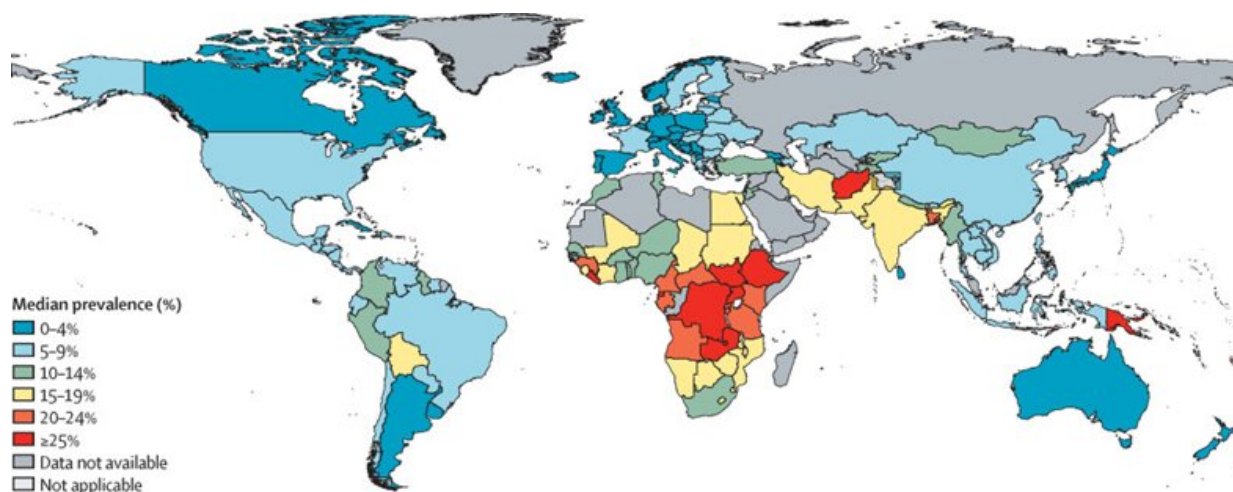


One in four women experience domestic violence before age 50

March 24 2022



Map of prevalence estimates of past year intimate partner violence among women aged 15 to 49 years, in 2018. Credit: Lynnmarie Sardinha et al.

Over one in four women (or 27 percent) experience intimate partner violence before the age of 50, according to a worldwide analysis led by researchers from McGill University and the World Health Organization. The largest of its kind, the analysis covers 366 studies involving more than 2 million women in 161 countries.

"Intimate partner violence against women—which includes physical and [sexual violence](#) by husbands, boyfriends, and other partners—is highly prevalent globally," says McGill University Professor Mathieu Maheu-

Giroux, a Canada Research Chair in Population Health Modeling.

According to the finding published in *The Lancet*, one in seven women (or 13 percent) experienced intimate partner violence within the last year of the study period between 2000 and 2018. The analysis also found high levels of violence against [young women](#), estimating that 24 percent of those between the ages of 15 to 19 experienced [domestic violence](#) in their lifetime.

While the numbers are alarming the true scale of violence is likely even higher, the researchers say, noting that the studies were based on self-reported experiences. Given the stigmatized nature of the issue, women can be hesitant to report their experiences, they explain.

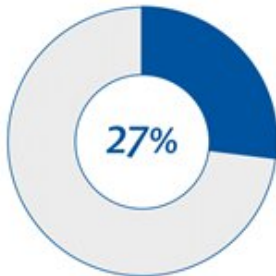
High-income countries reported lower rates of domestic violence

The researchers found regional variations, with high-income countries having lower prevalence of both lifetime and past year violence. The lifetime prevalence among women aged 15 to 49 was highest in Africa, South Asia, and parts of South America. The regions with the lowest estimated lifetime domestic violence against women were Central Asia and Central Europe.

The proportion of women who experienced intimate partner violence in the last year was around 5 percent for North America, Europe, and Asia Pacific. In regions of Africa, this number was as high as 15 percent to 30 percent.

Violence against women by male intimate partners is a global public health concern of pandemic proportions

Intimate partner violence (IPV) affects the lives of millions of women worldwide



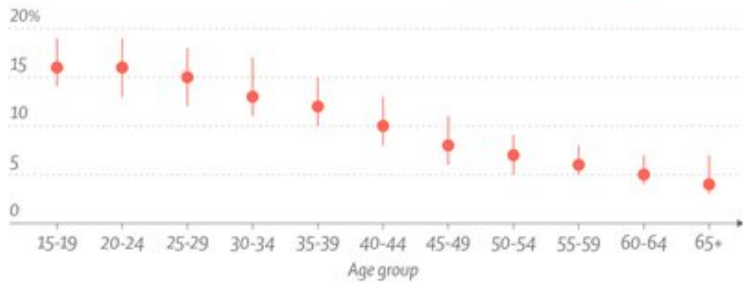
1 in 4 women¹
aged 15-49 have experienced IPV at least once in their lifetime.



1 in 7 women¹
aged 15-49 have experienced IPV in the past 12 months².

Prevalence of recent partner violence is highest among younger women

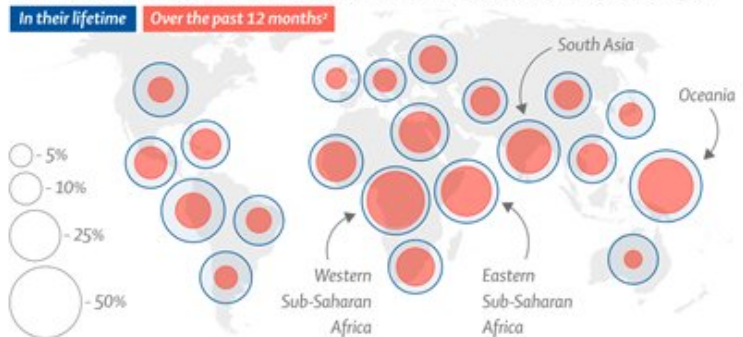
Proportion of women¹ worldwide who have experienced IPV **over the past 12 months²** by age group



Violence against women is a global concern

Highest prevalence of IPV is reported in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, Oceania, and South Asia.

Proportion of women¹ aged 15-49 who have experienced IPV, by Global Burden of Disease region



¹ Ever-partnered women; ² Study carried out in 2018 using data from 2000 to 2018. "Past 12 months" refers to period immediately preceding survey.

Read the full paper: Sardinha L, Maheu-Giroux M, Stöckl H, Meyer SR, García-Moreno C. Global, regional and national prevalence estimates of physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence against women, 2018. *The Lancet* 2022, published online Feb 16

Violence against women by male intimate partners. Credit: Lynnmarie Sardinha et al.

Canada among countries with lowest rates of domestic violence

"While Canada is among the top 30 countries with the lowest rates of intimate partner violence, it's still a problem that affects 1 in 25 women," notes Professor Maheu-Giroux. "Some provinces in Canada are looking at different ways to address domestic violence. In Quebec, for example, the government approved a [pilot project](#) in 2021 to create a special court for victims of domestic and sexual violence," he adds.

Calls to strengthen response in pandemic rebuilding efforts

"Overall, our research shows that governments are not on track to meet global targets to eliminate violence against [women](#) and girls. An important takeaway is that even in some [high-income countries](#) the prevalence of intimate partner violence is relatively high, which calls for investment in prevention at local and global levels," says Maheu-Giroux.

"In Québec alone, we witnessed a wave of 17 intimate partner femicides in 2021—the most extreme consequence of intimate partner violence and the highest number in more than a decade," he says.

Globally, the problem is likely to have been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the researchers explain. There's an urgent need to strengthen the public health response to [intimate partner violence](#), and ensure it's addressed in post-COVID-19 rebuilding efforts, they conclude.

More information: Lynnmarie Sardinha et al, Global, regional, and national prevalence estimates of physical or sexual, or both, intimate partner violence against women in 2018, *The Lancet* (2022). [DOI: 10.1016/S0140-6736\(21\)02664-7](#)

Provided by McGill University

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