys on sexual violence **only** are few
- Clearly a sensitive topic
 - Under-reporting has to be managed throughout survey
 - To reduce burden for comprehension and survey length, the topic was solely focused on one type of violence
- Coping mechanisms, minimisation lead to lack of naming/awareness of experiences
- How questions asked can impact disclosure rates in the survey
- Research shows that societies awareness of violence can impact on the reported or disclosed levels of violence in society



Considerations on comparability

Framing of surveys	Mix of data collected in standalone surveys and combined surveys, mix of crime/justice surveys, health surveys, violence against women surveys.
Concepts	Different legal definitions and objectives can lead to different definition of concepts – understanding of rape can change between countries and across time
Methodologies	Telephone vs face to face vs self completion vs web vs paper, impact of frame differences/sampling methodologies
Time definitions	Time period across which data collected, age of consent differences between countries
Instruments	Where the questions are placed can have an impact on prevalence levels
Societal differences	Societies acceptance of violence in their community, awareness of problem



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Headline data



Results

- Data collection finished on the 20th December 2022
- 4,582 records received – 37% RR which compares well internationally

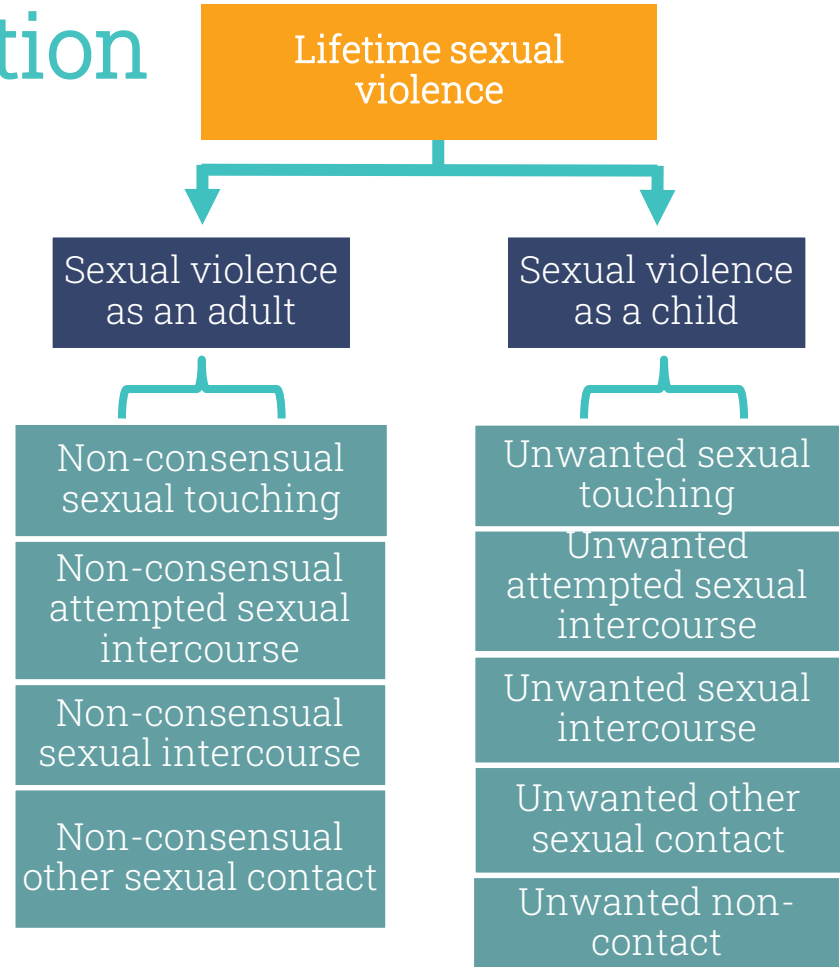
% of responses received by mode		
Web	Tablet	Paper
78%	18%	4%

- Good spread across all age groups, responses by sex in line with other CSO surveys.

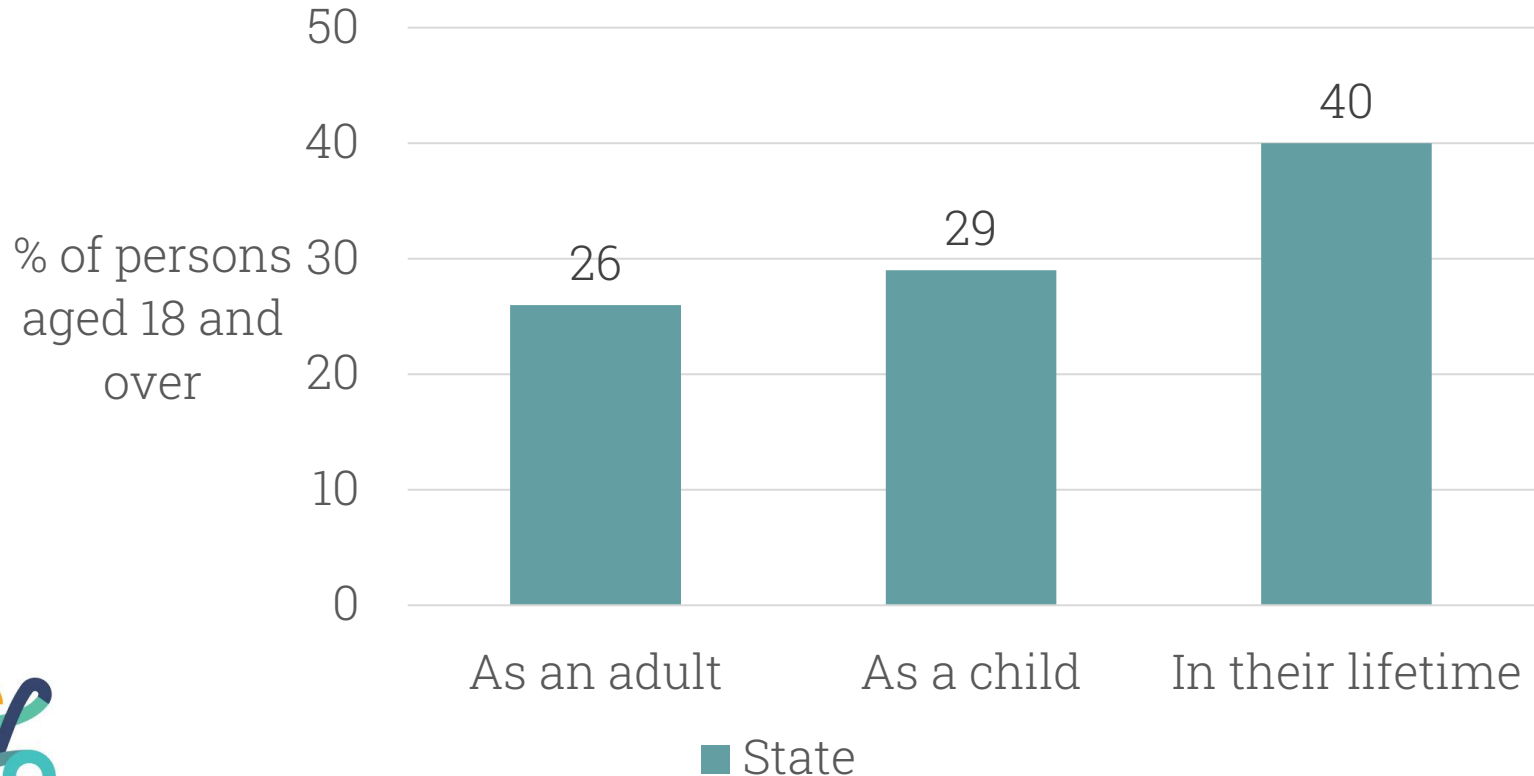


Sexual violence definition

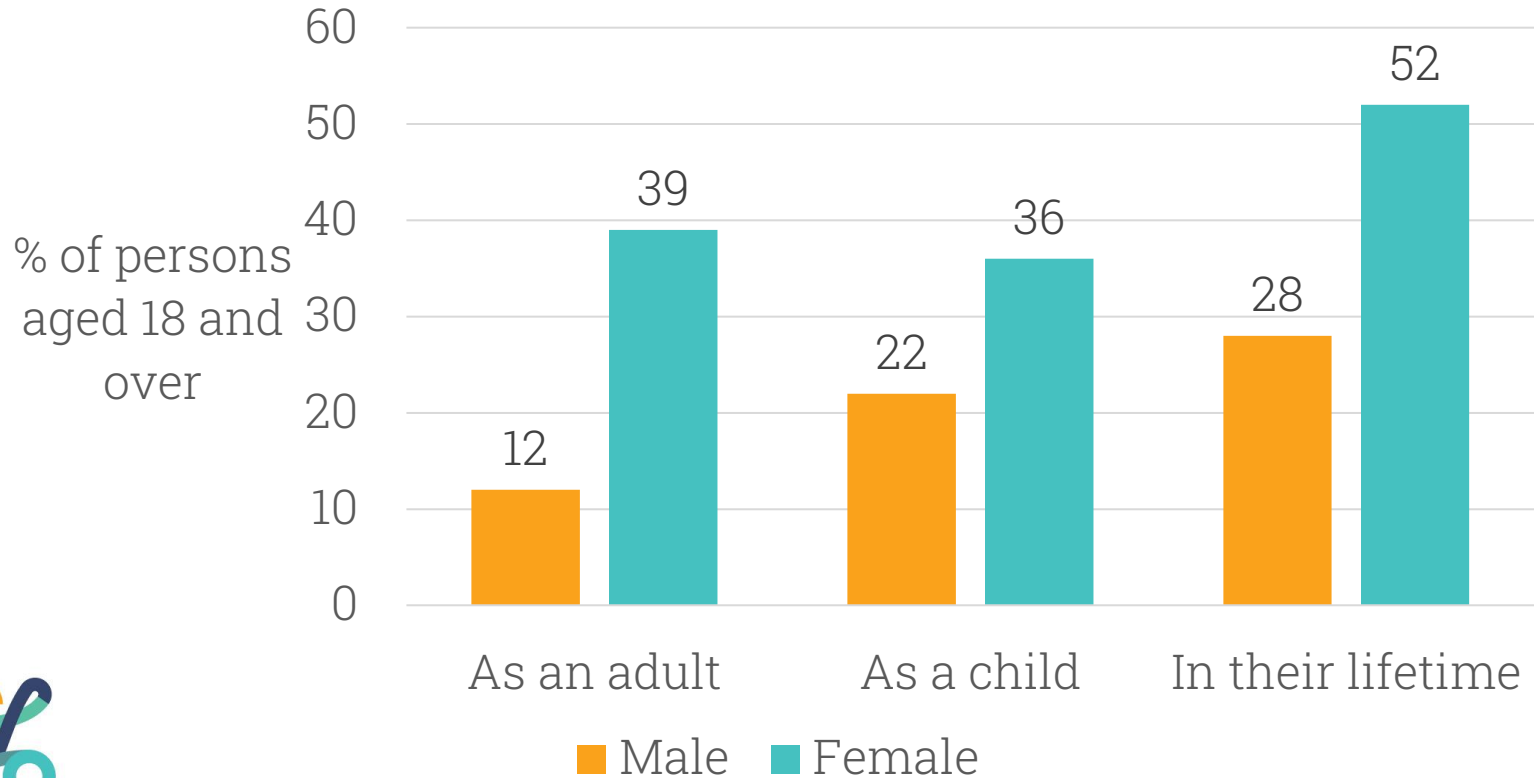
- Sexual violence is defined using national & international research
- “Violence” is sometimes associated with the use of force but can also mean having a marked or powerful effect on someone.



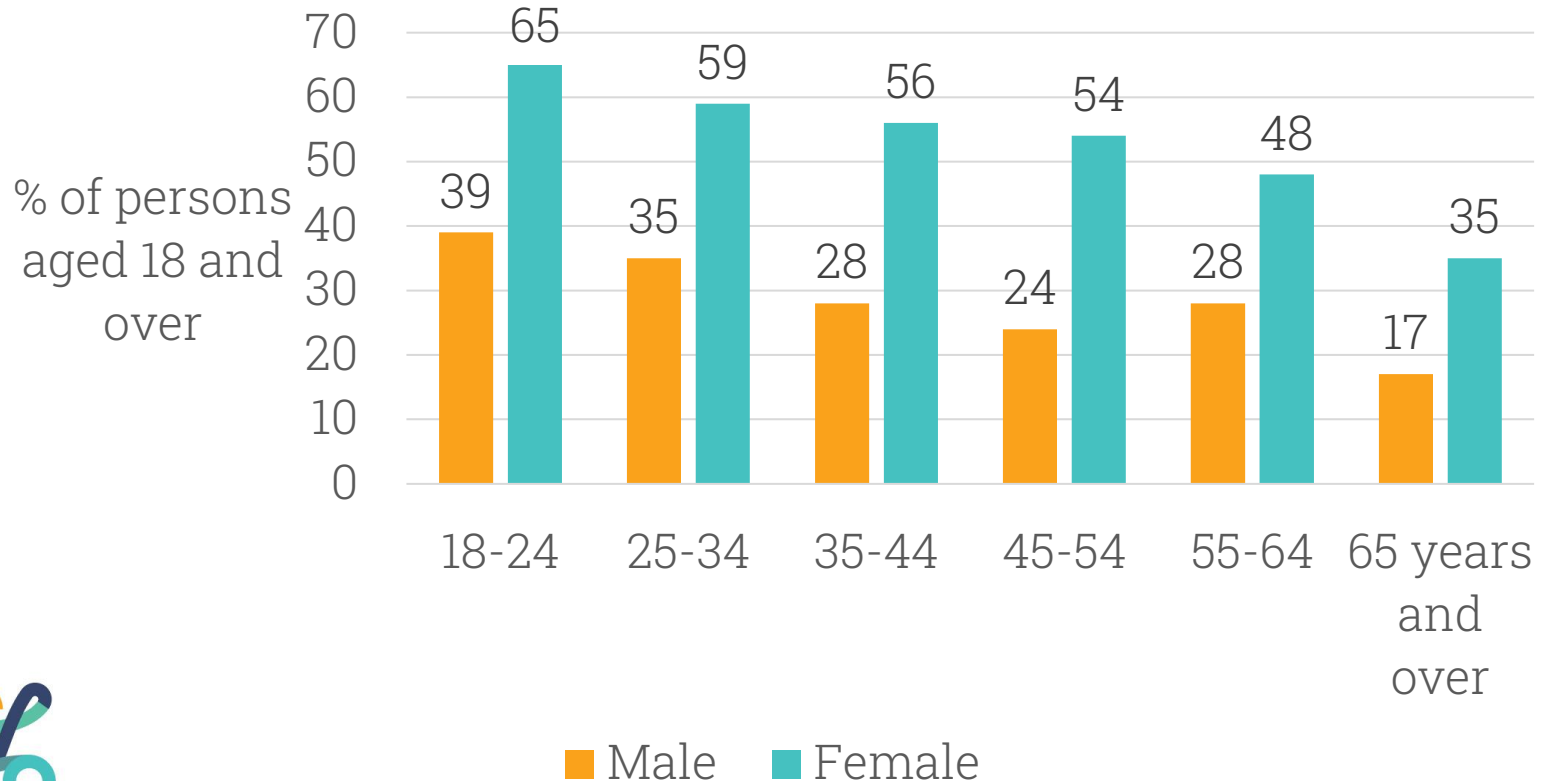
Experience of sexual violence, 2022



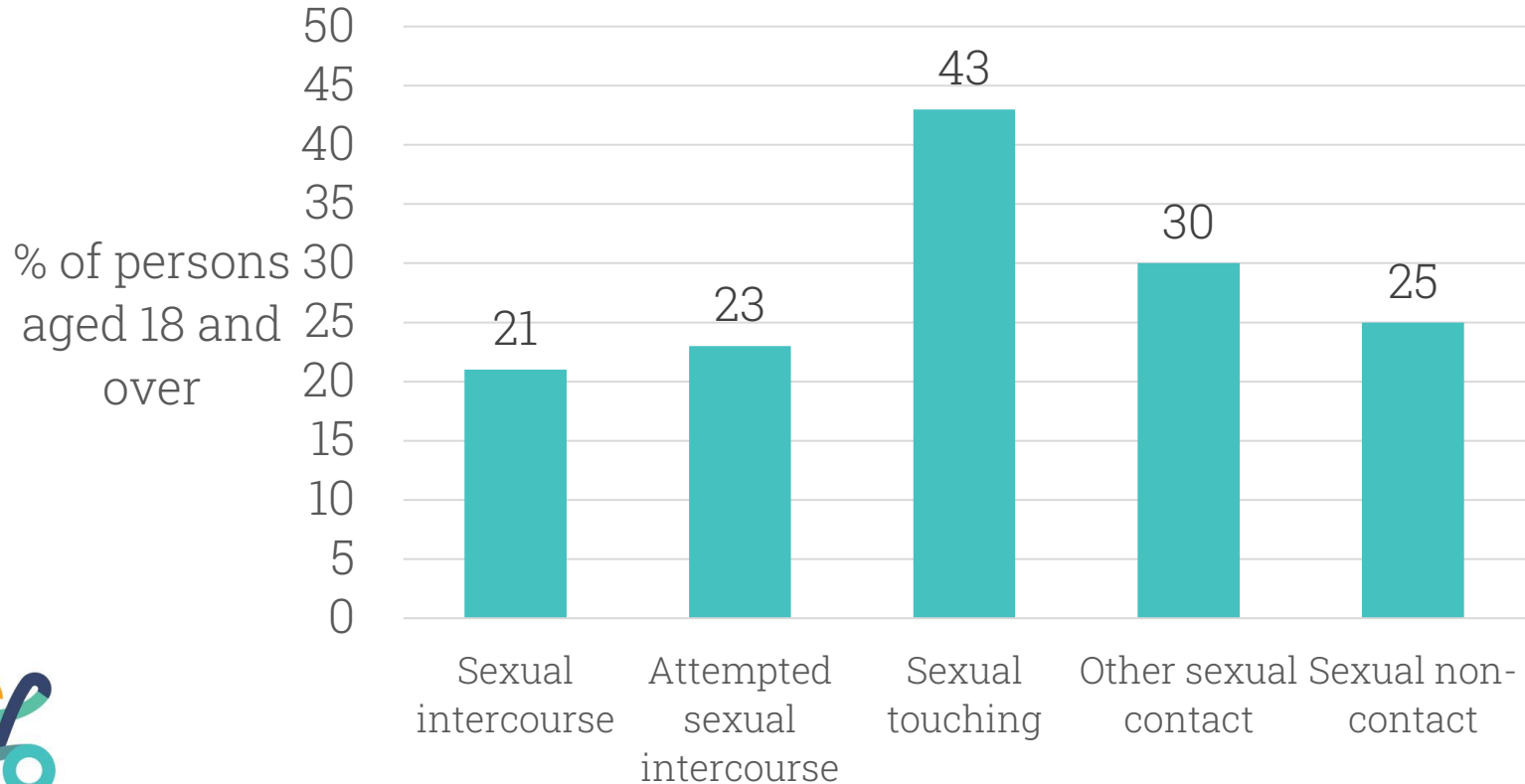
Experience of sexual violence by sex, 2022



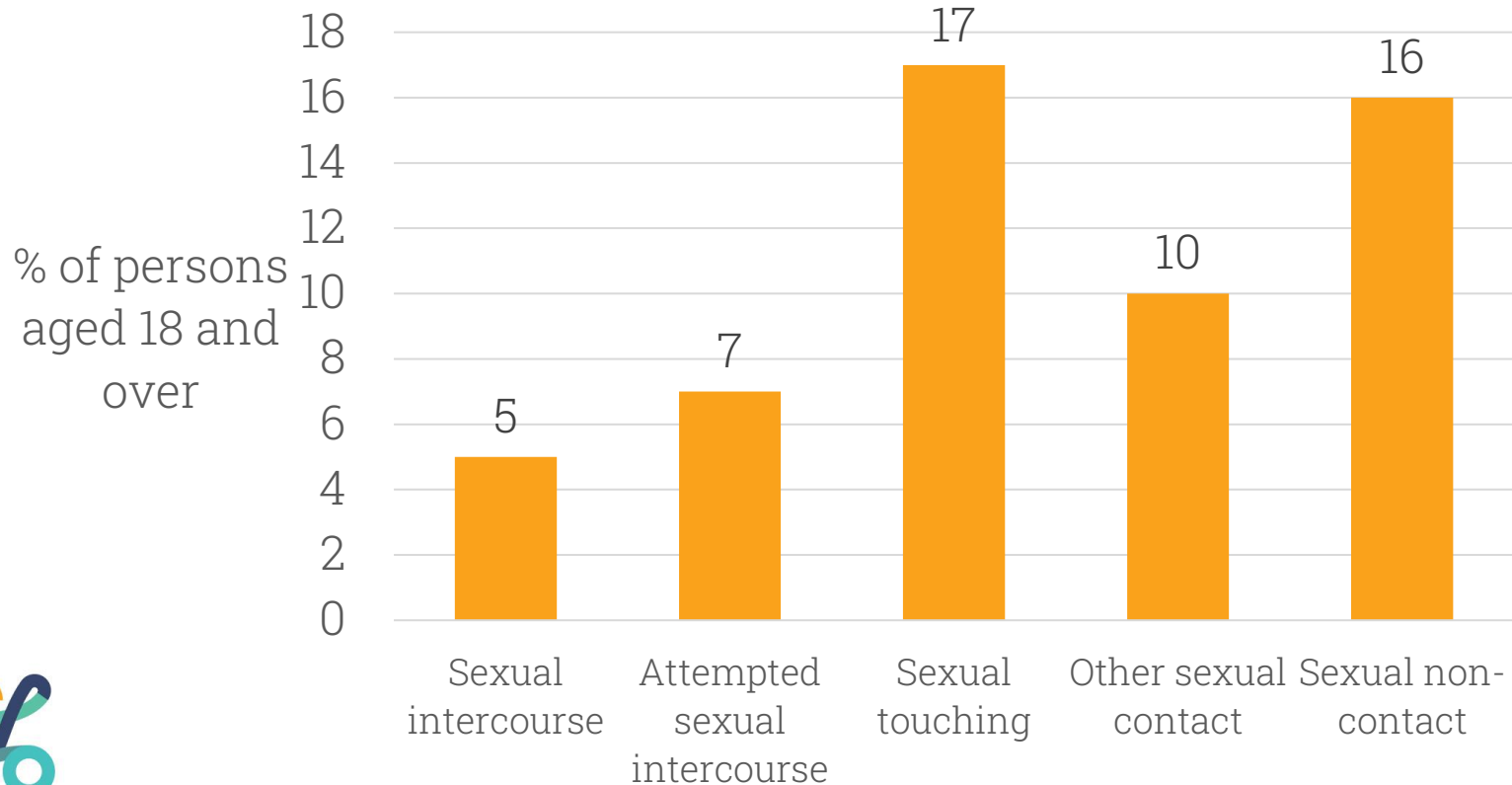
Experience of sexual violence in their lifetime by sex and age, 2022



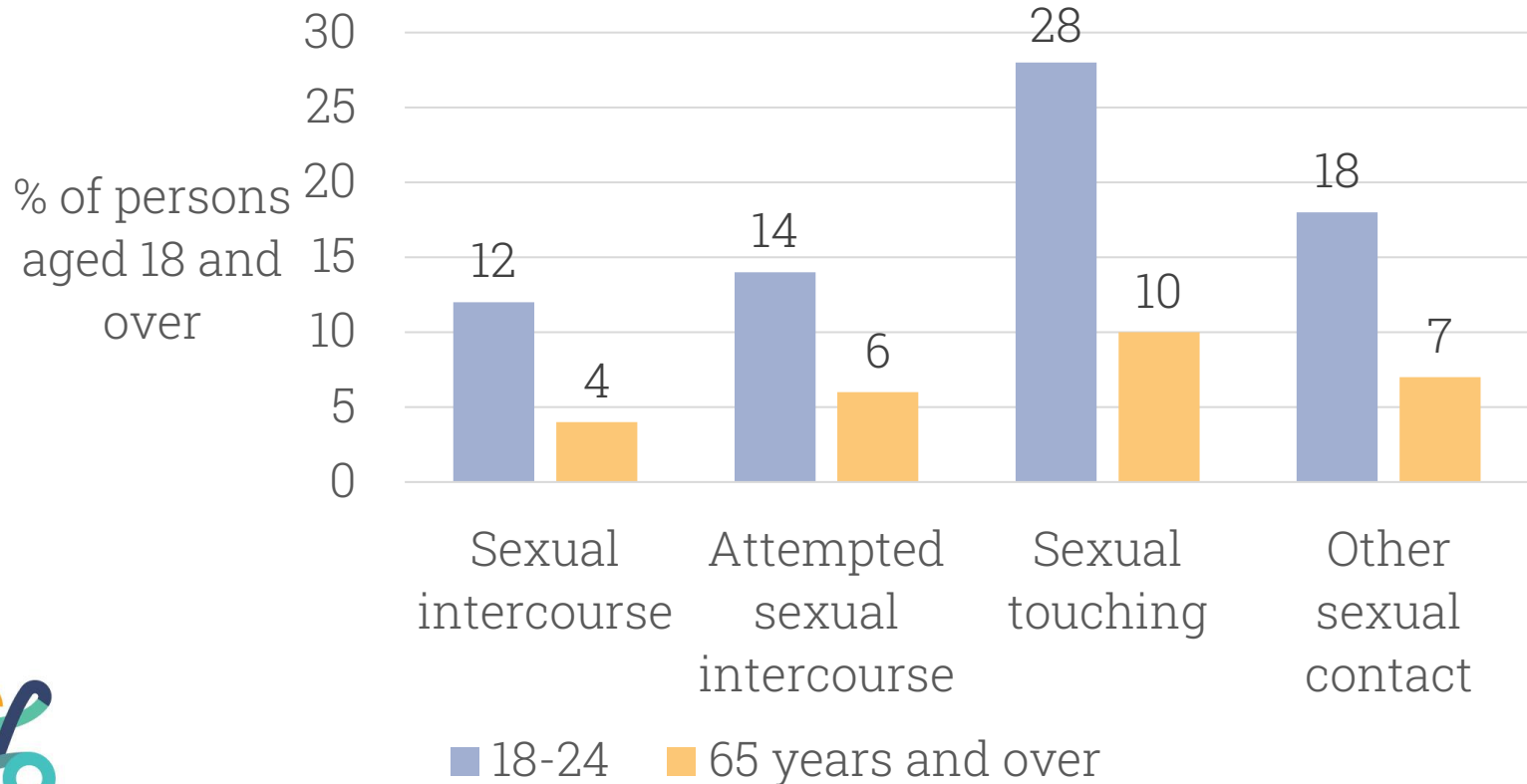
Type of non-consensual sexual violence experienced in their lifetime, 2022 - Female



Type of non-consensual sexual violence experienced in their lifetime, 2022 - Male



Type of non-consensual sexual violence experienced as an adult by age, 2022





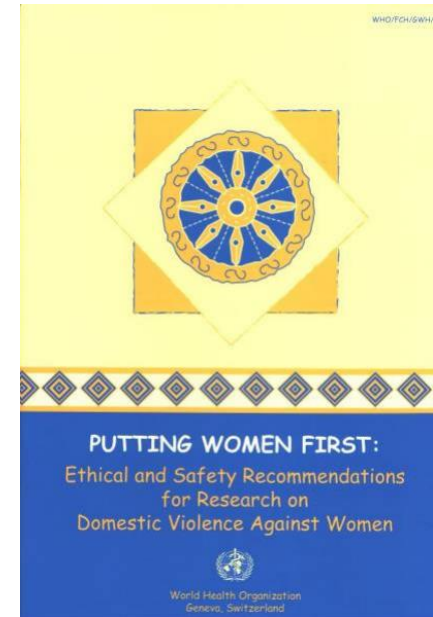
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Methodology

Ethical approach - WHO principles

1. Safety of respondents and research team
2. Studies need to be methodologically sound
3. Confidentiality for safety and data quality
4. Selection and training of team members
5. Actions to reducing distress to respondents
6. Possibilities of referral, support mechanisms
7. Proper interpretation and use of study results
8. Violence questions in other surveys



Safety was paramount

- Choice of modes – online or self-completion on tablet or paper
- Choice of collection approach – self completion
- Choice of Frame – person-based frame
- Single use access codes
- Unidirectional flow through the survey
- CSO confidentiality

Framing of survey - generic introductory name was used but introductory material highlighted the following general but important aspects:

- The potential sensitivity of the questions
- Respondents to only complete survey when their privacy is assured
- Confidentiality of the data submitted.
- The respondent was made aware of the survey topic when they accessed the web survey



Managing distress for respondents

- Respondent clear that survey is going to be on sexual violence before beginning and of their rights i.e. informed consent, GDPR rights outlined in transparency notice
- Good practice in questionnaire design applied
 - Design of questions to improve data quality and reduce distress
 - Testing of questions with relevant groups
 - Expert review on impact of questions
- Respondents will be informed that they can terminate the survey at any time
- Respondents can skip any questions they do not wish to answer in violence modules
- Screen with key support services to be provided to respondent irrespective of responses given.



Underreporting risk

“Biases introduced through under-reporting of instances of sexual violence will far exceed all other forms of survey and sampling errors.”

Tourangeau and Yan (2007)

- Sexual violence not part of everyday conversation
- For those who have experienced sexual violence, the feelings may be of shame, fear, panic
- Fear of disclosure which implies the security and privacy of the setting is critical



Addressing under-reporting

- CSO – independent, high levels of public trust
- Use a mode that creates a safe environment to disclose with privacy and security ensured
- Make concepts clear to encourage identification of experiences e.g. breakdown of sexual violence concept into partner and non-partner



Addressing under-reporting

- Best practice in questionnaire design used:
 - No victim blaming within the questions
 - Questions sensitively phrased
 - Grading of topics from less sensitive to more sensitive through survey
 - Grading of experiences through question flow
 - Behavioral style of questions
 - Adequate testing of the questions prior to going in the field



SVS elements

Ways tested

Variables	Expert Groups (Data and Policy Expert Groups)	Governance group (Liaison Group)
Questions	Focus Groups	Cognitive Interviewing
Questionnaire modules/full	Clinical Psychologists, Expert in trauma	Language therapist
Questionnaire in full	Internal Expert Review	Pilot/Survivor review
Survey management	Focus Group/Survivor Group/Pilot	Ethics Advisory Group

Data collection summary

- First, do no harm
- Nationally representative sample – randomly selected
- 13,000 cases in sample – with back up reserve sample selected for deployment if required
- Frame developed to allow respondent to be identified in advance
- Specific field team hired to deliver survey - with specific training plan
- Multimode delivery of the survey
 - Field team as recruiters rather than interviewers
 - Self-completion



Survey overview – multimode approach



Respondents

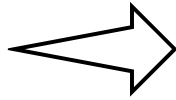
Survey overview – multimode approach



Direct
letter



Reminders



Respondents



Online

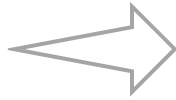
Survey overview – multimode approach



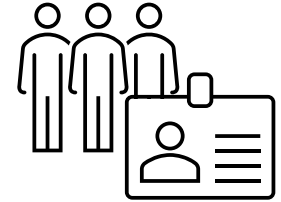
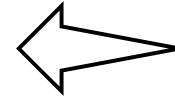
Direct
letter



Reminders



Respondents



Interviewers



Online



Self-completion



Paper

Managing staff on the project

- Agreed plan internally
 - Dependent on level of engagement with topic
 - Staff given choice, time to think about decision
 - Specific training offered where possible
 - Staff resources provided
- Decisions on methodology chosen to reduce impact on front line staff, as well as preserve data quality



Next steps

- SVS project closure
 - RMF and researcher access, papers, outreach, etc.
- Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence
 - Domestic Violence/Gender Based Violence survey development – CSO lead organisation
- New Agency, Cuan – timely that data in place
- Next SVS 2032, now part of official stats programme





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Questions?