



THE REIS GROUP
CaVEX REPORT

FAQ

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QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SURVEY DATA

Tell me about the new report and what you found.

What was the most interesting finding from the survey?

We saw three big things with the fourth annual CalVEX survey. First, almost half (46%) of adults in California have experienced some form of violence from a romantic or sexual partner in their lifetime.

Second, this is the first survey of its kind to look at non-binary people's experience with violence. We found staggering rates of violence compared to the general population and most of these incidents go unreported. Similarly, we see alarmingly high rates of violence for transgender people in the state.

Finally, while we saw some declines in violence in the general population compared to last year, we now know that these experiences remain shockingly common in gender diverse and sexually diverse communities.

How have rates of violence changed from previous years?

Why is this happening?

In 2023, past-year physical violence rates fell from the peak rates seen in 2021/2022, and were equivalent to 2020 rates, suggesting that physical violence has returned to pre-pandemic levels. This decrease was driven by lower rates of physical abuse among men in the past year. Physical violence rates may have been higher during the pandemic because people were experiencing a lot more stress - including financial stress, a known driver of violence.

2023 past-year rates of sexual violence also returned to pre-pandemic levels, partly due to lower reported rates of verbal and cyber sexual harassment by both men and women. Less time at home on the computer or mobile phone may be influencing that rate.

What do you think caused this post-pandemic decline?

We didn't specifically examine the cause of the decline, but we have some insights on the causes based on the data we do collect. During the pandemic, people experienced major life changes like evictions and job loss, which correlate with high rates of violence. This could be why we saw a peak in violence during the pandemic followed by a decline in 2023 as evictions and the unemployment rate slowed.

Also, during the pandemic more people were home and online. These private and sometimes anonymous spaces may have allowed for more online harassment. Now that people aren't spending as much time in those online spaces, violence in this category has dropped.

These findings suggest that government funding that eased the financial burdens of the pandemic may have also had an important impact on violence rates. Governor Gavin Newsom released one-time violence prevention funds in 2021, but it is slated to expire in 2024 and sustaining such funds could continue to reduce violence.



Why did you include non-binary people in this survey?

More and more, young people are identifying as non-binary, making this an important designation to include, particularly because publicizing their experiences can impact the availability of funding and services to assist them. While we have had non-binary respondents in prior surveys, we substantially increased the number of people we surveyed this year, in part so that we could speak to the experiences of populations like non-binary people.

Are there any other notable differences in violence rates?

We examined a variety of sociodemographic characteristics to see what might be associated with both physical and sexual violence. Household income and urban/rural location had no distinction in rates of violence.

We did see higher rates of violence among Californians identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or other self-described sexual identity. People with less than a high school degree also had disproportionately high rates of physical and sexual violence. Californians with a disability, a history of homelessness, or a history of incarceration all have higher rates of both physical and sexual violence.

These differences are important for decision-makers to know so that resources can be allocated to the populations most in need.

What are the health impacts of physical violence for people who experienced it in the past year?

We saw significant health impacts reported by the Californians who experienced physical violence. Most alarmingly, 25% of people who experienced violence reported that they seriously considered suicide. Moreover, two-thirds of respondents experiencing violence reported recent substance misuse. These data show the deep and potentially long-lasting impacts of violence on our communities that will require funding and coordinating multiple services including health, social services and public safety.

What are the health impacts of sexual harassment or assault for people who experienced it in the past year?

Major health impacts were also reported for people who had experienced sexual harassment or assault. Half of these respondents reported recent substance misuse. Their mental health also suffered, as they were four times more likely to report serious consideration of suicide in the past year and twice as likely to report severe depression and/or anxiety symptoms.

These health impacts make it all the more important for various sectors such as health, social services and public safety to work together on preventing and responding to violence.

What is the most surprising finding of this survey?

We were surprised to see that almost half (46%) of adults in California have experienced some form of violence from a romantic or sexual partner in their lifetime. This intimate partner violence includes emotional, controlling, threatening harm to themselves or others, physical, or sexual violence. Non-binary people (75%) and women (54%) experience intimate partner violence at disproportionate rates.

What is the typical relationship between perpetrator and victim?

The majority of victims of violence in the past year (58%) reported that at least one of the perpetrators was someone known to them, including family, friends, romantic partners, known authority figures, or acquaintances. Yet a majority (69%) also said that at least one of the perpetrators was a stranger.

Who do people tell when they've experienced violence?

Only 20% of people who experienced past year physical violence filed a formal report and 22% told no one at all about the experience.

A shocking 95% of people who experienced sexual violence never filed an official complaint or report. Almost half of those with these experiences told no one (48% of women and 36% of men).

More work needs to be done to make the act of reporting easy and the response to the report meaningful.

Does the survey examine violence perpetrated by the police?

Yes. We looked at both violence perpetrated by police, as well as perceived mistreatment by police. Black (22%) and Latinx (16%) Californians were more likely to report mistreatment by the police, relative to white (8%) and Asian (12%) respondents.


Young people (18-24), people with less than a high school degree/GED, people with a disability, lesbian, gay, or bisexual individuals, and people in the lowest income quintile were all more likely to report police mistreatment.

This is an important finding, since victims of violence may be less inclined to engage with police if they are also victims of violence or mistreatment from police.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE REPORT

What is the CalVEX survey

The report details findings from the California Violence Experiences (CalVEX) survey. This is the fourth round of this annual, statewide survey on physical violence, sexual violence and intimate partner violence among California adults, and the gender differences in these experiences. This year, for the first time, we include a category for non-binary/gender-queer/gender fluid identifications, which we collectively term as non-binary.



The goal of the CalVEX survey is to aid California by providing these data to guide violence-prevention programming and policy development. With the addition of non-binary people and analysis by racial and ethnic groups, we hope that the recognition of gendered risk and racial/ethnic disparities of violence will be illuminated. We also hope that decision makers will more deeply understand the contribution of violence to ongoing economic and health concerns in the state.

How many people were surveyed?

The final sample included 3,560 respondents - 2,013 women; 1,483 men; 64 people who identify as non-binary, genderqueer, gender fluid, or other self-described gender identity (collectively termed 'non-binary people' in the report). The survey was conducted online by NORC at the University of Chicago from March to May 2023.

Is the study representative of Californians?

Yes, CalVEX 2023 is an online, population-based survey research study with a state-representative sample of adults aged 18 and older in California. The full methodology is available in the report.

Are all of the results statistically significant?

All of the findings presented in the report - such as comparisons across groups or over time - are statistically significant.

Who funded this report?

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