To Report or Not to Report?

Understanding the impacts of reporting decisions for family and sexual violence in Aotearoa New Zealand

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The results in this report are not official statistics, they have been created for research purposes from the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) managed by Statistics New Zealand.

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Careful consideration has been given to the privacy, security and confidentiality issues associated with using administrative and survey data in the IDI. Further detail can be found in the privacy impact assessment for the Integrated Data Infrastructure available from www.stats.govt.nz.

Executive Summary

Background

Most victims of family violence (FV) and sexual violence (SV) do not report their criminal victimisation to police, but instead their experiences remain part of the 'dark figure of crime', or the proportion of actual crimes committed that remain officially unrecorded. The gap between victimisation and reported victimisation has a number of broad consequences for the policies and practices of government.

In this report we combine New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS) and other Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) data to consider two broad questions. First, what individual, community and offence-related factors predict non-reporting of FV and SV offences to Police (RQ1)? Second, is reporting or not associated with differences in wellbeing outcomes (RQ2)? Our analyses help to contextualise research and policy that relies on reported crime, and to identify areas where, as a result, reporting-associated policy responses may have potential shortcomings.

Existing Research

Victims of crime play a critical role as gatekeepers in the criminal justice system, with their decisions on whether to report influencing what the system knows and how it responds. While reporting is often viewed as a social responsibility that aids in apprehending and prosecuting offenders, research has more frequently explored why victims choose *not* to report rather than why they *do*. This is despite research showing that the perceived benefits of reporting—such as increased safety, access to formal support, and justice—are often undermined by stigma associated with victimisation and help-seeking, negative experiences with the criminal justice system, and uncertain outcomes. Many victims prioritise their personal recovery, safety, and control over their experiences, rather than engaging with the criminal justice system.

Hardy (2019) identifies four levels of influence that affect decisions to report crimes to the police: structural, social, situational, and individual. At the structural level, national or regional-level policies and practices create perceptions that the police may be unresponsive. Social influences include the impact of family, friends, and communities; individuals may be deterred from reporting due to exposure to the negative experiences of others, or normalisation of criminal behaviours. Situational factors involve the context of the crime, such as the type, frequency, and relationship to the perpetrator, which can make reporting seem futile, traumatic, or risky. At the individual level, personal identity, knowledge, and past experiences play a role; some may not recognise their experiences as crimes or may fear re-victimisation or exposure. Others may rely on informal supports or feel they have the resilience to handle the situation without involving Police.

Psychological perspectives on crime reporting suggest that the decision to report, particularly for FV and SV, is influenced by how victims perceive and label their experiences. The social construction of crime plays a crucial role in whether victims recognise their experiences as crimes, with many failing to acknowledge incidents like rape due to concerns about self-labelling as a ‘victim’, or societal stereotypes. Cognitive dissonance can lead victims to reinterpret the seriousness of their victimisation to protect their self-image and beliefs about the world. The responses of informal support networks also affect whether victims feel supported or blamed, which can impact their decision to report. Understanding these psychological dynamics is key to addressing barriers to reporting and supporting victims effectively.

Many studies have not adequately tested theoretical models of reporting and use different measures and research designs to test predictors of reporting, leading to inconsistent findings regarding individual predictors. That said, some notable characteristics emerge as being potentially important predictors of reporting. Physical injury is a consistent predictor of reporting across FV and SV cases, while weapon use and property damage are associated with increased FV reporting. Victims are more likely to report when multiple types of abuse occur or when the perpetrator is a stranger. Perpetrator characteristics, such as substance use, multiple perpetrators, or differing ethnicity, can also affect reporting, though this area is under-researched. Victim characteristics, including gender, age, and ethnicity, show mixed effects on reporting, although women and older victims are generally more likely to report. Situational factors like children witnessing the offence or the presence of bystanders can also increase the liklihood of reporting.

Research on the impact of FV and SV on health reveals significant differences in physical and mental wellbeing among victims. However, research often struggles to determine the sequence between victimisation, health impacts, and reporting, making it difficult to establish the extent to which impacts of victimisation contribute to reporting decisions. That said, some studies suggest that more severe psychosocial health consequences, such as PTSD symptoms or impaired social functioning, are linked to increased reporting of FV and SV. Employment is another complex factor, with some studies finding no effect on reporting likelihood, while others note that those whose employment is negatively affected by FV are more likely to seek formal help. Overall, the relationship between reporting and wellbeing remains intertwined with various health and social factors, which are not always clearly delineated in existing research.

Method

The current study used data derived from Statistics New Zealand's IDI. The IDI is a research database containing deidentified, linked data for all Aotearoa New Zealand residents, sourced from a variety of government and non-government organisations (NGOs)[1].

The sample for the current study comprised all New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS) respondents who reported at least one offence involving FV and/or SV in the 12 months prior to the survey period. For the purposes of analyses, data from victims of SV and victims of FV were analysed separately. NZCVS respondents could have experienced both SV and FV, including within the same incident, and therefore appeared in both the SV and FV victim groups.

Whether or not the FV or SV offences were reported to Police was a primary variable of interest in the current study, used as the criterion or dependent variable to inform RQ1, and as the means of separating groups of victims to inform RQ2. This variable was sourced from self-reports from NZCVS respondents, including whether the offence was reported by the victim themselves (for RQ1), or whether the offence was reported by anyone (for RQ2). Reporting to Police was captured dichotomously across all offences reported by survey respondents, as either 'at least one offence reported' (i.e. 'reporters'), or 'no offences reported' (i.e. 'non-reporters'). Findings from our analyses can therefore be interpreted as predictors or outcomes associated with *any* reporting, rather than as predictors or outcomes associated with reporting a specific offence.

Variables used in the current study were sourced from a variety of different agency datasets housed within the IDI. Data contained in the IDI as at October 2023 were available for analysis. These variables were used to create indicators of person-related characteristics, community-related characteristics, and offence-related characteristics that helped to inform the two research questions. Wellbeing outcomes data were also sourced from these datasets to inform RQ2.

Results and Implications

The key findings revealed a substantial under-reporting of both FV and SV, with SV having a notably lower reporting rate than FV. This highlights the important role of self-report victimisation surveys like the NZCVS in capturing data on these 'hidden' forms of violence. There may also be a need for targeted efforts to reduce barriers to reporting both FV and SV, such as creating subjectively 'safer' reporting pathways, and providing victims with more autonomy over what happens following their reports.

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[1] For more information, see: https://www.stats.govt.nz/integrated-data/integrated-data-infrastructure

The current results identified that victim perceptions of FV and SV offences as crimes were significantly related to reporting decisions. Many victims did not recognise their experiences as criminal offences, which contributed to low reporting rates. These findings highlight a need for ongoing research to understand why these offences are not being viewed as such, and potentially for further awareness-raising campaigns highlighting the diversity of both victims of FV and SV, and the many forms in which these harmful behaviours can manifest.

The current study also found that FV victims from more deprived backgrounds or who are more reliant on government agencies to meet basic living needs, and victims who experienced more severe forms of FV and SV may be disproportionately represented in official crime data. Higher levels of deprivation were associated with increased reporting rates, potentially due to greater familiarity with government services or fewer available informal support options. Conversely, less deprived people may rely more on personal networks or have the means to access private support, reducing the need to formally report offences. Less deprived people may also worry more about the stigma associated with being a victim of FV or SV. Similarly, victims who reported more severe offences, including those resulting in more serious injuries or involving threats of physical violence, were more likely to report offences to Police, possibly driven by the urgency of needing medical care or preventing further harm. This pattern suggests that the official data might be skewed towards capturing more extreme forms of violence and cases involving socially vulnerable victims, which may limit understanding of the full spectrum of FV and SV experiences.

Finally, findings from the study raised important questions about the current emphasis on formal reporting as the primary mechanism for addressing FV and SV victimisation. The lack of significant differences in wellbeing outcomes between those who reported and those who did not suggests that alternative forms of support, including informal networks and community resources, may be just as effective at responding to victim needs. Alternatively, the lack of differences in wellbeing outcomes may indicate that formal supports provided to victims are not effective or appropriately responsive to needs. These findings point to the potential benefits of shifting focus towards enabling informal support systems and providing victims with a wider range of options to access help and protect themselves against future victimisation. Future research should aim to explore these possibilities further, ensuring that policies and services are responsive to the diverse needs and experiences of all victims. By reimagining how we support victims beyond the confines of formal reporting, we can create a more inclusive and effective response to FV and SV in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Limitations of Research and Existing Data

While the current research provides valuable insights into the hidden forms of FV and SV in Aotearoa New Zealand and the effects of reporting decisions on victims and official data, several limitations need to be considered. The study's small sample sizes, particularly for SV, resulted in low statistical power, complicating the interpretation of null results and suggesting that some non-significant findings may be due to insufficient power rather than the absence of an effect. Future studies could address this by pooling data from additional waves of the NZCVS, though this depends on consistent data collection practices. Another limitation is the self-reported nature of NZCVS data, which, while capturing unreported crimes, relies on respondents' memory accuracy and willingness to disclose sensitive information. This could mean that a hidden proportion of offences remains unreported, affecting the generalisability and reliability of the findings. Additionally, the retrospective recall of data complicates determining causal relationships, as it is unclear whether the measured outcomes result from FV or SV or pre-existing factors. Although the longitudinal IDI data helps mitigate this issue, the real-world validity of some variables within the IDI poses challenges for interpreting the results.

In addition to general limitations, the study faced specific challenges related to the nature and format of the data available, which impacted the scope of the research. The way offences are captured in the NZCVS—often in clustered forms—limited the ability to analyse characteristics of individual offences and their influence on reporting decisions, as offences were not individually delineated, and specific dates of offences were unknown. Some items of interest, such as emotional responses to offences and avenues of help-seeking, were unavailable due to missing data or not being uploaded to the IDI, narrowing the range of research questions that could be explored. Non-NZCVS data sources also had limitations, such as the absence of a flag for FV-related offences in Police victimisation data, preventing planned comparative analyses. Moreover, the IDI's reliance on administrative proxies for psychosocial wellbeing limited the depth of wellbeing assessments, as these proxies often depend on engagement with government services, which may not accurately reflect the needs of all people. Addressing these issues in future data collection and development practices would enable more comprehensive research on FV and SV in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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Comparing Wellbeing Outcomes for Reporting and Non-reporting Victims of Family and Sexual Violence in Aotearoa New Zealand

Most victims of family violence (FV) and sexual violence (SV) do not report their criminal victimisation to police, but instead their experiences remain part of the 'dark figure of crime', or the proportion of actual crimes committed that remain officially unrecorded. The gap between victimisation and reported victimisation has a number of broad consequences for the policies and practices of government. Besides potential damage to the credibility of recorded crime, to deterrence as it is upheld by the criminal justice system, and even to perceptions of the health of a democracy (Torrente et al., 2017), underreporting leads to concerns about how well we understand the characteristics of these crimes and the experiences of victims, the suitability of the services provided to support and protect victims, and the evaluation of policies for the provision of care for victims and for upholding public safety (Xie & Baumer, 2019). Consequently, it is likely that policies and practices based on police-reported crime do not completely capture the experiences and needs of victims, and may not result in the most suitable responses being provided.

In this report we combine New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS) and other Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) data to consider two broad questions. First, what individual, community and offence-related factors predict non-reporting of FV and SV offences to Police? Second, is reporting or not associated with differences in wellbeing outcomes? Our analyses help to contextualise research and policy that relies on reported crime, and to identify areas where, as a result, reporting-associated policy responses may have potential shortcomings.

Victim Reporting

Arguably there are gatekeepers at every key point in the criminal justice system—actors who decide whether or not a particular event or action will proceed. Because of how important the decision-making of victims is to the criminal justice system, victims have been described as "a principal gatekeeper to the criminal justice system" (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1988, p. 16). Awareness of the extent of such gatekeeping only began to emerge as victimisation surveys similar to the NZCVS came into being in the early 1970s, revealing that victims are often the *first* gatekeeper: meaning that their decision-making, and its potential influence on what is known by the criminal justice system, is particularly important to understand.

But interestingly, although it has been argued that victims intentionally consider the costs and benefits of reporting or not, research on why people *don't* report to police has grown much more in the last several decades than research on why they *do* report. Perhaps this imbalance results from the perspective of the criminal justice system itself, that reporting

is part of the ‘social contract’. Under this view, people *should* report, firstly because it provides a better basis for the system to achieve its objectives such as apprehending and prosecuting perpetrators (Zinzow & Thompson, 2011), or to deliver better retribution, incapacitation or deterrence for the perpetrator (Gottfredson & Gottfredson 1988). In recent decades some feminist scholars and activists have encouraged women victims in particular to report, so that their voices are heard in the criminal justice system (Brooke-Hay, 2020). Finally, reporting is also encouraged under the belief that it should lead to better victim outcomes (e.g., because victims can access more formal help and support; Zinzow & Thompson, 2011).

Formal reporting to Police can lead to greater immediate safety with the removal of the alleged perpetrator, and Police have access to various mechanisms with the potential to increase safety and wellbeing, including multi-agency crisis response systems such as the Integrated Safety Response for family violence in parts of Aotearoa New Zealand. But overall, this official or wider societal view that victim reporting is clearly beneficial, if not an obligation, may fail to recognise that there are still substantial gaps between assurances about the benefits of reporting and the reality of how the experience actually unfolds (Hardy, 2019). This includes how well victims are treated, how well informed they are of the progress of their case, the uncertainty of outcomes, and how long it takes to determine outcomes. For adult victims of sexual assault in particular, arguably even when victims decide to do ‘the right thing’ and report, it is more than likely that the prosecution will fail. In other words, while decisions to report may centre on criminal justice responses available for dealing with the perpetrator and the victim’s perceptions of whether justice can be attained, often victims may be more focused on factors related to their personal recovery needs—rather than the functions of the criminal justice system—such as effective help-seeking (Brooks-Hay, 2020; Koukinen, 2002), avoiding retaliation from the perpetrator (Goodman-Williams et al., 2024); and maintaining agency over their own experiences (Huemmer et al., 2019).

Although victims sometimes regret not reporting, or report only after a considerable delay, in a New South Wales study, not reporting was viewed as beneficial for a number of reasons (Birdsey & Snowball, 2013). These included the avoidance of anticipated escalation (in intimate partner violence; IPV), the embarassment and invasion of privacy, and the stress of reporting. Any benefits of victim reporting may be further undermined by limitations in the ability of the criminal justice system to provide ongoing protection from the offender (Miller & Smolter, 2011). A disturbingly common theme in a recent Aotearoa New Zealand survey study was for FV and SV victims to report that police involvement “made things worse” (The Backbone Collective & Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura, 2024, p. 10).

Theoretical Models of Reporting Decision-Making

Central to understanding victim reporting is an understanding of the decision-making process itself, including characteristics that may influence the process. However much of the research on reporting is atheoretical (Chen & Ullman, 2010), examining correlates that are available rather than pre-selected. This means that much of the existing research focusses on predictors of reporting, rather than mechanisms that may explain the decsion to report or not.

Among potential models, the Rational Choice Framework (RCF) seems the most obvious candidate for application in this area. Consistent with interview studies with victims (e.g., Kelley, 2023; Martin, et al., 2023; Reeves, et al. 2023), the RCF assumes victims decide whether to report based on some form of calculation of the pros and cons of reporting, which may vary depending on the type of crime. For example, reporting stranger attacks requires much less complex decision-making than when the victim and perpetrator know each other, or are (or have been) in a relationship (Lorenz, et al., 2021), and when the victim has experienced multiple FV or SV events, especially with the same perpetrator. In these latter cases, there may be more risk of being disbelieved (Lorenz et al., 2021), of the outcome not being effective or reporting leading to reprisal from the perpetrator (Wolf, et al., 2003), or of Police making the situation worse (The Backbone Collective & Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura, 2024). However, although the RCF is often referred to as a theory, it was originally intended to be a framework and therefore has a number of limitations. For example, it is not clear whether the victim's emotional state (e.g., anger at unfairness of being victimised, fear of future assaults, anxiety about retaliation; Hardy, 2019) or desire for retribution (Brooks-Hay, 2020), or the social and support environment around the victim are adequately factored into decision making when applying the RCF (Xie & Baumer, 2019).

The RCF is also limited in this context by its application to characteristics of the offence itself. Others have broken down victim decision-making into staged models, although it is not clear whether the stages reflect logical categories used by researchers to order the various relevant factors, or an actual linear model of the decision-making stages used by victims. Models with multiple stages reveal the importance of myriad factors other than those associated with the offence itself in deciding to report. For example, Ruback and colleagues (e.g., Greenberg & Ruback, 1992; Ruback et al., 1984) proposed 3 stages in the decision-making process for reporting offences in general: (a) recognising the incident as a crime, (b) deciding how serious it was, and (c) deciding on action (including reporting, or not reporting). Accordingly, the victim's emotional state and the support and advice of significant others (if the victim discloses to others) can be important at all stages.

A different, more descriptive approach to reporting decision-making is seen in research on proposed ‘barriers to reporting’. All of this research has an implicit starting position that people should report to Police, but find it hard to do so. For example, Pijlman et al. (2023, p. 7531) proposed the following categories; Marcantonio et al. (2023) proposed a similar—though five-level—categorisation for sorority women on a US campus.:

> (a) individual barriers, such as feelings of shame, (b) interpersonal barriers, such as the fear of negative social reactions and (c) sociocultural barriers, such as societal stereotypes regarding sexual violence. The findings suggest that victims experience various, but primarily individual, barriers to help-seeking and that these barriers do not strongly differ between help-seekers and non-help-seekers.

Keller and Miller (2015) reported that much of this descriptive research sorts factors associated with reporting (or not) into three general categories: victim specific (individual, household); offence-specific—often the strongest predictors, especially crime seriousness—and environment-specific, including neighbourhood deprivation, social control, others’ advice, social cohesion, and perceived societal norms. The most comprehensive of these descriptive (i.e., atheoretical) approaches, and one that attempts to organise influences on victim decision making into a sort of ecological structure of “layers of resistance” was proposed by Hardy (2019). In Hardy’s model, all four layers of decision-making interact simultaneously. Hardy predicted that individual barriers—defined as “the influence of identity, knowledge, experience and feelings” (p. 307)—and situational factors (from context and environment) would have the most effect on decisions of whether to report to police.

Table 1 shows the factors that Hardy allocated to the various levels, alongside examples summarised from their research.

Table 1

Hardy's Four-Layer Model of Victim Reporting Decision-Making (summarised and adapted from Hardy, 2019)

Level of Influence		Examples from Hardy (2019)
Structural	Perceptions of national or state-level policies, practices that create expectation that police will be unresponsive	Awareness of public service cuts, perceiving police as having insufficient resources, belonging to one or more groups that are subject to gaslighting in social and formal media (e.g., certain immigrant groups)
Social	Family, friends, wider communities	Vicarious exposure to or awareness of the mistreatment experiences of other members of marginalised groups, or other family members, or having witnessed police interacting with family as a child. Or coming from countries where police corruption is rife. Also refers to tolerance of particular families or groups to the behaviour that others might see as worthy of reporting to police.
Situational	Context, environmental factors	Type and frequency of victimisation, location, relationship to perpetrator. Years of victimisation, creating sense that experience is "part and parcel" of life, and a known perpetrator means reporting might make things worse. The process of reporting and having it processed, described as exhausting and traumatising, complicated, and daunting. Not having the time and resources to engage with the system.
Individual	Person's identity, knowledge, experience, feelings	Awareness of whether experiences are crimes, understating of victim rights, having other ways to seek help besides police. Concern that reporting might revictimize or "out" the person (e.g., asylum seekers, LGBTQI+). Becoming "thick skinned" with resources to deal with the experience themselves or with others' support. Not feeling listened to or treated sympathetically or credibly by police previously, unsatisfactory outcomes of reporting. Avoiding blame or shame.

Psychological Perspectives on Reporting

As has already been noted, few studies of FV and SV reporting (or crime reporting in general) have tested theoretical approaches to reporting (e.g., rape reporting; Clay-Warner & McMahon-Howard, 2009), which goes some way to accounting for the confusing array of contradictory findings among the studies of individual predictors. Considering predictors of victims' reporting of all types of crime to Police, it has also been argued that the field has "overlooked how the meaning of victimisation is constructed" (Zaykowski, 2015, p. 272).

Particularly for FV and SV, this social construction aspect of crime definition may be important in the first step of reporting-related decision-making: recognising or acknowledging that a crime has been committed (Muehlenhard & Kimes, 1999; The Backbone Collective & Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura, 2024; Weiss, 2011). There is considerable research to suggest that unacknowledged rape—defined as experiences meeting the definition of rape but not labelled as such by the victim—is common. Failing to acknowledge that one has been raped has often been viewed as an education issue, based on the assumption that the victim is not familiar with the legal definitions of the crime, but research also suggests that resistance to being labelled as a rape victim contributes to this phenomenon (Caron & Mitchell, 2021). Consequently, it could be argued that considerations at all three stages noted by Ruback and colleagues above may influence each other (e.g., not wanting to have to report could change perceptions of whether a crime has occurred; see below). There is less research on unacknowledged FV (but see Clements, et al., 2022), despite that it seems to be commonly observed by those who work with people affected by FV, and in the general community.

Contributors to a motivation to avoid being labelled as a victim could be related to how the person might view themselves (i.e., personal identity) and how others might perceive them (Khan, et al., 2018). In this situation they may refuse to label their experience as a crime even when they describe criminal acts, because seeing oneself as a ‘rape victim’, for instance, creates a self image of disempowerment, in which others can subjugate the newly-labelled victim to their own desires (Khan et al., 2018). For example, in one study using a US National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) sample, a third of victims of sexual assault justified not reporting by excusing a perpetrator’s behaviour as lacking criminal intent, minimising serious injury, seeing themselves (the victim) as contributing to risk of victimisation, palliative comparison (e.g., “it could have been worse, at least I wasn’t killed”) and rejecting identifying as a victim (Fohring, 2015; Weiss, 2011). Victims have also been reported to redefine the event as something from which they learned valuable lessons (e.g., ‘post-traumatic growth’; Fohring, 2015).

When victimised, a person is challenged with integrating their experience with key core beliefs often held prior to the victimisation: that they are (relatively) invulnerable, that the world is fundamentally a reasonable and benevolent place, and that they are a person of value (Fohring, 2015). In a state of cognitive dissonance after the assault due to needing to “integrate incongruous trauma-related impressions to existing structures of belief” (Fohring, 2015, p. 47), victims may seek to avoid the resulting psychological distress, sense of vulnerability and loss of control over the world by using cognitive techniques that alter perceptions of the offence itself or its seriousness. In other words, the key step of identifying their experience as a criminal assault may not be based so much on what happened to them, but on the implications for their identity and social relationships of the experience of

victimisation, when—as one research participant said—"I just want to feel like it didn't affect me" (Khan et al., 2018, p. 442).

Victim wellbeing may also be affected by how key informal supports react to their victimisation. For example, Fohring (2015) has talked about how important victim blaming is for those around a victim. Those who hear about a victim's experience seek to preserve the commitment we all have to the cognitive schema known as the Just World theory (Lerner, 1980), which is important in maintaining psychological health. In simple terms, the Just World theory says that people "get what they deserve". In the context of victimisation, it helps to protect us from the idea that people can be assaulted through no fault of their own. Understanding the psychological forces at work is important to developing realistic approaches to mitigating, for example, victim blaming (Fohring, 2015). Victims' ability to seek help and support from informal sources may also be based on judgements about whether those supports will react positively or negatively and therefore whether they will get the support they seek. Attempts to change negative supporter reactions with simple educational messages may not hit their mark.

Victim reporting often isn't immediate. Fohring (2015) also noted that victims are more likely to report if they discover that they lack sufficient capacity to cope with their experiences: victims who had difficulty sleeping, were tearful, anxious, fearful or depressed were more likely to report. It is not clear in these cases whether victims were reporting because they realised they needed help, or because these symptoms were signals to them of the seriousness of the crime, and that drove reporting. Crime seriousness is a major predictor of reporting, but it is typically defined so vaguely that it would be more accurate to label the variable as *perceived* crime seriousness.

The other important stereotype in understanding predictors of reporting for SV is referred to as the 'real rape' or 'classic rape' stereotype. A surprising number of the factors that predict reporting relate to whether the event, victim or perpetrator conformed to this stereotype. Studies that have considered the real rape stereotype note that it affects individuals' own interpretation of whether what happened to them is grounds for reporting, as well as their evaluations of how their informal supports may respond, and whether police biases will affect formal responses (Brooks-Hay, 2020; Muniz & Powers, 2021; Thomas & Kopel*,* 2023*).* Intriguingly, whereas stereotypes often develop around genuinely common patterns, the real rape stereotype covers only a minority of rapes, perhaps explaining why rape is so rarely reported. But as Muniz and Powers (2021) noted recently, the stereotype applies much better to typical stranger violent crimes like robberies, suggesting that the invocation of the stereotype may be less about what constitutes a sexual assault and more about what constitutes 'legitimate crime' more broadly. If so, a novel theoretical approach to understanding reporting of FV would be to apply the concept of 'real crime' to that as well.

Research on Individual Variables Associated with Reporting SV and FV

When it comes to research on specific predictors of reporting for FV and SV victims, the research literature is sufficiently incoherent to make clear conclusions difficult. Research questions and methodological approaches vary considerably. Other relevant contextual factors such as whether mandatory arrest is in place (for FV) or whether reporting to police is important in accessing support services vary, and are not often clearly reported, making their relevance difficult to determine in comparing studies.

The vast majority of the research FV and SV victim reporting is actually on US college women who experience SV. They are a high-risk group that requires attention, but the conclusions may be difficult to generalise because the different jurisdictions have varying policies about how they deal with reporting, and in a number of these studies the first and sometimes only point of processing is campus-based rather than via regular police. Regarding the remaining literature, some studies look at SV only within the family. Some use samples from services that help victims, and others from nationally representative surveys. Still others ask about hypothetical scenarios using convenience samples or high-risk samples. Subtle differences in variables further cloud the picture (e.g., whether children regularly live in the household vs. were in the house at the time of the offence; perpetrator generally using too much alcohol vs. intoxicated on the day of the offence). Even in studies where people give their reasons for why they have or have not reported, the underlying meaning of the reasons may be unclear. For example if someone says “it was a private matter”, why did they want it to remain private? Does that mean they were seeking to avoid stigma, or wanting to control the outcome themselves, or something else entirely?

This high level of variability in design and measurement across studies has led to a disparate body of literature that is difficult to draw patterns from. That said, some variables do consistently emerge as being potentially important factors in FV or SV reporting. Consistent with several of the theoretical ideas above (e.g., the real crime stereotypes, motivation to maintain the Just World schema, or avoid disempowerment of victimhood) and also perhaps due to measurement inconsistency with other variables, the best predictors of reporting FV and SV are characteristics of the offence itself, such as victim injury, crime severity and weapon use. For example, when only demographic and offence indicators are used, the latter are more predictive of “police awareness” (i.e., awareness of the event by Police; Zaykowski, 2015).

Below is a brief summary of research on factors associated with reporting SV and FV. It is organised by “levels” or sources for clarity, but these do not perfectly align with the ecological levels proposed by Hardy above: the offence itself, the individual characteristics of the parties involved, and then environmental factors and influences from wider social layers. Relatively few of the variables examined have been found to predict reporting (Voce &

Boxall, 2018), and of those that have, findings are often contradictory across studies. Rather than providing a complete listing of all the studies that have examined the variable, instead a few representative examples are provided.

Offence-related Characteristics

- Extent of physical injury is one of the most reliable predictors: for women reporting men's SV toward them (Muniz & Powers, 2021), and for men and women reporting SV (Ceelen, et al., 2019; Ullman & Filipas, 2001), and in reporting FV (Birdsey & Snowball, 2013; Akers & Kaukinen, 2009), but not in the Stavrou et al. (2016) FV study (see Voce & Boxall, 2018 for a review).
- Weapon use was associated with increased FV reporting likelihood for three of five studies reviewed by Voce and Boxall (2018), and with increased likelihood of SV reporting (Carbone-Lopez et al., 2016; Clay-Warner & McMahon-Howard, 2009; Muniz & Powers, 2021).
- A combination of abuse types (rather than one type) was found in an Aotearoa New Zealand study to predict IPV reporting (Malihi et al., 2021) though this finding may also reflect that abuse was ongoing and not just an event, which few studies examine. In an Australian study, having previously reported an incident of IPV increased reporting, but having five or more previous incidents with same person decreased reporting (Birdsey & Snowball, 2013).
- Otherwise, within types of FV, physical violence followed by SV are the forms associated with greater likelihood of reporting (Voce & Boxall, 2018), with FV far more likely to be reported then SV (Stavrou et al., 2016).
- For FV, property damage during the event was also sometimes predictive (Akers & Kaukinen, 2009; Birdsey & Snowball, 2013) and sometimes not (see Voce & Boxall, 2018).
- Relationship to perpetrator: for SV, women reported stranger perpetrators more than non-strangers (Moore and Baker, 2018; Ullman et al., 2001). Conversely, SV by intimate partners is reported less than assaults by non-partners (Ceelen et al., 2019). For FV, unmarried partners reported more often than married partners (see Akers & Kaukinen, 2009 and research reviewed in Lee et al., 2010), and ex-partners were found to be more likely to report than a current partner or girlfriend (Stavrou et al., 2016). Those who have been together with their perpetrator longer are less likely to report (Lee et al., 2010). But being married has also failed to predict FV reporting (Birdsey & Snowball, 2013).

Perpetrator Characteristics

- Overall few perpetrator characteristics were associated with reporting, but this is an area that has notably received little attention in research despite its likely importance.
- Several FV studies of perpetrator substance use at time of their abuse found that it increased reporting (Akers & Kaukinen, 2009; Novisky & Peralta, 2015). But other studies found it was unrelated (see Voce & Boxall, 2018).
- Multiple perpetrators, or perpetrators who were a different ethnicity to the victim led to greater reporting in a review of college student reporting of sexual assault (Sabina & Ho, 2014).
- In one study reporting was more likely when the ethnicity of the perpetrator conformed to a criminal rapist stereotype (e.g., Black; Holmes & Deckard, 2019).

Victim Characteristics

- Being a woman was associated with higher likelihood of reporting than being a man for both FV (Voce & Boxall, 2018) and SV (Muniz & Powers, 2021; Lorenz et al., 2021; Weiss, 2010), and belonging to a sexual or to a gender minority was associated with lower reporting rates (Jachimowski, et al., 2024; Lorenz et al., 2021). But there were studies that found no gender differences for FV or SV (Walsh & Bruce, 2014) and no sexual minority differences (Eisenberg et al., 2021; Martin et al., 2023), even though rates of victimisation tended to be much higher in these groups (Flores et al., 2020).
- Pregnancy reduced the likelihood of reporting (Birdsey & Snowball, 2013) but also did not (Kivisto & Mills, 2023).
- Having consumed alcohol or drugs around the time of the event predicted non-reporting for SV (Ceelen et al., 2019; Carbone-Lopez et al., 2016; Clay-Warner & Burt, 2005), and also was not predictive (Du Mont et al., 2003; Fisher et al., 2003; Ullman & Filipas, 2001).
- For men raped by other men, being a “closeted” gay man was predictive of lower reporting of SV (see review of literature by Thomas and Kopel, 2023). For men who prefer to have sex with women (i.e., ‘straight’ men) fear of having sexuality questioned reduced the likelihood of reporting SV perpetrated by another man (Thomas & Kopel, 2023). And just as sexual, gender and racial minorities are predicted to report less because of anticipated discriminatory attitudes by Police, being involved in other crime as an offender too is associated with not reporting, for women victims of SV (Carbone-Lopez et al., 2016) and FV (Fohring, 2015; Iratzoqui & Cohn, 2020). Here the concern for victims is around the risk of being arrested themselves, especially if they are illegal drug users.

- Turning to ethnicity, White women were more likely to report in some studies (Brooks-Hay, 2020; (Muniz & Powers, 2021), although Voce and Boxall's (2018) review for FV found the White victims were less likely to report than non-White. Black people were also more likely to report (Martin et al., 2023), and Indigenous (Aboriginal) Canadians and 'visible minority' women were more likely to report (Akers & Kaukinen, 2009). Novisky & Peralta (2015) found no effect for ethnicity in FV reporting. Likely some of these differences are due to varying combinations of ethnic groups across studies. Stavrou et al. (2016) found no differences in reporting for victims for whom English was or was not the language spoken at home. But Birdsey & Snowball (2013) found not speaking English was not predictive for IPV. Non-US citizens were more likely to report FV in a US study of FV (Martin et al., 2023).
- Older victims have been found to be more likely to report SV (Gartner & Macmillan, 1995, in Brookes-Hay, 2020). Younger victims are less likely, but especially so on college campuses (Moore & Baker, 2018). For FV, age has been found not to be predictive (Birdsey & Snowball, 2013; Lee et al., 2010; Novisky & Peralta, 2015). But one study found that increasing age in adulthood led to more reporting for IPV, and levels dropped again in senior years (Akers & Kaukinen, 2009).
- For FV, victim education level has been found not to be predictive (Akers & Kaukinen, 2009; Lee et al., 2010; Novisky & Peralta, 2015). But higher income and education predicted reduced reporting for SV (see Brooks-Hay, 2020, for specific sources). Those experiencing economic disadvantage were found to be more likely to report FV (e.g., being unable to raise $2000 in an emergency; Stavrou et al., 2016). But Voce and Boxall (2018) reported that most studies found socioeconomic status per se was not relevant in predicting FV reporting. Women who depend financially on the perpetrator are also at reduced likelihood of seeking police attention (see Lee et al., 2010, for specific sources).
- For both FV and SV, the victim's evaluation of the seriousness of the crime (Carbone-Lopez et al., 2016; Sabina & Ho, 2014; for SV; Kang & Lynch, 2014, for FV) is associated with reporting. And one of the most robust predictors of reporting as we noted above is acknowledging that a crime has occurred (see also for SV: Littleton et al., 2008; Weiss, 2011; for FV: Stavrou et al., 2016; Voce & Boxall, 2018; and for victimisation in general, Fohring, 2015).
- Other variables also investigated include urban vs rural analyses (typically nonsignificant; see Akers & Kaukinen, 2009; Stavrou et al., 2016; for FV and SV), and having a protection order in place, which can be predictive for FV reporting (Birdsey & Snowball, 2013)**.**

Children and Bystander Involvement

The role of children in reporting FV has received significant attention and the pattern is complex. Simply having children yielded mixed results (not predictive: Novisky & Peralta, 2015; predictive: Akers & Kaukinen, 2009). But having children present during offences (i.e., witnessing) is a relatively consistent predictor of reporting (Voce & Boxall, 2018), and concern that children were at risk also predicted reporting (Birdsey & Snowball, 2013). Lee et al. (2010) noted how mixed findings were by observing that women with children were also sometimes more reluctant to report to police or proceed with prosecution because they feared losing custody of children or perpetrator retaliation around access to children. They also raised the important issue of considering cultural values around the importance of keeping family together vs. one's own wellbeing (see Lee et al. for individual references), although these seem likely not to simply map onto ethnic identity given mixed ethnicity results and the potential for religious identity to be a confound.

The role of other people in reporting is also complex. Bystanders are present in a surprisingly large proportion of sexual assaults, but make little or no difference to helpseeking or police reporting (Powers Mondragon & Rennison, 2023. However, encouragement by others to recognise the offending as a crime and to report it may increase reporting of SV (Paul et al., 2014; see also Brooks-Hay, 2020, for a review of the role of consultation with family/friends in both identifying the incident as a crime, and reporting to Police or to support agencies). DePrince et al. (2020) found that when social supports provided more positive tangible support and less negative support (e.g., distracting them, treating them differently than before), victims of SV were more likely to report to police. And there is some evidence that strong social support reduces the importance of reporting crime victimisation generally (Hardy, 2019).

Post-offence Social and Occupational Functioning and Wellbeing

The variables examined in these studies are particularly relevant to considerations of post-offence wellbeing. Before considering studies relating reporting to wellbeing, we first examine research on consequences of FV on health. A study analysing data from the nationally-representative Australian longitudinal women's health study over three generations found widespread differences in physical and mental wellbeing associated with IPV victimisation, and greater experienced pain levels compared to women of the same age who had not experienced IPV (Loxton et al., 2017). However, most studies cannot establish whether health was poorer before the onset of IPV, which may indicate a more general vulnerability factor in the prediction of who will be victimised. The Loxton study is particularly useful for addressing this limitation. In their 1973-78 cohort, they found that those who went on to *later* report experiencing IPV had poorer pre-IPV (i.e., baseline) health than women

with no IPV victimisation experience, but had higher wellbeing than those who had already experienced IPV at baseline, and went on to "catch up' (i.e., develop equivalently poorer health than those who did not experience IPV) with those with baseline IPV later in the follow-up. This pattern suggests both that wellbeing may be poorer before victimisation *and* deteriorates further with victimisation. Importantly, though, reporting to police was not examined in this study.

Studies that examine relationships between wellbeing and reporting also often cannot disentangle the sequencing of the person's experiences, symptoms, or areas of impaired functioning with reporting. As we noted earlier, people may report because of their perceptions of the impacts on them, with more severe consequences (e.g., poorer coping, but arguably also offence variables such as greater injury) leading to greater likelihood of reporting. More health and mental health consequences, or greater distress are commonly associated with reporting (Malihi et al., 2021; Fohring, 2015), and specifically, more PTSD symptoms have been found in formal reporters (Starzynski, 2005), including hyperarousal and reexperiencing (Walsh & Bruce, 2014) for SV. Another study found that educed ability to parent, or participate in social relationships with family and friends was also associated with greater likelihood of reporting (Lee et al., 2010).

Family violence also has complex relationships with victims' employment both before and after victimisation, and negative effects on the ability to work are not uncommon (Wathen et al., 2018). But we found few studies specifically looking at the relationship between reporting and employment. Kang and Lynch (2014) found that employment status made no difference to FV reporting, as did Akers and Kaukinen (2009) who noted that like many, their cross-sectional study could not disentangle what it would mean to find an association between reporting and employment if they had found one. Muniz and Powers (2021) found employment status made reporting less likely for SV. Notably, the one Aotearoa New Zealand study found that those whose work was more affected by their FV victimisation were more likely to seek formal help (Malihi et al., 2021).

Current Study

In summary, there is a reasonably large body of previous research on predictors of victim reporting in FV and SV, though it is dominated by examinations of SV for college women, and is primarily atheoretical and often limited to variables that are difficult to interpret meaningfully (e.g., demographic variables). This literature review was not systematic but did outline some of the underlying psychological factors that need to be considered to correctly interpret some variables associated with reporting, and focused where possible on variables that will be available for analysis in the datasets used in this study. The review did not cover the very important area of how Police are perceived, which

would be valuable to analyse in later research, especially given the recent report by The Backbone Collective and Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura (2024).

The overall aims of the proposed research were two-fold:

- to understand outcomes for victims of FV and SV depending on whether the offence was reported to police
- and, to assess how non-reporting may systematically influence research and policy work that relies on official victimisation data.

The following research questions were used to guide our research:

1. What person, community or offence-related factors are associated with whether victims report family or sexual violence offences to police?
2. What are the similarities and differences in wellbeing outcomes for victims of reported versus unreported family or sexual violence offences?
3. What are the implications of the findings from RQ1 for the ecological validity of research and policy that relies on official victimisation data?

Ultimately, outcomes from the proposed research will strengthen our understanding of potential threats to the validity of research and policy that relies solely on those who report, and identify how to best support victims opting for different avenues of reporting post-offence.

Method

The current study used data derived from Statistics New Zealand's IDI. The IDI is a research database containing deidentified, linked data for all Aotearoa New Zealand residents, sourced from a variety of government and non-government organisations (NGOs)[2].

Further details about the variables and specific data sources utilised in the current study are provided below.

New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS)

The New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS) is an annual survey conducted on behalf of the Ministry of Justice that collects self-reported information about experiences of crime from New Zealanders aged 15 and older. By the time of the current study, five 'cycles' of NZCVS data were available for analysis within the IDI: Cycle 1 (March 2018 – October 2018), Cycle 2 (October 2018 – September 2019), Cycle 3 (September 2019 – November 2020), Cycle 4 (November 2020 – November 2021), and Cycle 5 (November 2021 – November 2022).

For each cycle, approximately 6,000 to 8,000 households are randomly selected and approached to take part in the survey; one person aged 15 years or over is asked to respond from each household. The survey is completed in person, facilitated by an interviewer. Participants have the option of entering data directly themselves, and this is the default for questions relating to particularly sensitive forms of crime, such as SV and FV. Further details on the methodology employed by the NZCVS can be found on the Ministry of Justice's NZCVS website[3].

The NZCVS asks participants about their experiences of crime in the 12 months prior to the survey date, including how the experiences affected them, and whether the offences were reported to anyone[4]. The survey questions ask about specific behaviours that people have experienced, rather than asking about crimes directly. This means that people may report incidents that constitute an offence but that they do not view as a crime, or they may report incidents that they viewed as a crime that do not actually map onto any existing criminal offences. A team of trained coders read the incident details in order to determine whether a crime took place, and if so, the nature of the offence(s) involved in the incident.

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[2] For more information, see: https://www.stats.govt.nz/integrated-data/integrated-data-infrastructure

[3] https://www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/research-data/nzcvs/.

[4] Some questions also ask about lifetime experiences of certain forms of crime, however these data were not used in the current study.

Sample Identification

The sample for the current study comprised all NZCVS respondents who reported at least one offence involving FV and/or SV in the 12 months prior to the survey period. For the purposes of analyses, data from victims of SV and victims of FV were analysed separately.

The NZCVS asks about a variety of forms of SV, including offences where: anyone forced the person or tried to force the person to have non-consensual sexual intercourse or engage in any other non-consensual sexual act; anyone touched the person sexually or tried to touch the person sexually when the person did not want them to; or, anyone threatened the person face-to-face to do something to the person of a sexual nature, that frightened the person. All of these forms of violence were considered experiences of SV for the purposes of the current study.[5]

As per standard definitions employed for the NZCVS, FV in the current study comprised offences perpetrated by family members[6], including: robbery and assault; SV; harassment and threatening behaviour; and damage to motor vehicles or other property.[7] This means that NZCVS respondents could have experienced both SV and FV, including within the same incident, and therefore appeared in both the SV and FV victim groups.

Variable Definitions

Indicator of Reporting

Whether or not the FV or SV offences were reported to Police was a primary variable of interest in the current study, used as the criterion or dependent variable to inform RQ1, and as the means of separating groups of victims to inform RQ2. This variable was sourced from self-reports from NZCVS respondents, including whether the offence was reported by the victim themselves (for RQ1), or whether the offence was reported by anyone (for RQ2).

Importantly, the NZCVS collects data related to experiences of the crime in one of two ways: either with an 'individual' form, where respondents report characteristics and outcomes in relation to a single offence, or a 'cluster' form, where respondents are asked these questions in relation to more than one offence of a similar nature. This method is intended to reduce the reporting burden associated with having to complete an individual

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[5] More specifically, people were identified as sexual violence victims where they reported at least one offence across their incident report forms where the variable nzcvs_incident_finaloffencecode = 15.
[6] The NZCVS employs a broad definition of 'family member' as per the Family Violence Act 2018, including current or previous intimate partners, parents or step-parents, siblings or step-siblings, children, in-laws, and other extended family members.
[7] More specifically, people were identified as victims of family violence if they reported at least one identifiable offence across their incident report forms (i.e. nzcvs_incident_finaloffencecode <= 18) where the perpetrator was a family member (i.e. nzcvs_incident_dvrela_part = 1 OR nzcvs_incident_dvrela_expar = 1 OR nzcvs_incident_dvrela_fami = 1). We included all offence types in our definition of family violence given that the Family Violence Act 2018 defines FV as any form of harm between people in current or former family or whānau relationships.

form for each offence where there might have been a high frequency of certain kinds of victimisation experienced within the previous 12 months, such as ongoing FV episodes. Although the number of offences being considered for each cluster form was recorded, as was the number of total offence reported to Police, it was not possible to link particular offences within cluster forms to the offence characteristics or outcomes reported by respondents, nor pinpoint the exact dates of each offence within the 12-month reference period.

As a means of addressing this issue, we redefined reporting to Police dichotomously across all offences reported by survey respondents, as either 'at least one offence reported' (i.e. 'reporters'), or 'no offences reported' (i.e. 'non-reporters')[8]. This means that regardless of how many incidents either group had experienced, the reporter group had reported at least one, and the non-reporters had not. Findings from our analyses can therefore be interpreted as predictors or outcomes associated with *any* reporting, rather than as predictors or outcomes associated with reporting a specific offence.

The nature of the data provided by the cluster versus individual forms also had implications for how we defined and coded certain predictor or outcome variables. In particular, it meant that several of the offence-related characteristics had to be coded across all offences reported, rather than being tied to each individual offence. For example, for the variable that captured whether NZCVS respondents considered the offence they reported a crime, we had to create a variable that captured whether respondents considered *any* of the incidents they reported a crime, rather than each specific incident experienced. This meant that we were not able to tie these factors directly to whether each specific offence was reported to Police or not, but instead assessed whether these factors were related to reporting to Police in general (or at all). The implications of this are considered further in the Discussion section of this report.

Other Variables

Variables used in the current study were sourced from a variety of different agency datasets housed within the IDI. Data contained in the IDI as at October 2023 were available for analysis. These variables were used to create indicators of person-related characteristics, community-related characteristics, and offence-related characteristics that helped to inform the two research questions. Wellbeing outcomes data were also sourced from these datasets to inform RQ2. Further information on the variables extracted from the IDI are provided in the tables below, including the sources of the variables and how they

[8] Analyses were completed at the person level, so offences reported across multiple individual or cluster forms were included in this categorisation.

were derived, separated by whether they represented person-related, community-related, offence-related[9], or outcomes-related characteristics.

[9] Variables that captured the nature of the violence experienced (e.g., threats, physical violence, forced sexual acts) were coded based on items completed during screening, rather than by the finaloffencecode variable. This means that we may have missed incidents that reported particular forms of violence, such as threats, in the narrative offence description, but that had not been initially reported as these forms of violence during the screening.

Table 2

Person Characteristics Measured in the Current Study

Domain	Variable	Source data	Definition	Categories/Possible range
Demographic characteristics	Age	NZCVS	Self-reported age	N/A; recorded in years
	Gender identity	NZCVS	Self-reported gender identity	Man, Woman, Gender Diverse
	Ethnicity	NZCVS	Self-reported ethnicity; multiply coded with dichotomous indicators for each ethnicity	Māori, Pacific, European, Asian
	Sexual identity	NZCVS	Self-reported sexual identity	Heterosexual, Same sex, Bisexual
	Employment status	NZCVS	Self-reported employment status, at the time of survey completion	Employed, Unemployed, Economically inactive (e.g., retired or not seeking employment)
Health	Disability score	NZCVS	Count of the following basic activity domains the person reports having some difficulty with: vision, hearing, mobility, memory, self-care, and communication	0-6; higher scores indicate higher levels of disability
	Pain prescriptions	MOH Pharmaceuticals data	Filled a prescription for an analgesic (pain) medication in the 12 months prior to the survey period[10]	Dichotomous yes (1) or no (0)
	Mood prescriptions	MOH Pharmaceuticals data	Filled a prescription for a mood and/or anxiety medication in the 12 months prior to the survey period	Dichotomous yes (1) or no (0)

[10] The 'survey period' references the 12 months prior to the survey completion date that NZCVS respondents are asked to think about when reporting offences. Twelve months prior to the survey period is therefore referencing the 12-24 month period prior to the date of survey completion, or in other words, the 12 months prior to the NZCVS reference period. This time period was used for many of the derived predictor variables due to not being able to identify the specific dates of offences reported in cluster forms.

	AOD service use	MOH PRIMHD data	Engaged with an alcohol or other drug (AOD) service funded by the Ministry of Health, in the 12 months prior to the survey period	Dichotomous yes (1) or no (0)
	Non-AOD service use	MOH PRIMHD data	Engaged with a non-AOD mental health service funded by the Ministry of Health, in the 12 months prior to the survey period	Dichotomous yes (1) or no (0)
	Number of ACC injury claims	ACC Injury Claims data	Number of ACC injury claims in the 12 months prior to the survey period	N/A; count data
	Number of hospitalisations	MOH Hospitalisations data	Number of all-cause publicly-funded hospitalisation events[11] in the 12 months prior to the survey period	N/A; count data
Socioeconomic status	Benefit receipt	MSD Benefits data	Received an MSD benefit in the 12 months prior to the survey period	Dichotomous yes (1) or no (0)
	Social housing	Kāinga Ora Social Housing data	Occupant in a Kāinga Ora social housing house in the 12 months prior to the survey period	Dichotomous yes (1) or no (0)
	Number of prior addresses	IDI Core data	Number of addresses lived in up until the survey period (from 2007); used as an indicator of transience	N/A; count data
	Average deprivation score	IDI Core data	Weighted average[12] of the NZ Deprivation Index scores associated with addresses lived in up until the survey period (from 2007)	1-10; higher scores indicate higher levels of deprivation
Prior victimisation	Report of concern as a child	Child, Youth and Family (CYF) data	Ever a subject of a report of concern made to CYF (from 1991)	Dichotomous yes (1) or no (0)
	ACC sensitive claims	ACC Injury Claims data	Ever had an ACC claim that involves mental or physical injuries as a result of abuse (from 1994)	Dichotomous yes (1) or no (0)
	Number of NZCVS FV or SV offences	NZCVS	The number of FV (or SV) offences self-reported within the NZCVS 12 month reference period	N/A; count data

[11] Events are included in the Hospitalisations dataset if the stay was longer than three hours, including Emergency Department stays, and/or involved being admitted as an inpatient.
[12] The average NZ Deprivation Index score was weighted according to the number of days lived at each address.

	Number of NZCVS non-FV or non-SV offences	NZCVS	The number of victimisation offences self-reported within the NZCVS 12 month reference period[13], which were not FV-related (or SV-related)	N/A; count data
	Number of prior victimisations	Police Pre-Count Victimisations data	Number of events recorded by Police[14] where the person was identified as a victim of any crime, where the event occurred in the 12 months prior to the survey period[15]	N/A; count data
Prior offending	Number of prior offences	Police Pre-Count Offenders data	Number of offences for which the person had been proceeded against by Police, for offences that occurred in the 12 months prior to the survey period	N/A; count data

Notes. ACC = Accident Compensation Corporation; IDI = Integrated Data Infrastructure; MOH = Ministry of Health; MSD = Ministry of Social Development; NZCVS = New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey; PRIMHD = Programme for the Integration of Mental Health Data.

[13] Victimisation incidents are only included in the NZCVS dataset if they constituted criminal offences.
[14] Victimisations are recorded by Police where a police investigation involves an identifiable victim, and the result of the investigation is other than '*No crime*'.
[15] Note that this differs from the *Number of NZCVS family violence or sexual violence/non-family violence or non-sexual violence events* variable because the NZCVS indicator captures self-reported victimisation events within the 12 month survey reference period, whereas the Police variable captures formally-reported victimisations that occurred in the 12 months prior to the survey reference period.

Table 3

Offence Characteristics Measured in the Current Study

Research sample	Variable	Source data	Definition	Categories/Possible range
Both FV and SV victims	Any female perpetrator	NZCVS	Whether any of the FV (or SV) offences reported in the NZCVS were perpetrated by a female	Dichotomous yes (1) or no (2)
	Number of times injured	NZCVS	Number of times that FV (or SV) offences reported in the NZCVS resulted in injuries	NA; count data
	Most severe injury	NZCVS	Maximum self-reported severity of any injuries resulting from the FV (or SV) offences reported in the NZCVS	0 (not severe at all) – 10 (very severe)
	Ever viewed as a crime	NZCVS	Whether the person viewed any of the FV (or SV) offences reported in the NZCVS as a crime	Dichotomous yes (1) or no (2)
	Maximum offence seriousness	NZCVS	Maximum self-reported seriousness of the FV (or SV) offence reported in the NZCVS	0 (not serious at all) – 10 (very serious)
Family violence victims	Any non-intimate partner violence (IPV) offences	NZCVS	Whether any of the FV offences reported in the NZCVS were perpetrated by non-partner family members	Dichotomous yes (1) or no (2)
	Number of physical FV offences	NZCVS	Number of FV offences reported in the NZCVS that involved physical violence	N/A; count data
	Number of FV threat offences	NZCVS	Number of FV offences reported in the NZCVS that involved threats of force, violence or physical harm which frightened the person	N/A; count data
Sexual violence victims	Any non-family member perpetrator	NZCVS	Whether any of the SV offences reported in the NZCVS were perpetrated by non- family members	Dichotomous yes (1) or no (2)
	Number of forced sex offences	NZCVS	Number of SV offences reported in the NZCVS where someone forced, or tried to force, the person to have non-consensual sexual intercourse	N/A; count data

Number of forced sex act offences	NZCVS	Number of SV offences reported in the NZCVS where someone forced, or tried to force, the person to engage in any non-intercourse sexual activity	N/A; count data
Number of forced touch offences	NZCVS	Number of SV offences reported in the NZCVS where touched, or tried to touch, the person sexually when the person did not want them to	N/A; count data
Number of threat of forced sex offences	NZCVS	Number of SV offences reported in the NZCVS where someone threatened the person face-to-face to do something to the person of a sexual nature, that frightened the person	N/A; count data

Notes. NZCVS = New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey.

Table 4

Community Characteristics Measured in the Current Study

Variable	Source data	Definition	Categories/Possible range
Area	NZCVS	Self-reported type of area living it at the time of the NZCVS survey	Rural, urban
Neighbourhood deprivation	IDI Core data	NZ Deprivation Index score for the meshblock that victims were living in at the time of the NZCVS survey	1-10; higher scores indicate higher levels of deprivation
Neighbourhood victimisations	Police Pre-Count Victimisations data	Number of Police-recorded victimisations occurring within the person's residential meshblock, in the 12 months prior to the survey period	N/A; count data

Notes. IDI = Integrated Data Infrastructure; NZCVS = New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey.

Table 5

Wellbeing Outcomes Measured in the Current Study

Domain	Variable	Source data	Definition	Categories/Possible range
General wellbeing	Life satisfaction	NZCVS	Self-reported life satisfaction at the time of NZCVS completion	0 (completely dissatisfied) – 10 (completely satisfied)
Health	Psychological distress	NZCVS	Aggregate mental health score derived from self-reported levels of six mental health symptoms at the time of NZCVS completion.	0 – 24, with higher scores indicating higher levels of psychological distress
	Pain prescriptions	MOH Pharmaceuticals data	Filled a prescription for an analgesic (pain) medication in the 12 months following the date of NZCVS completion	Dichotomous yes (1) or no (0)
	Mood prescriptions	MOH Pharmaceuticals data	Filled a prescription for a mood and/or anxiety medication in the 12 months following the date of NZCVS completion	Dichotomous yes (1) or no (0)
	AOD service use	MOH PRIMHD data	Engaged with an alcohol or other drug (AOD) service funded by the Ministry of Health, in the 12 months following the date of NZCVS completion	Dichotomous yes (1) or no (0)
	Non-AOD service use	MOH PRIMHD data	Engaged with a non-AOD mental health service funded by the Ministry of Health, in the 12 months following the date of NZCVS completion	Dichotomous yes (1) or no (0)
	Number of ACC injury claims	ACC Injury Claims data	Number of ACC injury claims in the 12 months following the date of NZCVS completion	N/A; count data
	Number of hospitalisations	MOH Hospitalisations data	Number of all-cause publicly-funded hospitalisation events in the 12 months following the date of NZCVS completion	N/A; count data
Employment/ Income	Benefit receipt	MSD Benefits data	Received an MSD benefit in the 12 months following the date of NZCVS completion	Dichotomous yes (1) or no (0)
	Number of times off work	NZCVS	Number of times that the person required time off work as a result of FV (or SV) offences reported in the NZCVS	N/A; count data

Subsequent victimisation	Number of victimisations	Police Pre-Count Victimisations data	Number of events recorded by Police where the person was identified as a victim of any crime, where the event occurred in the 12 months following the date of NZCVS completion	N/A; count data
Subsequent offending	Number of offences	Police Pre-Count Offenders data	Number of offences for which the person had been proceeded against by Police, for offences that occurred in the 12 months following the date of NZCVS completion	N/A; count data

Notes. NZCVS = New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey.

Planned Data Analysis

RQ1: Predictors of Reporting

The first phase of the analysis aimed to identify variables that were significantly associated with victims reporting FV or SV to Police. To achieve this aim, we conducted analyses to identify a) personal, b) community-related and c) offence-related factors that significantly predicted whether the victim reported any of their FV or SV offences to the Police.

We first ran these as bivariate analyses using chi-square tests of independence and *t*-tests for independent means to identify significant differences in characteristics for victims who did versus did not report offences to the Police. Next we conducted multiple logistic regressions to identify person-, community- and offence-related characteristics that uniquely predicted reporting status, after controlling for other measured characteristics. Due to the relatively small samples, we first ran separate multiple regressions for each category of predictor. Characteristics that were significant in these individual regressions were then combined into a single multiple regression, to identify which factors remained significant predictors of reporting once other potentially important factors were controlled for.

RQ2: Outcomes of Reporting

In the second phase of analysis, we aimed to identify any differences in wellbeing outcomes for victims of reported versus unreported offences. As our focus was on outcomes of reporting rather than predictors of reporting, for these analyses we separated victims according to whether any of their FV or SV offences had been reported to Police by *anyone*, rather than by the victim specifically.

We used a propensity score matching (PSM) procedure to create matched samples of reported and unreported victims for this analysis. Propensity score matching is a method that is used to statistically approximate a randomised control trial (RCT), where an RCT is not feasible or desirable. When random allocation is not used, it can be assumed that group membership is more likely for people with some characteristics than others; there is potential bias in group allocation. In PSM, factors that are known to be related to the condition that divides groups, in this case reporting to the Police, are used to calculate a “propensity score”. This propensity score represents the likelihood of belonging to the “treatment” or “research” group, in this case, the reported victim group; victims with higher levels of the factors predictive of reporting to Police would have a higher propensity score, and therefore a higher likelihood of belonging to the reported victim group. Matched pairs are then created between the group of *actual* reported victims and unreported victims, by selecting, for each person in the reported victims group, a person in the unreported victims group is the closest

match, based on their propensity scores[16]; we also forced an exact match of victim gender and ethnicity (Māori or non-Māori) in the current study.

Essentially this PSM process creates two groups of victims matched on similarity of overall propensities for reporting victimisation to Police, but with one group whose victimisation actually *had* been reported to Police, and one whose victimisation actually *had not* been reported to Police. Given that this is not a prospective design (i.e., victims had already 'opted into' one of the groups by the time the data were collected), and given that in reality, we would never conduct a study where people were obliged by random allocation to report or not report a victimisation experience, this approach is the best method available for mimicking retrospectively the benefits of random allocation. To give an example, if younger victims were less likely to report, but youth also was related to the measured wellbeing outcome, then failing to match the two groups on age could lead us to assume that a difference between the 'reported' and 'non-reported' groups on the wellbeing outcome is due to reporting when actually it is due to age. Therefore, using PSM can avoid misinterpretation of findings that are due to pre-existing differences between groups (i.e. where some of the factors that predict reporting are also associated with the outcomes being measured). That said, it is still important to note that this approach does not control for potential differences between the groups that were not measured and not included in the PSM, and therefore we cannot assume with complete certainty that we have entirely eliminated potential confounds that separate these two groups.

Once the two matched groups had been created, we used a series of chi-square tests of independence and *t*-tests for independent means to identify any significant differences in wellbeing outcomes between the two groups. This informed whether there were any potential differences in victim outcomes depending on whether the victimisation had been reported to Police or not.

[16] We set a caliper threshold of 0.25, which represents how close the propensity scores need to be to be considered a "match".

Results: Predictors of Reporting

This first results section provides an overview of findings related to RQ1: *What individual, community and offence-related factors predict family and sexual violence offences being reported to authorities?* Findings related to FV reporting are provided first, followed by findings related to SV.

Family Violence Reporting

As shown in Table 6 below, approximately[17] 1,026 NZCVS respondents reported being the victim of at least one FV offence in the prior 12 months. On average, these respondents reported experiencing just over three distinct FV offences within this period, and just under 10 non-FV offences. Just over three-quarters of people who reported experiencing FV were women, with approximately half identifying as Māori and two-thirds identifying as European. The average age of these respondents was around 40 years old. Although approximately half of the people who reported experiencing FV were employed, relatively high rates of deprivation were also identified in this sample, with 50% having received some form of MSD benefit in the 12 months prior to the survey period, average deprivation scores of 7 (out of 10) on the NZ Deprivation Index, and just under one-eighth of the sample living in social housing in the 12 months prior to the survey period.

Of the NZCVS respondents who reported experiencing at least one FV offence in the past 12 months, around 351 (34.2%) reported at least one of these offences to Police. Note that this only includes victims who reported the offence themselves; victims were not counted as having reported the offence if it was only reported by another person.

Person Characteristics

Table 6 provides a breakdown of the person characteristics of these FV victims, separated by whether or not they reported at least one of the offences to Police. The table also provides the outcome of bivariate analyses (either chi-square tests of independence, or *t*-tests for independent means) assessing the statistical significance of any differences in person characteristics by reporting status.

[17] Language such as “approximately” is used when discussing count data due to the random rounding processes used on these data to adhere with IDI confidentiality rules.

Table 6

Person Characteristics of Family Violence Victims (N ≈ 1026) by Whether Any Offences were Reported by the Victim (n ≈ 351) or None were Reported by the Victim (n ≈ 675)

Characteristic	*Total* *n (%)*	Offences Reported by Victim *Any* *n (%)*	*None* *n (%)*	χ^2	*p*
Gender				18.37	< .001
Men	234 (22.8)	54 (15.4)	180 (26.7)		
Women	786 (76.6)	300 (85.5)	486 (72.0)		
Gender diverse[a]	*S*	*S*	*S*		
Ethnicities					
Māori	537 (52.3)	189 (53.8)	348 (51.6)	0.79	.373
Pacific	78 (7.6)	30 (8.5)	48 (7.1)	0.39	.531
European	669 (65.2)	216 (61.5)	453 (67.1)	3.83	.505
Asian	30 (2.9)	6 (1.7)	21 (3.1)	0.60	.439
Sexual identity				2.27	.132
Heterosexual	927 (90.4)	330 (94.0)	600 (88.9)		
Same sex[a]	12 (1.2)	*S*	*S*		
Bisexual	60 (5.8)	15 (4.3)	45 (6.7)		
Employment status				3.42	.181
Employed	567 (55.3)	180 (51.3)	387 (57.3)		
Unemployed	99 (9.6)	39 (11.1)	63 (9.3)		
Economically inactive	321 (31.3)	117 (33.3)	204 (30.2)		
Prior benefit receipt				36.60	< .001
Yes	513 (50.0)	261 (74.4)	255 (37.8)		
No	513 (50.0)	90 (25.6)	420 (62.2)		
Social housing				36.78	< .001
Yes	117 (11.4)	78 (22.2)	39 (5.8)		
No	909 (88.6)	273 (77.8)	636 (94.2)		
Report of concern as child				3.57	.059
Yes	213 (20.8)	102 (29.1)	111 (16.4)		
No	813 (79.2)	348 (70.9)	468 (83.6)		
ACC sensitive claims				11.04	< .001
Yes	162 (15.8)	81 (23.1)	81 (12.0)		
No	864 (84.2)	270 (76.9)	594 (88.0)		
Pain prescriptions				13.16	< .001
Yes	396 (38.6)	189 (53.8)	204 (30.2)		
No	630 (61.4)	270 (46.2)	363 (69.8)		
Mood prescriptions				0.07	.786
Yes	156 (15.2)	63 (17.9)	93 (13.8)		
No	870 (89.8)	378 (82.1)	495 (86.2)		
Non-AOD service use				1.04	.308

Yes	105 (10.2)	54 (15.4)	51 (7.6)		
No	921 (89.8)	297 (84.6)	624 (92.4)		
AOD service use				3.41	.065
Yes	51 (5.0)	33 (9.4)	18 (2.7)		
No	975 (95.0)	318 (90.6)	657 (97.3)		

		Offences Reported by Victim			
	Total	*Any*	*None*		
	M (SD)	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*	*t*	*p*
No. NZCVS FV offences	3.22 (5.40)	4.14 (5.60)	2.72 (5.23)	3.99	< .001
No. NZCVS non-FV offences	9.98 (31.55)	14.67 (40.27)	7.54 (25.55)	3.00	.003
Age	40.47 (15.07)	41.32 (13.73)	39.84 (15.71)	1.75	.081
Disability score	0.69 (1.14)	0.68 (1.05)	0.70 (1.18)	-0.28	.783
No. prior addresses	10.51 (8.30)	12.20 (9.20)	9.60 (7.65	4.44	< .001
Average deprivation score	7.01 (2.13)	7.45 (2.20)	6.79 (1.92)	4.82	< .001
No. ACC injury claims	0.40 (0.75)	0.41 (0.74)	0.39 (0.75)	0.58	.584
No. hospitalisations	0.21 (0.98)	0.23 (0.91)	0.20 (1.01)	0.62	.535
No. prior offences[b]	0.12 (0.58)	0.16 (0.69)	0.09 (0.51)	1.51	.133
No. prior victimisations[b]	0.13 (0.44)	0.26 (0.64)	0.06 (0.26)	5.65	< .001

Notes. Due to de-identification methods used by Stats NZ, totals may not add to 100%. Ethnicities were multiply coded. FV = family violence. *S* = suppressed due to insufficient numbers. No. = number of. [a]Same-sex attracted people and gender diverse people were excluded from the chi-square tests. [b]Prior offences and prior victimisations captured from Police data, in the 12 months prior to the NZCVS period.

Of the person characteristics measured, most did not show significant differences by reporting status. However, bivariate analyses found that men were significantly less likely to report FV than women, as were people who filled a prescription for pain medication in the 12 months prior to the survey period, and those who had higher average deprivation scores. Conversely, people who had previously lodged an ACC sensitive claim, lived in social housing, had lived in a higher number of previous addresses, or had received an MSD benefit in the 12 months prior to the survey period were significantly more likely to report FV to Police, according to bivariate analyses. People who reported experiencing a higher number of both family- and non family-related offending in the NZCVS, and who had higher rates of recorded victimisations in Police data in the 12 months prior to the survey period were also more likely to report FV offences to Police.

All person characteristics were then entered together into a single logistic regression, with victim reporting status as the criterion variable. This method allowed us to identify any unique predictors of reporting FV to Police, once other factors were controlled for. Results from this analysis are displayed below in Table 7.

Table 7

Person Characteristics Predicting Whether Any Family Violence Offences Were Reported by the Victim (n ≈ 966)

Characteristic	*B*	*SE*	X^2	*p*	*OR [95%CI]*
Gender[a]					
Woman	0.29	0.10	8.87	.003	1.78 [1.22, 2.61]
Ethnicities					
Māori	-0.09	0.09	0.97	.325	0.84 [0.59, 1.19]
Pacific	-0.02	0.15	0.02	.894	0.96 [0.54, 1.70]
European	-0.01	0.10	0.02	.890	0.97 [0.66, 1.43]
Asian	-0.06	0.26	0.06	.807	0.88 [0.32, 2.43]
Sexual identity[b]					
Same sex	0.01	0.50	0.00	.988	0.83 [0.20, 3.52]
Bisexual	-0.20	0.33	0.37	.544	0.68 [0.35, 1.31]
Benefit receipt	0.23	0.09	7.49	.006	1.60 [1.14, 2.23]
Social housing	0.39	0.12	10.74	.001	2.16 [1.36, 3.43]
Report of concern	-0.03	0.11	0.09	.768	0.94 [0.62, 1.42]
Sensitive claims	0.16	0.10	2.29	.130	1.37 [0.91, 2.06]
Pain prescriptions	0.21	0.08	7.10	.008	1.52 [1.12, 2.06]
Mood prescriptions	-0.06	0.11	0.29	.588	0.89 [0.59, 1.35]
Non-AOD service use	0.02	0.14	0.02	.879	1.04 [0.61, 1.78]
AOD service use	0.12	0.18	0.46	.497	1.27 [0.64, 2.53]
Age	0.01	0.01	2.21	.137	1.01 [1.00, 1.02]
Disability score	-0.13	0.07	3.64	.056	0.88 [0.76, 1.00]
No. prior addresses	0.01	0.01	0.24	.626	1.01 [0.98, 1.03]
Average deprivation score	0.07	0.04	2.82	.093	1.07 [0.99, 1.16]
No. ACC injury claims	0.02	0.11	0.03	.874	1.02 [0.82, 1.26]
No. hospitalisations	-0.09	0.10	0.90	.343	0.91 [0.76, 1.10]
No. prior offences	0.01	0.13	0.01	.931	1.01 [0.78, 1.32]
No. prior victimisations	1.03	0.21	24.24	< .001	2.81 [1.86, 4.24]
Intercept	-1.51	0.59	6.44	.011	

Notes. Model $X^2(23) = 101.84$, $p < .001$. LR $X^2(23) = 127.50$, $p < .001$. No. = number of. [a]Reference category = man. [b]Reference category = heterosexual.

Outcomes from this multiple logistic regression indicated that identifying as a woman remained a significant predictor of whether FV offences were reported to Police, with odds being 1.78 times higher for women than for men. Living in social housing also significantly increased odds of reporting by 2.16 times, as did both receiving an MSD benefit (1.60 times increase) or filling a pain medication prescription (1.52 times increase) in the 12 months prior to the survey period. Having a higher number of victimisations recorded in Police data in the 12 months prior to the survey period also remained a significant predictor, increasing the odds of reporting by 2.81 times. Considering the underlying circumstances that these

variables may be proxies for, these results indicated that women who were potentially of lower socioeconomic status (SES) and who had had greater prior contact with Police and health providers were more likely to report FV victimisation to Police.

Community Characteristics

As shown in Table 8 below, a large majority of the victims of FV in our sample lived in an urban area. They also lived in areas with relatively high levels of neighbourhood deprivation (just under 7 out of 10 on the NZ Deprivation Index) and an average of around 55 individual victimisations reported to Police by people in the neighbourhood in the 12 months prior to the survey period.

Results from bivariate analyses indicated that both higher rates of neighbourhood deprivation and higher rates of neighbourhood reported victimisations were significantly associated with higher rates of victims reporting of FV to Police (see Table 8). There was no significant association with rural/urban location.

Table 8

Community Characteristics of Family Violence Victims (N ≈ 1026) by Whether Any Offences were Reported by the Victim (n ≈ 351) or None were Reported by the Victim (n ≈ 675)

		Offences Reported by Victim			
Characteristic	*Total* *n (%)*	*Any* *n (%)*	*None* *n (%)*	χ^2	*p*
Area				0.04	.841
Rural	147 (14.3)	48 (13.7)	99 (14.7)		
Urban	876 (85.4)	303 (86.3)	576 (85.3)		
		Offences Reported by Victim			
	Total *M (SD)*	*Any* *M (SD)*	*None* *M (SD)*	*t*	*p*
Neighbourhood deprivation	6.98 (2.69)	7.36 (2.58)	6.78 (2.73)	-3.28	.001
Neighbourhood victimisations	54.62 (78.99)	62.31 (84.45)	50.35 (75.71)	-2.28	.022

Notes. Due to Stats NZ de-identification methods, totals may not add to 100%.

Table 9 shows the results of a multiple logistic regression that was conducted to identify any community characteristics that uniquely predicted FV offences being reported to Police by the victim. In this analysis, only neighbourhood deprivation remained a significant predictor of reporting, with victims who lived in more deprived neighbourhoods being slightly more likely to report FV to Police (*OR* = 1.08).

Table 9

Community Characteristics Predicting Whether Any Family Violence Offences Were Reported by the Victim (n ≈ 993)

Characteristic	*B*	*SE*	X^2	*p*	*OR [95%CI]*
Area[a]					
Urban	0.05	0.10	0.29	.590	1.11 [0.76, 1.64]
Deprivation	0.07	0.03	7.12	.008	1.08 [1.02, 1.14]
Victimisations	0.00	0.00	2.44	.118	1.00 [1.00, 1.00]
Intercept	-1.22	0.20	37.02	< .001	

Notes. Model $\chi^2(3) = 12.99$, $p = .005$. LR $\chi^2(3) = 13.35$, $p = .004$. [a]Reference category = rural.

Offence Characteristics

Table 10 below provides a breakdown of offence-related characteristics for FV victims in our sample, by whether any of these FV offences were reported to Police or not. It also provides results from bivariate analyses testing the significance of any differences in the offence-related characteristics by victim reporting status.

It is important to note that NZCVS data were not always reported at an individual offence level (i.e., when respondents reported multiple instances of similar offences using cluster forms; see Method section for more detail). Therefore, the characteristics reported in Table 9 are derived from the totality of FV offences the surveyed individual experienced and thus are not necessarily associated with any particular offence (unless they reported only one) . For example, *Any female perpetrator* measures whether a female was responsible for any of the FV offences reported by the victim, and *Max offence seriousness* measures the highest percieved seriousness of all FV offences reported by the victim across all incidents. So where a victim has reported multiple FV offences perpetrated by both males and females, they would be counted under *Any female perpetrator*, but the female-perpetrated offences are not necessarily the same as the offence that corresponds to their *Max offence seriousness* measure, because that could have been an offence where they were victimised by a male perpetrator. As such, these offence characteristic analyses should be interpreted as identifying features of the overall offences experienced by a person that may be predictive of FV being reported by the victim, rather than as a measurement of the individual offence characteristics that would predict the victim reporting that particular FV offence to the Police.

Bivariate analyses found that victims who reported FV offences to the Police were significantly more likely to have viewed one or more of these offences as crimes. Notably, 46% of the overall sample did not view any of the FV incidents they had reported in the

NZCVS as crimes. This proportion dropped to 24% of victims who did report FV offences to Police, whereas approximately 58% of people who did not report any FV offences did not view any of these incidents as crimes.

Table 10

Offence Characteristics of Family Violence Victims (N ≈ 1026) by Whether Any Offences were Reported by the Victim (n ≈ 351) or None were Reported by the Victim (n ≈ 675)

Characteristic	*Total* *n (%)*	Offences Reported by Victim *Any* *n (%)*	*None* *n (%)*	χ^2	*p*
Any female perpetrator				0.28	.597
Yes	330 (32.2)	108 (30.8)	219 (32.4)		
No	696 (67.8)	243 (69.2)	456 (67.6)		
Any non-IPV perpetrator				3.54	.060
Yes	510 (49.7)	162 (46.2)	351 (52.0)		
No	516 (50.3)	189 (53.8)	324 (48.0)		
Ever viewed as a crime				103.72	< .001
Yes	552 (53.8)	267 (76.1)	285 (42.2)		
No	474 (46.2)	84 (23.9)	390 (57.8)		
	Offences Reported by Victim				
	Total *M (SD)*	*Any* *M (SD)*	*None* *M (SD)*	*t*	*p*
Max offence seriousness	6.38 (3.07)	7.90 (2.28)	5.58 (3.13)	-13.41	< .001
Most severe injury	1.38 (2.72)	2.27 (3.30)	0.91 (2.22)	-6.89	< .001
No. physical FV offences	4.08 (20.21)	6.02 (15.27)	3.09 (22.30)	2.47	.014
No. FV threat offences[a]	6.97 (21.31)	11.45 (29.31)	4.66 (15.10)	-4.06	< .001
No. times injured	0.82 (2.31)	1.37 (2.66)	0.53 (2.05)	-5.17	< .001

Notes. Due to de-identification methods, totals may not add to 100%. FV = family violence, IPV = intimate partner violence, No. = number of. [a]FV threat offences comprised offences where a family member threatened to use force or violence on the person, or to physically harm the person in a way that frightened the person.

Significant differences were also found in relation to the maximum offence seriousness and most severe injury across FV offences experienced by victims, with victims who reported experiencing more serious offences and injuries being more likely to report FV to Police. Victims who had experienced more offences involving physical violence or threats of physical violence, and who had been injured more times as a result of FV offences, were also more likely to report FV to the Police. No significant differences were found in reporting status by whether any of the offences had been perpetrated by a female or a non-partner family member (i.e., non-IPV perpetrator).

Table 11 below provides the results of the logistic regression with all offence-related characteristics entered as predictors and victim reporting status as the criterion variable. The regression indicated that viewing any FV incident reported in the NZCVS as a crime (of the incidents reported in the survey period) was the strongest predictor of victim reporting after controlling for other offence-related factors, increasing the odds of reporting by just under two and a half times. Reporting higher maximum offence seriousness was also related to higher odds of reporting FV to Police, with odds increasing by 1.23 times for each increase in seriousness rating. Reporting a higher number of experienced threats of FV was also significantly associated with victim reporting, although the effect of this was relatively small, with a 2% increase in the odds of reporting for each additional threat of FV experienced.

Table 11

Offence Characteristics Predicting Whether Any Family Violence Offences Were Reported by the Victim (n ≈ 990)

Characteristic	*B*	*SE*	χ^2	*p*	*OR [95%CI]*
Any female perpetrator	0.01	0.08	0.03	.861	1.03 [0.75, 1.42]
Any perpetrator non-intimate partner	-0.08	0.08	1.04	.308	0.85 [0.63, 1.16]
Ever viewed as a crime	0.43	0.08	25.95	< .001	2.37 [1.70, 3.30]
Maximum offence seriousness	0.21	0.03	44.48	< .001	1.23 [1.16, 1.31]
Most severe injury	0.06	0.03	3.25	.071	1.06 [1.00, 1.13]
No. physical FV offences	-0.01	0.01	5.36	.021	0.99 [0.98, 1.00]
No. FV threat offences	0.02	0.01	8.06	.005	1.02 [1.01, 1.03]
No. times injured	0.07	0.05	1.94	.163	1.07 [0.97, 1.17]
Intercept	-2.34	0.23	106.63	< .001	

Notes. Model $\chi^2(8) = 147.91$, $p < .001$. *LR* $\chi^2(8) = 196.81$, $p < .001$. FV = family violence, No. = number of.

Somewhat counterintuitively, the multiple logistic regression also found that the number of physical FV offences experienced was *negatively* associated with reporting after controlling for other offence-related factors, with the odds of reporting FV decreasing by 1% for every physical FV offence experienced.

Being a victim of any female-perpetrated FV offences or non-intimate partner-perpetrated FV offences were not significantly associated with odds of victim reporting after controlling for other offence-related factors, and nor were the maximum severity of injury or the number of times that the victim had been injured in a FV offence.

Combined Characteristics Model

As a final step of the analysis, all characteristics that were found to be significant in the person-related, community-related or offence-related logistic regressions were entered

as predictors into a final logistic regression predicting FV victim reporting status (see Table 12).

This analysis showed that receiving some form of MSD benefit or filling a pain medication prescription in the 12 months prior to the NZCVS survey period, and living in social housing remained significant predictors of reporting, increasing the odds of victim reporting by 1.44, 1.52 and 1.85 times, respectively. The number of experienced victimisations recorded in Police data in the 12 months prior to the survey period also remained significant predictors, with the odds of reporting FV increasing by 154% for every additional recorded victimisation. Only victim gender became a non-significant predictor in this combined model, from the person-related characteristics entered into the model.

While neighbourhood deprivation was no longer a significant predictor of FV victim reporting in this final model, several offence-related characteristics remained significant predictors. These included ever viewing a FV incident as a crime (increasing odds of reporting by 2.06 times), the maximum seriousness of a FV offence (increasing odds of reporting by 1.24 for each increase in seriousness rating), and the number of times the victim experienced threats of FV (with odds increasing by 2% for every additional threat offence). The number of physical FV offences experienced was no longer a significant predictor in this final model.

Table 12

All Significant Person, Community or Offence-related Characteristics Predicting Whether Any Family Violence Offences Were Reported by the Victim (n ≈ 954)

	B	*SE*	χ^2	*p*	*OR [95%CI]*
Person characteristics					
Woman	0.15	0.10	2.36	.125	1.36 [0.92, 2.01]
Prior benefit receipt	0.18	0.08	4.80	.028	1.44 [1.04, 2.00]
Social housing	0.31	0.12	6.49	.011	1.85 [1.15, 2.97]
Pain prescriptions	0.21	0.08	6.94	.008	1.52 [1.11, 2.08]
No. prior victimisations	0.93	0.22	18.54	< .001	2.54 [1.66, 3.88]
Community characteristics					
Neighbourhood deprivation	0.02	0.03	0.27	.603	1.02 [0.96, 1.08]
Offence-related characteristics					
Ever viewed as a crime	0.36	0.09	16.77	< .001	2.06 [1.46, 2.92]
Maximum offence seriousness	0.22	0.03	44.55	< .001	1.24 [1.16, 1.32]
No. physical FV offences	-0.01	0.01	3.33	.068	0.99 [0.98, 1.00]
No. FV threat offences	0.02	0.01	7.23	.007	1.02 [1.01, 1.03]
Intercept	-2.35	0.34	47.60	< .001	

Notes. Model $\chi^2(10) = 160.74$, $p < .001$. LR $\chi^2(10) = 238.94$, $p < .001$. FV = family violence, No. = number of.

Taken together, the results of this final combined model suggest that factors related to lower socioeconomic status or receiving more support from government agencies for basic living circumstances may be particularly important predictors of increased FV reporting. Viewing the incident as a crime, experiencing more subjectively serious offences, and experiencing more threatening behaviour also appear to be key factors associated with the decision to report experiences to the Police.

Sexual Violence Reporting

As shown in Table 13 below, approximately 723 NZCVS respondents reported being the victim of SV within the 12 month survey window. On average, these respondents reported experiencing between two to three SV offences over that time period, as well as just under 11 other non-sexual offences during the same period. Just under 80% of the SV victims were women, and just under three quarters identified as European, with a little over 40% identifying as Māori. With an average age of just under 35, SV victims were predominantly heterosexual and were employed at the time of the survey. Around a third of SV victims had received some form of MSD benefit in the 12 months prior to the survey period and their average deprivation score was 6 (out of 10) on the NZ Deprivation Index, although only 5% lived in social housing. Just under 20% of the sample had been the focus of a report of concern to child protective services as a child. Of the SV victims, only around 69 (9.5%) had reported at least one of these offences to the Police themselves.

Person Characteristics

Table 13 also displays the results of bivariate analyses assessing for any relationship between individual person characteristics and the likelihood of victims reporting their experiences of SV to the Police; note that some of these analyses had to be suppressed due to low cell counts in either reporting group.

Although there were no significant differences in SV victim reporting status by victim gender, ethnicity or age, victims who were currently unemployed or economically inactive were significantly more likely to report at least one SV offence to Police. Victims who had received some form of MSD benefit in the 12 months prior to the survey period were also more likely to report at least one SV offence to Police, as were those who lived in social housing. Being the focus of a report of concern to child protective services as a child, or making an ACC sensitive claim were also associated with increased likelihood of reporting SV offences to Police. Although engaging with an AOD service in the 12 months prior to the survey period was predictive of reporting SV victimisation, there was no significant relationship between reporting status and filling a pain or mood medication prescription, or engaging with a non-AOD mental health service in the previous 12 months.

Table 13

Person Characteristics of Sexual Violence Victims (N ≈ 723) by Whether Any Offences were Reported by the Victim (n ≈ 69) or None were Reported by the Victim (n ≈ 654)

Characteristic	*Total* *n (%)*	Offences Reported by Victim		X^2	*p*
		Any *n (%)*	*None* *n (%)*		
Gender				4.56	.102
Man	141 (19.5)	6 (8.7)	135 (20.6)		
Woman	573 (79.3)	60 (87.0)	510 (78.0)		
Gender diverse[a]	9 (1.2)	*S*	*S*		
Ethnicities					
Māori	309 (42.7)	30 (43.5)	279 (42.7)	0.00	.964
Pacific	57 (7.9)	9 (13.0)	48 (7.3)	3.04	.081
European	525 (72.6)	45 (65.2)	480 (73.4)	2.51	.113
Asian[a]	48 (6.6)	*S*	*S*	*S*	*S*
Sexual identity				*S*	*S*
Heterosexual	597 (82.6)	63 (91.3)	537 (82.1)		
Same sex	21 (2.9)	*S*	*S*		
Bisexual	81 (11.2)	*S*	*S*		
Employment status				10.83	.004
Employed	480 (66.4)	36 (52.2)	447 (68.3)		
Unemployed	63 (8.7)	12 (17.4)	54 (8.3)		
Economically inactive	156 (21.6)	24 (34.8)	135 (20.6)		
Prior benefit receipt				15.10	< .001
Yes	234 (32.4)	36 (52.2)	198 (30.0)		
No	489 (67.6)	33 (47.8)	456 (69.7)		
Social housing				29.63	< .001
Yes	33 (4.6)	12 (17.4)	21 (3.2)		
No	690 (95.4)	57 (82.6)	633 (96.8)		
Report of concern as child				5.35	.021
Yes	132 (18.3)	21 (30.4)	111 (17.0)		
No	591 (81.7)	48 (69.6)	543 (83.0)		
ACC sensitive claims				18.28	< .001
Yes	102 (14.1)	21 (30.4)	84 (12.8)		
No	621 (85.9)	48 (69.6)	570 (87.2)		
Pain prescriptions				0.44	.509
Yes	252 (34.9)	27 (39.1)	228 (34.9)		
No	471 (65.1)	42 (60.9)	426 (65.1)		
Mood prescriptions				0.04	.851
Yes	96 (13.1)	9 (13.0)	87 (13.3)		
No	627 (86.7)	60 (87.0)	567 (86.7)		
Non-AOD service use				1.70	.192
Yes	81 (11.2)	9 (13.0)	69 (10.6)		
No	642 (88.8)	60 (87.0)	585 (89.4)		
AOD service use				6.07	.014

Yes	24 (3.3)	6 (8.7)	18 (2.8)		
No	699 (96.7)	63 (91.3)	636 (97.2)		

		Offences Reported by Victim			
	Total	*Any*	*None*	*t*	*p*
	M (SD)	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*		
No. NZCVS SV offences	2.55 (3.07)	3.04 (3.44)	2.50 (3.03)	-1.17	.247
No. NZCVS non-SV offences	10.89 (29.89)	32.78 (80.27)	8.62 (15.91)	-2.47	.016
Age	34.73 (14.07)	38.19 (13.07)	34.37 (14.15)	-1.94	.055
Disability score	0.68 (1.18)	0.90 (1.28)	0.66 (1.17)	-1.38	.167
No. prior addresses	9.10 (7.52)	13.48 (11.49)	8.65 (6.84)	-3.35	.001
Average deprivation score	6.19 (2.25)	6.81 (1.88)	6.10 (2.28)	-2.85	.005
No. ACC injury claims	0.42 (0.78)	0.38 (0.93)	0.42 (0.76)	0.39	.698
No. hospitalisations	0.23 (1.04)	0.44 (1.71)	0.20 (0.92)	-1.44	.155
No. prior offences[b]	0.10 (0.76)	0.25 (1.25)	0.08 (0.69)	-1.15	.253
No. prior victimisations[b]	0.10 (0.48)	0.25 (0.65)	0.08 (0.45)	-2.16	.034

Notes. Due to de-identification methods, totals may not add to 100%. Ethnicities were multiply coded. SV = sexual violence. *S* = suppressed due to insufficient numbers. No. = number of. [a]Gender diverse people were excluded from the chi-square test for gender. [b]Prior offences and prior victimisations captured from Police data, in the 12 months prior to the NZCVS period.

Further, bivariate analyses indicated that the total number of non-SV offences experienced in the 12-month NZCVS survey period was significantly related to reporting, with people who experienced more non-SV offences being more likely to report at least one SV offence to Police. People who had lived in a higher number of previous addresses (a proxy for transience) and who had higher average deprivation scores were also more likely to report at least one SV offence to Police, as were people who had experienced more victimisations in the 12 months prior to the survey period, according to Police data. However, there were no significant associations between reporting SV offences to Police and the total number of sexual offences experienced within the survey period, the victim's disability score, or total number of ACC injury claims, hospitalisations or perpetrated offences in the 12 months prior to the survey period.

Next, all person-related characteristics were entered into a multiple logistic regression, to identify characteristics that remained significant predictors of victim reporting to Police once other person characteristics were also controlled for; see Table 14 for the results of this analysis. Living in social housing was the only significant person-related predictor of reporting SV to Police, increasing odds of reporting by 3.31 times. All other person characteristics were not significantly associated with reporting to Police after controlling for other person characteristics.

Table 14

Person Characteristics Predicting Whether Any Sexual Violence Offences Were Reported by the Victim (n ≈ 672)

Characteristic	*B*	*SE*	χ^2	*p*	*OR [95%CI]*
Gender[a]					
Woman	0.24	0.22	1.15	.284	1.62 [0.67, 3.89]
Ethnicities					
Māori	-0.24	0.18	1.87	.172	0.62 [0.31, 1.23]
Pacific	0.29	0.26	1.28	.259	1.78 [0.65, 4.86]
European	-0.26	0.19	1.91	.167	0.59 [0.28, 1.24]
Asian	-0.48	0.45	1.12	.290	0.39 [0.07, 2.25]
Sexual identity[b]					
Same sex	0.16	0.61	0.07	.787	1.02 [0.18, 5.81]
Bisexual	-0.31	0.48	0.41	.522	0.64 [0.20, 2.07]
Benefit receipt	0.19	0.18	1.06	.303	1.45 [0.72, 2.93]
Social housing	0.60	0.26	5.36	.021	3.31 [1.20, 9.12]
Report of concern	0.35	0.19	3.51	.061	2.02 [0.97, 4.21]
Sensitive claims	0.33	0.19	3.04	.081	1.92 [0.92, 4.01]
Pain prescriptions	0.06	0.16	0.16	.688	1.13 [0.62, 2.09]
Mood prescriptions	-0.18	0.22	0.62	.430	0.70 [0.29, 1.69]
Non-AOD service use	-0.36	0.27	1.78	.182	0.49 [0.17, 1.40]
AOD service use	0.16	0.34	0.24	.625	1.39 [0.37, 5.22]
Age	0.02	0.01	2.98	.085	1.02 [1.00, 1.05]
Disability score	-0.02	0.12	0.02	.877	0.98 [0.77, 1.25]
No. prior addresses	0.03	0.02	2.04	.153	1.03 [0.99, 1.07]
Average deprivation score	0.08	0.08	0.97	.325	1.08 [0.92, 1.27]
No. ACC injury claims	-0.24	0.21	1.23	.268	0.79 [0.52, 1.20]
No. hospitalisations	0.16	0.12	1.76	.185	1.17 [0.93, 1.48]
No. prior offences	-0.16	0.15	1.17	.280	0.85 [0.63, 1.14]
No. prior victimisations	0.37	0.25	2.17	.141	1.45 [0.89, 2.36]
Intercept	-3.66	1.11	10.87	.001	

Notes. Model $\chi^2(23) = 58.21$, $p < .001$. LR $\chi^2(23) = 65.87$, $p < .001$. No. = number of. [a]Reference category = man. [b]Reference category = heterosexual.

Community Characteristics

The relationships between measured community characteristics and victims reporting at least one SV offence to Police are provided below in Table 15. There were no significant bivariate relationships between community-level characteristics and whether victims reported SV to the Police.

Table 15

Community Characteristics of Sexual Violence Victims (N ≈ 723) by Whether Any Offences were Reported by the Victim (n ≈ 69) or None were Reported by the Victim (n ≈ 654)

Characteristic	*Total* *n (%)*	Offences Reported by Victim *Any* *n (%)*	*None* *n (%)*	χ^2	*p*
Area				0.00	.961
Rural	72 (10.0)	6 (8.7)	63 (9.6)		
Urban	651 (90.0)	63 (91.3)	588 (89.9)		
		Offences Reported by Victim			
	Total *M (SD)*	*Any* *M (SD)*	*None* *M (SD)*	*t*	*p*
Neighbourhood deprivation	6.25 (2.71)	6.59 (2.77)	6.22 (2.70)	-1.02	.310
Neighbourhood victimisations	49.31 (65.78)	60.61 (84.77)	48.34 (63.39)	-1.11	.272

Notes. Due to de-identification methods, totals may not add to 100%.

As shown by the results presented in Table 16, these community-level characteristics remained non-significant predictors of victim reporting once entered together into a multiple regression.

Table 16

Community Characteristics Predicting Whether Any Sexual Violence Offences Were Reported by the Victim (n ≈ 702)

Characteristic	*B*	*SE*	χ^2	*p*	*OR [95%CI]*
Area[a]					
Urban	0.03	0.23	0.01	.907	1.06 [0.43, 2.58]
Deprivation	0.03	0.05	0.46	.496	1.04 [0.94, 1.14]
Victimisations	0.00	0.00	1.85	.173	1.00 [1.00, 1.01]
Intercept	-2.60	0.37	48.06	< .001	

Notes. Model $\chi^2(3) = 2.98$, $p = .395$. LR $\chi^2(3) = 2.77$, $p = .429$. [a]Reference category = rural.

Offence Characteristics

Differences in offence-related characteristics by SV victim reporting status are provided below in Table 17, along with the results of bivariate analyses assessing the significance of any relationships between offence characteristics and victim reporting of SV to Police. As with the FV analyses, it is important to remember that SV offences may also have been reported using cluster forms, and so these analyses explored offence-related characteristics across a differing number of offences per victim.

Table 17

Offence Characteristics of Sexual Violence Victims (N ≈ 723) by Whether Any Offences were Reported by the Victim (n ≈ 69) or None were Reported by the Victim (n ≈ 654)

Characteristic	*Total* *n (%)*	Offences Reported by Victim *Any* *n (%)*	Offences Reported by Victim *None* *n (%)*	χ^2	*p*
Any female perpetrator				0.92	.337
Yes	114 (15.8)	9 (13.0)	108 (16.5)		
No	609 (84.2)	60 (87.0)	546 (83.5)		
Any non-family member perpetrator				6.25	.012
Yes	576 (79.7)	48 (69.6)	528 (80.7)		
No	147 (20.3)	21 (30.4)	126 (19.3)		
Ever viewed as a crime				59.36	< .001
Yes	264 (36.5)	57 (82.6)	207 (31.7)		
No	459 (63.5)	12 (17.4)	447 (68.3)		

	Total *M (SD)*	Offences Reported by Victim *Any* *M (SD)*	Offences Reported by Victim *None* *M (SD)*	*t*	*p*
Max offence seriousness	4.88 (3.19)	7.64 (2.54)	4.56 (3.10)	-9.56	< .001
Most severe injury	0.48 (1.82)	2.12 (3.63)	0.30 (1.40)	-4.08	< .001
No. forced sex offences[a]	1.56 (5.08)	4.19 (10.91)	1.29 (3.92)	-2.19	.032
No. forced sex act offences[a]	0.86 (3.13)	1.45 (3.77)	0.80 (3.05)	-1.39	.169
No. forced touch offences[b]	3.17 (7.40)	4.23 (15.70)	3.07 (5.87)	-0.59	.559
No. threat of forced sex offences[c]	1.06 (4.80)	4.38 (13.42)	0.71 (2.27)	-2.25	.028
No. times injured	0.41 (1.72)	1.31 (2.56)	0.30 (1.57)	-3.32	.001

Notes. Due to de-identification methods, totals may not add to 100%. No. = number of. [a]Forced sex offences and forced sex act offences involved offences where anyone forced the person or tried to force the person to have non-consensual sexual intercourse (forced sex) or any other sexual act (forced sex act). [b]Forced touch offences involved offences where anyone touched the person sexually or tried to touch the person sexually when the person did not want them to. [c]Threat of forced sex offences involved offences where anyone threatened the person face-to-face to do something to the person of a sexual nature, that frightened the person.

Results from the bivariate analyses indicated that ever viewing a SV offence as a crime (among the offences reported in the survey) was significantly associated with reporting SV to Police. Higher maximum offence seriousness and injury severity, as well as being injured a greater number of times as a result of SV, were also significantly associated with greater likelihood of victim reporting. Additionally, experiencing higher numbers of forced sexual contact or threats of forced sexual contact offences were also significantly associated with a higher likelihood of reporting SV to Police. Conversely, where any SV offences were perpetrated by a non-family member, victims were significantly less likely to report any SV to

Police (or in other words, if the offences were always perpetrated by family members, likelihood of reporting the SV was higher). There were no significant relationships between victim reporting and perpetrator gender, number of forced sexual act offences, or number of forced sexual touch offences, at the bivariate level.

All offence-related characteristics were then entered simultaneously into a multiple logistic regression predicting SV victim reporting status; see Table 18 below. After controlling for other offence-related characteristics, viewing at least one SV offence as a crime increased the odds of victim reporting by 261%. Additionally, for every one point rating increase, the odds of reporting SV significantly increased by 1.24 and 1.23 times for maximum offence seriousness and injury severity, respectively. Odds of reporting was also 10% higher for every additional threat of forced sexual contact offence experienced by victims.

Once other offence-related factors were controlled for, perpetrator gender and familial relationship to the victim, the number of times the offences led to injuries, and the number of forced sexual contact offences, forced sexual act offences, and forced sexual touch offences were not significantly predictive of victim reporting of SV.

Table 18

Offence Characteristics Predicting Whether Any Sexual Violence Offences Were Reported by the Victim (N ≈ 669)

Characteristic	*B*	*SE*	χ^2	*p*	*OR [95%CI]*
Any female perpetrator	-0.03	0.24	0.02	.897	0.94 [0.37, 2.41]
Any non-family member perpetrator	-0.06	0.19	0.09	.766	0.90 [0.43, 1.86]
Ever viewed as a crime	0.64	0.19	11.44	.001	3.61 [1.72, 7.61]
Maximum offence seriousness	0.21	0.06	11.13	.001	1.24 [1.09, 1.40]
Most severe injury	0.20	0.07	7.84	.005	1.23 [1.06, 1.42]
No. forced sex offences	0.03	0.03	0.65	.420	1.03 [0.96, 1.10]
No. forced sex act offences	-0.03	0.05	0.47	.493	0.97 [0.88, 1.06]
No. forced touch offences	-0.02	0.02	1.45	.228	0.98 [0.95, 1.01]
No. threat of forced sex offences	0.10	0.04	5.23	.022	1.10 [1.01, 1.20]
No. times injured	-0.17	0.12	2.04	.153	0.84 [0.67, 1.07]
Intercept	-3.90	0.50	61.85	< .001	

Notes. Model $\chi^2(10) = 67.08$, $p < .001$. LR $\chi^2(10) = 100.71$, $p < .001$. No. = number of.

Combined Characteristics Model

Finally, all characteristics that were found to be significantly predictive of SV victim reporting across the person- and offence-related regression models were inputted into a single combined multiple logistic regression. This allowed us to identify which characteristics

remained significant predictors of victims reporting at least one SV offence to Police, after controlling for other potential predictors of this decision. The results from this combined regression are provided below in Table 19.

Table 19

All Significant Person or Offence-related Characteristics Predicting Whether Any Sexual Violence Offences Were Reported by the Victim (n ≈ 681)

Characteristic	*B*	*SE*	χ^2	*p*	*OR [95%CI]*
Person characteristics					
Social housing	0.41	0.24	3.04	.081	2.28 [0.90, 5.73]
Offence characteristics					
Ever viewed as a crime	0.64	0.18	12.47	<.001	3.59 [1.77, 7.30]
Maximum offence seriousness	0.19	0.06	10.19	.001	1.21 [1.08, 1.36]
Most severe injury	0.12	0.06	4.85	.028	1.13 [1.01, 1.26]
No. threat of forced sex offences	0.05	0.03	2.72	.099	1.06 [0.99, 1.13]
Intercept	-3.37	0.48	49.52	< .001	

Notes. Model $\chi^2(5) = 69.04$, $p < .001$. LR $\chi^2(5) = 98.71$, $p < .001$.

Once other characteristics were controlled for, ever viewing a SV offence as a crime remained a strong predictor of victim reporting, increasing the odds of reporting by just over three and a half times. Maximum offence seriouesness and injury severity ratings also remained significant predictors though they made much small contributions, with the odds of victims reporting at least one SV offence increasing by 21% and 13% respectively for the highest offence seriousness rating and injury severity rating. Once these factors had been controlled for, living in social housing and the number of threats of forced sex offences experienced were no longer significant predictors of SV victim reporting to police.

Together, these results suggest that the severity of the SV experienced and views on the illegality of these behaviours are two key factors contributing to the decision to report SV to Police, irrespective of other factors measured.

Results: Outcomes of Reporting

A second focus of this study was on the identification of any differences in wellbeing outcomes as a result of FV or SV being reported or not. This was *RQ2: Are there any differences in wellbeing outcomes for victims of reported versus unreported family or sexual violence offences?* Results from analyses addressing this research question are reported below, first for FV offences, followed by SV offences.

Importantly, because our goal was to measure differences in outcomes related to offences being known to, or not known to police, for these analyses, NZCVS respondents were categorised into ‘reported’ and ‘non-reported’ groups based on whether at least one of the offences perpetrated against them were reported by *anyone*, rather than only on reports by the victim. We assumed that relationships between reporting and wellbeing outcomes—for instance, those following from increased access to formal support as a result of reporting to Police—would be available regardless of how Police become aware of the offending. Using reporting by *anyone* as the outcome measure therefore meant we could compare victims who may have had access to services through formal reporting channels (regardless of whether they personally made the decision to inform police), with victims who did not. This approach therefore differed from that taken in the analyses reported above, where the person-, community-, and offence-related factors were used to predict the reporting behaviour of the *victim*.

Family Violence Reporting Outcomes

Of the approximately 1,026 NZCVS respondents who indicated they had experienced FV victimisation in the previous 12 months, approximately 432 (42.1%) respondents had at least one offence that had been reported by someone to the Police, with no one having reported any offence for the remaining approximately 594 (57.9%) of respondents.

Table 20 below provides an overview of the characteristics of FV victims in the sample, broken down by whether at least one of their experienced FV offences had been reported. Respondents who identified as women were significantly more likely to have at least one FV offence reported to Police compared with men, whereas those who identified as European were more likely to have no offences reported to Police. Respondents with one or more FV experiences reported to Police also reported significantly higher numbers of family and non-FV victimisations over the past 12 months in the NZCVS, and were also more likely to be recorded as a perpetrator or victim of some form of crime in Police data in the 12 months prior to the survey period. These respondents also had significantly higher average deprivation scores according to the NZ Deprivation Index, and lived at a significantly greater number of prior addresses compared with respondents for whom no FV offences had been reported to Police.

In summary, basic descriptive analyses of the sample indicated that FV offences were more likely to become known to Police for non-European women with higher self-reported and Police-reported involvement in crimes (either as a victim or perpetrator), and who lived with greater socioeconomic deprivation.

Table 20

Characteristics of Family Violence Victims (N ≈ 1026) by Whether Any Offences were Reported by Anyone (n ≈ 432) or None were Reported by Anyone (n ≈ 594)

Characteristic	Total n (%)	Offences Reported by Anyone		χ^2	p
		Any n (%)	None n (%)		
Gender				5.58	.018
Man	234 (22.8)	84 (19.4)	153 (25.8)		
Woman	786 (76.6)	348 (80.6)	438 (73.7)		
Gender diverse[a]	*S*	*S*	*S*		
Ethnicities					
Māori	537 (52.3)	237 (54.9)	303 (51.0)	1.57	.210
Pacific	78 (7.6)	39 (9.0)	42 (7.1)	1.04	.309
European	669 (65.2)	261 (60.4)	408 (68.7)	7.96	.005
Asian	30 (2.9)	9 (2.1)	18 (3.0)	0.21	.644
Sexual identity				2.78	.096
Heterosexual	927 (90.4)	405 (93.8)	525 (88.4)		
Same sex[a]	12 (1.2)	*S*	*S*		
Bisexual	60 (5.8)	21 (4.9)	42 (7.1)		
Employment status				3.57	.168
Employed	567 (55.3)	225 (52.1)	342 (57.6)		
Unemployed	99 (9.6)	51 (11.8)	51 (8.6)		
Economically inactive	321 (31.3)	138 (31.9)	183 (30.8)		

	Total M (SD)	Offences Reported by Anyone		t	p
		Any M (SD)	None M (SD)		
No. NZCVS FV offences	3.22 (5.40)	3.89 (5.22)	2.73 (5.48)	3.46	<.001
No. NZCVS non-FV offences	9.98 (31.55)	14.02 (42.86)	7.04 (19.09)	3.17	.002
Age	40.47 (15.07)	41.09 (14.06)	40.2 (15.76)	1.14	.250
Disability score	0.69 (1.14)	0.68 (1.06)	0.70 (1.19)	-0.39	.694
No. prior addresses	10.51 (8.30)	12.01 (9.18)	9.39 (7.41)	4.86	<.001
Average deprivation score	7.01 (2.13)	7.52 (1.92)	6.69 (2.21)	5.98	<.001
No. prior offences[b]	0.12 (0.58)	0.17 (0.73)	0.08 (0.43)	2.36	.019
No. prior victimisations[b]	0.13 (0.44)	0.23 (0.60)	0.05 (0.25)	5.83	<.001

Notes. Due to de-identification methods, totals may not add to 100%. Ethnicities were multiply coded. FV = family violence. *S* = suppressed due to insufficient numbers. No. = number of. [a]Same-sex attracted people, and gender diverse people were excluded from the chi-square tests. [b]Prior offences and prior victimisations captured from Police data, in the 12 months prior to the NZCVS period.

Propensity Score Matching

As mentioned above in the Method section, propensity score matching was used to create two matched groups from the overall FV sample. One group comprised victims for whom at least one FV offence had been reported by anyone to Police ('reported' group), and the second group comprised victims for whom no FV offences had been reported to Police ('unreported' group). Differences in wellbeing outcomes were then measured across these two matched samples, allowing us to control for variables associated with FV reporting that could confound the relationship between reporting and wellbeing-related outcomes.

Variables that were identified as significant predictors of FV reporting in the first phase of the study were used as matching variables in this process, along with victim age.[18] Scores on these variables were used to generate a propensity score for each victim in the full FV sample (approximately 1,026 people), representing the propensity for each person to have had at least one of their FV victimisations reported to the Police. Participants were also matched exactly on identified gender and ethnicity.

Of the approximately 432 FV victims with at least one FV offence reported to Police, around 324 were able to be matched with an appropriate person for whom no FV offences had been reported (meaning there were approximately 324 victims in each group). Following this matching, no significant differences were identified in propensity scores between the two matched groups, nor in any of the underlying variables contributing to the propensity score. This indicated a successful match between the two groups.

Outcomes by Reporting Status

After creating the matched samples, we compared wellbeing-related outcomes between the two groups; see Table 21. Results showed that FV victims in the reported group were off work a significantly greater number of times on average than victims in the unreported group; this was a small effect (d = 0.18). No other significant differences in wellbeing outcomes were identified between the two groups.

[18] Variables included in the propensity score calculation included: victim age; number of prior Police-recorded victimisations; prior filled pain prescription; prior benefit receipt; living in social housing; whether family violence incidents were ever viewed as a crime; number of threats of family violence; and maximum family violence incident severity.

Table 21

Outcomes for Matched Samples of Family Violence Victims, by whether Any Offences were Reported by Anyone (n ≈ 324) or None were Reported by Anyone (n ≈ 324)

Characteristic	Matched Samples			
	Reported *n (%)*	*Unreported* *n (%)*	χ^2	*p*
Non-AOD service use	24 (7.4)	24 (7.4)	0.00	1.000
AOD service use	18 (5.6)	9 (2.8)	3.50	.061
Filled pain prescription	138 (42.6)	126 (38.9)	0.52	.471
Filled mood prescription	51 (15.7)	48 (14.8)	0.05	.829
Benefit receipt	177 (54.6)	171 (52.8)	0.06	.813
	Matched Samples			
	Reported *M (SD)*	*Unreported* *M (SD)*	*t*	*p*
Life satisfaction	6.99 (2.00)	7.23 (1.94)	1.25	.210
Psychological distress	6.75 (5.70)	6.72 (5.72)	-0.07	.943
No. ACC injury claims	0.40 (0.66)	0.44 (0.79)	0.76	.449
No. hospitalisations	0.17 (0.51)	0.24 (0.90)	1.28	.200
No. times off work	0.80 (2.45)	0.38 (2.23)	-2.28	.023
No. offences[a]	0.08 (0.39)	0.09 (0.68)	0.21	.832
No. victimisations[a]	0.09 (0.35)	0.11 (0.35)	0.56	.573

Notes. No. = number of. [a]Offences and victimisations captured from Police data, in the 12 months following the NZCVS period.

Sexual Violence Reporting Outcomes

Of the approximately 723 NZCVS respondents who experienced at least one SV offence in the previous 12 months, offences involving approximately 87 (12.0%) were reported by anyone to Police ('reported' victims), whereas none of the offences involving the remaining 636 (88.0%) were reported to Police by anyone ('unreported' victims).

As shown in Table 22 below, on average, victims of SV had experienced between two to three SV offences in the previous 12 months, and there was no significant difference in the number of SV offences for reported versus unreported victims. However, the number of non-SV offences over this time period was significantly related to reporting, with reported victims also reporting higher average numbers of non-SV offences in the NZCVS than unreported victims, as well as higher average numbers of total victimisations that had become known to Police in the 12 months prior to the survey period.

Table 22

Characteristics of Sexual Violence Victims (N ≈ 723) by Whether Any Offences were Reported by Anyone (n ≈ 87) or None were Reported by Anyone (n ≈ 636)

Characteristic	*Total n (%)*	Offences Reported by Anyone		χ^2	*p*
		Any n (%)	*None n (%)*		
Gender				2.96	.228
Man	141 (19.5)	12 (13.8)	132 (20.8)		
Woman	573 (79.3)	75 (86.2)	501 (78.8)		
Gender diverse[a]	9 (1.2)	*S*	*S*		
Ethnicities					
Māori	309 (42.7)	39 (44.8)	270 (42.5)	0.20	.654
Pacific	57 (7.9)	9 (10.3)	45 (7.1)	2.13	.145
European	525 (72.6)	54 (62.1)	468 (73.6)	4.11	.043
Asian	48 (6.6)	*S*	*S*	*S*	*S*
Sexual identity				*S*	*S*
Heterosexual	597 (82.6)	78 (89.7)	522 (82.1)		
Same sex[a]	21 (2.9)	*S*	*S*		
Bisexual	81 (11.2)	*S*	*S*		
Employment status				10.44	.005
Employed	480 (66.4)	45 (51.7)	438 (68.9)		
Unemployed	63 (8.7)	12 (13.8)	51 (8.0)		
Economically inactive	156 (21.6)	27 (31.0)	129 (20.3)		

	Total M (SD)	Offences Reported by Anyone		*t*	*p*
		Any M (SD)	*None M (SD)*		
No. NZCVS SV offences	2.55 (3.07)	3.09 (4.02)	2.47 (2.91)	1.38	.169
No. NZCVS non-SV offences	10.89 (29.89)	29.49 (73.30)	8.34 (15.31)	2.68	.009
Age	34.73 (14.07)	37.10 (12.60)	34.41 (14.24)	1.84	.068
Disability score	0.68 (1.18)	0.77 (1.21)	0.67 (1.18)	0.71	.482
No. prior addresses	9.10 (7.52)	12.56 (11.23)	8.59 (6.75)	-4.86	<.001
Average deprivation score	6.19 (2.25)	6.92 (1.94)	6.09 (2.28)	3.24	.002
No. prior offences[b]	0.10 (0.76)	0.24 (1.14)	0.08 (0.69)	1.29	.202
No. prior victimisations[b]	0.10 (0.48)	0.25 (0.63)	0.08 (0.45)	2.46	.016

Notes. Due to de-identification methods, totals may not add to 100%. Ethnicities were multiply coded. SV = sexual violence. *S* = suppressed due to insufficient numbers. No. = number of. [a]People attracted to the same sex and gender diverse people were excluded from the chi-square tests. [b]Prior offences and prior victimisations captured from Police data, in the 12 months prior to the NZCVS period.

There were no significant differences in reporting by victim gender, with most victims identifying as women. The majority of the victim sample also identified as European, and being European was related to significantly lower likelihood of SV being reported to Police by anyone; there were no further significant differences by ethnicity. Significant differences in SV reporting were also identified by employment status, with people who were employed being less likely to have had any offences reported to Police, and those unemployed or economically inactive being more likely to have had at least one SV offence reported to Police. This aligned with patterns by number of prior addresses and average deprivation score, with reported victims living in a significantly higher number of addresses on average and having significantly higher average deprivation scores than unreported victims. There were no significant differences in the number of prior offences recorded in Police data for reported versus unreported victims.

Propensity Score Matching

Variables that were identified as significant predictors of SV reporting in the first phase of the research were used as matching variables in the propensity score matching procedure for the SV victims, along with victim age.[19] Of the approximately 87 SV victims in the 'reported' group, approximately 72 were able to be matched to an appropriate SV victim in the 'unreported' group. This meant that there were approximately 72 SV victims in each group for the comparison of outcome analyses.

A series of *t*-tests and chi-square tests for independence indicated that there were no significant differences between the matched 'reported' and 'unreported' SV victim groups in propensity scores or individual matching variables following the matching procedure. This indicated that the two groups had been adequately matched on these variables.

Outcomes of Sexual Violence Reporting

Wellbeing-related outcomes were compared between our matched reported and unreported SV victim groups, with results presented below in Table 23. As shown in the table, no significant differences were identified between groups across any of the outcome variables assessed. Results from these analyses should be interpreted with caution due to the small number of respondents in each matched group; the small number of participants substantially reduces statistical power, increasing the likelihood of false negatives (or Type II error).[20]

[19] Variables included in the propensity score calculation included victim age, maximum sexual violence incident severity, most severe injury rating from a sexual violence incident, and whether any incidents of sexual violence were viewed as crimes.

[20] A post-hoc power analysis indicated that the smallest effect size that we could detect with 80% power was $d = 0.47$, which corresponds to a moderate effect. This means that small effects would likely failed to reach statistical significance in our analyses due to the small sample sizes.

Table 23

Outcomes for Matched Samples of Sexual Violence Victims, by whether Any Offences were Reported by Anyone (n ≈ 72) or None were Reported by Anyone (n ≈ 72)

Characteristic	Matched samples		χ^2	*p*
	Reported *n (%)*	*Unreported* *n (%)*		
Non-AOD service use	6 (8.3)	9 (12.5)	0.63	.426
AOD service use	*S*	*S*	*S*	*S*
Filled pain prescriptions	27 (37.5)	36 (50.0)	0.72	.398
Filled mood prescriptions	9 (12.5)	9 (12.5)	0.00	1.000
Benefit receipt[a]	27 (37.5)	27 (37.5)	0.12	.729
	Matched samples			
	Reported *M (SD)*	*Unreported* *M (SD)*	*t*	*p*
Life satisfaction	6.69 (2.16)	6.99 (1.90)	0.87	.387
Psychological distress	7.86 (6.41)	7.48 (5.84)	-0.68	.495
No. ACC injury claims	0.40 (0.79)	0.38 (0.66)	-0.23	.818
No. hospitalisations	0.31 (1.57)	0.13 (0.38)	-0.95	.343
No. times off work	0.74 (2.62)	0.43 (1.69)	-0.84	.404
No. offences[b]	0.06 (0.29)	0.04 (0.26)	-0.30	.761
No. victimisations[b]	0.14 (0.39)	0.09 (0.33)	-0.93	.351

Notes. No. = number of. [a]Data were missing for some victims in the 'reported' group, and so *p* does not equal 1 despite the same number of victims receiving a benefit in both groups. [b]Offences and victimisations captured from Police data, in the 12 months following the NZCVS period.

Discussion

Summary of Key Findings

Below we provide a summary of the key findings related to each of the research questions, including discussion of the potential implications of these findings from both a theory and policy perspective.

Reporting Rates for Family and Sexual Violence

In line with previous research, the results of the current study found that a majority of victims of FV and SV did not report any of these offences to Police. This finding highlights the importance of self-report victimisation surveys, such as the NZCVS, for collecting information on the 'hidden' forms of violence in communities. Levels of under-reporting were markedly larger for SV compared with FV, with less than 10% of SV victims reporting any offences to Police as opposed to around one third of FV victims. This replicates findings from previous international research showing that FV is more likely to be reported than SV (Stavrou et al., 2016). In addition to differences in perceptions of the illegality of FV and SV offences (see further discussion below), this suggests that the barriers to reporting, including stigma, not wanting to identify as a victim, and fears about consequences of reporting, potentially remain greater for SV than for FV. The specific reasons for non-reporting were not explored in the current study.

The disparity in reporting rates between SV and FV could suggest the need for more focused policy work on reducing barriers to SV reporting, such as providing reporting pathways that are perceived as 'safe', and improving awareness of the different outcomes that can result from formal reporting of SV to Police, including how much autonomy victims have over these outcomes. However, as discussed further below, the current research also raises questions about the current emphasis on reporting and whether reporting does lead to better outcomes for victims. Indeed, the provision of psychological and other health supports through the ACC sensitive claims process without the need for victimisation to be reported through official channels may partially explain the lower rates of reporting for SV; if victims are able to access desired supports without a formal report to police and resultant engagement in an often-aversive criminal justice process (The Backbone Collective & Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura, 2024), perhaps victims are choosing to take this option. Future research is needed to more closely examine these possibilities, and better understand the explicit motivations or rationales that are driving decision-making regarding reporting in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Factors Predictive of Reporting to the Police

For both SV and FV victims, viewing the behaviours experienced as a crime was a key predictor of reporting to Police. This aligns with existing literature, which also finds perceptions of the illegality of an offence to be a key factor in whether victims choose to

report their experiences to Police (Muehlenhard & Kimes, 1999; The Backbone Collective & Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura, 2024; Weiss, 2011). In the current study, just under half of FV victims and just under two-thirds of SV victims did not identify any of the offences they experienced as constituting crimes; this disparity likely also partially explains the differences in Police reporting rates for FV and SV victims. This is concerning given that offences are only included in the NZCVS dataset if they meet the threshold of what Police consider an offence.

These figures indicate that despite ongoing public health and primary prevention campaigns that aim to raise understanding of SV and FV, there remains a need to raise awareness of what FV and SV look like across the spectrum of relevant behaviours, and to address unhelpful stereotypes about the nature of what 'real' FV and SV is. Although not explored in the current study, some of this seeming lack of awareness of the seriousness of offences reported in the NZCVS may also relate to a well-established phenomenon of people being reluctant to label themselves as 'victims' (Caron & Mitchell, 2021). There may be fears about resulting social stigmatisation associated with being a 'victim', as well as cognitive dissonance driven by prior-held beliefs about the importance of reporting crime butting up against fears of actually engaging in the criminal justice system and implications for perceptions of a Just World (Fohring, 2015; Khan, et al., 2018; Lerner, 1980). Addressing these issues may again involve further work to normalise and de-stigmatise what it means to be a 'victim', and providing victims with more information and assurance over their level of autonomy regarding formal responses to reports that are made.

For FV victims, other key factors associated with reporting to Police appeared to relate to higher levels of deprivation and higher levels of pre-existing connections with government organisations, including receiving MSD benefits, living in social housing, being prescribed pain medication in the prior 12 months, and having prior victimisations reported to Police. These findings also align with previous research on factors that may contribute to higher reporting rates (Lee et al., 2010; Stavrou et al., 2016). The lower levels of reporting among less deprived populations may relate to their greater ability to self-fund required supports and services following victimisation. Prior research has also found that less deprived people tend to have larger informal social support networks (Dunst, 2023), and so these networks may be able to be drawn upon as an alternative to (or in addition to) formal reporting. Utilising these alternative forms of support may thereby help to alleviate the fears of stigmatisation or loss of control over the criminal justice response that were discussed above, depending on the perceived supportiveness of this broader informal network. In addition, it is possible that pre-existing connections with government organisations themself also reduce several barriers to victim reporting, such as already having to deal with perceived stigma associated with accessing government services. Being in regular contact

with government services may also trigger a ‘safeguarding’ effect, whereby victimisation is more likely to be detected and reporting encouraged by staff at these organisations.

Additionally, the current study found that experiencing a higher number of threats of physical violence was uniquely associated with victims reporting any FV to the Police. No other forms of FV were specifically associated with reporting behaviours. This indicates that reporting may also play a preventative role for FV victims, whereby victims are reporting threats to Police so that they can intervene and stop the threat from being enacted.

For SV victims, only the severity of the violence experienced (in addition to ever viewing the incident as a crime, as discussed above) appeared to be significantly related to reporting behaviours; the maximum severity of FV offences was also a significant predictor of FV reporting. In other words, victims were more likely to report either SV or FV if they were experiencing more subjectively severe forms of violence, including violence leading to more serious injuries. This is again consistent with the international literature (Carbone-Lopez et al., 2016; Kang & Lynch, 2014; Sabina & Ho, 2014; Voce & Boxall, 2018). There are likely several factors that may explain this pattern in reporting. First, victims may be reporting these offences due to the need to seek medical or other forms of health care, or for fear of further escalation of violence leading to even more severe injuries. Second, these results may again indicate that less subjectively severe forms of SV or FV are falling below a ‘threshold’ whereby they are either not being viewed as criminal, there is a belief that reports would not be taken seriously, or even perhaps that the experience is just a ‘normal’ part of human experience. For example, although grabbing or slapping buttocks without consent would constitute a sexual offence, this is something that is commonly experienced by people who attend bars or nightclubs (Kavanaugh, 2013; Peterson et al., 2023). People experiencing these offences may not therefore think it important or worthy of reporting to Police. Future research is needed to more deeply explore the explicit reasons contributing to decisions to report in order to tease these different possible motivations apart.

The relationship between the severity of offending and likelihood of reporting may again indicate the need to continue public health and psychoeducational campaigns to raise awareness of the more seemingly ‘benign’ or normalised forms of SV and FV. This may also include the need for further work to understand the experiences of victims who do report these subjectively less severe forms of SV and FV; how seriously do these reports appear to be taken by Police and other criminal justice organisations, and how do these experiences impact future reporting? Relatedly, more work is required to better understand the benefits to victims for reporting less subjectively severe forms of violence and how effective formal responses are to these reports, or whether perhaps it is ultimately more beneficial for these victims to seek informal means of addressing their needs and protecting themselves against future victimisation.

The finding that victims experiencing more severe forms of SV and FV are more likely to make reports to Police also suggests that official victimisation data are likely capturing a disproportionate number of more severe forms of violence. This may be skewing the picture of what 'normative' SV and FV looks like towards more extreme forms of violence, and providing less insight into the more insidious forms that these kinds of violence can take. Likewise, the finding that more deprived people or people more reliant on government supports were more likely to report FV suggests that official FV data may be skewed towards a disproportionate representation of victims as lower SES or more socially vulnerable. It is therefore important that people who use these official forms of data, such as policy makers and service providers, are aware of these potential biases in the data. This is to ensure that policies and services created to address FV and SV are responsive to the diverse needs and characteristics of the entire victim population, and that developed resources and services appropriately acknowledge the spectrum of FV and SV behaviours through which harm can be caused to victims.

Outcomes of Reporting

The current study found that there was a significant difference in the amount of time taken off work depending on whether FV had been reported to Police (by anyone), with reporting being associated with a higher number of hours taken off work as a result of FV offences. This aligns with previous Aotearoa New Zealand-based research that found that FV was more likely to be reported when it impacted work (Malihi et al., 2021). Given that more subjectively severe offences were also more likely to be reported, this increase in time off work could be associated with injuries preventing work or a need to attend medical appointments, although there were no differences in hospitalisations or prescription use in the 12 months following the survey period between reporting groups. Alternatively, the increased time off work could relate to having to attend meetings with police, lawyers or engage with other criminal justice processes for victims who reported, or could also be related to the special FV leave that has been legislatively required to be provided for victims of FV (although this leave is available to employees regardless of whether there has been a Police report; Family Violence Act 2018).

Other than time off work, no other significant differences were identified in wellbeing outcomes between FV and SV victims whose victimisation had and had not been reported to Police. This finding is difficult to interpret conclusively. On the one hand, this finding may indicate that reporting FV or SV to Police may not be important for ensuring that victims are appropriately supported. Victims may be able to access required supports informally through existing networks, or victims may be choosing to access services through NGOs or ACC sensitive claims pathways that do not require formal reports to be made to Police. Given the range of supports that are provided across the Aotearoa New Zealand FV and SV sectors

that do not require a report to have been made, it's not entirely clear that a report would be necessary for required supports to be accessed. That said, given that only around 10% of victims in our sample were accessing government-funded non-AOD mental health services in the 12 months after the survey, it appears that accessing informal support pathways may be more common than accessing these confidential formal supports. One potential exception to this could be access to crisis services, which may be more easily and quickly accessed by victims who have made reports and are provided with help to navigate the different crisis options available. Because access to mental health services was only measured following the survey period, the current study would not have been able to capture any differences in access to crisis services as a result of reporting. This is therefore an important area of future research.

Conversely, the lack of any significant difference in most wellbeing outcomes between the two groups could be because victims are not able to access needed supports regardless of whether their victimisation has been reported or not. This could be due to available supports being inaccessible or otherwise not meeting the needs of victims. Alternatively, any wellbeing impacts of being able to access supports for reported victims could be offset by the negative impacts on wellbeing often experienced by victims who engage in criminal justice processes (Brooks-Hay, 2020; The Backbone Collective & Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura, 2024; Wolf et al., 2003).

However, we also acknowledge that our ability to investigate wellbeing indicators as a consequence of reporting in this study was poor. In line with much previous research it was difficult to identify any temporal sequence between reporting and wellbeing variables. Relatedly, there were no controls on pre-reporting wellbeing, and finally, indicators of wellbeing were themselves quite limited, and potentially insensitive to the reality of victims' lives. This is expanded upon further below in the Limitations section.

The reasons for the lack of measurable differences in wellbeing outcomes were not able to be more closely explored in the current study, and are an important direction for future research. Further research would help us better understand whether changes are needed to reporting processes and available supports to better meet the needs of victims who do report, or whether we should de-emphasise reporting to Police as a key desirable decision for victims and instead move towards a more nuanced understanding of when reporting may or may not be beneficial for victims. Key to this would be exploring how we might better enable and champion informal community supports, and the building of trusted social networks around people at-risk of FV or SV. Bolstering the provision of informal supports would align with research that has found that informal supports are often more effective at improving wellbeing than formal supports (Dunst, 2023), and that formal supports should therefore be a supplement to, rather than replacement for, informal supports.

Limitations

Although the results of the current research provide a step towards better understanding the 'hidden' forms of FV and SV in Aotearoa New Zealand, and the impacts that reporting decisions have on victims and official victimisation data, there were several key limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the sample sizes were relatively small, particularly for SV, and statistical power to detect significant effects was therefore low. This further complicates the interpretation of null results (e.g., the lack of significant differences in victim wellbeing outcomes), as these may be more due to the lack of statistical power than because there truly is no effect or difference to find. This issue will be addressed through the collection of additional NZCVS waves that can be pooled together to create larger samples, although this is dependent on stability in items and data collection practices over successive waves.

Another key limitation of the current study was the self-reported nature of the NZCVS data used. Although this is in some ways also the strength of NZCVS data, as it means that crimes that are not otherwise reported can be captured, it also means that we are reliant on a) the accuracy of respondent memory and recall and b) the willingness of respondents to report their experiences. The NZCVS methodology has been carefully designed to try and encourage full disclosure, such as having respondents privately complete the SV and FV items rather than verbally reporting on these items to the interviewer, however the stigma and sensitivity associated with these offences means that there likely still remains a 'hidden' proportion of offences even in self-reported victimisation surveys. This may limit the generalisability of our findings to all victims, and issues with the accuracy of offence recall would impact the reliability of associations found in our data in relation to each research question.

The retrospective recall nature of much of the data captured in the NZCVS also makes it difficult to tease apart causal relationships; it is difficult to ascertain whether the FV or SV offences themselves causing the measured outcomes, or whether these outcomes reflect pre-existing characteristics or contexts for people more likely to be victimised. The longitudinal nature of the IDI data addresses this issue somewhat, however as noted below, the real-world validity of many of the variables captured in the IDI introduces other issues in terms of interpreting the meaningfulness of results.

Issues with Existing Data

In addition to the general limitations noted above, there were several limitations specifically related to the nature or format of the data available that impacted the scope of our intended research. We separate these limitations off from those above as these are limitations that may be particularly notable for future development of data collection or

development practices. Addressing these issues could help to enable future research in this space.

The structure of how offences are captured in the NZCVS was a key limitation of the current research. In particular, capturing offences of a similar nature in cluster forms notably limited our ability to make inferences about the characteristics of individual offences and how they influenced reporting decisions. This is because the characteristics of individual offences , and whether they had been reported or not, were not delineated within the cluster form. Instead, cluster forms often only reported counts (e.g., number of overall offences, number of offences reported, etc), or asked participants to respond to items thinking of the offences overall (e.g., for rating how much the offence affected them). Clustering offences also meant that the specific dates of each offence were unknown, and we were therefore not able to capture short term predictors or outcomes that occurred immediately before or after each offence. Instead, we were only able to use predictors and outcomes that occurred before or after the full 12-month reference period of the survey.

There were several items of interest in the NZCVS that were not able to be used in the current research due to issues with missing data. These included the emotional response to the offence, alcohol and drug use, how much the offence affected the victim, and the reason for the conflict (for FV). In addition, some items of interest from the NZCVS were not able to be used for the current research because they had not been uploaded to the IDI. These included items related to avenues of help-seeking or who offences were reported to, such as the reporting of offences to friends, family or whānau, or other informal networks. Addressing issues with these missing data would substantially broaden the scope of research questions that could be addressed with the NZCVS.

Limitations were also identified with non-NZCVS data sources. Namely, existing Police victimisation data included in the IDI do not have a flag for FV-related offences. This meant that it was not possible to carry out a planned analysis comparing victims identified through official Police data with victims identified using NZCVS data. This may be addressed with the refresh of NIA data that is planned for the IDI.

Finally, the data in the IDI is limited in terms of information that is directly related to psychosocial wellbeing. Instead, we were required to use administrative proxies for wellbeing indicators and outcomes that we were interested in, such as access of government-funded mental health services as an indicator of overall mental health. This approach is limited for several reasons, including the fact that these proxies mostly rely on engagement with government services, and that non-engagement can only loosely be interpreted as a lack of need; there are many reasons why people may not engage with government services even though they are experiencing poor psychosocial wellbeing. Incorporating more direct measures of health and wellbeing would substantially improve the

ability to conduct meaningful social sciences research using the IDI, although identifying how these data could be collected on large scales would be a substantial piece of work in itself.

Future Research

Findings from the current research suggest several directions for future research that could meaningfully advance our understanding of victim reporting decisions and outcomes. First, as highlighted above, further work is needed to better understand the interplay between formal and informal avenues of help-seeking for SV and FV, and the ways in which informal supports can help with improving victim wellbeing. This could expand upon findings in the current study regarding whether reporting to Police is an outcome that we should be targeting or encouraging for victims, or whether there are more responsive ways to meet the needs of victims and protect against future harm.

Relatedly, more research is needed on the specific reasons why victims choose to report (or not), and who they choose to report to, such as what the anticipated responses to the reports are, why people might not think that Police can intervene, or why people do not perceive certain FV or SV incidents as offences. Better understanding the specific contributors to these perceptions would enable us to identify appropriate responses to under-reporting, such as whether the focus should be on public health campaigns or awareness raising, or on improving victim autonomy over what happens following a report being made.

The literature review and analyses in the current study also did not cover the very important area of how Police are perceived by victims, and how this influences decisions to report. This aspect of reporting decisions would be valuable to analyse in later research especially given the recent report published by The Backbone Collective and Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura (2024), and the recent expansion of the NZCVS to capture trust in Police as a regular measure.

In addition to understanding potential negative impacts by reporting status, further work is required to identify potential protective factors for victims; or in other words, the characteristics of victims or the response to reports that leads to positive outcomes for victims following FV or SV offences. Furthering our understanding of key protective factors would identify areas in which further policy and service delivery could be directed to support preventative efforts, rather than purely intervention work.

Conclusion

Findings from this research provide one further step toward understanding the complexities surrounding the reporting of FV and SV to Police in Aotearoa New Zealand. The key findings revealed a substantial under-reporting of both FV and SV, with SV having a notably lower reporting rate than FV. This highlights the important role of self-report

victimisation surveys like the NZCVS in capturing data on these 'hidden' forms of violence. There may also be a need for targeted efforts to reduce barriers to reporting both FV and SV, such as creating subjectively ‘safer’ reporting pathways, and providing victims with more autonomy over what happens following their reports.

The current results also identified that perceptions of FV and SV offences as crimes were significantly related to reporting decisions. Many victims did not recognise their experiences as criminal offences, which further contributed to low reporting rates. These findings highlight a need for ongoing research to understand why these offences are not being viewed as such, and potentially for further awareness-raising campaigns highlighting the diversity of both victims of FV and SV, and the many forms in which these harmful behaviours can manifest.

The current study also found that FV victims from more deprived backgrounds and victims who experienced more severe forms of FV and SV may be disproportionately represented in official crime data. Higher levels of deprivation were associated with increased reporting rates, potentially due to greater familiarity with government services or fewer available informal support options. Conversely, less deprived people may rely more on personal networks or have the means to access private support, reducing the need to formally report offences. Less deprived people may also worry more about the stigma associated with being a victim of FV or SV. Similarly, victims who reported more severe offences, including those resulting in more serious injuries or involving threats of physical violence, were more likely to report offences to Police, possibly driven by the urgency of needing medical care or preventing further harm. This pattern suggests that the official data might be skewed towards capturing more extreme forms of violence and cases involving socially vulnerable victims, which may limit understanding of the full spectrum of FV and SV experiences.

Finally, findings from the study raised important questions about the current emphasis on formal reporting as the primary mechanism for addressing FV and SV victimisation. The lack of significant differences in wellbeing outcomes between those who reported and those who did not suggests that alternative forms of support, including informal networks and community resources, may be just as effective at responding to victim needs. Alternatively, the lack of differences in wellbeing outcomes may indicate that formal supports provided to victims are not effective or appropriately responsive to needs. These findings point to the potential benefits of shifting focus towards enabling informal support systems and providing victims with a wider range of options to access help and protect themselves against future victimisation. Future research should aim to explore these possibilities further, ensuring that policies and services are responsive to the diverse needs and experiences of all victims. By reimagining how we support victims beyond the confines of formal reporting,

we can create a more inclusive and effective response to FV and SV in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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