**Figure 2.19c. SURVEY SAMPLING: Illustrative Newspaper Articles 3**

**EM9422: The Globe and Mail, December 15, 1994, pages A1, A4**

# Harassment risk high, study says

## Survey shows 23% of adult women report sexual pressure at work

**BY ALANNA MITCHELL**
**Social Trends Reporter**

Nearly one in four Canadian women over 18 – or 2.4 million – have been sexually harassed on the job, according to a ground-breaking study by Statistics Canada.

Five per cent reported unwanted sexual touching related to their work and another 1 per cent said they had been forced into having sex as a result of being employed. If accurate, that 1 per cent of the sample would represent about 100,000 women. The most frequent assailants were co-workers and bosses.

The figures come from the landmark *Violence Against Women Survey* conducted by Statscan in 1993. It was the first national survey of its kind anywhere in the world and involved telephone interviews with 12,000 randomly-selected women across the country. Its initial findings on the prevalence of attacks against women were published a year ago.

Yesterday, the survey's figures on work-related sexual harassment were published in the agency's quarterly *Perspectives on Labour and Income*. They are the first national figures published on a topic that has become pressing over the past decade as women entered the work force in unprecedented numbers. Last year, 45.2 per cent of the Canadian labour force was female.

As well, such incidents as the testimony of Anita Hill against U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, the success of David Mamet's play *Oleanna* and the just-released Hollywood movie *Disclosure* starring Demi Moore and Michael Douglas have brought the topic of sexual harassment to public attention. Holly Johnson, a senior analyst at Statscan who was in charge of the *Violence Against Women Survey*, said the data provide empirical proof that women's feelings of vulnerability are accurate.

The earlier research from the survey showed that 51 per cent of Canadian women reported at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since age 16.

Twenty-nine per cent of wives said they had been violently treated by a husband. And 60 per cent of women felt worried about walking alone after dark.

"The evidence is very clear that far too many women are abused in the context of their families. And we also know that increasingly women feel unsafe in the streets," said Robert Glossop of the Vanier Institute of the Family. "This evidence now tells us that about a quarter of women feel at risk in their jobs. Where do women feel safe?"

The survey found that most respondents who had ever experienced work-related sexual harassment were harassed in more than one way. And it found that the least severe forms of harassment were the most common.

For example, 77 per cent of the women who reported harassment (statistically representing about 1.9 million women) said that the man had made inappropriate comments about their body or sex life. On the other hand, 18 per cent said they were pressured to have sex on the threat that their job might suffer if they did not.

More than half the women who had been sexually harassed said the person who had done it was a male co-worker. Another 39 per cent said it was a male boss. Thirteen per cent said it was a male client or customer and another 3 per cent said it was a male student. The survey did not catalogue female violence against men.

The survey also found that 6 per cent of women who were currently working reported experiencing at least one form of sexual harassment related to work in the 12 months before the survey was taken. This would work out to nearly 400,000 women.

Young women were more likely than older women to be harassed. In 1993, 10 per cent of women aged 18 to 24 had been harassed on the job, compared to 6 per cent of all working women. And unmarried women, no matter what their ages, were also more likely to be sexually harassed on the job than married women.

The amount of money a woman makes does not appear to influence whether she will be sexually harassed.

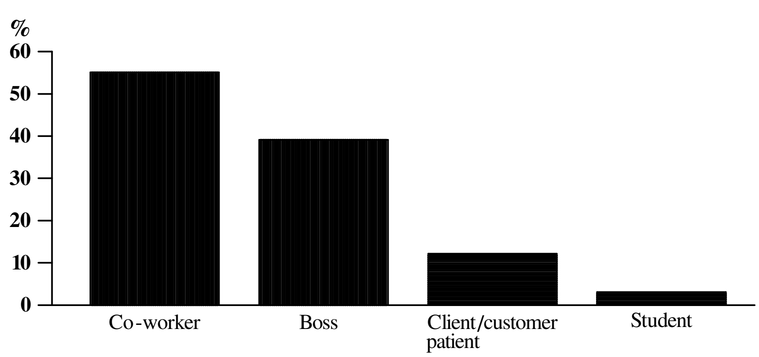
David Northrup, manager of the survey research centre at the Institute of Social Research at York University in Toronto, said the magnitude of the problem is downright frightening. He has worked on a smaller, unpublished study of work-place sexual harassment.

### THE DEFINITION

The Violence Against Women Survey defined these unwelcome actions by men – co-workers, bosses, customers, patients or students -- as work-related sexual harassment:

- Making a woman uncomfortable by commenting inappropriately about her body or sex life;
- Making her uncomfortable by repeatedly asking for a date and refusing to take no for an answer;
- Leaning over her unnecessarily, getting too close, or cornering her;
- Hinting that she could lose her job, or that her employment situation might suffer, if she did not have a sexual relationship with him.

### SOURCES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AGAINST WOMEN




Note: Figures do not add to 100% because of multiple responses
*Source: Violence Against Women Survey, 1993*



(*continued overleaf*)

"It doesn't feel good to be a male and read this stuff," he said. "You get irritated because other men are such assholes."

He said he feared the actual number of women who are harassed in the workplace is larger than the study found. His work – in which he reinterviews people who have just been questioned for a survey – shows that people tend to hold back telling interviewers such things.

Patricia O'Hagan, a sociologist at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, B.C., and its harassment policy co-ordinator, also said work-place sexual harassment is probably a much bigger problem than the study found.

The study confined itself to a narrow definition of sexual harassment, asking only about men who made inappropriate comments about a woman's body or sex life, got unnecessarily close to or cornered a woman, repeatedly asked for a date and refused to take no for an answer, and threatened to hurt her job security if the woman did not have sex.

Dr. O'Hagan said such types of harassment as telling a woman she ought to be at home having babies would not be covered under such a definition, nor would things like workplace-related stalking or graffiti.

Despite this, she said she expects the survey results to be attacked by those who do not wish to believe them. But she said the fact that Statscan is able to conduct such a survey and publish its results shows that the subject of work-related sexual harassment is finally coming out of the closet.

The study was not able to measure whether work-related sexual harassment is increasing. But speculation runs both ways. Mr. Northrup said he feels that as women achieve a critical mass in the labour force, they will demand and receive better treatment.

Ellen Gee, chairwoman of sociology and anthropology at Simon Fraser, said that the opposite may happen. She explained that sexual harassment is a reflection of the power difference between men and women in society. As more women enter the work force, men may perceive them as an ever-growing threat and make greater attempts to discourage them from working.

**REFERENCE:** Statistics Canada – Holly Johnson: Work-related sexual harassment. *Perspectives on Labour and Income* **6**(#4): 9-12 (Winter, 1994). Catalogue 75-001E, ISSN 0840-8750. [Arts Library call number: CA1 SC 75-001]

1 In the first sentence of the third paragraph of the middle column of the article EM9422 reprinted overleaf on page 2.157, explain what is meant by the phrase .... *statistically representing about 1.9 million women* .... .

2 At the top of the right-hand column of the article EM9422 reprinted overleaf on page 2.157, a box with the heading THE DEFINITION is given; discuss briefly:

- the *statistical* importance of this information to the survey;
- the *statistical* reason(s) for including the information in the box with the newspaper article.

3 The last paragraph of the middle column of article EM9422 reprinted overleaf on page 2.17 reports that *Young women were more likely than older women to be harassed. In 1993, 10 per cent of women aged 18 to 24 had been harassed on the job, compared to 6 per cent of all working women. And unmarried women, no matter what their ages, were also more likely to be sexually harassed on the job than married women.* Describe briefly the *statistical* issues involved in these two statements.

- Outline how the issues you have identified might be addressed in a future investigation of the same topic.

4 Discuss briefly the strength(s) and weakness(es) of the diagram at the lower right overleaf on page 2.157 as a pictorial method of data presentation; include in your discussion suggestions for overcoming the weakness(es) you identify.

5 For the diagram given overleaf at the lower right, identify the paragraph of the article EM9422 where the data are given.

- Discuss critically the following statement: *Among the four categories of sources of work-related sexual harassment against women, the diagram shows that male co-workers are* most *likely, and male students* least *likely, to engage in such behaviour.*

6 *Statistical* and other issues of interest arise in the second paragraph of the left-hand column above: *He said he feared the actual number of women .... people tend to hold back telling interviewers such things.*

- Which of our six error categories, and the resulting limitation imposed on Answers, are involved in this paragraph?
- What *other* paragraphs of the article EM9422 deal with the same *statistical* issue? Explain briefly.

7 The second-last paragraph of the article EM9422 reprinted above states that *The study was not able to measure whether work-related sexual harassment is increasing*; suggest possible reason(s) for this limitation on the Answers.

- Outline how an investigation might be conducted to quantify the change in level of work-related sexual harassment over time.