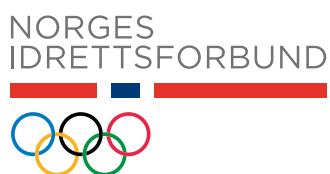




Foto: Erik Ruud, NIF



NIH

# HARMFUL EXPERIENCES IN SPORTS

Young adults' experiences of psychological violence,  
physical violence and sexual harassment

Kari Fasting, Nina Sølvsberg, Siv Gjesdal

Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (NOC).  
Norwegian School of Sports Sciences.

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2024



A close-up photograph of a person's arm and hand holding a yellow soccer ball. The person is wearing a light blue short-sleeved shirt and a black wristband with a yellow circular detail. The soccer ball is yellow with black and orange patterns. The background is blurred, showing other people in a sports setting.

“

The overall aim of the project “Harmful Experiences in Sports” was to provide more information and knowledge that may be useful in the safeguarding work of Norwegian sport.



# Executive summary

The overall aim of the project “Harmful Experiences in Sports” was to provide more information and knowledge that may be useful in the safeguarding work of Norwegian sport, with respect to various forms of harmful behaviour (psychological, physical, and sexual). Questions answered in the survey were: what were the incidences of such behaviours, who has experienced them, who was the perpetrator, where did they occur, and who has reported such incidents, all in the past year. A total of 1,261 participants aged 18-30 years, who were members of a sports club were drawn from the membership register of The Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports. Subjects answered an online questionnaire. The study is one of the very few incidence studies worldwide that surveyed what young adults had experienced in sports during the past 12 months. Most studies are prevalence studies and concern what happened to the participants when they were children and/or adolescents.

About half of the participants had experienced at least one form of harmful experiences “once or twice” in the past 12 months. Psychological violence (47%) was experienced more often than sexual harassment (25%) and physical violence (21%). There was no significant difference between women and men in the incidence of psychological and physical violence, but women (34%) experienced far more sexual harassment than men (19%). Very few women or men had been subjected to sexual coercions/sexual assaults. We have no evidence to conclude that the extent of harmful experiences is higher in sports than in other arenas of society.

Most participants experienced these violations “during training” and “in connection with competitions”. Male coaches/instructors and male athletes were most often the perpetrators. Physical and psychological violence were primarily carried out by “male coaches/instructors,” while “male athletes” most often were the perpetrators of sexual harassment. There were almost no referees or health personnel, and very few in leadership positions, among the perpetrators.

Approximately 60% of those who had experienced harmful behaviours, had spoken up/talked to someone about their experiences. Psychological violence was most often reported to someone, and physical the least. Few had delivered a formal report (approx. 20%), i.e. contacted managers or leaders in the sport club/federation, contacted the police, or used MittVarsel. Among those who had not reported, 79% stated that they thought that “the incident was nothing to report”.

Based on the results, it is proposed that a greater focus should be placed on the prevention of psychological violence, that common guidelines be drawn up for the prevention of all types of violence, that larger-scale surveys be carried out and at the same time more knowledge be developed about special groups (such as female elite athletes, coaches, judges/referees, LGBTQ+ athletes, athletes with an immigrant background, and athletes with disabilities). A priority should also be awareness-raising and education, especially for coaches and athletes, who also should be given the opportunity to be more involved in the development of safeguarding strategies and procedures in their sport.

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# Foreword

In 2022, Kari Fasting was awarded the IOC Women and Sport Award for Europe. With the award came the opportunity to apply for funding for a project within one or more of the IOC's focus areas for gender equality. After dialogue with the Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (NIF), and the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences (NIH), Kari Fasting took the initiative to apply for funding for the project "Harmful experiences in sports". The application was approved, and the project subsequently received financial support from Olympic Solidarity, in addition to resources from NIF and NIH. We would like to thank both institutions and the IOC for making it possible to carry out the project.

The project group has been led by Professor Emerita Kari Fasting and has also consisted of Associate Professor Siv Gjesdal and researcher Nina Sølvberg, all from the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences. At the beginning of the project, Cecilie Prebensen, team leader for values works at the time, Håvard Øvregård, senior advisor for safeguarding, and Julie Karima Berg, advisor for ethical and safe sport, all from NIF, were also part of the project group. Thank you to all three. Due to changes in the work situation of the first two, it is Julie Karima Berg who has mainly been our employee and supporter in NIF. A big thank you to her. We would not have been able to complete the project without her efforts and help.

The project has also had a resource group that is to be thanked for its valuable input, particularly in the planning and implementation of the data collection. It has consisted of: Professor Åse Strandbu (NIH), Dr Hanne Sogn (NIH), Researcher I – Kari Stefansen (NOVA), Professor Mike Hartill (Edge Hill University, England), safeguarding Advisor – Maria Karin Dalsbø (Norwegian Gymnastics Federation) and "Voice of experience" – Senior lecturer Tor Solbakken (Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences).

We would also like to thank all the participants in the project. We have collected data from young adult members of sports clubs aged 18-30 years about their experiences during the past 12 months of harmful behaviours in sport. These results are presented in this report. We have also collected data on the experiences these members have had while participating in children's and youth sports, which will be presented in a separate report. The overall objective of the survey was to obtain more information and knowledge that can be useful in Norwegian sport's efforts to prevent and deal with various types of abuse (mental, physical and sexual) in organised sport. We hope we have succeeded in this.

Oslo 19 May 2024  
Kari Fasting, project leader  
Nina Sølvberg  
Siv Gjesdal





“

What do we know about the incidence  
and reporting of harmful experiences  
in sport?

# 1. Background and introduction

The Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (NIF) has zero tolerance for discrimination and harassment regardless of gender, ethnic background, religion, sexual orientation, and disability<sup>1</sup>. For several years, efforts have been made to prevent bullying, discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse in Norwegian sport. However, the knowledge serving as the baseline for various measures has been very inadequate. The overall goal of the project "Harmful experiences in sport" is therefore to provide more information and knowledge that can be useful in Norwegian sport's preventive work against and handling of various types of harmful behaviours in organised sport.

This chapter first provides a brief historical overview of measures that have been implemented by NIF. It then presents relevant definitions and legislation, before providing an overview of previous studies which show what we know about young adults' experiences of harmful behaviour in sport. Based on this, the chapter concludes with the research questions we want to get answered through this study.

## 1.1 NIF's work to prevent harmful behaviour in sport

In 2000, the report "Women, Elite Sports and Sexual Harassment" was published<sup>2</sup>. The report was part of the Norwegian Olympic Sports Centre's women's project and showed that 28% of female elite athletes had experienced one or more forms of sexual harassment in a sports context. With reference to the report, the NIF Board adopted the same year on "Guidelines against sexual harassment and abuse in sport"<sup>3</sup>. In 2008, the Police Certificate of Conduct scheme was adopted. This currently means that "Everyone with tasks in the sports who has a relationship of trust or responsibility in relation to minors or persons with developmental disabilities must present a valid police certificate

(childcare certificate)", and that those who have remarks on their police certificate must not have such tasks in sport<sup>4</sup>. Two years later (2010), the NIF Board adopted new revised guidelines against sexual harassment and abuse in sport, presented in a booklet with information on definitions, prevention, reporting etc. The guidelines apply to all Norwegian sports (Appendix 1)<sup>5</sup>. The following year, in 2011, a position in the NIF administration was dedicated to this area, and today three people are involved in the work on "Safe Sport". In addition, all regional offices have people who work with whistleblowing/safe sport as part of their position. In 2013, five films were made for use in preventive work, and in 2017 a guide for handling cases of sexual harassment and abuse was put in place. In 2019, the Annual General Meeting decided to strengthen the work on ethical and safe sport, with a mandate to investigate measures that could develop the organisation's work. The report "Ethical and Safe Sport" from 2021 describes the work done in the following five delivery areas<sup>6</sup>:

- Ethical code of conduct and related competence work
- Ethical Advice
- System for whistleblowing and handling cases
- Process for cases to the sports Judgement Committee
- Requirements for good governance

<sup>1</sup> Norwegian Sports Confederation, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Fasting & Sundgot-Borgen, 2000

<sup>3</sup> Norwegian Sports Confederation, 2000

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.idrettsforbundet.no/tema/politiattest/>

<sup>5</sup> Norwegian Sports Confederation, 2010. Information about and guidelines against sexual harassment and abuse in sport.

<sup>6</sup> Norwegian Sports Confederation, 2021. Report Ethical and Safe Sport



All these areas may be of relevance to our study, but we would particularly like to emphasise that “MittVarsel”, a new digital system for reporting and handling reports, was introduced in all national federation and regional offices in May 2022. From August the same year, all sports clubs have been offered the same solution. To date, approximately 400 sports clubs have been trained in the use of “MittVarsel”. All members of Norwegian sports can report through “MittVarsel”, regardless of whether their sports club has adopted the system.

When it comes to children and young people particularly, NIF (2018), in collaboration with the Ministry of Children and Equality and the Ministry of Culture, launched the campaign “Start to Talk”, developed by the Council of Europe<sup>7</sup>. Start to Talk is a video that shows situations that can happen in sport and illustrates how difficult it can be for children to speak out about sexual abuse. The aim of the campaign is, among other things, to reduce uncertainty and fear around harassment and abuse.

“Trygg på trening” (Safe at Training) is a free course for coaches and volunteers. It has been developed by Save the Children Norway in collaboration with NIF, NOK<sup>8</sup> Bergen and several national sport federations. The course aims to provide participants with expertise on what violence and sexual abuse are, how to prevent this in their own club, and what to do if one is worried about a child<sup>9</sup>. The course aims to make the sports arena a safer place for children<sup>10</sup>.

This brief overview shows that NIF has implemented several measures in recent years to prevent sexual harassment and abuse in sport and has set up a digital reporting system<sup>11</sup>. In addition, several national federations have developed their own safeguarding measures. However, very little is known about the impact of all this work, as most

of the measures have not been evaluated. However, in an attempt to explain and understand the findings of our study, as well as propose new safeguarding measures, it may be important to have knowledge of the safeguarding work that NIF already has carried out and is carrying out.

The overview also shows that it is primarily harmful behaviour of a sexual nature (sexual harassment and sexual abuse) that have been in focus. Relatively little attention has been paid to other types of harmful behaviours, such as psychological and physical violence. However, these forms of harm are touched upon at two pages on NIFs website, one on “Bullying”, which contains tips on how coaches and managers should deal with bullying and address a bullying situation<sup>12 13</sup>, and one page on “Violence and threats”. The latter contains a guide to dealing with violence and threats in sport. The guide intends to make it easier to report, deal with and respond to violence and threats in a sports context<sup>14</sup>.

## 1.2 Definitions and Laws

In this project, we wanted to map the extent of various forms of harmful behaviour. We use “harmful” as an overarching and broad term, which can include a wide range of behaviours and events. According to Safe Work Australia, harmful behaviours include among others violence and aggression, bullying, harassment, including sexual and gender-based harassment, racism, ableism and agism. This is very close to how “krenkende adferd” is defined in Norwegian language<sup>15</sup>. Harmful behaviours can therefore refer to words or actions that involve bullying, violence, harassment, discrimination, racism and exclusion<sup>16</sup>. Accordingly, harmful behaviour can be an umbrella term that covers everything from individual statements or actions to repeated episodes, and the actions can be physical, psychological, verbal, non-verbal and relational.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.coe.int/en/web/sport/start-to-talk{%2237617769%22:\[3\]}](https://www.coe.int/en/web/sport/start-to-talk{%2237617769%22:[3]})

<sup>8</sup> Competence centre against sexual abuse

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.reddbarna.no/vart-arbeid/barn-i-norge/trygg-pa-trening/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.idrettsforbundet.no/tema/tryggidrett/trygg-pa-trening-med-redd-barna/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.idrettsforbundet.no/tema/tryggidrett/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.idrettsforbundet.no/tema/tryggidrett/mobbing/>

<sup>13</sup> The Red Cross and Telenor have developed an anti-bullying programme against cyberbullying Use Hue, which the Norwegian Sports Confederation, the Norwegian Football Federation and the Norwegian Ski Federation adopted in 2022 (<https://www.idrettsforbundet.no/nyheter/2022/felles-kamp-mot-nettmobbing/>).

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.idrettsforbundet.no/tema/tryggidrett/vold-og-trusler/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://snl.no/search?query=krenkelse>

<sup>16</sup> <https://snl.no/krenkelse>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.barnehage.no/barnehageloven-mobbing-ua/voksne-som-krenker-barn-i-barnehagen/229027>

The following three forms of harmful behaviours are examined in this study: psychological, physical and sexual. As just mentioned, harassment and violence can be examples of harmful behaviour, and consequently definitions of sexual harassment, psychological and physical violence have formed the basis for the questions we ask. Dinutvei.no, a Norwegian national guide to violence and abuse, defines psychological violence as follows: "Psychological violence is when someone uses their voice, body language and words in a way that offends, harms, threatens and controls others. Victims of psychological violence often feel guilt, shame, fear, insecurity, sadness and inferiority. Psychological violence does not leave physical traces as physical violence can. That's why it can be difficult to recognise and finding words to describe it"<sup>18</sup>. Physical violence is "any violence that involves physical contact - kicking, hitting, pulling, biting, scratching, restraining, shaking, pushing and grabbing someone by the throat. Confinement and isolation are also forms of physical violence"<sup>19</sup>. The definition and content of sexual violence seems to vary more than the two forms just defined. Dinutvei writes that sexual violence includes all forms of sexual violations/harm: "Examples include acts or attempted acts involving physical contact such as touching, groping, licking, sucking, masturbation, acts similar to sexual intercourse, sexual intercourse and rape, and acts or attempted acts that do not involve physical contact such as sexualised teasing, indecent exposure, photography, filming, peeping and showing pornography"<sup>20</sup>. Sexual harassment can also be understood as an umbrella term that includes various forms of sexual violations/harm. International research shows that sexual harassment

in the workplace can be divided into three main components or dimensions<sup>21</sup>: gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion.

Harassment is prohibited under Norwegian law, and the "Act on Equality and Prohibition against Discrimination" defines sexual harassment in section 13: "Sexual harassment means any form of unwanted sexual attention that has the purpose or effect of being offensive, intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or distressing"<sup>22</sup>. Jardim (2018)<sup>23</sup> points out that sexual harassment partly overlaps with certain forms of sexual assault<sup>24</sup> in Norwegian legislation. The definition can form the basis for criminal prosecution in serious cases under the Penal Code<sup>25</sup>.

As can be seen from this, the terms sexual harm, sexual harassment, and sexual violence partly overlap and are used somewhat interchangeably. They also vary somewhat depending on whether or not children are involved<sup>26</sup>. In this report, we have chosen to use the term "sexual harassment" and not sexual violence, as opposed to "psychological and physical violence". The reason for this is that we use an existing measurement which has been tested and developed by the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment<sup>27</sup>.

This measurement uses sexual harassment as an umbrella concept as is common in international workplace research<sup>28</sup>. Accordingly, it measures different dimensions of sexual harassment (gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, coercion, and sexual assault), which we will return to in the next chapter.

<sup>18</sup> <https://dinutvei.no/vold-i-naere-relasjoner/ulike-former-for-vold/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://dinutvei.no/vold-i-naere-relasjoner/ulike-former-for-vold/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://dinutvei.no/vold-i-naere-relasjoner/ulike-former-for-vold/>

<sup>21</sup> Fitzgerald et al, 1995

<sup>22</sup> [https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2017-06-16-51/KAPITTEL\\_2#KAPITTEL\\_2](https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2017-06-16-51/KAPITTEL_2#KAPITTEL_2)

<sup>23</sup> Jardim et al, 2022

<sup>24</sup> "Sexual abuse is used as an umbrella term and encompasses a wide range of unwanted sexual behaviour," according to the NHI. "A child is sexually abused when he or she is involved in sexual activity that he or she is unable to understand, cannot consent to, is not mature enough to consent to, or that violates the laws and norms of society. This includes all sexual activity with children under the age of 16" (<https://nhi.no/forstehjelp/akuttmedisin/miscellaneous/sexual-abuse>).

<sup>25</sup> [https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2005-05-20-28/KAPITTEL\\_2-11](https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2005-05-20-28/KAPITTEL_2-11) CHAPTER\_2-11, chapter 26 Sexual offences.

<sup>26</sup> Sexual harassment is not usually used for children. In Norwegian, the terms sexual abuse and sexual violence are more commonly used for the same type of behaviour that is referred to as sexual harassment among adults. All forms of sexual offence against children are therefore often characterised as sexual abuse, i.e. in Norwegian language "overgrep".

<sup>27</sup> Fasting & Køber, 2019

<sup>28</sup> Fitzgerald & Cortina, 2018



### 1.3 What do we know about the incidence and reporting of harmful experiences in sport?

The oldest Norwegian study on the prevalence of harmful experiences in sport includes sexual harassment among female elite athletes. The study is more than 20 years old and was part of NIFs Elite Sports Department's Women's Project (n = 572, 15-39 years)<sup>29</sup>. One of the findings was that 28% of female elite athletes had experienced sexual harassment from people in the sports environment. A few years later, a comprehensive survey was conducted among 193 female sports students at four university colleges about their experiences of sexual harassment in organised sports. Here, 21% of the students had experienced sexual harassment from a person in sport<sup>30</sup>. Both of these studies measured 'lifetime' experiences (prevalence), i.e. how many people have experienced some form of sexual harassment at least once, but no information regarding when it happened, how many times, etc. These two Norwegian studies only covered sexual harassment of young women.

In the "Youth in Oslo" 2021 survey (n = 2283), participants who were active in sports found that the participants were asked about four different forms of harmful behaviours in a sports context: 1) threatened, bullied, or experienced social exclusion, 2) subjected to negative inappropriate or hurtful sexual comments, 3) unwanted sexual touching and 4) another form of sexual assault during the past year. Overall, approximately 14% of boys and 16% of girls had experienced at least one type of these behaviours<sup>32</sup>.

In 2021, the Norwegian Football Federation published a report on unwanted situations and behaviours in Norwegian football in 2020<sup>33</sup>. A total of 31 cases of violence and threats and nine cases of discrimination were registered in 37 matches. This accounted for 0.04% of all mat-

ches, but in a player survey from the same year, 4% stated that they had been subjected to violence and 10% that they had experienced threats and harassment<sup>34</sup>.

A recent study (n = 919) in upper secondary school, among elite and non-elite athletes and a reference group that included both boys and girls, analysed the incidence of sexual harassment and abuse in the past 12 months. The results showed that 39% experienced sexual harassment and abuse, and that the incidence was higher among girls than among boys<sup>31</sup>. Again, only sexual harassment was measured.

We have some knowledge of the prevalence of unwanted behaviours and violence in sport in other Western countries, as the number of studies has increased over the past 20 years, but in general there is little research. Little is known about young adults, different types of whistleblowing/ formal reporting systems and how they work, even though many countries have developed action plans for the prevention of harassment and abuse in sport<sup>35</sup>.

Most of the studies are lifetime studies, which have been conducted in the UK<sup>36</sup>, Belgium and the Netherlands<sup>37</sup>, Germany<sup>38</sup>, Canada<sup>39</sup>, and Australia<sup>40</sup>. Both girls/women and boys/men are included in these studies, which map different types of harmful experiences in children's and youth sports. Except for one study from Canada<sup>41</sup>, which covers 14-17-year-olds, all of the studies are retrospective, i.e. persons over the age of 18 are asked about their experiences in sport before they were 16 or 18 years old. The prevalence of harmful experiences varies, but they all find that girls/young women are more often subjected to harmful behaviour than boys/young men. Furthermore, they show that the perpetrator is most often, but not always, a man, and that teammates

<sup>29</sup> Fasting & Sundgot-Borgen, 2000

<sup>30</sup> Fasting et al., 2014

<sup>31</sup> Sølvberg et al., 2022

<sup>32</sup> Strandbu et al., 2023

<sup>33</sup> Semmerud & Lunde, 2021

<sup>34</sup> In this survey, "violence" meant "actions that hurt, pain, frighten or offend another person. 'Threats' (psychological violence) refers to words, body language and tone of voice that offend, threaten and control the other person." Discrimination referred to that some people are treated less favourably than others, without this differential treatment being objective, necessary or proportionate.

<sup>35</sup> Fasting, 2019

<sup>36</sup> Alexander et al., 2011

<sup>37</sup> Vertommen et al., 2016; 2022

<sup>38</sup> Ohlert et al., 2018; 2021

<sup>39</sup> Wilson et al., 2022

<sup>40</sup> Pankowiak et al., 2023

<sup>41</sup> Parent & Vaillancourt-Morel, 2021

more often than the coach are the perpetrators. The various forms of harmful behaviours are analysed in these studies, and all show a greater extent of psychological violence compared to physical and/or sexual violence. The largest study on the prevalence of various forms of abuse in children's and youth sport is a comparative study of 10,302 people in six European countries who were active in organised sports before the age of 18<sup>42</sup>. The participants were aged 18-30, but this study also asked about experiences before the age of 18. The results showed that the total prevalence of interpersonal violence in children's and youth sport was very high (75%) and ranged from 70% in Austria to 89% in Belgium (Wallonia-Brussels). A surprising finding was that boys (80%) in all countries had experienced more than girls (71%). Psychological violence was the most prevalent form of violence in this study (65%). When it comes to the prevalence among adults in sport, we have not found any studies that map the situation here and now, i.e. in the last year (incidence study).

This overview shows that little is known about the prevalence of harmful behaviours in Norwegian sport. This applies in particular to knowledge about the prevalence of psychological and physical violence. We also know little about boys and men, and adults. Nor do we know who discloses/reports such incidents, what is reported, or why it is not reported. There are also very few studies that provide a situational picture of prevalence among members of organised sports by examining prevalence 'last year'. We hope that this study will help to bridge some of these knowledge gaps. This could also be of importance internationally, as there is a general lack of knowledge about the prevalence of abusive behaviour among young adult athletes over the age of 18, as well as little research on reporting and whistleblowing.

## 1.4 Research questions

As mentioned earlier, the overall aim of the study is to obtain more information and knowledge that can support Norwegian sports' efforts to prevent and handle various types of harmful behaviours in organised sports. As part of this, we also want to uncover risk groups and risk situations. The survey will provide answers to the following questions:

1. What is the incidence of psychological and physical violence, as well as sexual harassment in the last year among members of sports clubs in the 18-30 years age group?
2. Who has experienced such incidents, who carried them out, and where did they happen?
3. How many and who formally or informally report such harmful behaviours, what is reported, to whom is it reported, and why have people chosen not to report?

## 1.5 Structure of the report

The rest of the report begins with a chapter in which we explain the methods and analyses we have conducted, which form the basis of our results (chapter 2). This is followed by three result chapters: 1) incidence of harmful experiences over the past 12 months (chapter 3), 2) where the incidents took place (chapter 4), and 3) the perpetrators of harmful behaviours (chapter 5). These chapters answer research questions 1-2. Chapter 6 answers research question 3 and deals with reporting. The final chapter (Chapter 7) is called "What do the results tell us". Here possible risk groups are discussed as well as the results in relation to other studies. Finally, suggestions for safeguarding measures and further research are presented.

<sup>42</sup> Hartill et al., 2023





“

The overall aim of the study is to obtain more information and knowledge that can support Norwegian sports' efforts to prevent and handle various types of harmful behaviours in organised sports **abuse in organised sports**.



## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Sample and data gathering

The survey covers people aged 18-30 who in 2023 were members of a sports club affiliated with NIF. According to NIF's membership statistics, this totalled 314,285 people, 40% of whom were women. An electronic questionnaire was sent by e-mail to approximately half of these, stratified by gender and age. Data collection started on 2. November 2023. Three reminders were sent, and the survey was closed on 16 January 2024. To get as many responses as possible, information about the survey was posted on NIF's website and publicised on social media<sup>43</sup>. Furthermore, newsletters about the survey were sent by e-mail to all national federations, with a request to pass this on to their members and/or create a post on their own websites. This was also sent by e-mail to all sports clubs with a request to share with their members. In addition, an email was sent via the Norwegian Athletes' Central Organisation (NISO) to all their members. NIH also posted the news item from NIF on NIH's website. When the survey closed, 6258 had opened the link to the questionnaire, of which 5381 had consented to answer it. However, approximately 40% (2151) turned out to be outside the target group as they were over the age of 30 and/or not members of a sports club. This is probably because the e-mail addresses to which the questionnaire was sent were incorrect, even though the membership statistics were correct<sup>44</sup>. Of the 2,706 who were within the target group and who were thus given the opportunity to continue with the survey, around half dropped out of the first part that dealt with harmful experiences last year. This means that the results presented in this report are based on a sample of 1,261 people aged 18-30 who were members of a sports club. The survey provides a picture of the situation by mapping harmful experiences that members of a sports club aged

18-30 years have been subjected to in the past 12 months. In line with research projects in other countries, the extent of perceived harm in childhood and adolescence in sport is also mapped. These results will be published later in a separate report on harmful experiences in sport among children and adolescence.

### 2.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was divided thematically into four sections; 1) demographic variables (gender, sexual orientation, age, education, main occupation, immigrant status and permanent disability) 2) involvement and engagement in sport over the past 12 months and during childhood and adolescence (athlete, coach, voluntary positions of trust, referee, sport federation affiliation, time spent on sport, experience of childhood and adolescence sport, participation in competitive sport, performance level, training environment, and familiarity with NIF's and their own federation's websites about sexual harassment and abuse), 3) mapping of harmful experiences (physical, psychological and sexual) in sport last year and as children and youth, and 4) follow-up questions to those who had experienced harmful behaviours (who the perpetrator was, where it had occurred and aspects related to disclosing/reporting).

The questionnaire was tested in a pretest between mid-July and mid-September 2023 and sent out three times to the email addresses of 4,000 female and male members of sports clubs aged 18-30. Of these, 191 opened the email and 183 consented to participate in the survey. The number of people who answered all the questions was 71. Changes were made to the questionnaire based on the responses of these people and comments from the study's resource group.

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.idrettsforbundet.no/nyheter/2023/arets-viktigste-sporreundersokelse-skall-skape-en-tryggere-idrett>

<sup>44</sup> According to NIF, members are checked against the national register. The explanation for why so many email addresses have been incorrect is that they are old addresses, often belonging to parents, which have never been removed from the system and replaced with the children's email address even after they have become adults.

### 2.2.1 Measuring harmful experiences among young adults (18-30 years)

The part of the questionnaire that covered harmful experiences was introduced as follows: "In the following questions, think back to experiences you have had in a sports context in the past 12 months"



"Sports context" means during training under the auspices of a club/regional Sport Confederation/national federation, competitions/training camps, board meetings, courses, social contexts, or digital contact in connection with sport



The beginning of each question was: "In the last 12 months - have you experienced in a sports context"



The response options to all questions about harmful behaviours were: "1) No, not experienced, 2) Once or twice, 3) Sometimes, 4) Often, and 5) Very often". In total, there were 41 questions that measured some form of harmful behaviours (physical = 11 questions, psychological = 14 questions, sexual = 16 questions).

For physical and psychological violence, we did not find any Norwegian valid measurements that were suitable for use. We have therefore developed our own. The questions included in these measures are inspired by sports research in other countries on the prevalence of psychological and physical violence in sport<sup>45</sup>.

To arrive at a measurement instrument that is as valid and reliable as possible, several statistical analyses were carried out. These are described in more detail in section 2.4 and in Appendix 2. As a result, the measures of physical and psychological violence consisted of 10 questions each.

**Table 2.1. Questions measuring psychological violence in sports**

1	...being scolded at/criticised for not performing well enough, arriving late, skipping practice, forgetting equipment, etc.?
2	... to be subjected to bothersome teasing or unpleasant joking?
3	... that your performance in training and competitions was ridiculed?
4	... being shouted at in a way that you perceived as negative and/or threatening?
5	... to be called insulting names like stupid, dumb, idiot, slow and the like?
6	... that lies and negative rumours about you were spread?
7	... being humiliated to the point of embarrassment and feeling inferior?
8	... being ignored and overlooked when you didn't do so well in training and/or competitions?
9	... being threatened with being kicked out/expelled from practice and/or from the team?
10	... that someone tried to control your social life, such as isolating you from friends and family?

<sup>45</sup> Interpersonal Violence in Sport (IVIS) (Vertommen et al., 2016)  
Parent et al., 2020. Violence Toward Athletes Questionnaire (VTAQ)  
Hartill, et al., 2021. CASES: Child abuse in sport: European Statistics – Project Report  
Kerr et al., 2019. Prevalence of Maltreatment Among Current and Former National Team Athletes

**Table 2.2. Questions measuring physical violence in sports**

1	... being hit with an open hand or with a fist (in ways not authorized by the rules of the sport, such as in martial arts)?
2	... to be forced to the ground (in ways not authorized by the rules of the sport, such as in martial arts)?
3	... being hit with an object (e.g. a shoe, racket, bat or similar)?
4	... being forced to do extra training or exercises as punishment, such as additional sit-ups or running farther than others during training?
5	... being forced or persuaded to continue training when you were injured or exhausted?
6	... to be shaken or pushed (in ways not approved by the rules of the sport, such as in martial arts)?
7	... that someone tried to strangle you?
8	... being forced to participate in initiation ceremonies and/or rituals involving physical harm or pain to you (e.g. beating, hitting, choking, or excessive alcohol consumption)?
9	... to be persuaded or forced to take drugs/doping to for example, lose/gain weight, increase muscle mass, improve performance, stop or delay menstruation?
10	... that someone has thrown an object after you or at you?

For measuring sexual harassment, we have used a battery of questions that has been developed through several studies at the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI)<sup>46</sup>. This battery of questions has been used in studying the incidence of sexual harassment in the Armed Forces three times at two-year intervals. The battery consists of 16 questions measuring four different

dimensions of sexual harassment; "gender harassment" (4 questions), "unwanted sexual attention" (7 questions), "sexual coercion" (3 questions) and "sexual assault" (2 questions)<sup>47</sup>.

We have made a few linguistic changes to some questions to adapt the battery to sports.

<sup>46</sup> Fasting and Køber, 2019; Fasting et al, 2021; Fasting et al, 2022; Ubisch et al, 2023

<sup>47</sup> In the questionnaire, the questions about physical and psychological offences, as well as sexual harassment, were asked in random order.

**Table 2.3. Questions measuring different dimensions of sexual harassment in sports**

Gender harassment	
1	... insulting or unpleasant comments about your gender, for example that women/men are not suited to participate in certain types of sports or professions or to do certain types of tasks
2	... that someone has told you sexual jokes or stories that upset you or that you found harmful or uncomfortable?
3	... that someone has treated you badly, ignored you, or insulted you because of your gender
4	... that someone has behaved in a condescending manner or has made degrading or unpleasant comments or slurs towards you because of your gender
Unwanted sexual attention	
5	... sexually explicit gazes or glances that you were upset by or found offensive or uncomfortable?
6	... that someone has tried to establish a romantic or sexual relationship with you, even though you had rejected this?
7	... comments or remarks about your appearance or body that you were upset by or found offensive or uncomfortable?
8	... annoying or intrusive invitations for dates, dinners etc., even though you had declined them?
9	... unwanted sexual references (looks, slurs, jokes and teasing) about your body, your clothes, your private life, your sexual orientation etc.?
10	... that someone has taken or shared sexually charged photos/videos of you that you were upset about or found offensive or uncomfortable?
11	... unwanted physical contact that you were upset by or found offensive or uncomfortable, such as touching, groping, patting, hugging, or kissing against your will?
Sexual coercion	
12	... unwanted requests for sexual favors with the promise or implication of a reward, such as the promise of being selected for the team, better training conditions/working conditions, a good reference or similar?
13	... that someone has treated you badly because you didn't want to have sex, for example by excluding you from the team, giving you poorer training/working conditions or similar?
14	... that someone has used their position to pressure you into unwanted sexual activity?
Sexual assault	
15	... that someone has had sex/intercourse with you without your consent?
16	... to be forced into sexual acts?



## 2.3 Ethical considerations

For some, the consequences of harmful experiences can be very serious and long-lasting. Results from the first national survey on child abuse and neglect among a representative sample of Norwegian 12-16 –year-olds from the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies, refer to mental and somatic health problems, reduced quality of life, sleeping difficulties, and increased school absence<sup>48</sup>. The report on violence and abuse in the Norwegian population from 2023 shows that both women and men who had experienced violence had statistically significantly higher symptom levels of anxiety and depression than people who had not experienced violence. This applied to all types of violence<sup>49</sup>. It is therefore problematic to ask people about such experiences. Unpleasant and traumatic experiences that had been forgotten can be brought up again. For this reason, we included telephone numbers and addresses for the following websites two places in the questionnaire: The helpline for people who have experienced sexual abuse, the DIXI resource centre, “Din utvei (Your way out)”, and NIF’s webpage with advice and tips for helplines and counselling services. These were contacted in advance and informed about when the data collection would take place. The study was approved by NIH’s ethics committee in May 2023 and by SIKT (Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research) in July 2023 following a DPIA (personal impact assessment).

## 2.4 Data analysis

When it came to mapping the various forms of harmful experiences, we conducted a series of factor analyses to investigate whether the expected structure was present in the material. In other words, the extent to which the individual questions together measure the forms of harmful behaviours we were interested in, namely psychological violence, physical violence and sexual

harassment. As we had an idea of the factor structure in advance, we decided that a confirmatory factor analysis was most appropriate. In this context, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used, using Mplus (see Appendix 2).

As a result of these analyses, both psychological and physical violence were measured with 10 questions each, while sexual harassment was measured with 16 questions.

### 2.4.1 Reliability and validity

We used composite reliability to measure the internal consistency in the three forms, represented by Raykov’s Rho<sup>50</sup>. Values of .7 and above are considered acceptable<sup>51</sup>, and our analyses showed acceptable reliability for all three forms of harmful behaviour. For more information, see Appendix 2.

Another fundamental characteristic of measurements is whether they measure what we intend or want to measure, i.e. validity. This can be more difficult to test, as there are no simple statistical measures that measure validity. In this survey, we have asked ourselves whether the questions measuring the three forms are adequate for the underlying phenomena we wanted to measure. This is called ‘face validity’. We believe that this is the case as the three different measurements contain questions that we consider to be relevant, in addition to being based on knowledge from previous research<sup>52,53</sup>.

### 2.4.2 Scoring of the questions about harmful experiences

There are different ways of presenting the results on harmful experiences. The most common way is to report frequencies in the form of percentages at the scale level<sup>54</sup>. We have also chosen to do this in this report. When we report the total incidence of harmful behaviours, this means that everyone who has used the response option 2, 3, 4 or 5 on at least one of the questions about psychological or physical violence or sexual harassment, respectively, is recorded as having experienced

<sup>48</sup> Hafstad & Augusti, 2019

<sup>49</sup> Dale et al., 2023

<sup>50</sup> Raykov, 2009

<sup>51</sup> Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994

<sup>52</sup> Ubisch m.fl., 2023; Vertommen et al., 2016; Interpersonal Violence in Sport (IVIS) (Vertommen et al., 2016); Parent et al., 2020 ; Hartill, M.et al., 2021; Kerr et al., 2019.

<sup>53</sup> In a project among 14-17 year olds in Canada, content validity was tested by experts in connection with the development of the Violence Towards Athletes Questionnaire (VTAQ). Furthermore, criterion validity and construct validity were tested in a translation of the same scale in a study in Belgium. This was done by comparing the results of the VTAQ with other validated questionnaires measuring mental health and quality of life (Parent et al., 2019; Vertommen et al., 2022).

<sup>54</sup> Fasting & Køber, 2019

“

For some, the consequences of harmful experiences can be very serious and long-lasting.

Photo: Erik Ruud, NIF

at least one harmful experience. The same applies to each of the three forms of harm, and to each component/dimension of sexual harassment. If one has experienced at least one form of harmful behaviour once or twice, this is recorded as experienced.

### 2.4.3 Statistical analyses

In the report, we use descriptive analyses in the form of frequency tables and cross-tabulations<sup>55</sup>. Fisher's exact test was used for cross-tabulations with 2×2 categories, and the Pearson chi-square test was used for cross-tabulations with multiple categories. P-value <.05 was considered statistically significant. In addition, we have used decision tree analyses (CHAID) to consider risk groups<sup>56,57</sup>. This is a statistical procedure that uses dimension reduction to identify the characteristics that have the strongest interaction with the experience of the various forms of harmful behaviours. From these characteristics, we can identify risk groups. We have conducted a total of four tree analyses. One for each of the forms of harmful behaviour, and one for the total, i.e. with the three forms combined.

All the above analyses were carried out using the SPSS statistics programme, version 28. The results are presented in the form of tables and figures (bar charts, etc.). Groups of ten people or fewer are masked for privacy reasons. We know

from other surveys that gender is an important explanatory variable for perceived harmful behaviour. Most of the tables and figures therefore show results for women and men separately.

### 2.5 Description of the participants

In the following three tables, we first provide a demographic overview of the participants in the survey (table 2.4). Table 2.5 provides an overview of which national sport federation the participants belong to, Table 2.6 presents the participants' role in sport and the type of sport they participate in, Table 2.7 presents results for those who responded that they are active athletes ("competitive athletes/recreational athletes/exercisers") and the final table (2.8) provides an overview of the extent to which the participants have visited the websites of NIF and their own national sport federation concerning sexual harassment and abuse.

Below is a brief description of the content of each of the tables. The percentages in the tables are based on the participants who have answered the relevant question. This applies to all tables in the report. In response to the question about gender, a total of eight people marked the following category, "other gender/this categorisation does not suit me". Because the number is ten or fewer, these have been omitted from all tables in the report that present results separated by gender, but they

<sup>55</sup> We have not used decimals in tables. Where the values have been  $\geq 5$ , we have increased them.

<sup>56</sup> CHAID is also called tree analysis. CHAID can be regarded as a stepwise analysis of variance. It tests the interaction between the independent variables and is used, among other things, to identify extreme groups that have either very high or very low values of the criterion variable (the dependent variable).

<sup>57</sup> IBM: [https://www.ibm.com/docs/en/SSLVMB\\_28.0.0/pdf/IBM\\_SPSS\\_Decision\\_Trees.pdf](https://www.ibm.com/docs/en/SSLVMB_28.0.0/pdf/IBM_SPSS_Decision_Trees.pdf)

**Table 2.4. Demographic variables among women, men and total, presented as number (n) and percentage (%)**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
	753	60 %	500	40 %	1253	100 %
<b>Age</b>						
18-20 years	391	52 %	207	41 %	598	48 %
21-30 years	362	48 %	293	59 %	655	52 %
<b>Immigration<sup>1</sup></b>						
Persons with an immigration background	60	9 %	33	7 %	93	8 %
The rest of the Norwegian population	645	93 %	436	93 %	1081	92 %
<b>Sexual orientation</b>						
Heterosexual	625	89 %	442	94 %	1067	91 %
Other <sup>2</sup>	80	11 %	28	6 %	108	9 %
<b>Education</b>						
Primary, middle and high school	442	63 %	284	61 %	726	62 %
Higher education <sup>3</sup>	261	37 %	184	39 %	445	38 %
<b>Main occupation<sup>4</sup></b>						
Employed	412	59 %	279	60 %	691	59 %
Student	252	36 %	148	32 %	400	34 %
Other	39	6 %	41	9 %	80	7 %
<b>Persons with permanent disabilities<sup>5</sup></b>	39	6 %	20	4 %	59	5 %

<sup>1</sup> The category "Persons with an immigrant background" includes immigrants (people who themselves have immigrated to Norway, born abroad to foreign-born parents) and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents (people born in Norway to two foreign-born parents).

<sup>2</sup> The "other" category under sexual orientation includes homosexual, bisexual, queer, and unsure/none of the categories apply to me.

<sup>3</sup> The category "higher education" includes one-year programs at universities or university colleges, bachelor's degrees or equivalent, master's degrees or equivalent and doctoral degrees.

<sup>4</sup> The category "employed" includes full-time and part-time positions including students working full-time/part-time, "student" includes full-time students, while "other" includes conscription/early service (military), unemployed/on leave/on social welfare, other and people who did not wish to respond.

<sup>5</sup> The category "permanent disability" includes mobility impairment, hearing impairment, visual impairment, or intellectual disability.

are included in the other tables. In addition, there were three participants who stated "don't know/don't want to answer" when asked about immigration. These were excluded from the analyses on immigration.

Table 2.4 shows that the study included more women (60%) than men and that the age distribution is relatively similar when we separate the participants into two groups, aged 18-20 and 21-30. Among women, the oldest group accounts for 48%, while the corresponding number for

men is 59%. Among the youngest, it is the other way round, 52% of women and 41% of men are 20 years old or younger. Furthermore, 8% have an immigrant background and 9% have a sexual orientation other than heterosexual. Well over one-third have a higher education, more than half are employed (59%) and 5% have some form of permanent disability.

**Table 2.5. Number (n) and percentage (%) of participants from each National Sport Federation in the Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (NIF)**

	Total			Total	
	n <sup>1</sup>	%		n <sup>1</sup>	%
	760	61 %		510	40 %
Norwegian Sledding, Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation	2	.2	Norwegian Ice Hockey Federation	32	2.5
Norwegian Federation of American Sports	37	2.9	Norwegian Judo Federation	3	.2
Norwegian Badminton Association	9	.7	Norwegian Martial Arts Federation	40	3.2
Norwegian Bandy Federation	45	3.6	Norwegian Kickboxing Federation	8	.6
Norwegian Basketball Federation	17	1.3	Norwegian Climbing Federation	32	2.5
Norwegian Federation of Company Sport	2	.2	Norwegian Air Sports Federation	12	1.0
Norwegian Billiards Federation	2	.2	Norwegian Motorsport Federation	8	.6
Norwegian Boxing Federation	9	.7	Norwegian Orienteering Federation	21	1.7
Norwegian Table Tennis Association	6	.5	Norwegian Canoe Federation	4	.3
Norwegian Bowling Federation	2	.2	Norwegian Rowing Federation	6	.5
Norwegian Board Sport Federation	1	.1	Norwegian Rugby Federation	5	.4
Norwegian Wrestling Federation	6	.5	Norwegian Equestrian Federation	51	4.0
Norwegian Archery Federation	2	.2	Norwegian Sailing Federation	6	.5
Norwegian Curling Association	2	.2	Norwegian Ski Federation	62	4.9
Norwegian Cycling Federation	11	.9	Norwegian Biathlon Association	21	1.7
Norwegian Dance Federation	6	.5	Norwegian Shooting Sport Federation	32	2.5
Norwegian Diving Federation	5	.4	Norwegian Skating Federation	14	1.1
Norwegian Fencing Federation	2	.2	Norwegian Association of University Sports	11	.9
Norwegian Multisport Federation	1	.1	Norwegian Powerlifting Federation	19	1.5
Norwegian Football Federation	269	21.3	Norwegian Swimming Federation	47	3.7
Norwegian Athletic Federation	53	4.2	Norwegian Tennis Federation	12	1.0
Norwegian Functional Fitness Federation	6	.5	Norwegian Triathlon Federation	7	.6
Norwegian Golf Federation	5	.4	Norwegian Waterski and Wakeboard Association	4	.3
Norwegian Gymnastic Federation	67	5.3	Norwegian Weightlifting Federation	4	.3
Norwegian Sled Dog Racing Association	6	.5	Norwegian Volleyball Federation	40	3.2
Norwegian Handball Federation	187	14.8			

<sup>1</sup> People who stated "other" gender (n = 8) are included in the table.

Table 2.5 shows the national sport federations in which the participants spend the most time. All national sport federations are represented except for the following four: Norwegian Casting Federation, Norwegian Cricket Federation, Norwegian Softball and Baseball Federation, Norwegian Squash Federation.

The sports with the most participants are football (21.3%), handball (14.8%), gymnastics (5.3%), skiing (4.9%) and equestrian sports (4.0%). In total, 23 federations are represented with fewer than 10 participants<sup>58</sup>.

<sup>58</sup> Analyses that investigate the extent of perceived violations within the individual sports federations are not presented as the number in most sports federations is very small.



Most of the respondents are active athletes or exercisers (91%), but many of them also have other roles. This can be seen in table 2.6, where 32% have been involved as a coach in the past year, 13% have held voluntary positions of trust, and 12% have been a referee. A closer look at the active athletes shows that more than half (n = 705) have only been active as athletes, while 47 people have only been coaches, 11 have only held voluntary positions of trust and 21 have only been referees<sup>59</sup>. The most common combination is being an athlete and a coach, totally 222 people.

Table 2.6 also shows responses to the question: "Is the sport you have spent the most time on an individual sport or a team sport?" We note that 44% of participants have spent the most time on an individual sport and 56% on a team sport.

**Table 2.6. Sports variables among women, men and total, presented as number (n) and percentage (%)**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
	753	60 %	500	40 %	1253	100 %
<b>Role<sup>1</sup></b>						
Athlete (competitive athlete, recreational athlete, exerciser)	681	90 %	459	92 %	1140	91 %
Coach	263	35 %	139	28 %	402	32 %
Voluntary positions of trust	113	15 %	55	11 %	168	13 %
Referee	92	12 %	56	11 %	148	12 %
<b>Type of sport</b>						
Individual sports	333	44 %	223	45 %	556	44 %
Team sports	420	56 %	277	55 %	697	56 %

<sup>1</sup> Participants could mark multiple roles. The question was: "How have you been involved in organised sport in the last 12 months. You can tick several options"

<sup>59</sup> We had hoped that these groups would have been somewhat larger, in order to investigate whether harmful experiences varied with role. Due to the fact that so few responded to the questionnaire, this is difficult. However, we want to investigate whether there is any difference between those who are only active as athletes/exercisers and those who hold other roles and combinations of roles.

Table 2.7 shows the responses to questions asked only to those who had indicated that they were an athlete, competitive athlete, recreational athlete, or exerciser <sup>60</sup>. Based on previous research, we had mapped out conditions that we wanted to investigate as possible risk factors. Total time spent on their sport (including all roles), as well as participation in competitive sports can be such factors<sup>61,62</sup>. We note that four out of five have participated in competitive sports in the past year. The largest group has competed at club level

(34%), while 13% have competed internationally. Slightly more than half spend most of their time training in groups within their sport clubs, while around one in four spend most of their time exercising alone. Only 11 people spend most time training alone with a coach. Time spent on their main sport varies from less than four hours per week to more than 16 hours per week. The largest group is those who spend 5-10 hours (40%), and the smallest group is the group of those who spend more than 16 hours.

**Table 2.7. Athlete variables among women, men and total, presented as number (n) and percentage (%)**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
	753	60 %	500	40 %	1253	100 %
<b>Most time spent on</b>						
Training alone	166	24 %	104	23 %	270	24 %
Training with others	74	11 %	71	16 %	145	13%
Group training in sports clubs	383	56 %	247	54 %	630	55 %
Alone with coach	6	1 %	5	1 %	11	1 %
Commercial fitness centre	39	6 %	18	4 %	57	5 %
Other	13	2 %	14	3 %	27	2 %
<b>Time spent on main sport last 12 months<sup>1</sup></b>						
Less than 4 hours/week	157	23 %	125	27 %	282	25 %
5-10 hours/week	272	40 %	187	41 %	459	40 %
11-15 hours/week	151	22 %	75	16 %	226	20 %
More than 16 hours/week	101	15 %	72	16 %	173	15 %
<b>People participating in competitive sports in the last 12 months.</b>	553	81 %	367	80 %	920	81 %
<b>Highest level of competitive sport last 12 months.</b>						
Sports clubs	199	36 %	113	31 %	312	34 %
Regional	127	23 %	98	27 %	225	25 %
National	156	29 %	111	30 %	267	29 %
International	71	13 %	45	12 %	116	13 %

<sup>1</sup> In further analyses, time spent on main sport will be categorized as "≤10 hours a week" (less than 4 hours and 5-10 hours) and "≥11 hours a week" (11-15 hours and more than 16 hours).

<sup>60</sup> Hereafter referred to as athletes

<sup>61</sup> Fastig et al., 2010

<sup>62</sup> Daignault et al., 2023

Table 2.8 shows how many persons have visited NIF's website about reporting, NIF's website on sexual harassment and abuse, and their national sport federations websites on sexual harassment and abuse. Although the reporting website is more recent to date, more people have visited this website compared with those visiting the website

about sexual harassment and abuse. However, very few have visited NIF's website about reporting, only 9%. Relatively the same number of women as men have visited this site, while slightly more women than men have visited the pages about sexual harassment and abuse.

**Table 2.8. Persons visiting the websites of NIF about reporting and NIF and national sports federations on sexual harassment and abuse. Presented as number (n) and percentage (%) among women, men and total.**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
	752	60 %	499	40 %	1251	100 %
Persons visited NIF's website about reporting	69	9 %	45	9 %	114	9 %
Persons visited NIF's website on sexual harassment and abuse	52	7 %	22	4 %	74	6 %
Persons visited their organisation's website on sexual harassment and abuse	53	7 %	26	5 %	79	6 %

## 2.6 Representativity and weighting

We cannot say anything about the response rate as we do not know how many people received the survey, but it is very low. A low response rate does not necessarily lead to biased results but depends on how representative the sample is<sup>63</sup>. Most surveys on harmful experiences in sport have a convenience sample, where you often don't know the size or other characteristics of the population, i.e. the group you want to say something about. In this study, however, we know something about the population (which in our case

are members of a sports club between the ages of 18 and 30), in the form of a breakdown by gender, age, national sports federation. This makes it possible to compare those who have responded to the survey with all members of sports clubs in this age group in Norway. In this way, we can investigate how representative the sample is of all 18–30-year club member in terms of these variables<sup>64</sup>. This is particularly important in relation to gender, as we know from the research literature that gender can be an important explanatory variable for various forms of harmful behaviours<sup>65</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> Hellevik, 2016

<https://www.forskning.no/statistikk-innvandring-kronikk/kronikk-lave-svarprosent-forer-ikke-nodvendigvis-til-skjeve-resultater/1167716>

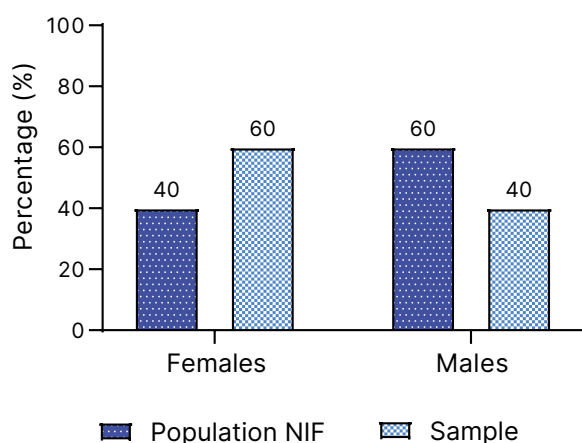
<sup>64</sup> As there are many federations and only 1,261 people who responded to the survey, we have chosen not to compare the sample with the population on this variable.

<sup>65</sup> Vertommen et al., 2022

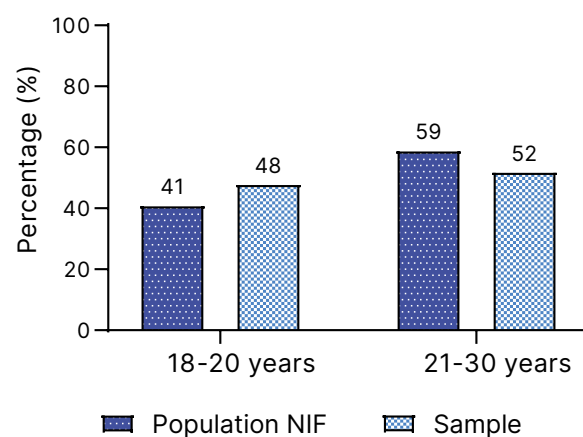
Figure 2.1 shows that women are overrepresented, and men are underrepresented in our survey compared to NIF's members in the 18-30 age group. In this age group, women and men in NIF account for 40% and 60% respectively. In our study, the gender distribution is reversed: 60% women and 40% men.

We have also compared the age distribution of the sample with the population. Figure 2.2 shows that there are a few more young people in the sample than in the population, while the opposite is true for those aged 21-30. If we compare the figures, we see that the bias is smaller for age than for gender. To ensure that the results are more

representative for NIF's members aged 18-30, we have therefore chosen to weight the sample based on the gender distribution. This means adjusting for under-representation of men and over-representation of women in the survey. All results presented in the report are weighted by gender. Whether the survey is representative of young adults in NIF is nevertheless difficult to say anything about apart from the gender distribution. The results should be interpreted with caution as the topic itself may have influenced who chose to respond to the questionnaire. In addition, it is reasonable to assume that there is under-reporting due to the sensitive nature of the study <sup>66</sup>.



**Figure 2.1. Gender distribution in the population and in the sample**



**Figur 2.2. Age distribution in the population and in the sample**

<sup>66</sup> Mergaert et al., 2016



# 3. The incidence of harmful experiences among young adults

In this chapter, we present the incidence of harmful experiences among young adults. In line with other research on harmful behaviours in sports, 'experienced' in this report means that the participants have experienced minimum one incident at least once or twice in the past 12 months<sup>67</sup>. The chapter is divided into four sub-chapters. The extent of psychological violence is shown in section 3.1, physical violence in section 3.2, sexual harassment in section 3.3, and overall incidence in section 3.4, i.e. whether the participants have experienced one or more of the three forms of harmful behaviour. Finally, in section 3.5, we compare the three forms of harmful behaviour and summarise the key findings.

We will examine whether the incidence of the forms of harmful behaviours varies with demographic variables (Table 3.1) and some of the sports variables presented in Chapter 2, to identify high- and low-risk groups. We have selected six sports variables that are presented in two figures and two tables. Figure 3.1 and Table 3.2. presents results from the questions that all participants have answered. Here we investigate 1) whether there is any difference in the experience of harmful behaviour between those who have spent the most time on an individual sport or team sport, and 2) whether there is any difference between those who are solely athletes and those who hold other roles in sport, as well as 3) which role the participants have spent the most time on. This is followed by Figure 3.2 and Table 3.3, which present responses to questions asked only to those who indicated that they were athletes (competitive athletes, recreational athletes, exercisers). Here we examine 1) the incidence among those who spent  $\leq 10$  hours and  $\geq 11$  hours per week on their main sport, 2) participation in competitive sport, and 3) the highest level at which the participants competed.

## 3.1 Psychological violence

Table 3.1 shows that 47% have experienced at least one of the ten described incidents at least once or twice in the past year. The incident that both women and men have experienced the most is "...being scolded at/criticised for not performing well enough, arriving late, skipping practice, forgetting equipment, etc.?" Many have also experienced "being subjected to bothersome teasing or unpleasant joking" (especially women), and/or experienced "that your performance in training and competitions was ridiculed" (especially men). Very few have experienced "that someone attempted to control your social life, such as isolating you from friends and family".

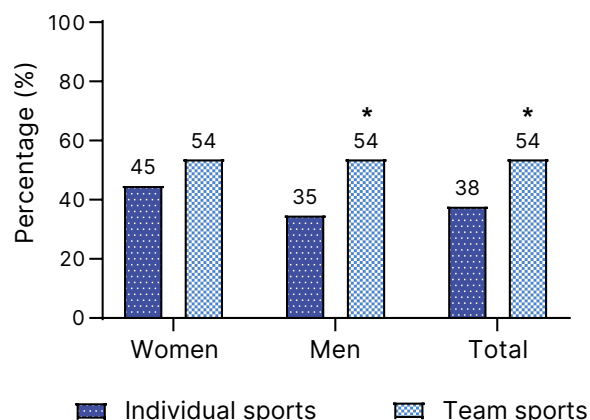
There are no significant differences between women (50%) and men (45%) in the incidence of psychological violence, but age appears to be important. The youngest (55%) are more likely to have experienced psychological violence than those aged over 21 (41%). Men with an immigration background (60%) are more frequently subjected to psychological violence than men from the rest of the Norwegian population (45%), while women with low education levels have experienced more psychological violence (55%) than women with higher education (41%).

<sup>67</sup> All numbers in tables and figures are rounded to the nearest whole number. We only provide numbers for groups with ten or more respondents.

A person's sexual orientation did not appear to impact their experiences of psychological violence in our study, nor did disability or whether they were employed.

Men with an immigration background is the group that has experienced the most psychological violence (60%), and men with disabilities is the group that has experienced the least (36%). This is shown in table 3.1.

Regardless of their role, participants involved in team sports are far more exposed to psychological violence than those involved in individual sports. This difference is particularly large for men (54% in team sports and 35% in individual sports). This is shown in figure 3.1.



**Figure 3.1. Incidence of psychological violence in sport in the past 12 months among women, men and total, by team and individual sport (\*p<.05)**

**Table 3.1. Incidence of psychological violence in sport in the past 12 months among women, men and total, categorized by demographic variables**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Incidence of psychological violence</b>	252	50 %	339	45 %	591	47 %
<b>Age</b>	*		*		*	
18-20 years	151	58 %	162	52 %	313	55 %
21-30 years	101	42 %	177	40 %	278	41 %
<b>Immigration</b>			*		*	
Persons with an immigration background	23	58 %	30	60 %	53	60 %
The rest of the Norwegian population	210	49 %	282	43 %	492	45 %
<b>Sexual orientation</b>						
Heterosexual	204	49 %	294	44 %	498	46 %
Other	29	55 %	20	47 %	49	51 %
<b>Education</b>	*		*		*	
Primary, middle and high school	162	55 %	201	47 %	363	50 %
Higher education	71	41 %	111	40 %	182	40 %
<b>Main occupation</b>						
Employed	136	49 %	180	43 %	316	46 %
Student	83	49 %	102	46 %	185	47 %
Other	14	54 %	30	48 %	44	50 %
<b>Persons with permanent disabilities</b>						
Yes	13	50 %	11	36 %	24	43 %
No	220	50 %	302	45 %	521	47 %

\*p<.05

Table 3.2 shows that there is a big difference in the experience of psychological violence between athletes and people in other roles, as well as among combinations of these groups, of which the latter two are referred to as 'others'. This is particularly true for men, where a higher proportion in the 'others' category have experienced psychological violence (52%) compared to those who are only athletes (41%).

Participants were also asked which role they spent the most time on. Table 3.2 shows that referees stand out. Both female and male referees are subjected to significantly more psychological violence than those who spend most of their time as coaches or athletes.

Figure 3.2 shows responses to questions that were only asked to those who were athletes. The more hours you spend on sport per week, the greater the likelihood of having been subjected to psychological violence. This applies to both women and men. In total, the percentage is 40 among those who spend 10 hours, or less in a sport setting per week. The corresponding percentage for those who spend 11 hours, or more is 59.

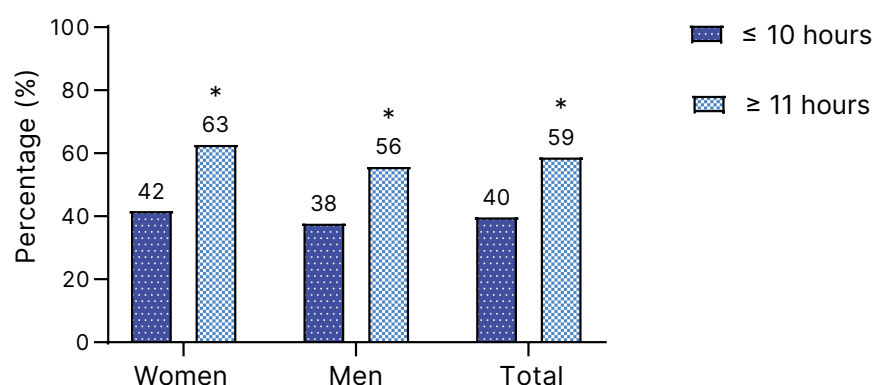
Approximately 2 out of 3 women in the latter group have experienced at least one form of psychological violence.

**Table 3.2. Incidence of psychological violence in sport in the past 12 months among women, men and total, categorized by role and the role they spend most time on**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Role</b>				*		*
Athlete (competitive athlete, recreational athlete, exerciser)	121	46 %	189	41 %	310	43 %
Others <sup>1</sup>	131	54 %	150	52 %	281	53 %
<b>Role spent most time on</b>		*		*		*
Athlete	199	49 %	273	44 %	472	46 %
Coach	34	46 %	32	42 %	65	44 %
Voluntary positions of trust	<10	-	<10	-	13	48 %
Referee	11	92 %	30	71 %	41	76 %

<sup>1</sup> 'Others' include coach, voluntary positions of trust and referee, and combinations between the different roles

\*p<.05



**Figure 3.2. Incidence of psychological violence in sports in the past 12 months among women, men and total, categorized by time spent on main sport among athletes (\*p<.05)**

**Table 3.3. Incidence of psychological violence in sport in the past 12 months among women, men and total, categorized by participation in competitive sport and highest level of competitive sport**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Participated in competitive sports last 12 months.</b>		*		*		*
Yes	202	55 %	273	50 %	475	52 %
No	24	28 %	30	22 %	54	24 %
<b>Highest level of competitive sport last 12 months.</b>		*				
Sports clubs	65	49 %	84	49 %	149	49 %
Regional	36	42 %	78	53 %	114	49 %
National	68	65 %	83	50 %	150	55 %
International	34	71 %	29	43 %	62	54 %

\*p<.05

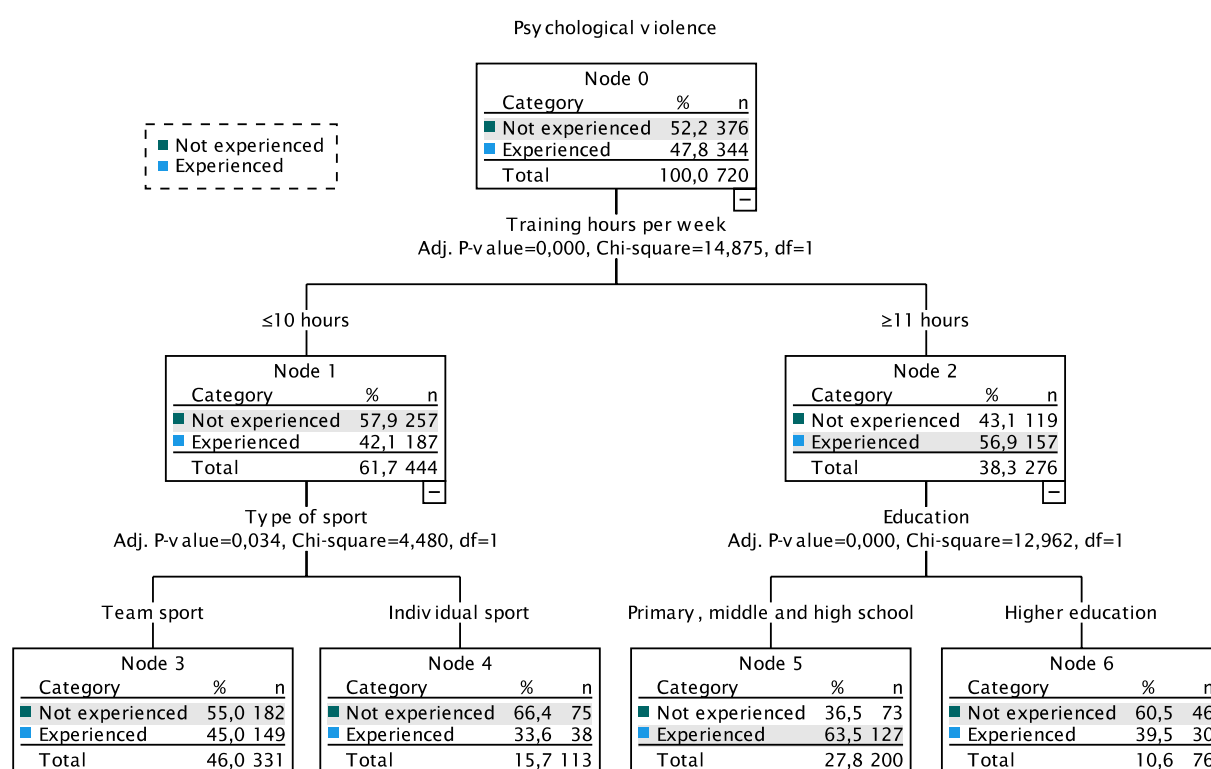
Table 3.3 shows that those who participated in competitive sport last year (52%) are far more likely to experience psychological violence than those who did not compete (24%). This applies to both genders. The level at which you compete also appears to be a risk factor, but only for women, where 65% and 71% of those who have competed nationally and internationally, respectively, have experienced psychological violence in the past year.



Photo: Martin Strøm, NIF



Tree analyses were also conducted to investigate risk groups, and these analyses only include athletes. Figure 3.3 shows that 'time spent on main sport' best predicts whether the athletes have been exposed to psychological violence, followed by level of education. The risk group here is people who spend 11 hours or more per week on their main sport and have primary school/middle school/high school education<sup>68</sup>. In this group, 64% have experienced psychological violence. Those who have experienced the least psychological violence are athletes who spend 10 hours or less per week on their sport and participate in individual sports (34%).



**Figure 3.3. Tree analysis for psychological violence**

<sup>68</sup> Hereafter referred to as low education.

### 3.2 Physical violence

In total, 21% of the participants had experienced at least one form of physical violence once or twice in the past year. There is no significant difference between women and men regarding the incidence of this type of violence (Table 3.4). By far the most common incidents experienced by both genders are "being forced to do extra training or exercises as punishment, such as additional sit-ups or running farther than others during training", and "being forced or persuaded to continue training when you were injured or exhausted". No women and only a few men had experienced "being forced to participate in initiation ceremonies and/or rituals that involved physical harm or pain to you (e.g. beating, hitting, choking or excessive alcohol consumption)".

Apart from age, there are few significant differences. Like psychological violence it is the youngest people who have experienced the highest levels of physical violence (27%). Among men, those with a low level of education have experienced more (24%) than those with a high level of education (14%). Table 3.4 also shows that students (25%) are more likely to experience physical violence than those being employed (18%). Women in the youngest age group (28%) and those with a sexual orientation other than heterosexual (28%) both report the highest incidence of physical violence. In contrast, women with higher education have experienced the least physical violence (17%).

**Table 3.4. Incidence of physical violence in sports in the past 12 months among women, men, and total, categorized by demographic variables**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Physical violence</b>	113	22 %	149	20 %	262	21 %
<b>Age</b>	*		*		*	
18-20 years	73	28 %	81	26 %	154	27 %
21-30 years	40	17 %	68	16 %	107	16 %
<b>Immigration</b>						
Persons with an immigration background	≤10	-	≥10	-	20	22 %
The rest of the Norwegian population	92	21 %	129	20 %	221	20 %
<b>Sexual orientation</b>						
Heterosexual	86	21 %	128	19 %	214	20 %
Other	15	28 %	11	26 %	25	26 %
<b>Education</b>			*		*	
Primary, middle, and high school	71	24 %	101	24 %	172	24 %
Higher education	29	17 %	38	14 %	68	15 %
<b>Main occupation</b>					*	
Employed	51	19 %	72	17 %	123	18 %
Student	44	26 %	54	24 %	98	25 %
Other	≤10	-	12	19 %	17	20 %
<b>Persons with permanent disabilities</b>						
Yes	≤10	-	≤10	-	≤10	-
No	99	22 %	134	20 %	233	21 %

\*p<.05

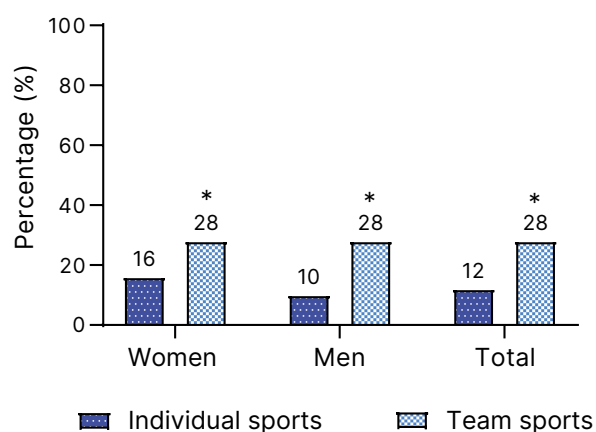


Figure 3.4 shows the incidence of physical violence among individuals who have spent more time on team sports compared to in individual sports. Like psychological violence, we also observe that those involved in team sports are more likely to have experienced physical violence (28%) compared to those involved in individual sports (12%).

**Figure 3.4. Incidence of physical violence in sport in the past 12 months among women, men and total, categorized by team and individual sport (\*p<.05)**



There is no difference between those who are solely athletes and those who hold a combination of roles, except among men, where 24% in the latter group ('others') have experienced more physical violence than those who are only athletes (17%). There is also no difference between those who have spent the most time on the athlete role and those who have spent the most time as coaches. This is shown in table 3.5.

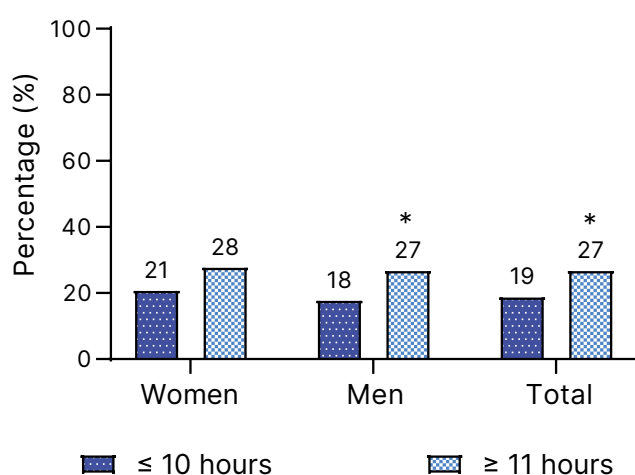
For athletes, Figure 3.5 shows that those who spend 11 hours or more on their sport per week are more likely to experience physical violence (27%) than those who spend less time (19%). This difference primarily applies to men.

**Table 3.5. Incidence of physical violence in sport in the past 12 months among women, men, and total, categorized by role and the role they spend most time on**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Role</b>				*		
Athlete (competitive athlete, recreational athlete, exerciser)	59	22 %	80	17 %	138	19 %
Others <sup>1</sup>	54	22 %	69	24 %	123	23 %
<b>Role spent most time on</b>						
Athlete	98	24 %	123	20 %	221	22 %
Coach	13	18 %	18	24 %	31	21 %
Voluntary positions of trust	<10	-	0	0	<10	-
Referee	<10	-	<10	-	<10	-

<sup>1</sup> Others include coach, voluntary positions of trust and referee, and combinations between the different roles

\*p<.05



**Figure 3.5 Incidence of physical violence in sport in the past 12 months among women, men and total, categorized by time spent on main sport among athletes (\*p<.05)**



People who have participated in sports competitions in the past year are more likely to experience physical violence than those who do not participate in competitive sports. There is no difference in the extent of physical violence based on the level of competitive sport, like our findings regarding psychological violence (table 3.6).

Unlike psychological violence, the decision tree analysis of physical violence (Figure 3.6) shows that the distinction between participating in team

sports or individual sports is most significant in determining whether one has been exposed to physical violence.

The risk group here is people who play team sports and spend 11 hours or more per week on their sport. In this group, almost half (48%) have been exposed to physical violence. Those who have experienced the least physical violence are athletes involved in individual sports, who are not students but employed/other (7%).

**Table 3.6. Incidence of physical violence in sport in the past 12 months among women, men, and total, categorized by participation in competitive sport and the highest level of competitive sport**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Participated in competitive sports last 12 months.</b>		*		*		*
Yes	98	26 %	134	24 %	231	25 %
No	≤10	-	≤10	-	18	8 %
<b>Highest level of competitive sport last 12 months.</b>						
Sports clubs	32	24 %	45	27 %	77	25 %
Regional	19	22 %	35	24 %	53	23 %
National	31	30 %	39	23 %	70	26 %
International	15	32 %	15	22 %	90	26 %

\*p<.05



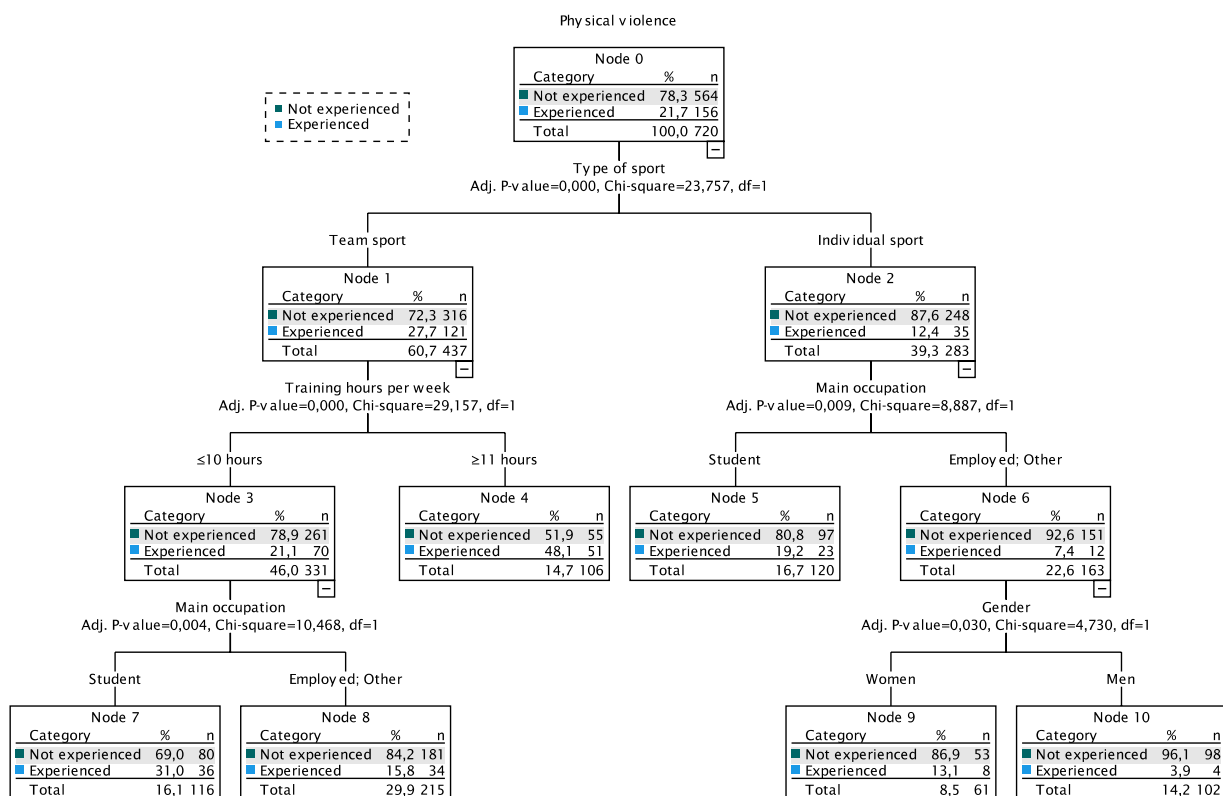


Figure 3.6. Tree analysis for physical violence



### 3.3 Sexual harassment

One in four have experienced at least one incident of sexual harassment in the past 12 months. This is shown in table 3.7. In contrast to physical and psychological violence, we find significant differences between women (34%) and men (19%) for sexual harassment. The youngest age group (30%) is more likely to experience sexual harassment than those aged 21 and older (21%), especially among men. We note that there is a tendency for heterosexuals to experience less sexual harassment than people of other sexual orientations, but the difference is not statistically significant. The experience of sexual harassment varies with education and main occupation, primarily among men. People with a low level of education (27%) and students (29%) experience the most sexual harassment, compared to those with a high level of education (21%) and those in employment

(22 %). The group where most people have experienced sexual harassment is women aged 18-20 (38%), while the group where the fewest have experienced this is men with higher education (15%) (table 3.7).

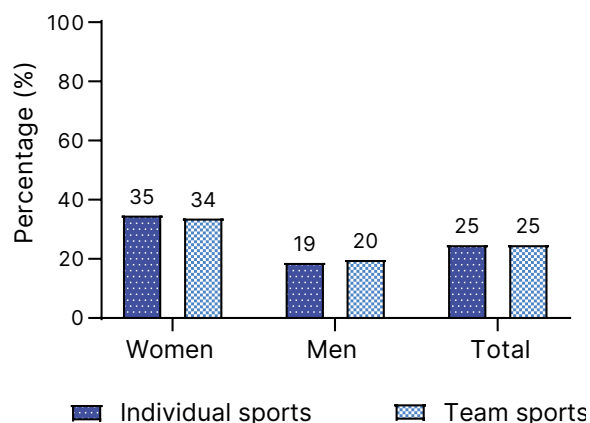
Among the 16 questions that measured sexual harassment, we find that "insulting or unpleasant comments about your gender, for example that women/men are not suited to participate in certain types of sports or professions or to do certain types of tasks" and "someone has told you sexual jokes or stories that upset you or that you found harmful or uncomfortable" are the incidents that most women have experienced. The latter, about sexual jokes, has also been experienced by most men, and about the same number of men have been subjected to "comments or remarks about your appearance or body that you were upset by

**Table 3.7. Incidence of sexual harassment in sport in the past 12 months among women, men and total, categorized by demographic variables**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Sexual harassment*</b>	172	34 %	144	19 %	316	25 %
<b>Age</b>	*	*	*	*		
18-20 years	99	38 %	71	23 %	170	30 %
21-30 years	72	30 %	74	17 %	146	21 %
<b>Immigration</b>						
Persons with an immigration background	144	33 %	120	18 %	264	24 %
The rest of the Norwegian population	13	33 %	12	24 %	25	28 %
<b>Sexual orientation</b>						
Heterosexual	137	33 %	123	19 %	260	24 %
Other	19	36 %	11	26 %	30	31 %
<b>Education</b>	*	*	*	*		
Primary, middle and high school	101	34 %	93	22 %	194	27 %
Higher education	54	31 %	41	15 %	95	21 %
<b>Main occupation*</b>	*	*	*	*		
Employed	83	30 %	69	17 %	152	22 %
Student	66	39 %	47	21 %	113	29 %
Other	≤10	-	≥10	-	24	27 %
<b>Persons with permanent disabilities</b>						
Yes	8	31 %	8	26 %	16	28 %
No	147	33 %	126	19 %	273	25 %

\*p<.05

or found harmful or uncomfortable". The largest gender difference is found for "insulting or unpleasant comments about your gender, for example that women/men are **notsuited** to participate in certain types of sports or professions or to do certain types of tasks", where 15% among women have experienced this compared to 3% among men. The vast majority of both women and men have not experienced sexual assault, which was measured with the following questions: "someone has had sex/intercourse with you without your consent" and/or "to be forced into sexual acts".



**Figure 3.7. Incidence of sexual harassment in sport in the past 12 months among women, men, and total, categorized by team sports and individual sports.**

Figure 3.7 shows that, unlike psychological and physical violence, there is no difference in the experience of sexual harassment between those who have spent the most time on team sports compared to those who have spent the most time on individual sports. In both groups, 25% have experienced sexual harassment.

If we compare those who are only athletes with those in other roles and combinations of these roles, we find that athletes (21%) experience less sexual harassment than the others (31%). While athletes tend to report experiencing sexual harassment less frequently than coaches and referees, the differences are not statistically significant and may be attributable to chance.

**Table 3.8. Incidence of sexual harassment in sport in the past 12 months among women, men, and total, categorized by role and the role they spend most time on**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Role</b>		*				*
Athlete (competitive athlete, recreational athletes, exerciser)	74	28 %	80	17 %	154	21 %
Others <sup>1</sup>	97	40 %	65	22 %	162	31 %
<b>Role spent most time on</b>						
Athlete	127	31 %	116	19 %	243	24 %
Coach	30	41 %	18	24 %	48	32 %
Voluntary positions of trust	≤10	-	≤10	-	≤10	-
Referee	≤10	-	≤10	-	16	30 %

<sup>1</sup> Others include coach, voluntary positions of trust and referee, and combination of the different roles

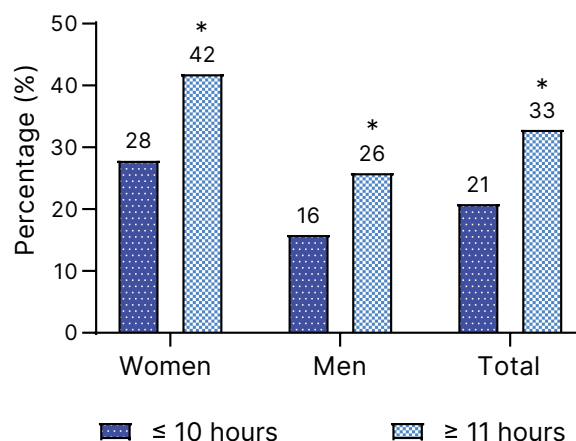
\*p<.05



Figure 3.8 shows that there are significant differences in the perceived experiences of sexual harassment based on how much time the active athletes spend on their primary sport. Among those who spend 11 hours or more per week it is 33%, and among those who spend 10 hours or less, it is 21%. The figure also shows that among the women who spend 11 hours or more on their primary sport, 42% have experienced sexual harassment. The corresponding number for men is 26%.

Table 3.9 shows a significant difference in the incidence of sexual harassment between those who participate in sports competitions and those who do not. Specifically, 27% of individuals involved in sports competitions reported experiencing sexual harassment, compared to 17% of those not involved in competitive sports. This applies to both women (35%) and men (21%). The level at which you compete is of great importance to women. Among women competing internationally, around half (48%) have experienced at least one form of sexual harassment.

Gender is the greatest risk factor for experiencing sexual harassment (Figure 3.9). The group with the highest incidence is women who have used 11 hours or more per week on their main sport (40%). Men in the 21-30 age group have experienced the least (14%).

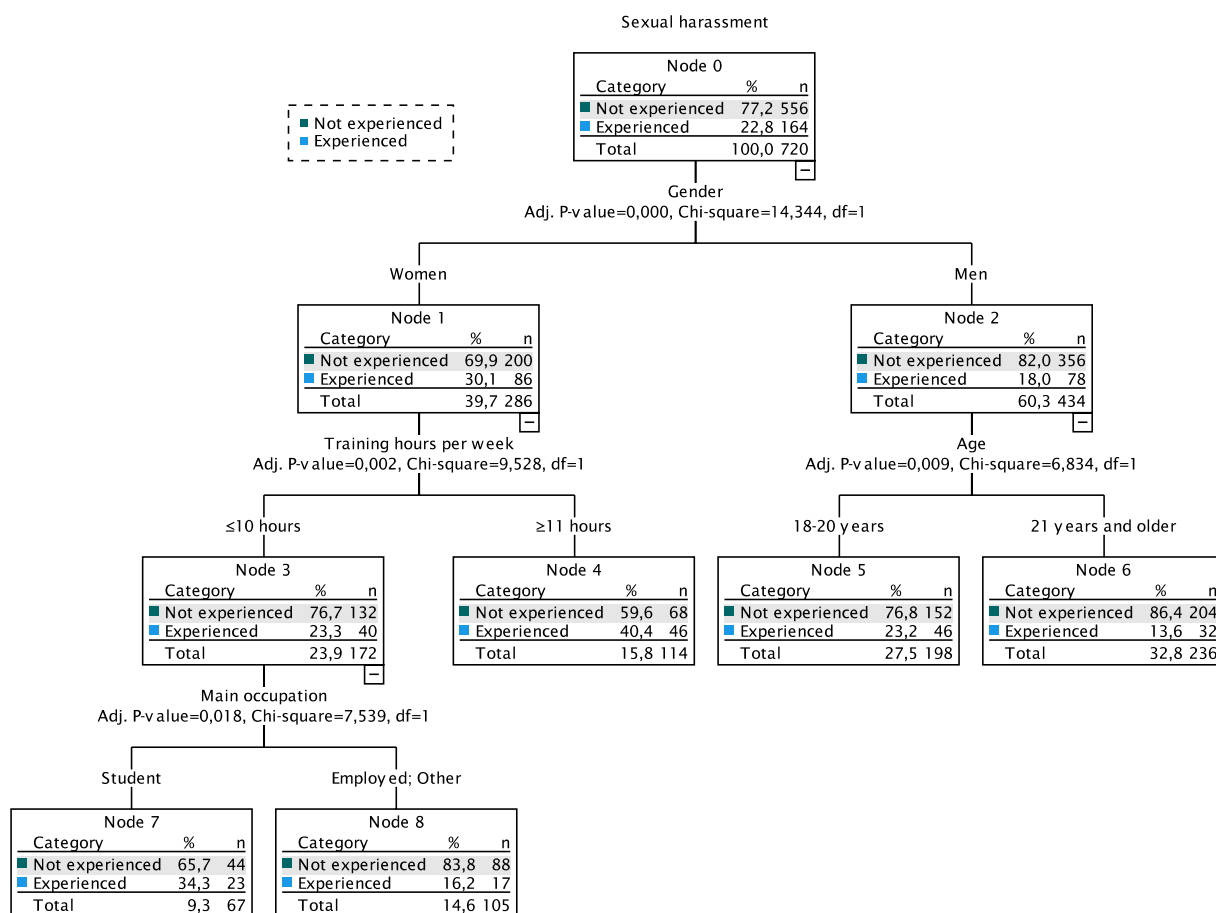


**Figure 3.8. Incidence of sexual harassment in sport in the past 12 months among women, men and total, categorized by time spent on primary sport among athletes (\*p<.05)**

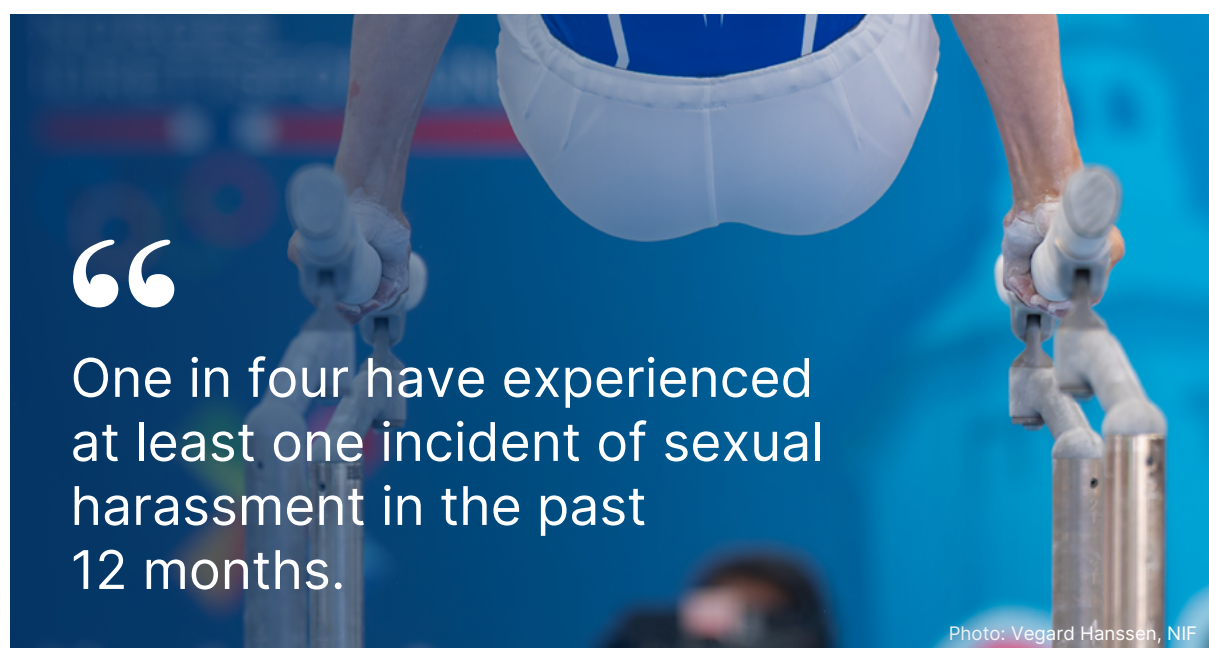
**Table 3.9. Incidence of sexual harassment in sport in the past 12 months among women, men, and total, categorized by participation in competitive sport and the highest level of competitive sport**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Participated in competitive sports last 12 months.</b>		*		*		*
Yes	131	35 %	116	21 %	246	27 %
No	20	23 %	18	13 %	38	17 %
<b>Highest level of competitive sport last 12 months.</b>		*				
Sports clubs	35	26 %	33	19 %	68	22 %
Regional	27	32 %	38	26 %	65	28 %
National	46	44 %	35	21 %	80	30 %
International	23	48 %	11	16 %	33	29 %

\*p<.05



**Figure 3.9. Tree analysis for sexual harassment**



As mentioned in Chapter 2, the sexual harassment measurement from the FFI contains four dimensions: gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, sexual coercion, and sexual assault. Table 3.10 shows the distribution of experiences within these dimensions separately for women and men, as well as in total. Almost no one has experienced sexual coercion or assault ( $\leq 10$ ). Relatively more women have experienced **sexual** harassment (28%) than unwanted sexual attention (18%). There is no difference among men.

We also examined the overlap between the two largest dimensions and found that among those who have experienced gender harassment, 42% of women and 38% of men have also experienced unwanted sexual attention.

**Table 3.10. Dimensions of sexual harassment by gender**

Dimensions of sexual harassment	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Gender harassment	139	28 %	87	12 %	226	18 %
Unwanted sexual attention	91	18 %	90	12 %	181	14 %
Sexual coercion	$\leq 10$	-	$\leq 10$	-	$\leq 10$	-
Sexual assault	$\leq 10$	-	$\leq 10$	-	$\leq 10$	-



### 3.4 Total incidence of harmful experiences

In this section, we present the overall incidence of harmful experiences. These results show how many people have experienced at least one incident of either psychological violence, physical violence or sexual harassment in the past 12 months.

More than half of the participants have experienced at least one harmful incident once or twice in a sports context in the past year. This is shown in table 3.11. The table shows significant differences between gender, age groups, and level of education; women (61%) have experienced harmful behaviours more often than men (52%), younger people (62%) more often than older people (50%), those with lower education have experienced more (59%) than people with higher education (49%). Somewhat surprisingly, the results show no significant differences in harmful experiences between people with an immigration

background and the rest of the Norwegian population, between people with and without permanent disabilities, and between heterosexuals and people with a different sexual orientation. However, we note that there is a tendency, particularly among men, for people with an immigration background to experience harmful behaviours more often than men in the rest of the Norwegian population. This is partly because men with an immigration background experience more psychological violence (Table 3.1).

The group where most people have been subjected to harmful experiences is women aged 18-20. As many as 68% in this group have experienced one or more harmful incidents or behaviours in a sports context the last year. Men with permanent disabilities is the group that has experienced the fewest harmful incidents (45%).

**Table 3.11. Incidence of harmful experiences in sports in the last 12 months among women, men and total, categorized by demographic variables**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Total harmful experiences in sports*</b>	309	61 %	387	52 %	696	56 %
<b>Age</b>	*		*		*	
18-20 years	179	68 %	179	58 %	357	62 %
21-30 years	130	54 %	209	48 %	338	50 %
<b>Immigration</b>						
Persons with an immigration background	25	63 %	32	64 %	56	63 %
The rest of the Norwegian population	260	60 %	327	50 %	587	54 %
<b>Sexual orientation</b>						
Heterosexual	253	60 %	339	51 %	592	55 %
Other	32	60 %	21	50 %	53	56 %
<b>Education</b>	*		*		*	
Primary, middle and high school	192	65 %	231	54 %	423	59 %
Higher education	91	52 %	128	46 %	219	49 %
<b>Mail occupation</b>						
Employed	160	58 %	207	49 %	367	53 %
Student	106	63 %	116	52 %	221	57 %
Other	17	65 %	36	58 %	53	61 %
<b>Persons with permanent disabilities</b>						
Yes	15	48 %	14	45 %	29	52 %
No	268	60 %	345	51 %	613	55 %

\*p<.05



As shown in Table 2.6, we have mapped the roles the participants have in sport. The respondents could select four roles: athlete, coach, voluntary position of trust, and referee. The background to this question was our interest in investigating whether there were differences between the various roles in relation to experienced harmful behaviours. Due to the low number of participants in the survey, we cannot present figures here, but in Table 3.12 we see the combinations of roles that the participants represent. We only show the combinations where ten or more people have reported harmful experiences. The results should be interpreted with caution as the numbers in some of the groups are very small. However, the numbers indicate that many referees (76%)

are exposed to harmful experiences, which is also reflected in the groups that include referees in combination with other roles. From Table 3.2, we know that this is primarily due to psychological violence. Athletes are the group that appears to have experienced the fewest harmful experiences (51%).

Table 3.13 shows which role the participants spend the most time on. This reflects the findings from Table 3.12, where we see that those who spend the most time as referees have been most exposed to harmful experiences (80%). Among the few female referees, the number is as high as 92%.

**Table 3.12. Incidence of harmful experiences in sport in the last 12 months, categorized by role and combination of roles**

Role(s)	Harmful experiences		Respondents in total
	n	%	n
Referee only	19	76 %	25
Athlete, coach and referee	27	75 %	36
Athlete and referee	35	74 %	47
Coach only	28	65 %	43
Athlete and coach	128	59 %	216
Athlete, coach and voluntary positions of trust	28	55 %	51
Athlete and voluntary positions of trust	28	54 %	52
Athlete only	366	51 %	724

**Table 3.13. Incidence of harmful experiences in sport in the past 12 months among women, men, and total, categorized by role and the role they spend most time on**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Role</b>		*		*		*
Athlete (competitive athlete, recreational athlete, exerciser)	148	56 %	218	47 %	366	51 %
Others <sup>1</sup>	161	67 %	170	59 %	330	62 %
<b>Role spent most time on</b>				*		*
Athlete	241	60 %	312	50 %	553	54 %
Coach	46	63 %	39	52 %	85	57 %
Voluntary positions of trust	9	64 %	5	39 %	14	54 %
Referee	12	92 %	32	74 %	44	80 %

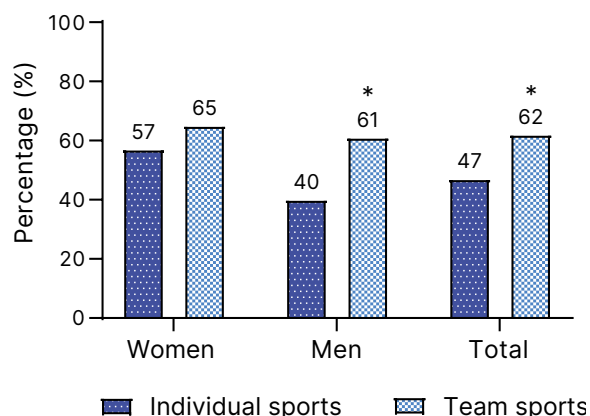
<sup>1</sup> Others include coach, voluntary positions of trust and referee, and combinations between the different roles

\*p<.05

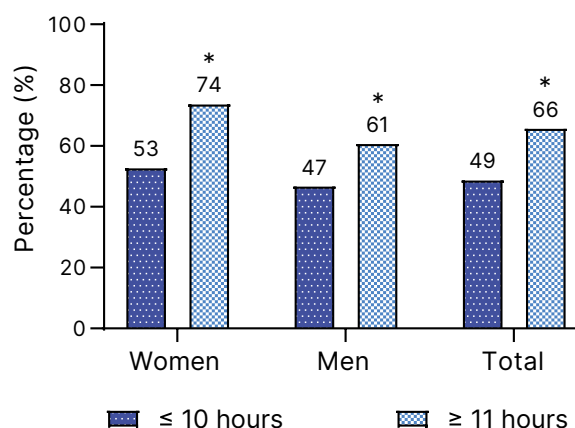
Regardless of role, people who represent a team sport (62%) more often report harmful experiences than people who are most involved in an individual sport (47 %). This is particularly true of men in team sports (61%), whereas the corresponding percentage in individual sports is 40% (Figure 3.10).

In line with previous findings, we see that athletes who spend 11 hours or more per week on their primary sport are the ones most often subjected to harmful experiences, at a rate of 66% (Figure 3.8). Among female athletes, this figure is 74%.

As shown in chapter 2, a significant number of athletes have participated in sports competitions in the past year. Table 3.14 shows that around three out of five among these have experienced at least one harmful incident. The difference between competitive and non-competitive athletes is significant for both genders. The table also shows the incidence of harmful experiences in relation to the level at which the athletes have competed. Among women, we find significant differences between the sports clubs/regional levels and the national/international levels. In total, 81% of female athletes who have competed internationally have experienced at least one or two harmful experiences.



**Figure 3.10. Incidence of harmful experiences in sport in the past 12 months among women, men, and total, categorized by team and individual sport (\*p<.05)**



**Figure 3.11 Incidence of harmful experiences in sport in the past 12 months among women, men and total, categorized by time spent on main sport among athletes (\*p<.05)**

**Table 3.14. Incidence of harmful experiences in sports in the last 12 months among women, men and total, categorized by participation in competitive sport and the highest level of competitive sport**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Participated in competitive sports last 12 months.</b>		*		*		*
Yes	242	65 %	314	57 %	555	60 %
No	34	40 %	38	27 %	72	32 %
<b>Highest level of competitive sport last 12 months.</b>		*				
Sports clubs	78	59 %	98	58 %	176	58 %
Regional	48	57 %	87	59 %	135	58 %
National	76	73 %	98	59 %	174	64 %
International	39	81 %	32	47 %	70	61 %

\*p<.05

The amount of time spent on their primary sport per week is of greatest importance for whether they have experienced some form of harmful experience (Figure 3.12). Among women who spend 11 hours or more per week on their main sport, 77% have been subjected to harmful incidents. Another risk group that emerges is men who play team sports and spend 11 hours or more on their primary sport per week. In this group, 67% have experienced one or more forms of harmful incidents. The group in which the fewest people have been subjected to harmful incidents consists of athletes who train 10 hours or less per week and who play an individual sport (40%).

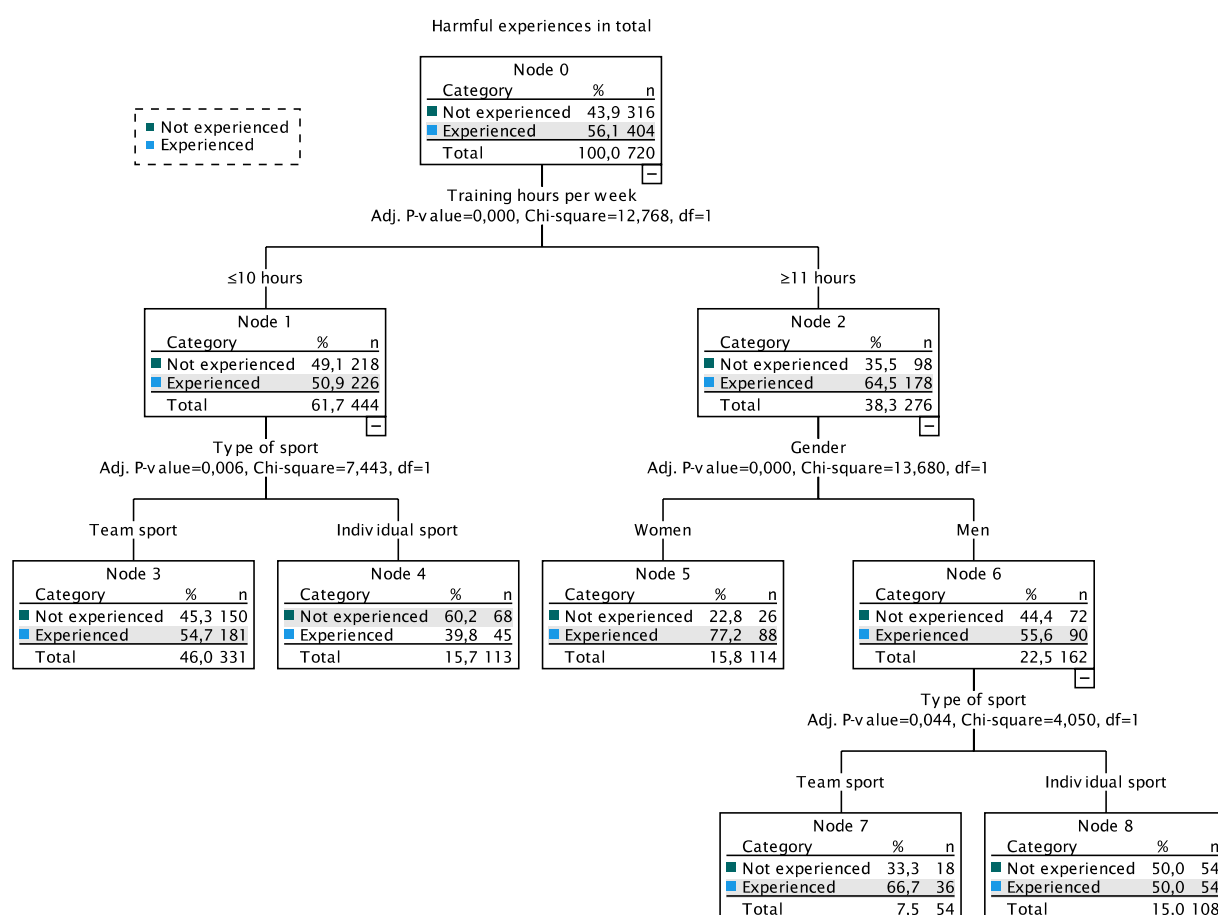


Figure 3.12. Tree analysis for harmful experiences in total

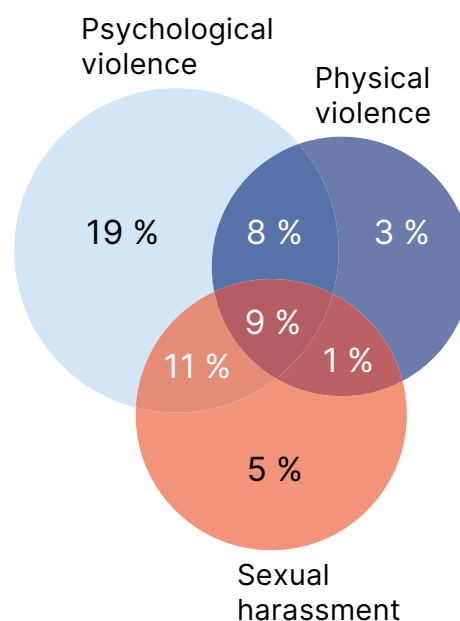
### 3.5 Summary

Table 3.15 provides an overview of the incidence of the various forms of harmful experiences. It shows that:

- Approximately half (56%) of the participants have experienced some form of harmful experience at least "once or twice" last year. Psychological violence (47%) is experienced much more often than sexual harassment (25%) and physical violence (21%)
- There is no significant difference between women and men in the incidence of psychological and physical violence
- Women (34%) experience more sexual harassment than men (19 per cent)
- More women have experienced gender harassment (28%) than unwanted sexual attention (18%)
- Very few ( $\leq 10$ ) have been exposed to sexual coercion and/or sexual assault

As just shown, 47%, 21% and 25% of participants have experienced psychological violence, physical violence, and sexual harassment, respectively.

Figure 3.13 shows the overlap between the three forms. A total of 9% have experienced all three, while 19% have only experienced psychological violence, 3% only physical violence, and 5% only sexual harassment. The combination of psychological violence and sexual harassment is the combination that most people have experienced (11%). A combination of psychological and physical violence was experienced by 8%, while 1% experienced both sexual harassment and physical violence.



**Figure 3.13. Overlap between experiences of psychological violence, physical violence, and sexual harassment**

**Table 3.15. Incidence of different forms of harmful experiences**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Psychological violence	252	50 %	339	45 %	591	47 %
Physical violence	113	22 %	149	20 %	262	21 %
Sexual harassment *	172	34 %	144	19 %	316	25 %
Gender harassment *	139	28 %	87	12 %	226	18 %
Unwanted sexual attention *	91	18 %	90	12 %	181	14 %
Sexual coercion	$\leq 10$	-	$\leq 10$	-	$\leq 10$	-
Sexual assault	$\leq 10$	-	$\leq 10$	-	$\leq 10$	-
Harmful experiences in total *	309	61 %	387	52 %	696	56 %



For all three forms of harmful experiences, we found that:

- There are no significant differences in the incidence of harmful experiences between people with and without a permanent disability
- Younger people have experienced more harmful experiences than older people
- More people with a low level of education have experienced harmful experiences than people with a high level of education
- Combinations of different roles in sport have experienced more than those who are only active as athletes
- Those who spend 11 hours or more per week on their primary sport have experienced more than those who spend less time
- Those who have participated in competitive sports have experienced more than those who have not competed

Findings related to the different forms of violence:

- Students experience more physical violence and sexual harassment compared to those being employed
- Women who compete internationally experience more psychological violence and sexual harassment than those who compete at a lower level
- Those who spend the most time being a referee have experienced more psychological violence than people in other roles
- Men with an immigration background experience more psychological violence than other men
- Those who spend the most time on a team sport have experienced more psychological and physical violence than those who participate in individual sports

Risk groups:

- The group that has experienced the most psychological violence are those who spend 11 hours or more per week in their sport and have low education (64%)
- The group that has been most exposed to physical violence consists of those who spend the most time on a team sport and spend 11 hours or more per week on their main sport (48%)
- Gender is the biggest risk factor for experiencing sexual harassment. The groups with the highest incidence are women who spend 11 hours or more per week on their primary sport (40%)
- For harmful experiences overall, time spent on main sport is the greatest risk factor. The group most at risk of experiencing harmful experiences are women who spend 11 hours or more per week on their main sport (77%). Another risk group is men who play team sports and spend 11 hours or more on their primary sport (67%)



“

There is no significant difference between women and men in the incidence of psychological and physical violence.

## 4. Where do the harmful behaviours occur?

In terms of safeguarding, it is important to know where the harmful experiences take place. The participants were therefore asked to indicate where this had happened for each incident they had experienced. They were given the opportunity to specify various contexts where harmful behaviours had taken place.

If the same person had committed the harmful behaviours against them several times, but in different arenas, or if they had experienced the same incident several times, but from different people and in different contexts, this was possible to report in the questionnaire. The results thus give us an overview of where the incidents occur. The percentages in the total column therefore add up to more than 100. The chapter first contains a description of where psychological violence occur. This is followed by physical violence, and sexual harassment. We then provide an overview of the contexts in which the overall harmful experiences take place. Finally, we summarise and look at the similarities and differences between the various forms of harmful experiences.

### 4.1 Contexts where psychological violence occur

Table 4.1 shows that among those who have experienced psychological violence, almost three out of five have experienced this during training and/or competition. This is followed by in the locker room (22%) and in connection with a training camp (21%). Only 10% mention the internet/social media. For two of the contexts, we find significant gender differences: men (25%) experience psychological violence more often than women (17%) in the locker room, while women (20%) experience this more often than men (10%) in social contexts organised by the sport.

**Table 4.1. Contexts in which psychological violence occur among women, men and total**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
At practice organised by a sports club/sports association/sports federation	160	64 %	200	59 %	360	61 %
In connection with a competition	158	63 %	215	63 %	373	63 %
In connection with a training camp	52	21 %	69	20 %	121	21 %
Travelling to and from practice/competition/camps	33	13 %	44	13 %	77	13 %
In the locker room *	42	17 %	86	25 %	128	22 %
Social contexts organised by the sport *	50	20 %	33	10 %	83	14 %
On the internet/social media	25	10 %	33	10 %	58	10 %
Other	29	12 %	38	11 %	67	11 %
Do not wish to disclose	11	4 %	23	7 %	34	6 %

\*p<.05

## 4.2 Contexts where physical violence occur

Table 4.2 shows that physical violence most often is experienced at practice (72%), and in connection with competitions (39%) and training camps (14%). Physical violence is experienced very rarely in the other contexts we have analysed. Women (79%) experience physical violence at practice more often than men (66%).

## 4.3 Contexts where sexual harassment occur

Table 4.3 shows that the context in which sexual harassment takes place, compared to physical and psychological violence, is more varied. At practice (55%) is where it most often occurs, but almost as many (46%) are sexually harassed in connection with competition. Approximately one in four experience sexual harassment in connection with training camps and in social contexts organised by the sport. The results also shows that relatively more men (28%) than women (11%) have experienced sexual harassment in the locker room (Table 4.3).

**Table 4.2. Contexts in which physical violence occur among women, men, and total**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
At practice organised by a sports club/sports association/sports federation*	88	79 %	99	66 %	187	72 %
In connection with competition	37	33 %	66	44 %	103	39 %
In connection with a training camp	18	16 %	18	12 %	36	14 %
Travelling to and from practice /competition/camp	≤10	-	≤10	-	≤10	-
In the locker room	≤10	-	≤10	-	13	5 %
Social contexts organised by the sport	≤10	-	≤10	-	≤10	-
On the internet/social media	≤10	-	≤10	-	≤10	-
Other	≤10	-	≤10	-	≤10	-
Do not wish to disclose	≤10	-	≤10	-	≤10	-

\*p<.05

**Table 4.3. Contexts in which sexual harassment occurs among women, men, and total**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
At practice organised by a sports club/sports association/sports federation	94	55 %	80	55 %	174	55 %
In connection with competition	72	42 %	74	51 %	146	46 %
In connection with a training camp	37	22 %	35	24 %	72	23 %
Travelling to and from practice /competition/camp	23	13 %	32	22 %	55	17 %
In the locker room*	18	11 %	41	28 %	59	19 %
Social contexts organised by the sport	47	27 %	26	18 %	73	23 %
On the internet/social media	32	19 %	18	13 %	50	16 %
Other*	31	18 %	14	10 %	45	14 %
Do not wish to disclose	≤10	-	≤10	-	≥10	6 %

\*p<.05



Tables 4.4 and 4.5 show where gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention take place, respectively. As shown for the other forms of harmful experience, most people experience gender harassment and/or unwanted sexual attention at practice and in connection with competitions, training camps, and in social contexts organised by the sport. This applies to both genders. For gender harassment, more men (21%) than women (9%) have experienced this when travelling to and from practice/competition/camp. The same applies among those who have experienced gender harassment in the locker room (31% men and 8% women).

Regarding unwanted sexual attention, we also find that men (23%) experience this more often in the locker room than women (11%). Table 4.5 also shows that men (50%) are more likely than women (34%) to experience unwanted sexual attention in connection with competitions.

**Table 4.4. Contexts in which gender harassment occurs among women, men, and total**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
At practice organised by a sports club/sports association/sports federation	68	49 %	47	53 %	115	51 %
In connection with competition	56	40 %	39	45 %	95	42 %
In connection with a training camp	27	19 %	20	23 %	47	21 %
Travelling to and from practice /competition/camp*	13	9 %	18	21 %	31	14 %
In the locker room*	11	8 %	27	31 %	38	17 %
Social contexts organised by the sport	35	25 %	17	19 %	52	23 %
On the internet/social media	21	15 %	11	13 %	32	14 %
Other*	≥10	-	≤10		31	14 %
Do not wish to disclose	≤10	-	≤10	-	14	6 %

\*p<.05

**Table 4.5. Contexts in which unwanted sexual attention occurs among women, men, and total**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
At practice organised by a sports club/sports association/sports federation	58	63 %	48	53 %	106	58 %
In connection with competition*	31	34 %	45	50 %	76	42 %
In connection with a training camp	18	20 %	20	22 %	38	21 %
Travelling to and from practice /competition/camp	13	14 %	18	20 %	31	17 %
In the locker room*	10	11 %	21	23 %	31	17 %
Social contexts organised by the sport	24	26 %	15	17 %	39	22 %
On the internet/social media	13	14 %	11	12 %	24	13 %
Other*	≥10	-	≤10	-	21	12 %
Do not wish to disclose	≤10	-	≤10	-	≤10	-

\*p<.05

#### 4.4 Contexts where all harmful behaviours occur

If we look at where the harmful experiences occurred for all three forms combined, we find, in line with the results from the different forms separately, that most people experience harmful behaviours at practice (63%) and in connection with competition (61%). Table 4.6 shows that many have also experienced harmful experiences in connection with training camps (23%) and in the locker room (22%). Fewer have been violated via social media (13%). We also note that men (26%) are more likely than women (16%) to be violated in a changing room and that women (24%) are more likely than men (13%) to be violated in social contexts organised by the sport.

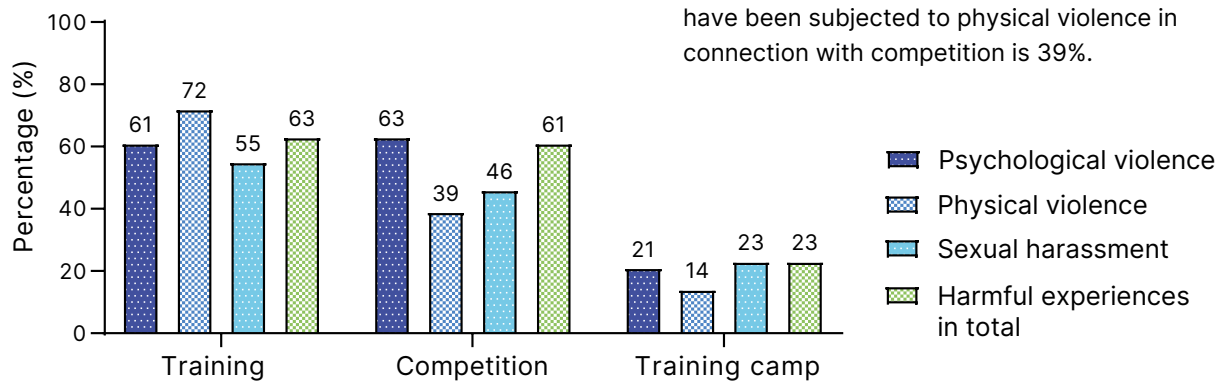


Figure 4.1. Contexts in which harmful experiences occur, separated by psychological violence, physical violence, sexual harassment, and overall harmful experiences.

#### 4.5 Summary

- Most people report harmful experiences to occur "at practice organised by a sports club/sports association/sports federation" and "in connection with competitions"
- Fewer report "on the internet/social media"
- This applies to all three forms of harmful experiences, but the proportion who have been subjected in these contexts vary between the three forms of harmful experiences
- Figure 4.1 shows that 72% of those who have experienced physical violence have experienced this at practice, while the corresponding number among those who have experienced sexual harassment during practice is 55%. When it comes to psychological violence, most people have experienced this in connection with competition (63%). The corresponding percentage among those who have been subjected to physical violence in connection with competition is 39%.

Table 4.6. Contexts where overall harmful experiences occur among women, men, and total

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
At practice organised by a sports club/sports association/sports federation	200	65 %	240	62 %	440	63 %
In connection with competition	192	62 %	236	61 %	428	61 %
In connection with a training camp	70	23 %	87	23 %	157	23 %
Travelling to and from practice /competition/camp	46	15 %	57	15 %	103	15 %
In the locker room*	50	16 %	102	26 %	152	22 %
Social contexts organised by the sport*	74	24 %	51	13 %	125	18 %
On the internet/social media	48	16 %	42	11 %	90	13 %
Other*	55	18 %	48	12 %	103	15 %
Do not wish to disclose	18	6 %	32	8 %	50	7 %

\*p<.05

## 5. Who are the perpetrators?

For each incident, participants were asked who they experienced this from. They could choose several options. Different incidents could have been experienced from the same person, or the same incident could also have been experienced from different people. As in previous chapters, the results for psychological violence, physical violence, and sexual harassment are presented first, followed by an overall overview of who committed the harmful experiences.

### 5.1 Perpetrators of psychological violence

Half of those who have experienced at least one or two incidents of psychological violence have experienced this from a male coach/instructor (Table 5.1). This applies to both women and men. Roughly the same number (46%) have experienced this from a male athlete, but here we find a large gender difference, as many more men (62%) than women (25%) have experienced psychological violence from a male athlete. In total, 26% have experienced psychological violence from a female athlete. More women (39%) than men (17%) have been subjected to psychological violence by a

female athlete. Furthermore, we note that relatively more women (18%) than men (5%) have experienced psychological violence from other women in sport, while this is reversed among those who have experienced psychological violence from other men in sport. Among men, 21 % has experienced psychological violence from other men, while the corresponding percentage among women is 12%.

Table 5.1 also shows that among men, the majority have been subjected to psychological violence by a male athlete (62%), while the fewest have experienced this by other women in sport (5%).

**Table 5.1. Perpetrators of psychological violence among women, men, and total**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Female coach/instructor *	62	25 %	26	8 %	88	15 %
Male coach/instructor	126	50 %	173	51 %	299	51 %
Female athlete *	98	39 %	56	17 %	154	26 %
Male athlete *	62	25 %	212	62 %	274	46 %
Female leader	18	7 %	21	6 %	39	7 %
Male leader	28	11 %	57	17 %	85	14 %
Female spectator/audience	27	11 %	33	10 %	60	10 %
Male spectator/audience	36	14 %	59	17 %	95	16 %
Other women in sport *	46	18 %	18	5 %	64	11 %
Other men in sport *	29	12 %	71	21 %	100	17 %
Do not wish to disclose	20	8 %	36	11 %	56	10 %

\*p<.05

Among women, most have been victimised by a male coach/instructor (50%) and fewest by female leaders (7%).

We have also analysed whether the participants were subjected to incidents from male and female healthcare personnel and from female and male referees. The results show that these groups very rarely expose participants to psychological violence. The same applies to physical violence and sexual harassment, and these perpetrators are therefore excluded from all tables and figures in this chapter.

## 5.2 Perpetrators of physical violence

Figure 5.1 shows who have subjected the participants to physical violence<sup>69</sup>. The most frequent perpetrator of physical violence is a male coach/instructor. Approximately two out of three of those who have experienced physical violence have experienced this from a male coach/instructor. This is followed by male athletes (26%) and female coaches/instructors (18%). We also see from the figure that as many women as men had been physically violated by male coaches/instructors (64% and 62%), while female coaches/instructors more often subjected women (31%) to physical violence compared to men (8%).

Similarly, we found that male athletes had primarily inflicted physical violence on men (42%) and not women ( $\leq 10$ ), while female athletes had primarily inflicted physical violence on women (19%) and not men ( $\leq 10$ ).

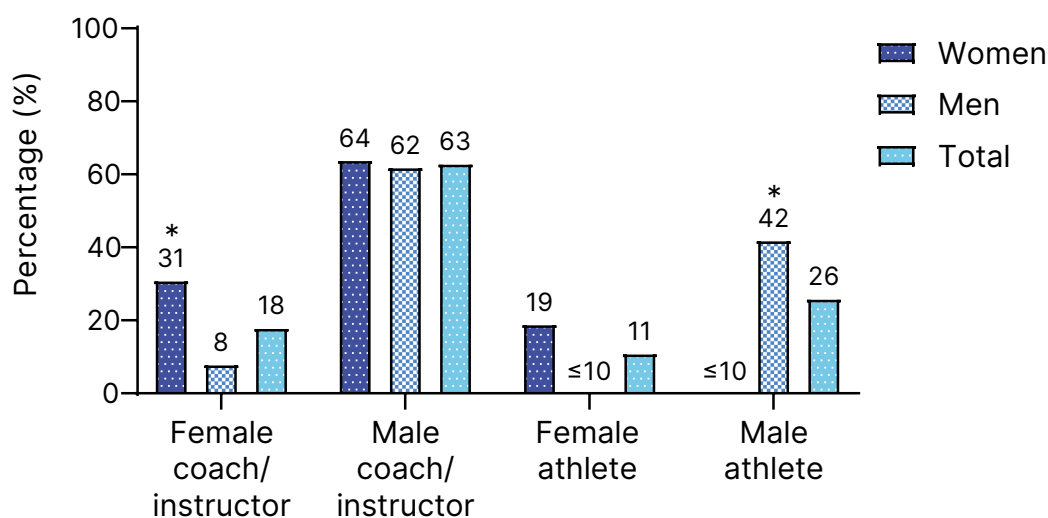


Figure 5.1. Perpetrators of physical violence among women, men, and total

<sup>69</sup> We have chosen to present the main findings in a figure due to the fact that there are  $\leq 10$  in most of the cells.



### 5.3 Perpetrators of sexual harassment

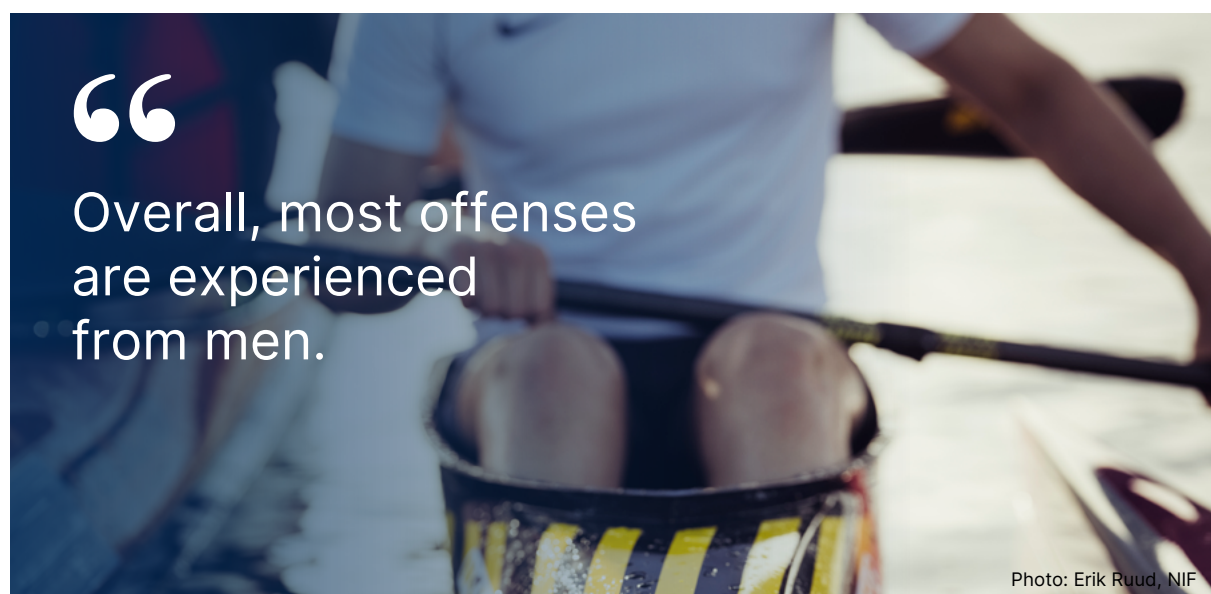
In the case of sexual harassment, the picture of who the perpetrators are is somewhat different. Table 5.2. shows that sexual harassment is most often experienced from a male athlete. Half of those who have been subjected to sexual harassment answered, "male athlete" when asked "who did you experience this from?". Relatively more men (61%) than women (41%) have experienced sexual harassment from a male

athlete. Furthermore, Table 5.2 shows that 30% have experienced sexual harassment from a male coach/instructor, relatively more women (39%) than men (20%). About one in four reports "other men in sport", and even for this group there are relatively more women (27%) than men (17%). The table also shows that 20% have been subjected to sexual harassment by a female athlete and 17% by a male spectator/audience.

Table 5.2. Perpetrators of sexual harassment among women, men, and total

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Female coach/instructor	≤10	-	≤10	-	22	7 %
Male coach/instructor *	66	39 %	29	20 %	95	30 %
Female athlete	28	16 %	36	25 %	64	20 %
Male athlete *	70	41 %	89	61 %	159	50 %
Female leader *	≤10	-	≥10	-	14	4 %
Male leader	19	11 %	12	8 %	31	10 %
Female spectator/audience	≤10	-	≤10	-	14	4 %
Male spectator/audience	31	18 %	21	15 %	52	17 %
Other women in sport	≤10	-	≥10	-	18	6 %
Other men in sport *	47	27 %	24	17 %	71	23 %
Do not wish to disclose	16	9 %	11	8 %	27	9 %

\*p<.05



“

Overall, most offenses are experienced from men.

Photo: Erik Ruud, NIF

Figures 5.2 and 5.3 show perpetrators of gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention. For both dimensions, male athletes (49%) are the most frequently reported perpetrator, and for both dimensions, men are victimised somewhat more often than women. In other words, when we examine these two dimensions separately, there are no difference from sexual harassment overall. In Figure 5.2, we notice that 38% of the female participants are exposed to gender harassment from

a male coach/instructor, while the corresponding figure for men is 23%. Other men in sport are also reported as perpetrators of gender harassment towards many women in sport (29%). Figure 5.3 also shows that women are more likely to experience unwanted sexual attention from a male coach/instructor (33%) than men (17%). We note that men (35%) are more likely than women (19%) to experience unwanted sexual attention from a male coach/instructor (33%).

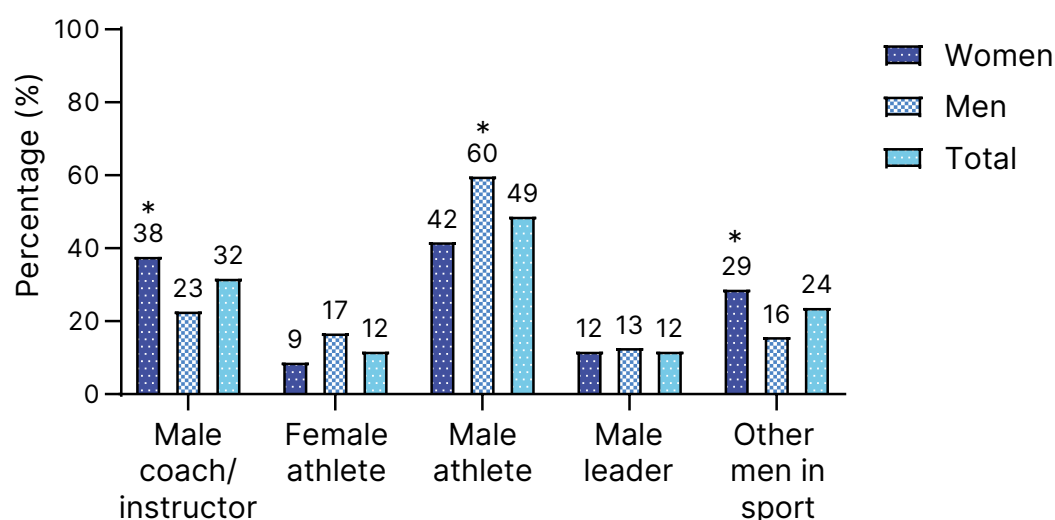


Figure 5.2. Perpetrators of gender harassment among women, men, and total (\*p<.05)

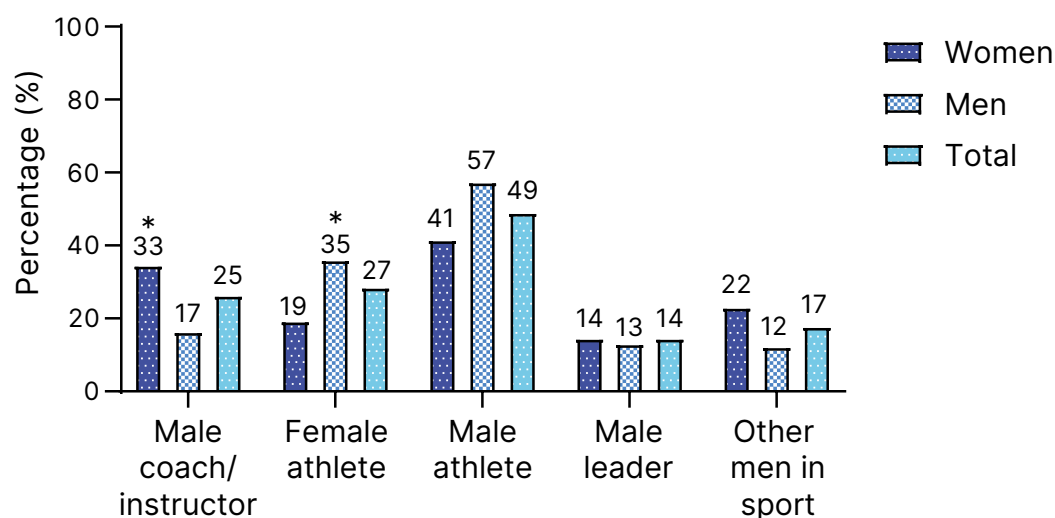


Figure 5.3. Perpetrators of unwanted sexual attention among women, men, and total (\*p<.05)

### 5.4 Perpetrators of overall harmful experiences

More than half of the participants have experienced being violated by a male coach/instructor (57%) (Table 5.3). This applies to both women and men. This is followed by male athletes (49%), but there are significant gender differences here. Sixty-four per cent of men and 30% of women have been violated by a male athlete. The largest group in the table is made up of women (67%) who have been violated by a female athlete. The corresponding percentage among men is 18.

**Table 5.3. Perpetrators of harmful experiences in total among women, men, and total**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Female coach/instructor *	81	26 %	35	9 %	116	17 %
Male coach/instructor	168	54 %	227	59 %	395	57 %
Female athlete *	113	67 %	69	18 %	182	26 %
Male athlete *	93	30 %	246	64 %	339	49 %
Female leader	21	7 %	21	5 %	42	6 %
Male leader	37	12 %	60	16 %	97	14 %
Female spectator/audience	31	10 %	36	9 %	67	10 %
Male spectator/audience	56	18 %	69	18 %	125	18 %
Other women in sport *	50	16 %	26	7 %	76	11 %
Other men in sport	64	21 %	80	21 %	144	21 %
Do not wish to disclose	36	12 %	47	12 %	83	12 %

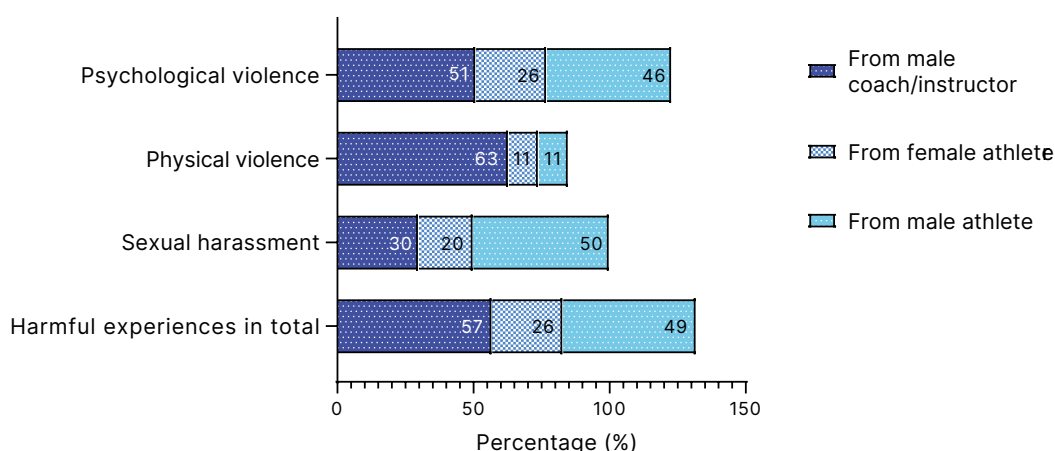
\*p<.05

## 5.5 Summary

→ There are almost no referees or health personnel among those who subject the participants to harmful experiences. There are also very few sports leaders among the perpetrators. "Male/spectator" and "other men in sport" appear in some contexts, especially among those who have experienced sexual harassment

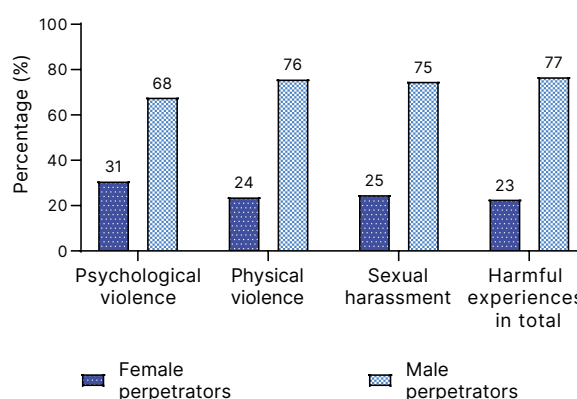
→ The overall overview in Table 5.3 shows that male coaches/instructors (57%) and male athletes (49%) are the most frequently reported perpetrator, followed by female athletes (26%).

→ If we compare Table 5.1 and 5.2, as well as Figure 5.1, we find that there are differences between the various forms of harmful experiences. This is clarified in Figure 5.4, where we present the number of harmful experiences from male coaches/instructors, male athletes, and female athletes. Physical (63%) and psychological (51%) violence are primarily committed by male coaches/instructors, while fewer coaches/instructors (30%) are reported as perpetrators of sexual harassment. About half of those who have experienced sexual harassment and psychological violence have experienced this from a male athlete, while only 11% have experienced physical violence from a male athlete. As we have seen, female perpetrators are much less common. One in four of those who have experienced psychological violence have experienced this from a female athlete, while the corresponding number for physical violence from a female athlete is 11%, the same as from a male athlete.



**Figure 5.4. Percentage of psychological violence, physical violence, sexual harassment, and total harmful experiences by male coaches/instructors, female athletes, and male athletes**

Overall, most harmful experiences are perpetrated by men. This can be seen in Figure 5.5, where we have calculated the total number of harmful experiences carried out by women and men respectively. The figure shows that approximately three out of four of the harmful behaviours experienced by the participants were perpetrated by men. There are insignificant differences between the various forms of harmful experiences by both women and men.



**Figure 5.5. Percentage of psychological violence, physical violence, sexual harassment and total harmful experiences by male and female perpetrators**

## 6. Do the harmful experiences get reported?

Reporting harmful experiences is important for preventing and stopping harmful behaviours, but the threshold for doing so can be high. There are no statistics on how many people report sexual harassment, how often, and how many enquiries NIF has received since the organisation began to systematically work to prevent sexual harassment and abuse. As mentioned in Chapter 1, "MittVarsel" was introduced in 2022. This means that the system had existed for a relatively short time before we collected data for this project in 2023.

For many years, however, it has been possible to report via other channels in the sport system, both at a local level and nationally. In addition, there are channels outside of sport. In NIF's booklet on prevention from 2010, it was stated that those who had been subjected to harassment or assault were asked to contact "someone you trust, and/or contact the management of the club/ federation, sports district or NIF, and/or contact The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud"<sup>70</sup>.

### 6.1 Scope of reporting

In a Norwegian study published in 2000 on sexual harassment among elite female athletes, no-one had told anyone in the sport environment about their experiences<sup>71</sup>. No-one had reported to parents either, but several had disclosed their experiences to friends.<sup>72</sup> A similar result was found in the Norwegian study in high schools<sup>73</sup>. Students reported their negative experiences primarily to friends, and very few (two people) had used the reporting system at the schools. The question we asked the participants in our survey was formulated as follows: "Have you informed/told anyone about this?" We did not use the Norwegian word for "reporting", as many might associate it with formal reporting/notification reporting.

In the rest of this chapter, we use inform/report or talked to as a generic term for those who have either delivered a formal complaint or just informed/told/talked to someone about their experiences.

Since we have asked follow-up questions for each incident, we will also investigate how many incidents have been reported, as well as how many people have spoken to someone about what they have experienced. The same person may have reported several incidents, and the same incident may have been reported to several people.

Among those who have experienced one or more harmful experiences, around three out of five have spoken to someone about it (Table 6.1). Except for physical violence, women report much more often than men. Fewer have informed about physical violence, but almost half of those who have experienced physical violence still informed someone. For psychological violence and sexual harassment, the gender difference is 24 and 30 percentage points, respectively. Men who have experienced sexual harassment are the group where the fewest people talk about their experiences (38%), while as many as 74% of those who have been subjected to psychological violence have informed somebody about it.

<sup>70</sup> Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports, 2010

<sup>71</sup> Fasting & Sundgot Borgen, 2000

<sup>72</sup> Fasting et al., 2002

<sup>73</sup> Sølberg et al., 2023

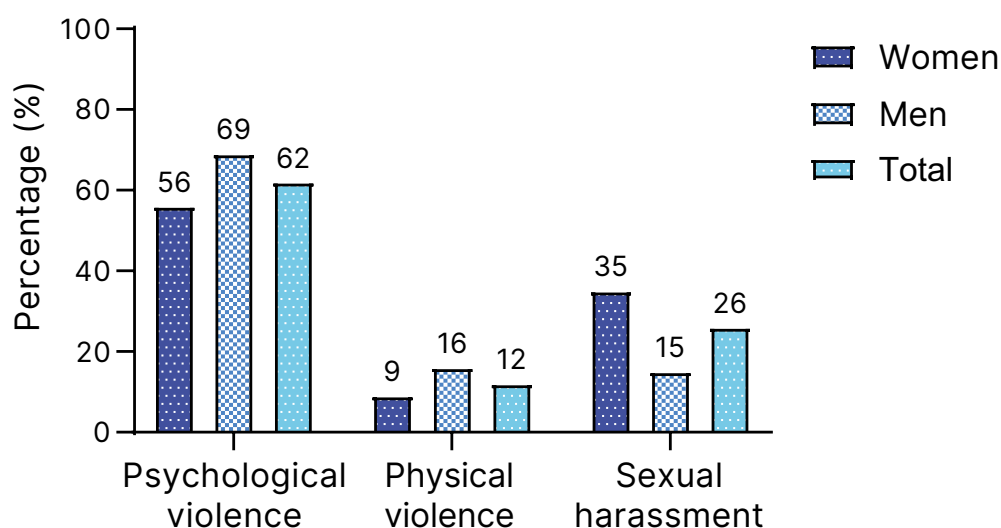


**Table 6.1. Participants who have reported psychological violence, physical violence, and sexual harassment, broken down by women, men, and total**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Psychological violence *	186	74 %	168	50 %	354	60 %
Physical violence	56	50 %	71	48 %	127	49 %
Sexual harassment	117	68 %	54	38 %	171	54 %
Harmful experiences in total *	231	75 %	194	50 %	425	61 %



In total, 1,340 incidents have been reported, which means that the number of people who have given this information, in average, talked about three incidents each. Figure 6.1 shows how these incidents are distributed across the three forms of harmful experiences separately for women and men, as well as in total. The pattern is the same as we observed in Table 6.1. Of all the incidents talked about, psychological violence accounted for 62%, sexual harassment for 26%, and physical violence for 12%.

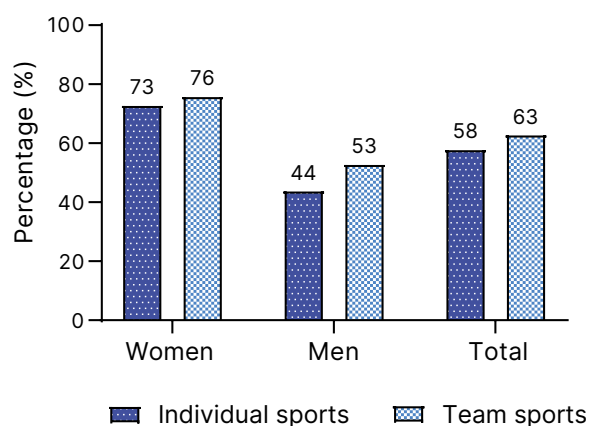


**Figure 6.1. Percentage of reported harmful experiences broken down by psychological violence, physical violence, and sexual harassment, among women, men, and total**

## 6.2 Who is reporting?

We have also investigated who is reporting in relation to demographic variables. The following results apply to overall harmful experiences. We find differences between age groups and between education levels in the proportion of people who report what they have experienced. The youngest (65%) report somewhat more than the oldest (57%), and those with a low level of education (65%) report more than those with a higher level of education (54%). This is shown in Table 6.2.

Figure 6.2 shows that there is no difference in the proportion of people reporting harmful experiences between those involved in team sports and individual sport.



**Figure 6.2. Formal and informal reporting of harmful experiences in sport, categorized by team and individual sport**

**Table 6.2. Formal and informal reporting of harmful experiences in sport**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Age</b>	*					
17-20 years	139	78 %	95	53 %	233	65 %
21-30 years	92	71 %	99	47 %	191	57 %
<b>Immigration</b>						
Persons with an immigration background	17	68 %	15	47 %	32	56 %
The rest of the Norwegian population	195	75 %	165	51 %	360	61 %
<b>Sexual orientation</b>						
Heterosexual	190	75 %	174	51 %	364	62 %
Other	21	66 %	9	43 %	30	57 %
<b>Education</b>	*					
Primary, middle and high school	149	78 %	126	55 %	257	65 %
Higher education	62	68 %	56	44 %	118	54 %
<b>Main occupation</b>						
Employed	117	73 %	104	50 %	221	60 %
Student	82	78 %	63	54 %	145	66 %
Other	12	71 %	15	42 %	27	51 %
<b>Persons with permanent disabilities</b>						
Yes	10	67 %	8	57 %	18	62 %
No	201	75 %	174	50 %	375	61 %

\*p<.05

Table 6.3 shows that persons who have combinations of different roles report more often (68%) than those who are athletes only (55%)

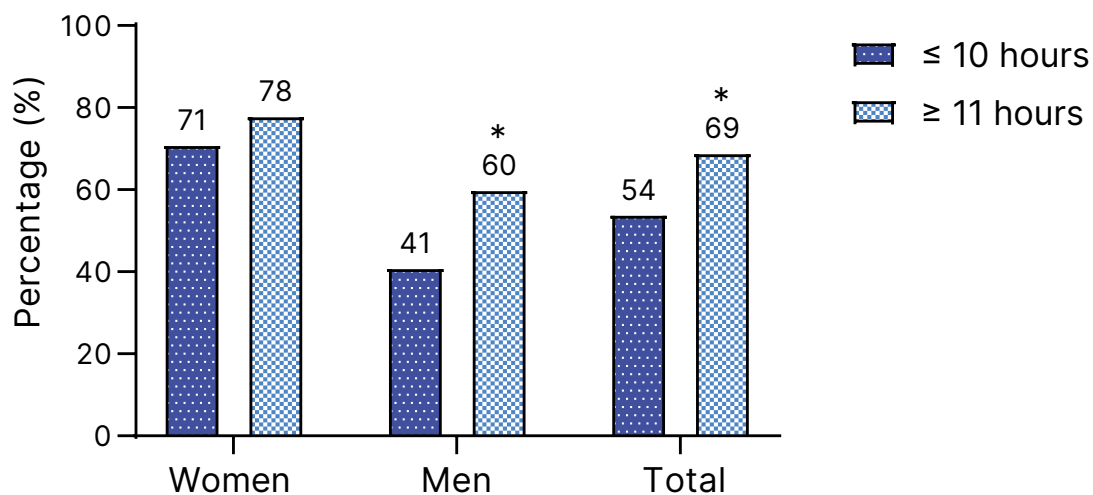
Those who spend the most time on sport (11 hours or more per week) report more often than those who spend less time (10 or less). This is shown in Figure 6.3 and applies primarily to men.

**Table 6.3. Formal and informal reporting of harmful experiences in sport among women, men, and total, categorized by role and the role they spend the most time on**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Role<sup>1</sup></b>		*				*
Athlete (competitive athlete, recreational athlete, exerciser)	102	67 %	101	46 %	202	55 %
Others	129	81 %	93	55 %	222	68 %
<b>Role spent most time on</b>						
Athlete	178	74 %	150	48 %	328	59 %
Coach	36	78 %	20	50 %	55	65 %
Voluntary positions of trust	6	67 %	2	40 %	8	57 %
Referee	11	92 %	23	72 %	34	77 %

<sup>1</sup> Others include coach, voluntary positions of trust and referee, and combinations between the different roles

\*p<.05



**Figure 6.3. Formal and informal reporting of harmful experiences in sport among women, men, and total, categorized by time spent on main sport (\*p<.05)**

Men who have participated in competitive sport (51%) are more likely to talk to others about what they have experienced compared to the few who have not participated in sports competitions (29%). Those who have competed internationally in the past year (76%) report more than those who compete at a lower level. This is shown in the total column in Table 6.4.

**Table 6.4. Formal and informal reporting of harmful experiences in sport among women, men, and total, categorized by participation in competitive sport and highest level of competitive sport**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>People participating in competitive sports in the last 12 months.</b>				*		*
Yes	183	76 %	161	51 %	343	62 %
No	21	64 %	11	29 %	32	45 %
<b>Highest level of competitive sport last 12 months.</b>						*
Sports clubs	58	73 %	45	46 %	103	59 %
Regional	31	65 %	41	47 %	71	53 %
National	61	80 %	56	57 %	116	67 %
International	34	87 %	20	63 %	53	76 %

\*p<.05

### 6.3 Who reported to?

Among those who reported the harmful experiences, other athletes (67%) were the group that most people spoke to. This applies to both women (69%) and men (64%) and is shown in Table 6.5. This is followed by parents (49%) and coaches/instructors (48%). Fewer than ten people has spoken to a lecturer/teacher or contacted the police. Few have used "MittVarsel" and/or spoken to a healthcare professional. The fact that women report more often than men is reflected in the table, except among those who have reported to "others". In this group, there are relatively more men than women. The greatest gender difference is found for those who have reported their experiences to colleagues/ fellow students/ friends outside of sport, and to parents. There appears to be relatively little formal reporting. If we assume that the categories leader in sports clubs/sports boards/sports federations, other voluntary positions of trust, the police, and "MittVarsel" are formal reports, approximately 20% of those who have reported have submitted a formal report.

### 6.4 Why are harmful behaviours not reported?

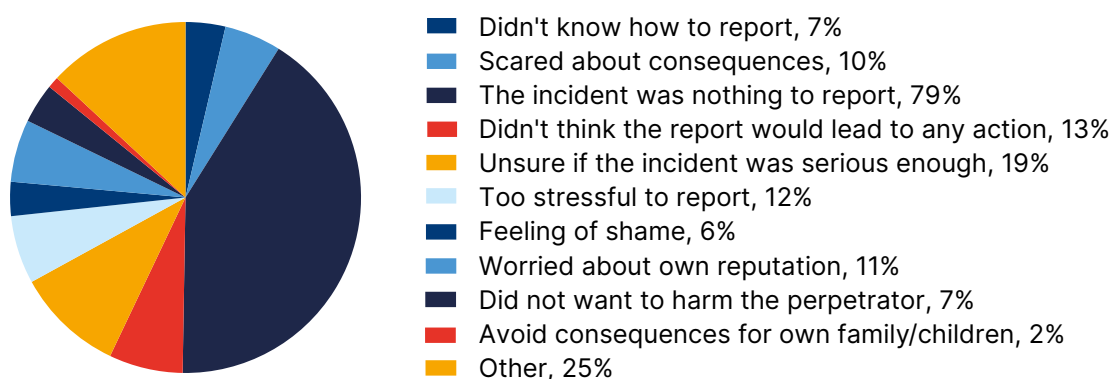
Table 6.1 shows that around 40% of the participants have not spoken to anyone about the harmful experiences they have been exposed to. The reported reasons for this are shown in Figure 6.4. Approximately four out of five (79%) responded that they "thought the incident was nothing to report", and 19% were "unsure whether the incident was serious enough". More women (27%) than men (15%) cited the latter reason. We also note that 13% did not report the incident because they thought that the report would not lead to any action, 12% found it too stressful to report, and 25% stated "other" reasons, i.e. reasons other than the categories presented in the questionnaire.

**Table 6.5. Who is it reported to, among women, men, and total**

	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Other athletes	159	69 %	125	64 %	284	67 %
Head of sports club/sports board/sports federation	66	29 %	51	26 %	117	28 %
Other voluntary positions of trust in sports clubs/sports board/sports federation <sup>1</sup>	50	22 %	41	21 %	91	21 %
Coach/instructor	103	45 %	99	51 %	202	48 %
Healthcare professionals inside and outside of sport	10	4 %	11	6 %	21	5 %
Colleague/co-student/friends outside sport *	78	34 %	47	24 %	125	29 %
Parents*	128	55 %	80	41 %	208	49 %
Lecturer/teacher	≤10	-	≤10	-	≤10	-
The police	≤10	-	≤10	-	≤10	-
Reporting system in sport) *	≤10	-	≥10	-	15	4 %
Others *	25	11 %	42	22 %	67	16 %
Prefer not to disclose	≤10	-	≥10	-	17	4 %

<sup>1</sup> board positions, referee, team leader, etc.

\*p<.05



**Figure 6.4. Reasons for not reporting harmful experiences in sport**  
(Each participant could indicate multiple reasons for not reporting)



## 6.5 Summary

- Among those who have experienced harm  around 60% had informed/told/talked to someone about it. Fewest report physical violence, and most report psychological violence. More women than men report psychological violence and sexual harassment
- A total of 1,340 incidents have been reported, which means that the number of people who have reported has on average reported three incidents each
- Those who are athletes only, report fewer incidents than those with other roles and combinations of roles
- Competitive athletes report more often than those who do not participate in competitions
- The group that most people have spoken to about the harmful behaviours that they have experienced is other athletes (67%)
- Almost half have also spoken to parents and/or coach/instructor
- Few have reported officially or formally (approx. 20%), i.e. contacted leaders or persons with other voluntary positions of trust in sport, the police, or used "MittVarsel"
- Among those who have not reported the incidents to anyone, 79% stated that they thought that "the incident was not something to report" as a reason for not having reported
- Many (19%) were "unsure if the incident was serious enough to report", and 13% "didn't believe the report would lead to any action"

“

Among those who have been subjected to harmful experiences, about 60% have informed/told/talked/reported to someone about what they have experienced.

## 7. What do the results tell us?

In this chapter, we will answer the questions we posed in the introduction and, based on these, suggest some measures for both the sport organizations and for sports research. We will comment on the results in relation to other studies although this is particularly challenging because we have not found any national or international studies that examine young adults' experiences of harmful experiences in sport. We must therefore refer to results related to children and young people that are retrospective, in addition to a few studies that are life-time studies, i.e. examine whether the participants have experienced harmful experiences once or several times in their lives.

Comparing research results on incidence and prevalence is inherently complicated because harmful experiences are defined and measured differently. This is particularly true of sexual harassment, which can include both harassing and abusive behaviour. There are smooth transitions and overlaps between different dimensions of sexual harassment<sup>74</sup>, which is why we have used a measurement covering **these four** dimensions of sexual harassment in this study.

In the first chapter, we indicated that different terms are used to describe the same phenomenon, and that the same behaviour can have different names. This also applies internationally and complicates comparisons. In English language, many sports researchers use the term 'violence' or 'interpersonal violence' to describe the phenomenon we investigate<sup>75</sup>. Other general terms are 'harm' and 'maltreatment'<sup>76</sup>. All these terms cover the incidents we have called harmful experiences. When we refer to studies that measure the three forms (psychological, physical, and sexual), the content, i.e. the wording of the questions, is relatively similar in the various studies, even though the overall terminology may be different. In addition to the use of different words and concepts, comparisons are also made difficult by the fact that the samples differ in terms of sports disciplines, roles

in sport, performance levels among the athletes, age, and gender. In sports, as different from workplace research, it is very rare to examine incidence, i.e., harmful experiences over a limited period, such as the last 12 or six months.

From a sports policy perspective, we assume that it is important to investigate whether sports nationally and internationally, differ from other organisations that serve as natural points of comparison. Unfortunately, this is very difficult because there is little research, the existing research is not comparable, and some of the questions we have asked in this study have not been investigated in other studies.

### 7.1 "What is the incidence of psychological and physical violence, as well as sexual harassment in the last year among members of sports clubs in the 18-30 years age group?"

As we have shown in Chapter 3, about half (56%) of participants have experienced some form of harmful experience at least "once or twice" in the past year. Psychological violence (47%) was experienced more often than sexual harassment (25%) and physical violence (21%). For the various dimensions of sexual harassment, we found that most people had experienced gender harassment (18%), followed by unwanted sexual attention (14%).

<sup>74</sup> Stander & Thomsen, 2016

<sup>75</sup> Vertommen et al., 2016; Hartill et al., 2023

<sup>76</sup> Wilson et al, 2022

Almost no one had experienced sexual coercion/sexual assault. This deviates somewhat from the Youth in Oslo 2021, where the incidence of various types of harmful behaviors in youth sports was investigated<sup>77</sup>. Four percent of high school students who were active in sports at the time of the survey reported that they had been touched against their will, and 3% reported that they had been subjected to "a form of sexual abuse". This difference may be due to differences in age between the two samples, differences in the number of questions, and the content of the questions.

We found overlap between the three forms of harmful experiences. In total, 9% had experienced psychological violence, physical violence, and sexual harassment. The combination of psychological violence and sexual harassment was the most common (11%). Furthermore, several of the risk factors were the same for all three forms of harmful experiences, including "time spent per week on their primary sport", but there were also differences between the three forms. The biggest risk factor for being subjected to psychological violence was spending 11 hours or more per week on their primary sport, for physical violence it was spending the most time on a team sport, and for sexual harassment it was being female. The relationship between psychological violence, physical violence, and sexual harassment is the same as that found in studies of children's and youth sports in other countries, including Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands<sup>78</sup>, Canada<sup>79</sup>, Australia<sup>80</sup>, and in a comprehensive European study<sup>81</sup>. As mentioned in Chapter 1, these are lifetime studies that have analysed adults' experiences in sport before the age of 18. Although the figures are not directly comparable (young adults' experiences last year versus experiences in children's and youth sport before the age of 18)<sup>82</sup>, our findings confirm that psychological violence occur more often among young adults in sport, than sexual harassment and physical violence.

<sup>77</sup> Strandbu et al., 2023

<sup>78</sup> Ohlert et al., 2021

<sup>79</sup> Parent & Vaillancourt-Morel, 2021

<sup>80</sup> Pankowisk et al., 2023

<sup>81</sup> Hartill et al., 2023

<sup>82</sup> As mentioned in the introduction, we have also mapped the participants' experiences in children's and youth sports. These results are planned to be published in a separate report, where we can make direct comparisons with surveys conducted in other countries.

<sup>83</sup> Berman et al., 2021

<sup>84</sup> Wilson et al., 2022

<sup>85</sup> Hartill et al., 2023

<sup>86</sup> Frøyland et al., 2023

<sup>87</sup> Sølvsberg et al., 2022

For psychological violence, we found no significant difference in incidence between women and men. These are similar results to those found in the sports studies on children and young people, and in a lifetime study among young elite athletes in athletics<sup>83</sup>.

Analyses of incidence in different groups show the highest incidence of psychological violence among male referees (92%), among women who had competed internationally (71%), and among male referees (71%).

As with the study of elite athletes in athletics, we found no gender differences in the incidence of physical violence. The groups that report the most physical violence in our study were women who had competed nationally (30%) and internationally (32%). In a survey of current and former national team athletes in Canada, women had been more exposed to physical harm than men (lifetime study)<sup>84</sup>, while several surveys of children and young people in sport in other countries have shown that boys have experienced more physical violence than girls. In the comprehensive study of sport among children and youth in six European countries, 52% of boys and 36% of girls had experienced physical violence in sport before the age of 18<sup>85</sup>. In the "Ung Vold" survey from 2023, which includes students in all levels of secondary schools in Norway, 23% of the boys and 14% of the girls had experienced physical violence during their childhood. The authors write that threats of violence or physical violence from peers is something that boys are exposed to far more often than girls<sup>86</sup>.

In contrast to the extent of psychological and physical violence, we found, in line with most other studies inside and outside of sport, that women (34%) had experienced more sexual harassment than men (19%). The groups that had experienced the most sexual harassment were female athletes who had competed at national (44%) and international (48%) level. This gender difference was also found in a Norwegian high school survey mentioned in the introduction<sup>87</sup>. Among female elite athletes, 42% had experienced sexual harassment in the past year. The corresponding figure for boys was 23%.



For non-elite athletes, the figures were 54% (girls) and 38% (boys). These figures are higher than those found in our survey of young adults, but they are not directly comparable as the survey in the high schools analysed sexual harassment in various social settings (at school, in sports outside school, and in leisure time), while we only analysed experiences in a sports context. Furthermore, the measurement instrument was also somewhat different from the one we have used in this study. On the other hand, the difference may also be explained by the different sample, as we know that the extent of sexual harassment is related to age, and students in high school are younger than in our survey.

There is somewhat more knowledge about sexual harassment in sport than for the other two forms of harmful experiences. In the introduction, we referred to a Norwegian survey that in 2000 showed that 28% of female elite athletes had experienced sexual harassment from a lifetime perspective (measured with 11 questions). In the current survey, we have examined the incidence of sexual harassment last year with 16 questions. Although the surveys are not directly comparable, an incidence of 34% indicates an increase in the experience of sexual harassment from 2000 to today.

As mentioned earlier, we have measured the incidence of sexual harassment using a measurement developed by the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI), which has been used in several surveys by FFI. Among women and men in the Norwegian Armed Forces under the age of 30, it was 59% and 18%, respectively, in the 2022 study, who had experienced sexual harassment in the past 12 months<sup>88</sup>. Among enlisted personnel and students, the figures were 55% for women and 20% for men. If we compare our survey with the Armed Forces, we can conclude that the extent of sexual harassment appears to be roughly the same for men in sport (19%) as in the Armed Forces (18-20%), while women in sport experience considerably less sexual harassment (34%) than women in the Armed Forces (55-59%). The same relationship is found when we analyse gender

harassment and unwanted sexual attention separately. There is little difference between enlisted men in the armed forces and men aged 18-30 in sport, but significantly more women in the armed forces than in sport have experienced gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention.

For unwanted sexual attention, the figures for enlisted women are 37% in the Armed Forces and 18% in sports, while the figures for men are 15% and 12%.

## 7.2 "Who has experienced such incidents, who carried them out and where did they happen?"

### 7.2.1 Who has experienced harmful incidents?

For all three forms, we found that the age group 18-20 years of age had been exposed to more harmful behaviors than the age group 21-30 years of age. The same applied to people with a low level of education, which was not surprising as studies have shown that violence is linked to sociodemographic factors, of which lower education is an indicator<sup>89</sup>.

The fact that there were no significant differences between heterosexuals and people with other sexual orientations (homosexual, bisexual, queer and unsure/none of the categories apply to me), and between those with and without a permanent disability was, however, somewhat unexpected. Some prevalence studies on children and young people in sports have examined the role of sexual orientation in the incidence of harmful experiences. These have found a higher prevalence of sexual violence among non-heterosexuals<sup>90</sup>. Although we did not find significant differences in our material, there were tendencies among both women and men that non-heterosexuals had been more exposed to sexual harassment than heterosexuals. Reports from sports settings and media interviews have indicated that many non-heterosexual individuals encounter harassment and hostility in sports. Surveys of young people with a sexual orientation other than heterosexual also show that this group is more exposed to sexual harassment, particularly in terms of hurtful language and unwelcome sexual comments<sup>91</sup>.

<sup>88</sup> Ubisch et al, 2023

<sup>89</sup> Dale et al, 2023

<sup>90</sup> Parent et al, 2021; Vertommen et al., 2016; Wilson et al., 2022; Ohlert et al., 2018; Pankowiak et al., 2023; Baiocco et al., 2018; Storr et al., 2022

<sup>91</sup> Frøyland and Stefansen, 2023



For many years, NIF has worked systematically to prevent harassment and discrimination since the campaign "Idretten mot homofob" (2007-2010). In recent years, it has been developed a thematic webpage called STOP, which was first launched by Norwegian top football in 2020. On the website of the national sports federation (NIF),<sup>92</sup> One can read that "Norwegian sport unite when we say STOP to racism, sexism, homophobia and all other forms of discrimination"<sup>93</sup>. Furthermore, a thematic page has been developed to support all organisational levels in Norwegian sport, and an inclusion project has been launched as a part of NIF's Diversity and Inclusion Initiative. We can speculate on whether the results of this work may help explain why there are no significant differences in harmful experiences in sport between heterosexuals and individuals of another sexual orientation<sup>93</sup>.

A retrospective study from Belgium found that people with a disability reported more sexual violence in children and youth sports than people without a disability<sup>94</sup>. A survey from Canada among national team athletes and former national team athletes found no difference in reported harm between people with and without a disability<sup>95</sup>. The same was found in a survey of elite athletes in Germany<sup>96</sup>. NIF is one of the few sports federations in the world that incorporated para-sport when the Norwegian Disabled Sports Confederation (NFI) was dissolved with effect from 31 December 2007. Since then, the different national federations have been responsible for people with disabilities in their sports. We assume that this has contributed to the integration of people with disabilities and, as such, may help to explain why there is no difference in harmful experiences between people with and without a disability in our study. But in our study, only 59 people (5% of the participants) stated that they had a permanent disability. A larger and more representative sample is therefore needed to draw conclusions about this.

Furthermore, in our survey we found that people with an immigration background had experienced more psychological violence (60%) than the rest of the Norwegian population (45%), which was particularly true for men. We did not find this difference for the other two forms of harmful experiences. Two retrospective studies from sport found that ethnic minorities were more likely to be victims of sexual harassment and violence than ethnic majorities<sup>97</sup>. Persons with an immigration background in general are somewhat more likely to experience violence and threats than the general population. According to the latest Norwegian Living Conditions survey, 6% of persons with immigration background had experienced violence or threats in the past 12 months, compared to 5% for the general population. Young boys with immigration background (16-24 years) are significantly more exposed to violence and threats than boys in general, and women with immigration background are more often exposed to violence than women in the general population<sup>98</sup>. Why this is not reflected in our study in sport is difficult to know. Perhaps sport is more inclusive, but it could also be that there are special groups that are attracted to sport.

For all forms of harmful experiences, we found that people with a combination of different roles in sport had experienced more than those who were only athletes. The same was true for those who spent 11 hours or more on their sport, and among those who participated in competitive sports compared to those who did not participate in competitions. Elite athletes, and women in particular, were also a risk group, with women who had competed internationally most often experiencing all three forms of harmful experiences. This suggests that the more involved you are in sport, the greater the chance that you will have experienced at least one incident once or twice in the past 12 months. In general, this reflects a culture in which harmful experiences take place in different arenas

<sup>92</sup> <https://www.idrettsforbundet.no/tema/tryggidrett/stopp/>

<sup>93</sup> <https://www.idrettsforbundet.no/nyheter/2021/-det-er-viktig-at-idretten-er-trygg-for-alle-uansett-hvem-man-elsker/>

<sup>94</sup> Vertommen et al., 2016

<sup>95</sup> Wilson et al., 2022

<sup>96</sup> Ohlert et al., 2018

<sup>97</sup> Vertommen et al., 2016; Wilson et al., 2022

<sup>98</sup> Wrålstad and Wiggen, 2017

and in different contexts. To a certain extent, the results are the same as those found in the studies mentioned previously on harmful experiences and violence in children's and youth sports in other countries; high-level competitive sport (national and international) and a high number of practice hours per week are risk factors, primarily for psychological violence<sup>99</sup>. A lifetime study from the Czech Republic found that female elite athletes had experienced more sexual harassment than female athletes competing at a lower level, who in turn had experienced more than female exercisers<sup>100</sup>.

### 7.2.2 Who are the perpetrators?

Male coaches/instructors (57%) are the ones who most often expose both women and men to harmful experiences. Almost as many (49%) have experienced harmful experiences from a male athlete, but here there are significant gender differences, with men most often experiencing this from a male performer. The relationship is reversed for those who have been violated by a female athlete, with women experiencing more harmful experiences from a female athlete than men do. This pattern varies somewhat when we analyse the different forms separately. Physical and psychological violence are primarily perpetrated by male coaches/instructors, while sexual harassment is most often perpetrated by male athletes. It is mainly men who are the perpetrators, and rarely health professionals, referees, or leaders in sport. The findings are consistent with the Canadian study of current and former national team athletes, which also found that the perpetrators of both physical and psychological harm were primarily coaches, while athletes were the most frequent perpetrators of sexual harm<sup>101</sup>. The Norwegian survey of high school students on sexual harassment and abuse also found that the largest group of perpetrators consisted of friends (83%), while coaches, teachers and health professionals together accounted for 20%, and 56% reported other perpetrators<sup>102</sup>.

### 7.2.3 Where have the harmful experiences occurred?

All forms of harmful experiences mainly occur where the athletes spend most of their time, i.e. during training under the jurisdiction of a sports club/sports association/sports federation (63%) or in connection with competitions (61%). Apart from women (79%) and men (66%) who have experienced physical violence during training, there are no differences between women and men when it comes to these two contexts. Many have also experienced harmful experiences in connection with a practice session (23%) and in the changing room (22%). Fewer have been offended via social media (13%). Men are more likely than women to have experienced psychological violence and sexual harassment "in the locker room," while women more often than men have experienced psychological violence in "social contexts under the auspices of sport".

Qualitative interviews from 2002, of Norwegian female elite athletes who had experienced at least one form of sexual harassment and/or abuse identified the following situations as risk factors: "Sexual harassment and abuse seem to occur particularly in locker rooms, in/at sports facilities, while travelling, in the coach's home or car, and at social events"<sup>103</sup>. We assume that the focus on the prevention of sexual harassment both in sport and in society may help to explain why the category "travelling to and from practice/competitions/gatherings" and "in social contexts under the auspices of sport" do not occur as often in 2023. Few other sports studies have examined where harmful experiences in sport take place, but in the report on Child Abuse in Sport European Statistics (CASES)<sup>104</sup>, the sports club was mentioned as the context in which the most serious physical, psychological and sexual incidents occurred.

<sup>99</sup> Parent et al., 2021; Vertommen, et al., 2016; Willson et al., 2022; Ohlert, et al., 2017

<sup>100</sup> Fasting et al., 2010

<sup>101</sup> Wilson et al., 2022

<sup>102</sup> Sølberg et al., 2022

<sup>103</sup> Fasting, 2011, s 325

<sup>104</sup> Hartill et al., 2021

It was surprising that relatively few reported harmful experiences occurring "on the internet/social media", even though this is in accordance with the survey from the Armed Forces, where only 3% of enlisted personnel/students stated that sexual harassment had taken place via digital media<sup>105</sup>. In a survey of 4,000 women in eight countries, Amnesty International found that one in four had experienced online abuse at least once<sup>106</sup>. In the survey conducted in 2022 on violence and abuse in the Norwegian population (aged 18-74), digital sexual harassment is referred to as a new form of violence and one in twenty state that they have been subjected to this<sup>107</sup>. In the "Young in Oslo" 2021 survey of high school pupils, 43% of girls and 22% of boys reported at least one unwanted sexual experience online or on mobile phones in the past year. The same survey also showed that girls were more vulnerable than boys, and that young people aged 15-16 were more vulnerable than those who were younger and older<sup>108</sup>. The fact that so few had experienced digital harmful experiences in sport in our study may be related to the way the questions were asked, as well as the difference in age where our participants were young adults.

### 7.3 "How many and who formally or informally report such harmful behaviours, what is reported, to whom is it reported, and why have people chosen not to report?"

Among those who have experienced harmful incidents, around 60% have informed/told/talked to someone about what they have experienced, and this applies to more women (75%) than men (50%). Fewer report physical violence and more report psychological violence. In relation to the demographic variables and the sports and athlete variables, we see a tendency that the groups who have experienced the most are also those where we find that the most people have talked to someone about what they have experienced.

The people most participants have reported to are other athletes (67%), parents (49%), and coaches/instructors (48 %). Very few seem to have handed in a formal/official report to the head of a sports organization, other persons with voluntary positions of trust in sports, the police, or "MittVarsel".

The numbers for reporting are very high compared to other surveys in and outside of sport. In the most recent survey in the Armed Forces, 23% of female soldiers/students and 17% of male soldiers/students stated that they had "reported/told someone"<sup>109</sup>. The high school survey of elite and non-elite athletes found that among those who had experienced sexual harassment, 20% had reported the incidents. Most had shared their experience(s) with friends, parents/family members or teachers/coaches. Only two students had used the formal reporting system at school<sup>110</sup>. In the survey of current and former national team athletes in Canada, only 15% had reported their experiences. The reasons for not reporting can be many, but the reason most people select in our study is that they thought "the incident was nothing to report" (79%). Being "unsure if the incident was serious enough" (19%) and didn't think the report would lead to any action (13%) were other frequently reported reasons.

The fact that so many people chose to talk to others may have been a result of the "#Metoo" campaign, but the result may also be related to NIF's own focus on safeguarding and to the development of "MittVarsel". In addition, we phrased the question as "Have you told someone about this?", which may have contributed to a higher proportion responding positively to this question, as other studies often use words such as 'reported' that may be perceived as more formal than 'told about' by the participants.

<sup>105</sup> Ubisch et al., 2023

<sup>106</sup> Amnesty International, 2017

<sup>107</sup> Dale et al, 2023

<sup>108</sup> Frøyland and Stefansen, 2023

<sup>109</sup> Ubisch et al., 2023

<sup>110</sup> Sølberg et al., 2023

The figures on reporting in our survey indicate a positive development, and this seems to be in line with the trend among young people in general. The authors of 'UngVold' 2023 write that "Previous studies have shown that many people do not talk to anyone about their experiences of sexual violence", and that a positive finding was "that many of the victims stated that they had talked to someone about what they had experienced: Three out of four girls had spoken to someone, usually a friend"<sup>111</sup>. Talking to a friend can be very positive for the individual, but it is unlikely to lead to a process that ends with the perpetrator being punished/changing their behaviour. We have noted that there is little formal reporting. This means that perpetrators may never be caught and probably continue with their abusive behaviour. The threshold for submitting a formal report can be high. The prerequisite is to have a system that makes reporting easy, ensures that everyone involved is supported, and establishes that reporting may lead to consequences. "MittVarsel", developed by NIF, is intended to be such a system. On NIF's webpage, they write that reporting in Norwegian sport should be both easy and safe. On these pages you will find information about what it means to report, who a report should be sent to, and how to report"<sup>112</sup>. Topics that can be reported include sexual harassment and abuse, bullying, violence and threats.

#### 7.4 How can the results be of practical use for the sports organizations, and which consequences should they have?

Because we do not have other Norwegian studies to compare with from previous years, we cannot conclude that the incidence of harmful experiences in sport has increased in recent years. We have suggested that the incidence of sexual harassment has probably increased, which is not surprising given that sport in many ways is a reflection of society. From 2014 to 2023, there has been a statistically significant increase in the incidence of violence in the population, and for women aged 18-29 years, the incidence

of rape has doubled from 2014 to 2023<sup>113</sup>. The results of the latest survey in high school students (2023/2024) also shows that all forms of bullying have increased; both from fellow students, digital bullying, and bullying from adults at school<sup>114</sup>.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the overall aim of the study was to obtain more information and knowledge that can support Norwegian sport's efforts to prevent and handle various types of harmful behaviors in organised sport. Based on the findings of our survey, we present issues that we believe sports organisations should consider.

##### → Greater focus on the prevention of psychological violence

For an organization that has zero tolerance for discrimination and harassment, it cannot be acceptable that just over half of the athletes have experienced at least one or two harmful incidents in a sports context in the past year. The relatively high numbers, particularly for psychological violence, indicate a lack of culture and respect for each other, as it is often other athletes and coaches/instructors who are the perpetrators. NIF has focused on preventing sexual harassment, violence and threats, but the results in this report indicate that the prevention of psychological violence should be given greater focus.

##### → Common guidelines for the prevention of harmful experiences

As shown in Figure 3.9, there is overlap between the various forms of harmful experiences, and we therefore suggest that NIF consider common guidelines for prevention in general, i.e. an expansion of the guidelines that currently exist for sexual harassment and abuse.

##### → Large-scale surveys with more participants and of specific groups

We have no evidence to conclude that the incidence of harmful experiences is higher in sport than in other arenas in society. On the contrary, the comparison with the same age group in the Norwegian Armed Forces, and measured with the same battery, indicates that the incidence of sexual harassment for women in sport appears to be lower than among women in the military.

<sup>111</sup> Frøyland and Stefansen, 2023

<sup>112</sup> <https://www.idrettsforbundet.no/tema/varsling/>

<sup>113</sup> Dale et al, 2023

<sup>114</sup> Wendelborg, 2024

To be able to say something about the incidence of harmful experiences over time, sports should therefore conduct surveys at regular intervals. In this report, there are very few participants in the various subgroups, which means that the results should be interpreted with caution. The number of participants in future studies should therefore be higher than in this study, so that it is possible to conduct more in-depth analyses of, for example in which situations harmful behaviour occurs, what triggers such situations, whether there are differences between different sports and environments (what characterises environments with high and low levels of harmful behaviour), why women who compete internationally seem to experience more harmful behaviours than women who compete at lower levels in sport, and factors related to harmful behaviours for the various roles that people in sport can hold. Both in Norway and in other countries, little is known about what coaches and referees experience in terms of harmful behaviour, and thus how this can be prevented. The results of this study indicate that referees are particularly vulnerable. There is a lack of knowledge about harmful experiences not only among referees, but also among coaches, and we propose incidence and prevalence studies specifically for these groups. This also applies to people with an immigration background, who we found were more exposed to psychological violence than other groups. In 2023 NIF published a literature review on diversity and inclusion in sport<sup>115</sup>. Among other things, the report states that "no studies have been identified that examine the extent of discrimination and harassment among LGBT+ people in sport. Nor have any studies been found that look at how discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation impact on LGBT+ athletes". We agree that these are important issues, and the results of this study also indicate that these are groups that NIF should acquire more knowledge about.

#### **→ Raising awareness and education, especially of coaches and athletes**

New knowledge (research), awareness-raising, and education are important to bring about change. Knowledge about harmful experiences in sport must be integrated in all coach education, and coaches should be made aware of athlete dynamics. Research on the role of coaches should therefore examine how coaches can influence the relationship between athletes and what it takes to create an environment that prevents or avoids harmful incidents. However, it's not just coaches who need more knowledge. This research has shown that there is a lot going on between athletes, and they also need awareness-raising and training. Athletes with and without experience of harmful behaviours should be involved as much as possible in all safeguarding work, as should coaches. Athletes in general are a group that NIF does not communicate with directly, which is why cooperation with national federations/regional offices/sports clubs and those who are closely connected to practice will be of great importance. We believe that closer co-operation with athletes in general, and with the Athlete Committee for elite athletes in particular, is a prerequisite for bringing about change in this area. When it comes to athletes (especially women) representing Norway internationally, leaders, coaches, and athletes alike should have knowledge of how to handle any critical situations that may arise.

#### **7.4.1 Conclusion**

We hope we have succeeded in fulfilling the report's purpose of providing more information and knowledge about harmful experiences in sports, and that the measures proposed at the end of this chapter can be useful in the preventive work against and handling of various types of harmful experiences in organised sports.

<sup>115</sup> Rambøll Management Consulting, 2023



# Attachments

## Appendix 1.

### Guidelines against sexual harassment and abuse in sports

(Adopted by the NIF Board in September 2010).

1. Treat everyone with respect, and refrain from all forms of communication, action or behaviour that may be perceived as offensive.
2. Avoid body contact that may be perceived as unwanted.
3. Avoid all types of verbal intimacy that may be perceived as sexually charged.
4. Avoid expressions, jokes and opinions that relate to the athlete's gender or sexual orientation in a negative way.
5. Seek to have both genders represented in the support network.
6. Avoid contact with athletes in private spaces unless there are several persons present or in agreement with the parents/guardians or the sports management.
7. Show respect for the athlete's, coaches and leader's private life.
8. Avoid dual relationships. If a reciprocal relationship is established, the situation should be raised and clarified openly in the milieu.
9. Do not offer any form of reward with the purpose of demanding or anticipating sexual services in return.
10. Take action and give notice if a breach of these rules is experienced.

## Appendix 2.

### Factor analyses

In this report, we used factor analysis to examine whether the data showed the expected patterns among the indicators. In other words, we had an idea of these patterns in advance, as the battery of questions was based on already validated questionnaires (sexual harassment) and previous research on psychological and physical violence. We therefore found it appropriate to use confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), which is a method for assessing whether the measures of various constructs are consistent with this previous research. To evaluate the results of CFA, we looked at three different indicators, namely comparative fit index (CFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and weighted root mean square residual (WRMR). According to Hu & Bentler (1999), a CFI equal to or above .95, an RMSEA lower than .06, and a WRMR below or close to 1.00 indicate a good fit to the data.

We conducted CFAs for each of the three forms of violations. In addition to this, similar to Fasting & Køber (2019), we ran separate CFAs for women and men. In situations where there were significant differences between the analyses of women and men, we made qualitative assessments related to certain questions. These analyses are described in more detail, for each type of harmful behaviours below.

#### Physical violence

Physical offences were initially measured with 11 questions. The first CFA showed good fit to data (CFA = .976, RMSEA = .04(.03-.05), WRMR = .928). However, further analyses showed that one question (*i.e.* ... *to be persuaded or forced to take drugs/doping to for example, lose/gain weight, increase muscle mass, improve performance, stop or delay menstruation?*) did not load on the factor for men. A CFA without this question was therefore examined, which showed a good fit for both genders separately, and for the entire sample in total (CFA = .980, RMSEA = .04(.04-.05), WRMR = 0.969). This solution also showed good reliability, with a Rho of .93. Thus, a total of 10 questions were used in further analyses.

#### Psychological violence

Psychological offences were initially measured with 14 questions. The first CFA did not show a good fit to the data (CFA = .873, RMSEA = .08(.08-.09), WRMR = 1.863). Further examination showed that three questions (*i.e.*, (1) *During the past 12 months in a sports context, have you experienced being persuaded or forced to participate in initiation ceremonies (e.g. in connection with joining the team) where the purpose is to humiliate and degrade you and/or others?*, (2) *During the past 12 months in a sports context, have you experienced being criticised for your body shape, weight, clothing and/or appearance, and* (3) *During the past 12 months in a sports context, have you experienced being shouted at or threatened because of your performance or because you did not want to train/compete/practice?*) presented low factor loadings (< .3). The CFA without these three questions showed a good fit to the data (CFA = .976, RMSEA = .04(.03-.05), WRMR = .928). However, further analyses by gender showed that one question (*i.e.*, *During the past 12 months in a sporting context, have you experienced being expelled from your group/team/club, or threatened with this for reasons that you did not understand or that were not told or explained to you?*) loaded negatively for men. A CFA without this question provided a good fit for the whole sample (CFA = .980, RMSEA = .04(.04-.05), WRMR = .969), and showed good reliability, with a Rho of .93. Thus, a total of 10 questions were used in further analyses.

#### Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment was measured with 16 questions initially, representing a global factor. The first CFA did not show a good fit to the data (CFA = .810, RMSEA = .08(.08-.09), WRMR = 2.300). Closer examination showed low factor loadings for the five questions dealing with sexual coercion and sexual assault. A CFA without these questions showed good fit to the data (CFA = .976, RMSEA = .04(.03-.05), WRMR = .928). This also showed good reliability, with a Rho of .92. However, it is clear that these questions represent sexual harmful behaviors with a high degree of severity.

## Appendix 2. cont.

The reason why they did not load on the global construct is likely due to the very low variance herein. In other words, very few people in this sample reported such experiences. This has been found previously as well (Parent et al. 2019), where the questions dealing with more serious incidents of sexual violations present very low factor loadings relating to a global factor. Thus, in line previous research, we found it appropriate to include them in the global factor that is sexual harassment. The original 16 questions were therefore used in further analyses where a global factor was of interest.

It was also of interest to examine the different dimensions of sexual harassment. Gender harassment was measured with a total of four questions, and the CFA showed a good fit to the data (CFA = .982, RMSEA = .10(.07-.14), WRMR = .853.) Furthermore, a Rho of .85 indicated good reliability. Thus, all four questions were used in further analyses of gender harassment.

*Unwanted sexual attention* was measured with seven questions, and the CFA showed good fit to the data (CFA = .984, RMSEA = .05(.04-.07), WRMR = .844), and a Rho of .90 indicated good reliability. As a result, all seven questions were used in further analyses looking at unwanted sexual attention.

*Sexual coercion and assault* were measured with three and two questions respectively, which is not enough to conduct a CFA. In addition, there was very little variance in the measurements, as few cases of these dimensions of sexual harassment were reported. These questions were therefore included in a global factor, as mentioned earlier, but we did not run analyses on these dimensions separately.

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# Biography – the authors



**Kari Fasting** is professor emerita at the Department of Sport and Social Sciences at the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences (NIH). She was the school's first rector (1989-1994) and has been president and is an honorary member of the International Sociology of Sport Association (ISSA). Her research area has been related to gender equality in sport, focusing on the experience and prevention of sexual harassment. In this area, she has been engaged as an advisor to the IOC, NIF, UNICEF and others, EU and the Council of Europe. She has a background in athletics as a national team athlete and board member of The Norwegian Athletic Association in the 1960s and 1970s. In 2022, Kari Fasting was awarded the IOC Women and Sport Award for Europe, and in 2023 she received the Order of St Olav, Knight of the First Class from HM King Harald V for her efforts to promote gender equality and human dignity in sport.



**Nina Sølberg** works as a researcher at the Department of Sports Medicine and the Department of Sport and Social Sciences at the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences (NIH). She has a PhD in sports science from the Department of Sports Medicine at NIH on sexual harassment and abuse among students in elite sports high schools and general high schools in Norway. Other primary areas of research and interest are eating disorders, mental health, and women's health. Nina has a sports background as a national team athlete in wheel gymnastics, coach in gymnastics and wheel gymnastic, and is a member of the working committee for wheel gymnastics in the Norwegian Gymnastics Federation.



**Siv Gjesdal** is an associate professor of sport psychology at the Department of Sport and Social Sciences at the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, where she teaches on the coaching programme. Her research interests are broad and include aspects such as motivation, well-being, youth sports schools and football. She also has experience as a coach in children's and youth sports.





The overall aim of the "Harmful experiences in sport" project was to obtain more information and knowledge that can support Norwegian sport's preventive work against, and handling of, various types of harmful experiences (psychological, physical, and sexual) in organised sport. The questions answered in the survey are: what is the extent of such offences, who has experienced them, who has committed them, where have they occurred, and how many and who have reported such incidents in the past year. A total of 1,261 participants aged 18-30 years who were members of a sports club, drawn from [NIF's](#) membership register, answered an electronic questionnaire.

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