

Mexico: intimate partner violence



Key points

- Violence against women by their intimate partners is rooted in the structural inequality that affects women.
- Violence against women, which has implications for their health, also affects the community and the State.
- Younger women are more likely to be subjected to intimate partner violence.
- Among the three types of violence against women, physical, sexual or psychological, the most common type is psychological violence.
- Almost one in four women suffered at least one occurrence of physical, sexual or psychological violence during the 12 months prior to the survey.

Background

Violence against women represents a serious problem in countries throughout the world, with long-lasting consequences for women and for society at large. Violence against women by their intimate partners impacts their physical, sexual and psychological health, and has repercussions in terms of family and community development. The risk for women, together with the costs associated with health care, keeps this issue at the top of the national policy and social agenda.

Violence against women, which is rooted in the unequal power relationship between the sexes, is based on gender norms that establish socially acceptable roles for women and men and that may be used by men as a social justification for violence against women, in particular their intimate partners.

The collection of statistical information allows professionals to measure, characterize and determine the prevalence of violence against women, which is fundamental in the design of public policies that aim to prevent, address and eliminate it. In Mexico, information on violence against women is collected through the National Survey on the Dynamics of Household Relationships, which has been conducted four times (2003, 2006, 2011 and 2016).

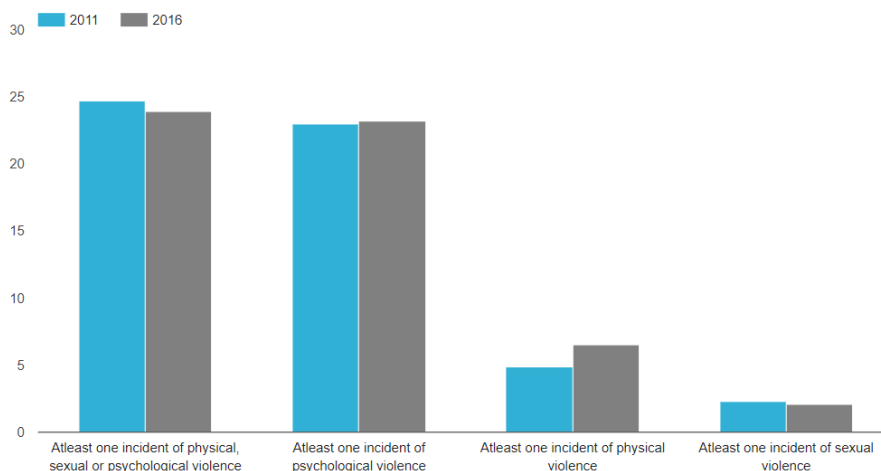
Since the very first survey in 2003, one of its main objectives has been to ascertain the level of violence against women in the context of intimate relationships, where the highest prevalence of violence has been reported. Women are at the greatest risk of being victims of violence in intimate partnerships, given the private nature and complex dynamics between couples.

Current situation

In the course of the 2016 National Survey on the Dynamics of Household Relationships in Mexico,¹ almost one in four women (23.9%) aged 15 and older reported having suffered at least one occurrence of physical, sexual, or psychological violence during the 12 months prior to the survey. There was no significant change with respect to the results of the 2011 survey, when the prevalence of intimate partner violence was estimated at 24.7% (see figure I).

Among the three types of violence against women, the most common was psychological violence, measured at 23.2% in 2016, a level that was very close to that recorded in 2011. The level of physical violence increased from 2011 to 2016, from 4.9% to 6.5%, although it is possible that the increase may be due to a better measurement of the two types of violence in the 2016 survey. Sexual violence, reported at 2.1% in 2016, was the least prevalent, although far from the least critical, among the three types of violence against women.

Figure I Proportion of Mexican women aged 15 and older who experienced physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the last 12 months by type of violence: 2011 and 2016

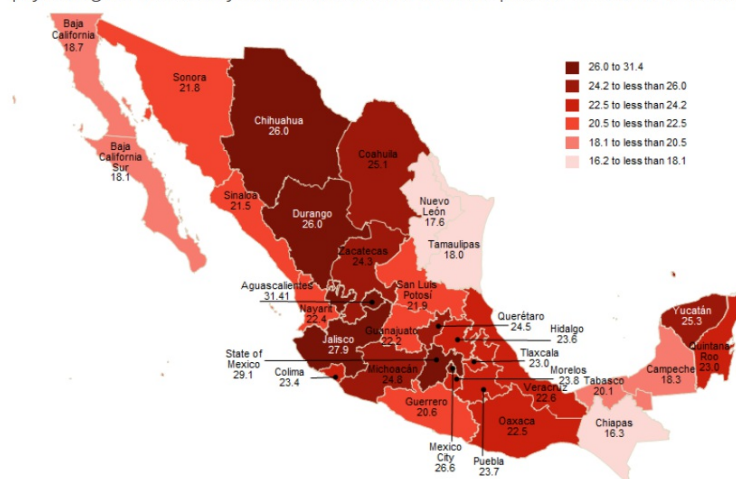


Source: National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), National Survey on the Dynamics of Household Relationships (2011 and 2016).

Note: The indicator includes women aged 15 and older who have or have had an intimate partner relationship.

At the subnational level, the highest proportions of women who reported that they had suffered at least one type of violence were in the north-centre states (Chihuahua and Durango), in the capital (Mexico City) and in some of the central states (Mexico, Jalisco and Aguascalientes), with levels from 26.0% to 31.4%, above the national average (see figure II). On the other side of the spectrum, the states of Baja California Sur, Tamaulipas, Nuevo León and Chiapas registered the lowest prevalence, ranging from 16.2% to 18.1%, with levels below the national average.

Figure II Proportion of Mexican women aged 15 and older who experienced physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the last 12 months by state: 2016



Source: INEGI, National Survey on the Dynamics of Household Relationships, 2016 (<https://en.www.inegi.org.mx/programas/endireh/2016/>).

Note: The indicator includes women aged 15 and older who have or have had an intimate partner relationship. The reference period corresponds to the last 12 months prior to the conduct of the survey, that is from October 2015 up to the time of the interview for the survey.

It is important to make use of statistical data on violence against women to promote the design of prevention and service programmes to address this critical issue. Among the many costs associated with violence against women are those linked to health, including unwanted and high-risk pregnancies, maternal mortality, sexually transmitted diseases (such as HIV/AIDS), physical and psychological injuries, suicide and femicide.

Violence against women has costs for the community and the State as such violence: reduces the ability of victims/survivors to make productive contributions to family, economy and public life; absorbs the resources of social services, the judicial system and health-care institutions; and reduces overall educational achievements, mobility and the potential of victims, their children and even those who have committed such acts of violence.

Younger women are more likely to be subjected to intimate partner violence

The proportion of women in Mexico who reported at least one occurrence of physical, sexual or psychological violence inflicted by a current or former intimate partner in the last 12 months was higher among young women aged 18–19 (30.9%).²

Legal framework

Progress has been made to address violence against women in the national legal framework, including, notably, the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free from Violence,³ and the inclusion of violent acts, such as femicide, into the national and subnational penal codes.

Related stories and further reading

- [Intimate partner violence](#)

About the data

Definitions

Percentage of women and girls aged 15 and older who report having experienced at least one occurrence of physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner during the 12 months previous to the survey.⁴

Coverage

Women in Mexico aged 15 and older who have ever had an intimate partner: reporting at both the federal and state levels.

Availability

Information necessary for the computation of this indicator is available at the webpage of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI).⁵

Footnotes

1. INEGI, National Survey on the Dynamics of Household Relationships, 2016.
2. INEGI, National Survey on the Dynamics of Household Relationships, 2016.
3. General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence, 2008.
4. National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), National Survey on the Dynamics of Household Relationships, 2016.
5. INEGI website.