

# California above national average for sexual harassment rates: report

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In the state of California, reported incidences of sexual harassment are 5 percent higher for women and 10 percent higher for men than the national average, report the authors of a joint study produced by the Center for Gender Equity and Health (GEH) at University of California San Diego School of Medicine and the nonprofit organization California Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CALCASA).

"California has led the nation's focus on the #MeToo and #TimesUp movement. This report offers a stark look at the widespread prevalence of verbal, physical and cyber-based sexual [harassment](#) in the Golden State," said Anita Raj, Ph.D., professor in the Department of Medicine at UC San Diego School of Medicine and director of GEH.

GEH is an academic center focused on [public health](#) and [social science research](#) and methods to build evidence on gender inequities and health, and how to tackle inequities for [better health outcomes](#).

Raj and co-authors said "Measuring #MeToo in California, 2019: A Statewide Assessment of Sexual Harassment and Assault" marks the first statewide analysis on the prevalence and scope of sexual harassment and assault in California. They will release their report Thursday, May 23. The team has, for the past two years, also released a nationwide study exploring the same data points across the entire United States.

The California-focused study found that overall Californians who identify as gay or lesbian, as well as male Californians who were born outside of the United States, are at higher risk of experiencing sexual harassment and assault.

Specific findings:

- More than 86 percent of women in California (compared with 81 percent nationally) and 53 percent of men (compared with 43 percent nationally) report having experienced some form of sexual harassment and/or assault in their lifetime.
- Three out of four foreign-born men reported harassment compared to one out of two U.S.-born men living in the state.
- Four out of five lesbian and [bisexual women](#) have faced [sexual assault](#) compared with one in four straight women.
- Three out of four gay and bisexual men have faced aggressive sexual harassment (e.g., stalking, unwanted sexual touching) compared with one out of three straight men.

"This report demonstrates that [sexual harassment](#) is prevalent and ubiquitous, but at the same time, we also see higher rates on some of our most marginalized residents, such as gay, lesbian and bisexual people and foreign-born men," said Raj.

David S. Lee, director of prevention, CALCASA, said that the study offers yet another confirmation

of the desperate need for education about sexual consent.

"Prevention efforts, including education in schools as early as possible, around issues of consent and harassment are crucial," said Lee. "We know that prevention works, and it's necessary to shift to a culture where individuals look out for one another."

**More information:**

[geh.ucsd.edu/wp-content/uploads/... d-assault-report.pdf](https://geh.ucsd.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/d-assault-report.pdf)

[geh.ucsd.edu/wp-content/uploads/... 05/cametooreport.pdf](https://geh.ucsd.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/cametooreport.pdf)

Provided by University of California - San Diego

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