

**Prevalentiemonitor**  
**Huiselijk Geweld en Seksueel**  
**Grensoverschrijdend gedrag**  
**2024**

Summary





Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en  
Datacentrum

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## Summary

This summary covers the following:

- Reason for the study
- Design of the study
- Subject of the study
- Answers to the research questions
- Additional topics
- Social context

### 1. Reason for the study

The reason for the launch of the Prevalence Monitor for Domestic Violence and Sexually Inappropriate Behavior (PHGSG)<sup>1</sup> in 2020 was the presentation of the study into the prevalence of domestic violence and child abuse (Ten Boom & Wittebrood, 2019) to the Dutch parliament. The Minister of that time of Health, Welfare and Sport and the Minister of that time for Legal Protection indicated that they believed it is important that research into the prevalence of domestic violence and child abuse is conducted more frequently than previously was the case (letter dated 5 February 2019). In addition, in response to the social #MeToo debate and the debate in the Dutch parliament on the Committee of Inquiry's report into Sexual Harassment and Abuse in Sports (De Vries Committee), a motion was passed in which, one of the conclusions was that there is no clear picture of the scale and development of cases of sexual harassment and sexual violence. Among other things, the motion requests the government to periodically conduct quantitative scientific research so that developments (primarily of the extent) of sexual harassment and sexual violence can be permanently monitored and the effect of prevention policy can be established.

After the start of the Monitor, the second measurement took place in 2022 and the third in 2024. This report describes the results of PHGSG 2024.

### 2. Design of the study

The figures in this PHGSG are based on an internet survey among a sample of the Dutch population aged 16 years and older (approximately 14.8 million people). One hundred thousand people were approached for the investigation. About 25 thousand people have completed the questionnaire, a response of 25.6 percent. This large number of respondents enables us to make reliable and detailed statements about the prevalence of domestic violence and sexually inappropriate behavior in the Netherlands.

### 3. Subject of the study

The Monitor describes the nature and extent to which domestic violence and sexually inappropriate behavior occur in the Netherlands. The data are based on self-reporting, this means that the respondent reports about his/her own feelings and experiences. Domestic violence involves acts of violence such as psychological violence, physical violence, stalking by ex-partner and sexually

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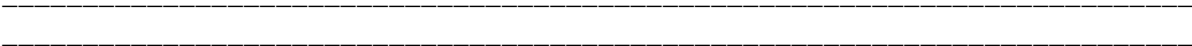
<sup>1</sup> In 2020 the monitor was named 'Prevalence Monitor for Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence'. In 2022 its name has changed to 'Prevalence Monitor for Domestic Violence and Sexually Inappropriate Behavior'. This change took place because the occurrences that measure sexual inappropriate behavior are not only about sexual violence, but also about sexual harassment. Sexually inappropriate behavior is a better all-encompassing term to describe these different sexual occurrences.

inappropriate behavior committed by someone in the domestic circle. The term “domestic circle” refers to the social relationship between victim and perpetrator, i.e. family members, relatives and (ex-)partners. “Domestic circle” does not refer to the location: the incidents do not necessarily have to have happened at home. Sexually inappropriate behavior includes all acts of sexual harassment and violence. Sexually inappropriate behavior can occur inside and outside the domestic circle, both online and offline (in the “real world”).

In this monitor the following acts of domestic violence and sexually inappropriate behavior are discussed separately: psychological violence in the domestic circle, physical violence in the domestic circle, stalking by an ex-partner, offline sexual harassment, online sexual harassment and physical sexual violence. The questions asked refer to violence experienced during a period of 5 years or in the 12 months previous to the survey. Since the fieldwork of this survey took place in March and April 2024, the annual prevalence of victimization relates to the period from March/April 2023 to March/April 2024. In addition, it is addressed to what extent this victimization is structural (i.e. at least monthly).

Victimization of domestic violence and sexually inappropriate behavior is broken down by relevant characteristics of victims such as gender, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, migration background, the position in the household, household’s prosperity level and urbanity of the municipality. Explanations of these characteristics can be found in section 1.2 of the Introduction.

It is also described who the perpetrators are, what the consequences are for the victims, and with whom the victims talked about their experiences. Additional subjects are victimization of domestic violence and sexually inappropriate behavior during childhood or any other period in life, being a perpetrator of domestic violence or conducting sexually inappropriate behavior, and suspicion, hearing or seeing of domestic violence to some-one in the vicinity.



**Psychological violence as part of domestic violence**

For the PHGSG 2024, some concepts were adjusted at the request of the Monitoring Committee. Whereas the previous measurements (2020 and 2022) included verbal aggression in the home and coercive control in the home, in 2024 these have been replaced by the new concept of psychological violence in the home.

Psychological violence refers to the structural forms of verbal aggression in the domestic circle. That is, the forms that occur monthly or more frequently. In addition, the forms of coercive control in the domestic circle, which involve threats and intimidation, fall under domestic psychological violence. Thereby, the concept of coercive control in the domestic environment is defined differently in 2024 than in the previous measurements (2020 and 2022).

The concept of psychological violence, and the concepts of domestic violence associated with it, were defined for the first time in 2024. The forms of harassment and violence included under psychological violence were also asked in a similar way in 2020 and 2022. This was used to determine the new concepts of psychological violence and domestic violence for 2020 and 2022. The previously

published figures on domestic violence are therefore not one-to-one comparable with the figures in the current monitor; they involve a different operationalization of domestic violence.

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#### 4. Answers to the research questions

A number of objectives and related research questions have been formulated for this monitor in consultation with the WODC. These are answered below.

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What is the nature and extent of victimization of domestic violence, sexual intimidation and sexual violence among the Dutch population aged 16 and older?

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##### **Annual prevalence of domestic violence**

In 2024, 9 percent of the population aged 16 and older (nearly 1.3 million people) reported having been the victim of one or more forms of *domestic violence* in the past 12 months. This includes domestic violence of a sexually inappropriate nature. Almost 7 percent of the 16-plus population (990 thousand people) has been a structural victim of domestic violence, this means they have experienced at least one form of domestic violence (almost) daily, weekly or monthly in the past 12 months.

If broken down into the various forms of domestic violence, 6 percent were victims of *psychological violence in the domestic circle* (870 thousand people). This includes, for example, incidents where the victim was structurally (monthly, weekly or daily) harassed, belittled or controlled. A specific form of domestic psychological violence is coercive control in the domestic circle. In the past 12 months, 1 percent (almost 200 thousand people) became victims of this.

In the past 12 months, 4 percent of the 16-plus population (more than 530 thousand people) said they had been the victims of *physical violence in the domestic circle*, of which 9 percent (50 thousand people) said that this violence occurred structurally. Physical violence refers to experiences in which violence was threatened, the victim was injured or attempted. The incidents range from threats of harm to attempted suffocation or injury from the use of weapons.

Five percent of the 16-plus population (nearly 730 thousand people) were victim of *coercive control in the domestic circle* in the past 12 months. Due to its repeated nature, this form of domestic violence is by definition structural: it involves violence in which one person strongly dominates and controls the other. The victim may be denied certain freedoms by the other person, such as maintaining social contacts or having their own money. The perpetrator can also threaten to harm himself, the victim, or loved ones.

Of people aged 16 and over with an ex-partner, 2 percent (over 210 thousand people) said they had been victims of *stalking by an ex-partner* in the past 12 months. Due to its repeated nature, stalking is, just like psychological violence, by definition a structural form of domestic violence.

### **Annual prevalence of sexually inappropriate behavior**

In 2024, 12 percent of the population aged 16 and older (more than 1.7 million people) was victim of one or more forms of *sexually inappropriate behavior* in the past 12 months. Of the 16-plus population, 2 percent (230 thousand people) was a structural victim of this form of violence.

Looking at the specific forms of sexually inappropriate behavior, 8 percent of the people aged 16 and over (almost 1.2 million people) reported having been a victim of *offline sexual harassment*<sup>2</sup> in the past 12 months. For 14 percent of the victims (more than 160 thousand people), the intimidation was of a structural nature. Offline sexual harassment concerns experiences with sexual harassment that took place in the ‘real world’, i.e. not online, and without physical contact between the perpetrator and the victim. Examples from this form of sexual harassment range from sexually suggestive comments to having to witness sexual acts.

Of the population aged 16 years and older, 5 percent (more than 760 thousand people) said that they have been victim of *online sexual harassment* in the past 12 months. For 14 percent of the victims (almost 105 thousand people) this was structural. This form of harassment concerns unwanted sexual behavior that took place via the internet, for example via social media, WhatsApp, (video)chat or e-mail. Examples are sexually offensive comments or being forced to perform online sexual acts.

Of the people aged 16 and over, 4 percent (more than 520 thousand people) said they have been a victim in the past 12 months of *physical sexual violence*. For 4 percent of the victims (almost 20 thousand people), this violence was structural. It concerns situations in which transgressive physical contact took place, ranging from unwanted touching to rape

### **Overlap between domestic violence and sexually inappropriate behavior**

Domestic violence can be sexually inappropriate behavior, and vice versa, sexually inappropriate behavior can take place in the domestic circle. This overlap between domestic violence and sexually inappropriate behavior is small: 1 percent of the 16-plus population (almost 205 thousand people) were victim of domestic sexually inappropriate behavior, while 8 percent (1.2 million people) were victims of domestic violence without sexually inappropriate behavior. Conversely, sexually inappropriate behavior for the most part does not take place in the domestic circle: 11 percent of the 16-plus population (almost 1.6 million people) has been a victim of sexually inappropriate behavior by an (unknown) perpetrator from outside the domestic circle. For 1 percent (almost 205 thousand people) this happened within the domestic circle.

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What is the trend of the annual prevalence of domestic violence, sexual harassment and sexual violence?

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### **Development domestic violence 2020–2024**

The annual prevalence of domestic violence in 2024 (9 percent) does not differ from that of 2022 or 2020 (both 9 percent). This also applies to the underlying forms of domestic violence: psychological violence in the domestic circle (6 percent in all three years), physical violence in the domestic circle (4 percent in all three years), and stalking by an ex-partner (2 percent in all three years).

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<sup>2</sup> Offline sexual harassment is sexual harassment/intimidation that does not take place via internet. It is the counterpart of online sexual harassment. To emphasize this, the name of this specific form of violence has changed: in the PHGSG 2020 this form of sexual harassment was called ‘non-physical sexual harassment’.



### **Development sexually inappropriate behavior 2020–2024**

In 2024 the annual prevalence of sexually inappropriate behavior was 12 percent. This is comparable to 2020, when it was 11 percent. In 2022 it was 13 percent, a higher proportion than in 2024. The annual prevalence of offline sexual harassment was in 2022 (then 9 percent) and 2024 (8 percent) higher than in 2020 (then 7 percent). The annual prevalence of online sexual harassment is in 2024 (5 percent), after an increase in 2022 (then 6 percent), again comparable with 2020 (then 5 percent). Between 2020 and 2024 the proportion of victims of physical sexual violence in the past 12 months has not changed significantly.

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Are there differences in the nature and extent of victimization of domestic violence, sexual harassment and sexual violence between different population groups (gender, age, sexual orientation, and other relevant groups)?

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### **Differences in victimization of domestic violence between population groups**

Women are about as likely to be victims of domestic violence as men (10 versus 7 percent). Young people are more likely to be victims than older people. In 2024, 24 percent of 16- to 18-year-olds were victims of domestic violence in the past 12 months. Among 18- to 24-year-olds, it was 19 percent. Among people 65 years and older, 2 percent were victims. Bi-plus women (17 percent) and people who identify as non-binary/genderqueer (26 percent) are victims relatively often.

### **Differences in victimization of sexually inappropriate behavior between population groups**

For sexually inappropriate behavior, women are more than twice as likely to be victims than men (16 versus 7 percent). Young people are more likely to be victims than older people. In 2024, 25 percent of 16- to 18-year-olds and 30 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds were victims. Among those over 65, it was 3 percent. Among young women aged 16 to 18, more than one-third (36 percent) has been victim of sexually inappropriate behavior. Among women aged 18 to 24, it was two-fifths (43 percent). Bi-plus women and people who identify as non-binary/genderqueer are relatively often victims. People with a completed college or university education and residents of more urbanized communities are victims relatively often.

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Who are the perpetrators of domestic violence, sexual intimidation and sexual violence?

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Domestic violence is most often committed by a partner or ex-partner. For psychological violence in the domestic circle 41 percent of the victims indicate that the partner was the perpetrator, 19 percent say the ex-partner. For physical violence in the domestic circle these percentages are lower, respectively 31 and 11 percent. Parents, brothers, sisters, children or other family members are mentioned less often as perpetrator.

For sexually inappropriate behavior, the majority of the perpetrators are from outside the domestic circle. For offline and online sexual harassment, about half of the victims report that the perpetrator is unknown. For physical sexual violence, most of the victims (61 percent) know the perpetrator. Perpetrators from outside the domestic circle that are mentioned relatively often are acquaintances from parties/going out, colleagues, dates, close friends, and - in the case of online sexual harassment - online acquaintances.

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What are the consequences for the victims of domestic violence, sexual intimidation and sexual violence?

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When interpreting the figures on the consequences, it must be taken into account that within the various forms of domestic violence and sexually inappropriate behavior, the incidents can differ greatly in terms of seriousness and impact on the victim. For physical sexual violence, the investigated incidents range from, for example, unwanted kissing to unwanted sexual intercourse. It is clear that the consequences for the victims of the former incident are different from those for the victims of the latter incident. And the figure show this, too.

In 2024, 49 percent of the victims of physical violence in the domestic circle in the past 12 months say that they (have) experienced consequences. Of victims of domestic psychological violence, 64 percent said so, of victims of ex-partner stalking, 67 percent.

Victims of offline sexual harassment (24 percent), online sexual harassment (20 percent) and physical sexual violence (32 percent) said they experienced negative consequences from the incident. It is important to note that for physical sexual violence, a vast majority (66 percent) experienced consequences if the unwanted incidents of sexual touching and kissing are excluded.

When looking at the nature of the consequences, for domestic violence, psychological problems are the most common, followed by relationship problems. For sexually inappropriate behavior, psychological problems are also the most frequently cited negative consequence, followed by sexual problems.

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To what extent do victims of domestic violence, sexual harassment and sexual violence talk to others about their experiences?

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The majority of victims of domestic violence talk to someone about their experiences. Of the victims of domestic violence, depending on the experience, 70 to 80 percent say they have talked to someone. Victims talked the most with people in their own social circle: mainly friends (30 to 50 percent), the partner (20 to 40 percent) or other family members or relatives (30 to 40 percent). People also talk relatively often to professional caregivers, such as (family) doctors, psychologists or social workers (about 30 percent).

Depending on the experience, 60 to 70 percent of victims of sexual inappropriate behavior talk to someone about their experiences. Victims talk the most with friends (35 to 50 percent), followed by the partner (15 to 25 percent) and other family members or relatives (10 to 15 percent). Professional counselors are talked with by 5 to 10 percent of the victims.

Comparatively little contact is made with institutes such as the police, Veilig Thuis and Centrum Seksueel Geweld. Depending on experience, 4 to 9 percent of victims of domestic violence talk to the police. Among victims of sexually transgressive behavior, it is 1 to 2 percent. Depending on experience, 2 to 3 percent of the victims of domestic violence talk to employees of Veilig Thuis.

Professionals of Centrum Seksueel Geweld are consulted by less than 0.5 percent of victims of sexual inappropriate behavior.

## **5. Additional topics**

### **Domestic violence and sexually inappropriate behavior in childhood**

In 2024, 16 percent indicated that they have been the victim of domestic physical violence in childhood (before the age of 12). About 6 percent were in their childhood victims of offline sexual harassment and physical sexual violence, respectively. Online sexual harassment was experienced by 4 percent of people aged 16 and older in their childhood. This form of harassment can only have affected the relatively younger generations because there was no Internet before.

Childhood victimization correlates with recent victimization. For example, two-fifths (41 percent) of victims of domestic physical violence had also experienced this form of violence before age 12. Among those who were not victims in 2024, this is 15 percent. Similarly, for offline and online sexual harassment and sexual violence, the proportion of victims is higher among people who were also victims in childhood.

### **Domestic violence and sexually inappropriate behavior throughout life**

A quarter of the population aged 16 and older has been a victim of domestic physical violence at some point in their lives (25 percent). One-fifth experienced offline sexual harassment (20 percent) or physical sexual violence (20 percent) at some point in their lives. More than 10 percent have ever been victims of online sexual harassment.

### **Self-reported perpetrators of domestic violence and sexually inappropriate behavior**

Of those aged 16 years and older, 2 percent reported that, there were instances in the past 12 months, when they themselves have been physically aggressive, controlling and/or intimidating in the domestic circle. This may also include unwanted sexual behavior or stalking an ex-partner. This is about 300 thousand people. Between 2020 and 2024, the proportion of self-reported perpetrators did not change.

Victimization of domestic violence and/or sexually inappropriate behavior in the domestic circle correlates with self-reported perpetration. Of those who say they have been victims of domestic violence, 12 percent say they themselves have also engaged in aggressive, controlling or intimidating behavior in the domestic circle. Of those who have not been victims, this is 1 percent. Also, people who say they have been victims of domestic physical violence, sexual harassment and/or sexual violence in childhood are with 6 percent more likely to say they are themselves perpetrators than those who were not victims in childhood (1 percent).

### **Experiences of domestic violence and sexually inappropriate behavior to someone close**

Overall, 26 percent report having had experiences with domestic violence to someone close to them: 18 percent have suspected it and/or 11 percent have heard or seen it. Sexual inappropriate behavior is less often suspected (7 percent) and/or observed in the close environment (7 percent). Overall, 13 percent report having had experiences of sexually transgressive behavior in someone close to them.

Of those who have ever heard or seen domestic violence in their environment, 7 percent have intervened. For sexually inappropriate behavior, 11 percent reported it.

More often, people talk to someone about the experience. Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) say they did so when they suspected, heard or saw domestic violence in their environment. When it comes to sexually inappropriate behavior, 73 percent indicate this. In most cases they spoke with the victim themselves. Talking to the (suspected) perpetrator, a social worker or the police was less common.

## **6. Social context**

### **Corona pandemic**

Whereas in 2020 and 2022 the corona pandemic had an impact on prevalence rates of domestic violence and sexual inappropriate behavior, this was not the case in 2024. There were significantly fewer cases of corona then and restrictive measures were no longer in place. In comparing the annual prevalences, the difference in social context due to the corona pandemic must be taken into account.

### **Media attention**

In addition in 2022, there was another social issue at play that was not so topical in 2020 and 2024: media coverage of sexually inappropriate behavior. The events at The Voice of Holland following the online program BOOS is an example of this. There are indications that the attention on this topic led to increased reporting of sexually inappropriate behavior. The aftermath of this may also continue to influence the outcomes of PHGSG 2024.