

Survey on:
**Gender-Based Violence
and Sexual Harassment
in the Swedish Higher
Education Sector**



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**SWEDISH
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Survey on Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Harassment in the Swedish Higher Education Sector

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Summary

Background

In 2019, a research and collaboration programme was launched with the aim of jointly increasing knowledge about gender-based violence and sexual harassment in the Swedish higher education sector, as well as underlying causes and consequences. In cooperation with Statistics Sweden (SCB), a survey was conducted in the academic sector in 2021. The purpose of this report is to describe the implementation of the survey and to provide a first account of a selection of data. The higher education institutions included in the survey were given the opportunity to receive results for a pre-determined set of questions and background variables.

The study

The overall goal of the study was to establish research-based knowledge on the prevalence and consequences of gender-based violence and sexual harassment in academia to form a basis for the development of prevention and support models and methods. The study was aimed at employees, PhD students and students at the 38 higher education institutions that are members of SUHF (Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions) and was conducted in May–July 2021. The survey examined sexual harassment using two different well-proven scales. The survey also included well-proven scales measuring organisational and social work environment, health, being exposed to bullying, hatred, threats, and incivility. In addition, the survey included two questions on respondents' perceptions of whether they being exposed to gender-based violence had decreased or increased during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A total of 38 918 respondents participated in the survey: 18 582 students, 5,256 PhD students and 15 080 employees. This corresponds to a total response rate of 31.9% (students 24.3%, PhD students 37.7% and employees 47.5%). Of the total number of respondents, 59.6% were women and 40.4% men.

Presentation of results

The report presents the results mainly as percentage estimates with margins of error (95% confidence interval). The percentages are estimates for the sector as a whole, although only a sample was surveyed and not all of them responded. Some analyses, however, have been done on primary data from the 38 918 respondents, and do not represent estimates for the sector as a whole.

Prevalence of sexual harassment

Percentage estimates show that 4% have been exposed to sexual harassment in the past twelve months. Young people, students and women report highest level of harassment. 8% have learned that others have been exposed to sexual harassment in the past twelve months. Here, too, young people and students report high level of awareness (women and men are equally likely to have become aware of such incidents).

Several different behaviours that can be interpreted as sexual harassment have been summarized into one measure. This measure could only be derived from analysis of primary data. 38% of respondents report that they have been exposed to at least one of these behaviours at least once (the scale is not limited in time). The group “women PhD students” reports the highest level of being exposed to this measure of behaviours. The most common behavioural patterns being reported were “asking intrusive questions about your private life”, “staring or leering at you”, and “making intrusive comments about your physical appearance or age that made you feel offended.”

Prevalence of other forms of gender-based violence

Percentage estimates show that 7% have been exposed to bullying in the past twelve months – women, employees and PhD students report highest levels of being exposed to bullying. 16% have become aware that others have been exposed to bullying in the past 12 months. Percentage estimates show that 5% have experienced online harassment in the last 12 months. A high percentage of the respondents has experienced incivility. The most common forms of incivility were “paying little attention to your statements or showed little interest in your opinions” and “interrupting or speaking over you”, which have been reported by about 50%.

COVID-19 and vulnerability

Analyses of questions about COVID-19 are made on primary data and show that being exposed to bullying and sexual harassment in most cases has not been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the cases where it has been affected, it has decreased – women report more frequently than men that this is the case.

Consequences of sexual harassment

Analyses of the consequences of sexual harassment are based on primary data. 12% (14% women and 8% men) of respondents who have reported that they have been exposed to sexual harassment have filed a formal complaint about the incident. The most common reason given for not filing a report was “it wasn’t that serious” for women and “I dealt with it myself” for men.

Analyses were conducted of the relationship between organisational factors and undesired sexual attention. These show, among other things, that those who have reported that they have been exposed to sexual harassment (both women and men) also report a lower degree of perceived support from colleagues/fellow students and from managers/teachers. In comparison to non-exposed, respondents (both women and men) who have reported that they have been exposed to undesired sexual attention indicate worse general health, higher stress level and higher degree of burnout. Respondents who have reported that they have been exposed to sexual harassment also indicate to a greater extent that they are considering resigning from their work/studies.

The survey provides a national sector-wide picture of the extent and consequences of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment. The results show common challenges faced by the the Swedish higher education. The intention is for the reported results to contribute to future preventive and supportive work at the national level.

Introduction

This report is a first presentation of the survey, focusing on gender-based violence and sexual harassment, which in 2021 was aimed at students, PhD students and employees at the 38 higher education institutions which are members of SUHF (Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions).

The survey was conducted within the framework of a research and collaboration programme on gender-based violence and sexual harassment, developed by Karolinska Institutet (KI), the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Malmö University (MaU), and the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research at the University of Gothenburg (GU). The data was collected with the help of Statistics Sweden (SCB).

During the autumn of 2021, the higher education institutions included in the study were offered the opportunity to order their own results in table format from Statistics Sweden. These result tables represent a selection of data with major focus on validated scales and overall variables, such as legal gender, age, students/PhD students/employees. This report presents a selection of data collected from all participating higher education institutions.

Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to describe the execution of a survey on gender-based violence and sexual harassment in the Swedish higher education sector in 2021, and to provide a first account of a selection of data from the survey.

Limitations

This report describes the execution of the survey and presents results based on a selection of questions and variables found in the result tables, which the higher education institutions have been offered to obtain. The report does not have any ambition to describe the complete data collected in the survey.

A research and collaboration programme

On 8 March 2019, a research and collaboration programme for gender-based violence and sexual harassment was launched. The programme aims to improve the study and work environment at higher education institutions based on research-based knowledge and, ultimately, to increase the quality in education and research. The programme is run jointly by KI, KTH, MaU and the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research, GU.

The establishment of the research and collaboration programme was a result of SUHF's conference in the spring of 2018, which aimed to highlight gender-based violence and sexual harassment in the Swedish higher education sector. SUHF's initiative followed the #MeToo movement that surfaced in the autumn of 2017. Stories of experiencing sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence were spread through more than 40 #MeToo movements in various sectors and groups in Sweden. #Akademiuppropet about being exposed to sexual harassment in the Swedish higher education sector was published on 24 November 2017 and signed by 2,400 women (SvD 24/11/2017).

A fundamental idea behind the programme is to create and disseminate research-based knowledge in collaboration and throughout different higher education institutions and scientific disciplines. The aim is to increase knowledge about being exposed to sexual harassment in the Swedish higher education sector, as well as about underlying causes and consequences. Collaboration provides better opportunities for higher education institutions to, for example, utilise data, obtain comparable results and produce aggregated analyses. In addition, a national research network has been initiated in order to acquire knowledge about ongoing research with different methodological approaches, thereby contributing to new research collaborations and also creating in-depth understanding of the sexual harassment phenomenon.

A central task of the programme was to conduct a national survey. The survey was conducted within the framework of an ethically approved research study with KI as responsible organisation and in collaboration with Statistics Sweden. The survey was designed in dialogue within the higher education sector and was conducted late in the spring of 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was a unique time for the higher education sector, with social restrictions and in most cases remote teaching, research and administration.

The overall purpose of the survey was formulated as gaining research-based knowledge of the prevalence and consequences of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment in the Swedish higher education sector. The survey was directed at students, PhD students and employees at Swedish higher education institutions, and is the first cross-sectoral study in Sweden.

The Swedish higher education sector

The core of the higher education sector is education and research, and it also has responsibilities within training employees for the future, interacting with the surrounding society, and contributing knowledge to solving societal challenges. The sector conducts extensive activities within the framework of almost 50 universities, colleges and individual education providers in Sweden.

SUHF is a collaborative organisation for 38 higher education institutions in Sweden, which in their operations conduct both research and teaching as higher educational institutions. The member institutions collectively include 77,928 employees and 452,621 students, with total income of SEK 78.4 billion (in 2020). The 38 higher education institutions show great variation in the number of employees, number of students and turnover. The higher education institutions may consist of one or more faculties.

SUHF is an arena for joint discussions, position statements and coordination when appropriate. Expert groups are established for areas where continuous collaborative work is a priority. This is the case for questions related to how higher education institutions can strengthen their ability to be good employers and promote good work and study environments. The Expert Group on Employers' Issues, the Board and the General Assembly of SUHF have actively supported the planning and implementation of the survey and see it as an important tool for the continued development of higher education institutions.

Concepts

For the purposes of this report, gender-based violence is considered to be a collective term for sexual harassment, bullying, cyber-bullying and incivility. These concepts are described in more detail below.

Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence is an umbrella term used in research to describe different forms of harassment and violence (O'Connor et al. 2021). The purpose is to create an understanding that being exposed to different forms of harassment is complex and include interlinked experiences that take place during a lifetime. Discrimination, bullying, abuse, unequal treatment, incivility, harassment and sexual harassment are all expressions of how abuse of power creates experiences of violence. This approach is established in large parts of the international research field (see further Hearn et al. 2020; Naezer et al. 2019).

Gender, in the current concept of gender-based violence, is used to highlight the importance of how inequalities and power structures in society (linked to gender, gender identity, class, race/ethnicity, sexuality, function, age etc.) contribute to being exposed to violence in different ways (Crenshaw 1989; Krizsan et al. 2012).

Sexual harassment

The sexual harassment concept is used in this report to describe being exposed to undesired sexual attention. Sexual harassment series are regulated in Sweden in both the Anti-Discrimination Act (ADL) and the Work Environment Act (WEA). In ADL, sexual harassment is described as a form of discrimination in work and education, and is defined as “conduct of a sexual nature that violates someone’s dignity” (Section 4, subsection 4 of ADL). Sexual harassment is prohibited by law, and employers and education providers have a responsibility to investigate and remedy sexual harassment according to both ADL and WEA. There are a variety of useful reports, guides and support material to look at regarding the legal definition of sexual harassment, from the Discrimination Ombudsman (DO), the Swedish Work Environment Authority (AMV) and others. But sexual harassment can also be understood and analysed beyond legal definitions and frameworks. #MeToo and the sector-specific riots that exploded both in Sweden and internationally during 2017 describe, for example, both the extent and complexity of different forms of being exposed to harassment at individual, organisational and societal levels.

In research, the perception and use of the concept of sexual harassment have changed over time. This is partly because different research methods are used in different disciplines. In addition, a methodological development has taken place, for example, through the use of specific questions and scales to investigate prevalence in more detail and on the basis of qualitative descriptions of events and situations. Development in the concept has also occurred through linking sexual harassment to other concepts and perspectives such as work environment and organisational culture. In research, sexual harassment is often combined with intersectional frameworks of understanding, i.e. power axes in a society intersect with each other

and contribute to oppression and subordination in different ways. This means that questions about how power, the exercise of power, dependency relationships, hierarchies etc., also include different minorities’ experiences of being exposed to harassment (see further on the history and development of the concept, e.g. Chandra & Erlingsdóttir 2020; Fileborn & Loney-Howes 2019).

Bullying and incivility

Bullying is defined as being exposed repeatedly over a longer period of time to unpleasant or degrading treatment, which is difficult to defend against ([http:// www.copsoq-network.org](http://www.copsoq-network.org)). Einarsen et al. (2011) describes bullying in the workplace as harassment, insults and/or freezing someone out, or when one or more people have a negative impact on someone else’s tasks. In order for certain behaviour to be considered bullying, it must occur repeatedly, as well as over a certain period of time (e.g. six months). Bullying is often described as an escalating process during which the person who is exposed to it is placed at a disadvantage and becomes the subject of systemic and negative social actions.

Previous research has also reported occurrence of various forms of lack of respect in higher education institutions, known as incivility (see e.g. Holm 2021). Incivility is defined as low-intensity aggressive behaviour with the intent to harm, in violation of workplace standards for mutual respect (Andersson & Pearson 1999; Cortina 2009). Incivility is in its nature insolent and rude behaviour, which shows lack of respect. Examples of such behaviour are interrupting, talking over someone and spreading rumours.

State of knowledge

Research on gender-based violence in research and education covers several disciplines and uses a broad set of theoretical and methodological perspectives. A description of international and national research on bullying, incivility and sexual harassment in higher education with focus on prevalence can be found below.

Gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

Several extensive investigations of bullying and incivility have been conducted. In a previous study by Smith and Rae Coel (2018), it is reported that aggression in universities and colleges today takes the form of direct attacks to a lesser extent and more of various forms of incivility instead. For example, occurrence of bullying in universities is reported to just under 10% (3-4% for severe forms of bullying), while experience of incivility is estimated at approx. 20% (Heffernan & Bosetti 2021).

Summaries of the research situation regarding sexual harassment in research and higher education have been presented in several international research reviews (e.g. Henning et al. 2017; Karami et al. 2021). Several different standardised metrics for measuring sexual harassment have been developed (e.g. Sexual Experience Questionnaire/SEQ and Generalised Workplace Abuse Questionnaire/GWA), which have mainly been used to replicate and confirm previous range-finding studies.

Most international range-finding investigations of sexual harassment in higher education are cross-sectional studies (e.g. Campbell et al. 2017), and fewer are longitudinal studies (e.g. MacGinley et al. 2016a; 2016b). Previous studies show major variations in the extent of sexual harassment in research and higher education (e.g. Sheldon et al. 2021). This variation can be explained by a number

of factors: sampling, concepts, perspectives and starting points, definition of sexual harassment, selected scales, questions and metrics, survey context, design and implementation, response rate, interpretative frameworks, horizons of understanding etc. (see also Thakur & Paul 2017).

National range-finding investigations into sexual harassment in the higher education sector in EU Member States are limited (Fajmonová et al. 2021), but, among others, Ireland has recently conducted a study (MacNeela et al. 2022).

Several Swedish studies have also been carried out in the Swedish higher education sector (see e.g. Ebintra et al. 2018; Grubbström & Powell 2020). In 2018–2020, a university-wide project was conducted at Lund University, which began with a qualitative part consisting of 61 individual interviews and 21 focus groups of students, PhD students and employees (Agardh et al. 2020). This was used as basis for developing a survey targeting partly employees and PhD students, and partly students. The qualitative parts of the project showed, among other things, the importance of power and positions of power for the risk of being exposed to sexual harassment, as well as a need for support and confirmation that what has happened can be in fact perceived as sexual harassment. Results from the surveys directed to employees and PhD students in the quantitative part of the project show that 25% of women and 7% of men report experiences of sexual harassment at some point during their time as employees and PhD students at Lund University (Agardh et al. 2020).

In the survey directed at students, 27% of women and 11% of men say that they have been exposed to sexual harassment at some point in connection with their studies or their student life at Lund University.

Method

A survey was constructed to investigate the prevalence and consequences of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, in the higher education sector. It uses, among other things, several different measures of gender-based violence. Two different scales, which are used in research to measure undesirable sexual attention, are included in the present survey.

Respondents

A total of 38,918 respondents participated in the survey: 18,582 students, 5,256 PhD students and 15,080 employees (8,494 teaching/research staff/TR; 6,586 technical/administrative staff/TA). Of the total number of respondents 23,200 were women (59.6%) and 15,718 were men (40.4%). For a more detailed description of the respondent group, see Table 1.

At the end of the survey, the overall response rate was 31.9% (students 24.3%, PhD students 37.7% and employees 47.5%). For the study, some data are also available as percentage estimates provided by Statistics Sweden (see also under the section “Results in table form for higher education institutions”).

Survey design

Researchers at KI (Associate Professor Christina Björklund) and at GU (Associate Professor Lisa Rudolfsson) were responsible for the design of the survey, which was discussed with other researchers in the research and collaboration programme. In order to allow for comparative and follow-up studies, the survey was based to a large extent on previously validated scales. An early draft of the survey was presented and discussed at three different dialogue days (in Malmö, Gothenburg and Stockholm) with representatives from the sector. The dialogue days resulted in several questions being added, replaced and rephrased.

The final survey was available in two versions, one for students and one for employees and PhD students. The surveys consisted of 126 and 127 numbered questions, respectively. Of these, 21 questions were supplementary questions and were therefore only shown to some respondents (i.e. depending on the respondent’s previous answers).

Survey questions

The questions presented in this report are summarized below.

Questions about organisational and social work environment, health, being exposed to bullying, hatred and threats, as well as being exposed to “undesired sexual attention” were measured through the validated instrument Copenhagen Psycho-Social Questionnaire; COPSOQ (<http://www.copsoq-network.org>). The questions refer to a fixed period of time, namely to the past 12 months (a question of being exposed to undesired sexual attention earlier than the past 12 months was added by the survey designers). Validation studies on COPSOQ have generated satisfactory results. Reliability in terms of internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) has been reported, also supported by intra-class correlations (ICC) and test-retest reliability. Relationships between COPSOQ scales and other result metrics, such as sick leaves, stress, anxiety and work capacity, also support the conceptual validity (Berthelson et al. 2020).

Concrete behaviours that may be perceived as undesired sexual attention were measured with questions obtained from a major prevalence study on sexual harassment and other forms of violence in the EU (FRA 2014; Latcheva 2017). After a discussion with Statistics Sweden, the survey designers modified the response options in order to make them more consistent with the response options to other questions in the survey. This scale has not been psychometrically validated before and is not limited in time in the present study.

Questions on incivility were measured by the Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS; Cortina et al. 2013). Reliability in the form of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) has been reported to 0.89. The questions are limited in time to the past twelve months.

Two questions regarding the respondent's perception of whether being exposed to harassment has decreased or increased during the COVID-19 pandemic have been included. These questions are developed by the survey designers and have not yet been validated.

In consultation with Statistics Sweden, the programme has decided not to include any free text response options in the survey since it was not considered possible to process free text responses from such a large number of respondents in a high quality process.

Implementation of the survey

Statistics Sweden (SCB) carried out a methodological review and analysis of the survey. SCB then tested the survey through cognitive interviews in order to investigate how questions and answer options are interpreted by respondents in the target group, after which the survey was modified.

In the autumn of 2020, a pilot study was carried out targeting 8,000 individuals (6,000 students, 500 PhD students and 1,500 employees). The total share of respondents in the pilot study was 41% (students 38%, PhD students 46%, employees 54%). The purpose of the pilot study was to test the form, the response rate in total and in different groups, as well as the number of responses in the desired review groups. As a result of the pilot study, the survey form was revised. Since the share who responded via the paper survey was low in the pilot study, this option was removed in the main study. In the pilot study, the share of respondents who answered in English was high in the PhD group, which is

why this option was kept in the main study. The researchers at KI and GU then developed the survey further (among other things, more scales on health/well-being and questions about performance were added). Questions and scales that were not previously translated into Swedish underwent back-translation and review by professional translators.

In the letter that was sent, questions about the study were referred to genusprogrammet@ki.se. All questions were answered and the majority of questions fell into one of the following areas: i) Why are certain answer options not included? The answers to this were mainly linked to the use of validated scales which should not be changed. ii) Why is there no option for comments and answers in free text? The answer to this was that following a discussion with SCB, we had concluded that the project did not have the resources to handle the large amount of potential free-text responses in a quality-secure manner. iii) Why do we conduct this survey during an ongoing pandemic that has strongly influenced how education and work are conducted? The answer to this is that if the investigation were to be postponed, it would have to be done at least a year and a half from now. We need to have at least twelve months back with a distinctly different situation. iv) Questions about the sample. The answer to this is that the sample is based on individuals in the Swedish Higher Education Register and in this case in the autumn of 2020.

Sampling

The sample included:

- students (first- and second-cycle graduates) in the autumn semester of 2020,
- PhD students, autumn semester 2020, and
- employees at higher education institutions, 2020.

All included individuals resided in Sweden and were identified via the Swedish Higher Education Register.

The sample consisted of 123,499 individuals, 77,102 students, 14,341 PhD students and 32,056 employees, obtained from a sample of a total of 453,499 individuals (stratified by higher education institutions and sample group, simple random sampling). The size of the sample was based on optimal allocation in the larger universities for each subpopulation. The smaller higher education institutions (eleven in total) were surveyed as a whole. In cases where a sample person belonged to more than one sub-population, the smallest sub-population was prioritised according to the order; 1) PhD student, 2) employee and 3) student.

The persons included in the pilot survey were removed from the sampling to the main survey. Prior to distribution of invitations to the survey, it was noted that 1,380 people had no known address, so the final sample consisted of 122,119 individuals. The invitation to the survey was distributed by Statistics Sweden and the first distribution began on 5 May 2021 and included information describing, among other things, the purpose of the survey, how data was handled and login information to the online survey. Three reminders followed before the survey was closed at the beginning of July. No checks have been performed of whether the right person has responded to the survey.

The sample of students included all those enrolled in a course in the autumn of 2020. This is a broad inclusion that targets training programmes, short or longer courses, full- and part-time studies, as well as campus-based training and distance learning courses. The sample did not take into account the student's degree of activity. Prior to any follow-up study, a discussion on narrowing the inclusion is advised to take place. The sample of employees was based on the Swedish Higher Education Register and is based on salary payments during the current period. Before a possible follow-up study, there should be a discussion on narrowing the inclusion. It can be noted that the sample frame for PhD students amounted to approx. 87% of the total number of PhD students at the time.

Non-response

The possibility of systematic non-response must always be considered. A systematic non-response in a survey can be based on the fact that the focus of the survey affects the willingness to participate in the survey. Persons who, for various reasons, are in a vulnerable situation could find it unpleasant to answer questions about sexual harassment and therefore choose not to participate in the survey. But the opposite is also possible, in other words, that a person who has not been exposed to sexual harassment thinks that their participation in the survey is not important.

It is also possible that respondents perceived certain issues as less relevant given the pandemic situation. In this context, it can be noted that the response rate in the survey was lower than that of the pilot study, where the stated purpose was to test the survey.

Data analysis

The programme has access to both results in table form from Statistics Sweden with estimated values for the entire sector as well as to primary data for the respondents. As higher education institutions have access to results in the form of estimated values of results in table form, data are mainly reported in this form in this report. The estimated values with error margins are for the entire population. This means that the values are estimates of data for the whole sector, even if only a sample was included and not all of them responded. These estimates are associated with uncertainties and are all given with 95% confidence interval. Statistics Sweden indicates estimated values in full percentage, which must be considered when making comparisons. A given value can thus vary +/- 0.5% in addition to the variation described with the confidence interval. It should be noted that the results in table form only correspond to a selection of data from the study and that when analysing relation-

ships using, for example, regression analysis, it is not given how the weights used for calculating estimated values are to be handled. For example in-depth analyses regarding differences between vulnerable and non-vulnerable are only made for primary data, which is emphasised when these are presented. In the in-depth analyses (t-tests) the confidence interval is also set to 95%.

Results in table form for higher education institutions

The 38 higher education institutions included in the survey have been given the opportunity in the autumn of 2021 to receive results in table form of answers for a pre-determined selection of questions and background variables. The results in table form included 45 questions focusing mainly on validated questions and scales, on the background variables legal gender, age (three groups: under 30 years, 30–49 years and 50 years and older) and by group (students, PhD students and employees: researchers/teachers and technical/administrative staff respectively).

The aim for the results in table form was to provide as much information as possible, for each higher education institution, in order to strengthen the work to prevent being exposed to violence. However, information may be shared only to the extent sampling and response rates allow, and only if the information does not risk revealing the identity of the respondents. Therefore, there was a significant variation in how much information a given higher education institution had access to, also considering the large variation in the size of the higher education institutions for the different groups of students, PhD students and employees. It was also possible to obtain the corresponding results in table form for the entire sector for comparison.

The results in table form present percentage estimates and error margins (95% confidence intervals) for the whole population. This means that the values are estimates of what the data is like in the sector as a whole, even if only a sample was included and not everyone responded. These estimated values are produced with calibrated weights (SCB 2021). The calibrated weights technique is an effective and flexible method for reducing uncertainties caused by sampling and non-response.



Results

The purpose of the survey was to establish research-based knowledge of the prevalence and consequences of gender-based violence and sexual harassment in the Swedish higher education sector. Part 1 of this report presents answers to validated questions (COPSOQ) regarding sexual harassment, bullying and violations on social media in total, for men and women (legal gender) respectively, based on age (under 30 years, 30–49 years and 50 years and older) and for legal gender and group (students, PhD students, employees) with a focus on the past twelve months. The choice to limit questions to the past year is based partly on the fact that the previously validated scales (e.g. COPSOQ) formulated the questions this way, partly on the more general knowledge of memory and surveys, i.e. that time intervals for survey questions should be limited in order to increase accuracy (e.g. Persson 2016). Questions about incivility (WIS) are presented in the same way. Validated instruments are reported mainly as percentage estimates.

Part 1 also presents the scale that captures different behavioural patterns (Latcheva 2017) in total, for men and women respectively (legal gender), based on age (under 30 years, 30–49 years and 50 years and older) as well as for legal gender and group (students, PhD students, employees). This scale is not psychometrically validated or limited in time.

Part 2 presents in-depth analyses of the consequences of undesired sexual attention (COPSOQ). These are all based on primary data.

Table 1 presents the background data for the collected cohort. Most of the employees who responded to the survey indicated that they had a permanent position (76.6%). It should be noted that only a total of 8.9% stated that they did not work/study remotely at all. The high rate of remote working is a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. To the question ”How much of your work/study did you do remotely, that is, outside your office/place of study (answer based on how your work/studies has mainly been allocated during the past twelve months)”, a total of 53.9% said that they worked/studied remotely five or more days per week.

Table 1. Background data for respondents

	N	Min-max/%	Mean (SD)	Non-response
Total population (N=38 918)				
Age	38 918	17-87	38.97 (14,01)	
Legal gender				
Men	15 718	40.4		
Women	23 200	59.6		
Background				
Born abroad	6972	17.9		4
Native-born	31 942	82.1		
Subpopulation				
Staff	15 080	38.7		
PhD students	5 256	13.5		
Students	18 582	47.7		
Remote working/distance learning				
Not at all	3436	8.9		158
1-2 days a week	5206	13.4		
3-4 days a week	8397	21.7		
5 days a week	20 910	53.9		
Do not know	811	2.1		
Staff (N=15 080)				
Type of employment				
Fixed-term employment	3529	23.4		
Permanent employment	11 551	76.6		
Staff type				
Teaching/research staff	8 494	56.3		
Technical/administrative staff	6 586	43.7		

Part 1. Gender-based violence

Undesired sexual attention

Diagrams 1a and 1b show undesired sexual attention over the past 12 months (COPSOQ) based on percentage estimates (95% confidence interval approx. +/- 0.3% – +/- 0.8%). Several trends can be observed. Among other things, the responses show that women are more vulnerable than men, that younger people are more vulnerable and that students are more vulnerable. The correlation between younger age and being a student must be considered, but this does not explain the differences between women and men. In terms of undesired sexual attention over the past twelve months (COPSOQ), the percentage estimate is the same (2%) for teaching/research staff and technical/administrative staff (data not shown).

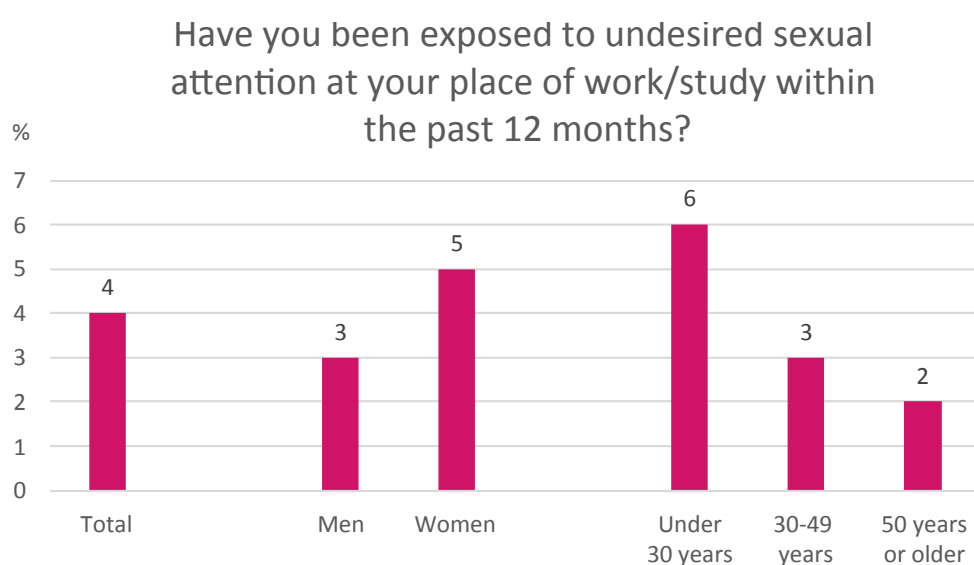


Diagram 1a. Undesired sexual attention broken down by legal gender and age. The Y-axis corresponds to percentage estimates for the answer option Yes (%).

Have you been exposed to undesired sexual attention at your place of work/study within the past 12 months?

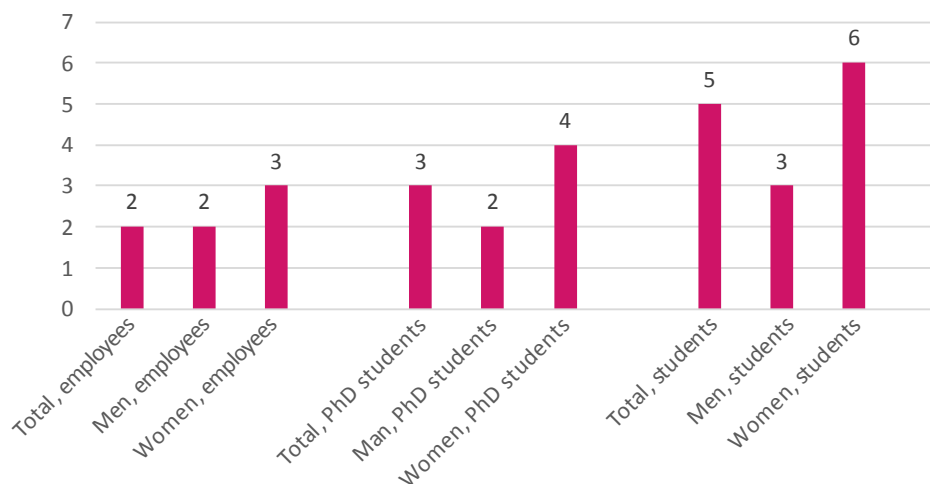


Diagram 1b. Undesired sexual attention broken down by legal gender and group (students, PhD students, employees). The Y-axis corresponds to percentage estimates for the answer option Yes (%).

Diagrams 2a and 2b show, in parallel with data from diagram 1, “Have you become aware that someone else has been exposed to undesired sexual attention at your place of work/study in the past twelve months” based on percentage estimates (95% confidence interval approx. +/- 0.3% - +/- 0.8%). The trend is that men and women have become aware to an equal extent that someone else has been exposed to undesired sexual attention at the workplace/study site in the past twelve months. There is a great difference between the age groups when it comes to becoming aware that someone else has been exposed to undesired sexual attention at their place of work/study in the past twelve months. Young people report awareness to a greater extent, which is consistent with the trend that young people also report to a higher degree that they have been exposed. The share who become aware that someone else has been exposed to undesired sexual attention at their place of work/study in the past twelve months is higher than those who report that they themselves have been exposed. Percentage estimates regarding awareness that another person has been exposed to undesired sexual attention is the same for teaching staff/researchers and technical/administrative staff (data not shown).

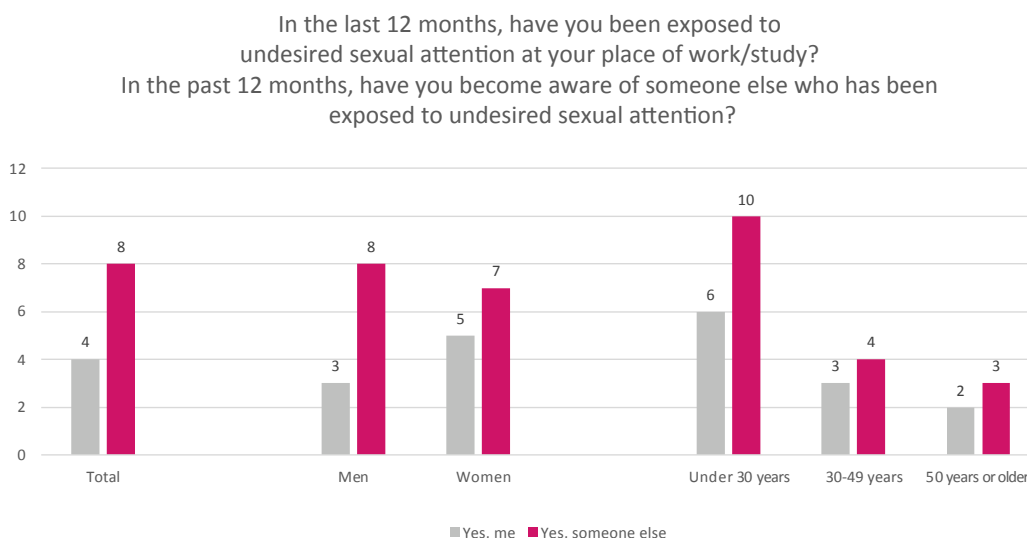


Diagram 2a. Being exposed to undesired sexual attention (grey bar) and awareness that someone else has been exposed to undesired sexual attention (pink bar) at your place of work/study in the past twelve months, broken down by legal gender and age. The Y-axis corresponds to percentage estimates (%).

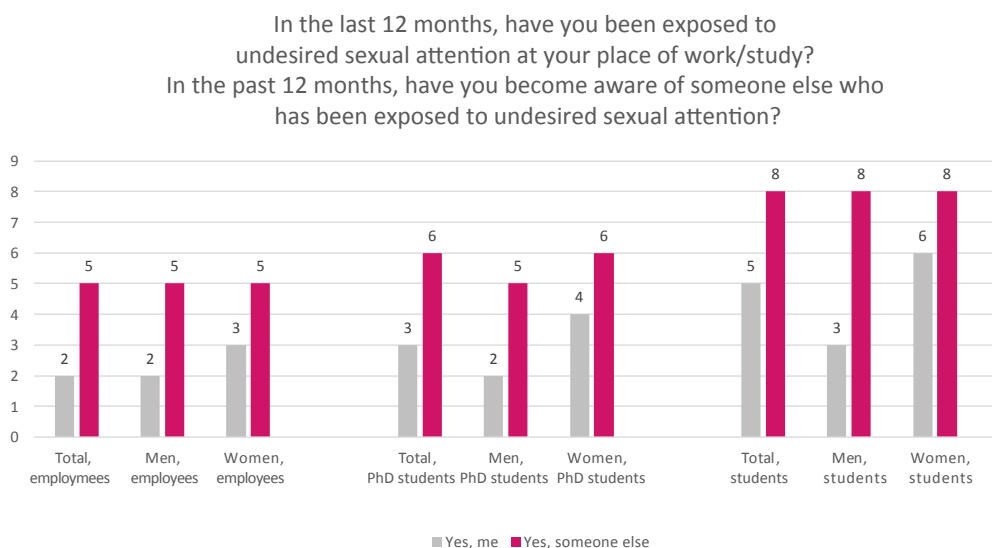


Diagram 2b. Being exposed to undesired sexual attention (grey bar) and awareness that someone else has been exposed to undesired sexual attention (pink bar) at your place of work/study in the past twelve months, broken down by legal gender and group (students, PhD students, employees). The Y-axis corresponds to percentage estimates (%).

Table 2 shows the percentage estimates for those who answered Yes at least once to any of the eleven questions from the behavioural scale described in Latcheva (2017). These questions have not been validated and are not limited in time.

Percentage estimates are shown for the total sample (T) and broken down by legal gender (men/M and women/W). Two response options included in the questionnaire (“Often” and “Many times”) are not reported as the percentage estimates are 0.5 or less for all questions for these response options.

Table 2. Questions about different forms of undesired sexual attention (Latcheva, 2017), reported for the Total and Legal gender groups (men/M and women/W).

In your work/studies, how often have you experienced...	Once/twice (%)			Sometimes (%)		
	T	M	W	T	M	W
...intrusive questions about your private life that made you feel uncomfortable?	15	14	16	4	3	4
...inappropriately staring or leering that made you feel intimidated?	15	9	18	5	2	6
...sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made you feel offended?	10	6	12	2	1	3
...intrusive comments about your physical appearance or age that made you feel offended?	15	11	18	4	3	4
...inappropriate invitations to go out on dates?	5	3	7	1	1	1
...somebody sending or showing you sexually explicit pictures, photos, or gifts that made you feel offended?	2	1	2	-	-	-
...somebody indecently exposing themselves to you?	1	2	1	-	-	-
...somebody made you watch or look at pornographic material against your wish?	2	4	1	-	1	-
...undesired sexually explicit emails, SMS, or messages on social media that offended you?	2	2	2	1	-	1
...inappropriate advances that offended you on emails, SMS or social media?	5	3	7	1	1	1
...unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing?	5	3	6	1	1	1

The figures correspond to percentage estimates (%) for the “Once/ Twice” and “Sometimes” response options. Only integers are available for percentage estimates. This, together with the uncertainty of the value, may result in that there is no value for the percentage estimate in the column for total (T) but there is a percentage estimate of 1% for men (M; The question “Made you watch or look at pornographic material against your wish?” and the option “Sometimes”). An individual may have answered “Yes” to several questions, which is why the total percentage estimates for the questions can be summed to a value above 100%.

The most common forms of being exposed to harassment reported in the Swedish higher education sector are “asked intrusive questions about your private life that made you feel uncomfortable” (19%), “staring or leering that made you feel intimidated” (20%) and “intrusive comments about your physical appearance or age that made you feel offended” (19%). Especially when it comes to “staring or leering that made you feel intimidated” and “intrusive comments about your physical appearance or age that made you feel offended”, the level of being exposed to sexual harassment is higher for women (24% and 22%, respectively) than for men (11% and 14% respectively).

Regarding being exposed to sexual harassment in digital forums, “somebody sending or showing you sexually explicit pictures, photos, or gifts that made you feel offended” and “inappropriate advances that offended you on emails, SMS or social media” the share of individuals who answered “Yes” to these questions is 2% and 5%, respectively, with a higher share of women than men who answered “Yes”.

In making any comparisons with the results reported in Latcheva (2017), it is important to note that the Latcheva study is a structured interview survey, while what is reported in this report is based on an online survey. In the Latcheva study, the questions focus on the past twelve months or since an individual turned 15 years old. The current survey does not aim for a specific time interval, but was instead limited by the wording “In your work/study”. Latcheva examines only women and the answer options are three, while the current survey had four answer options.

Diagrams 3a-3e present results from five of the Latcheva questions based on percentage estimates (95% confidence interval approx. +/- 0.2% - +/- 1.7%). The diagrams are chosen with the ambition to provide a broad picture of the different forms of being exposed to sexual harassment. Some trends can be observed. PhD students report the highest level of being exposed to sexual harassment when it comes to “intrusive questions about your private life that made you feel uncomfortable?”, especially the group women PhD students (diagram 3a). For other behavioural patterns, women and young people report higher level of being exposed to sexual harassment than others (Figure 3b-3e). Teaching/research staff and technical/administrative staff do not display any difference in percentage estimates (data not shown).

In your work/studies, how often have you experienced intrusive questions about your private life that made you feel offended?

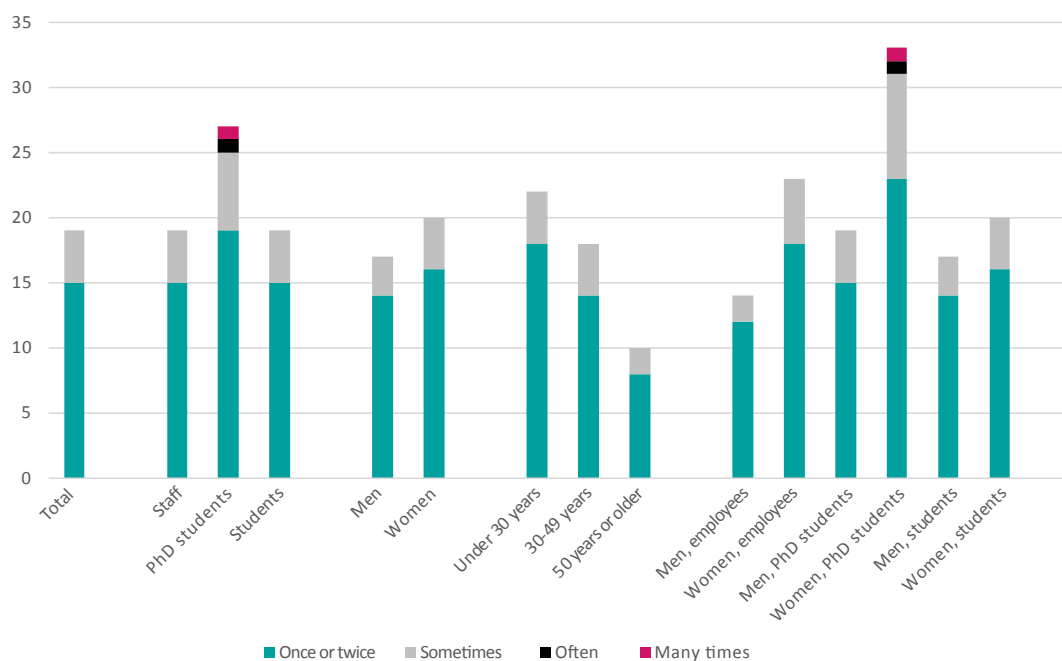


Diagram 3a. Yes answer to the question “how often have you experienced intrusive questions about your private life that made you feel uncomfortable?” broken down by legal gender, age and group (students, PhD students, employees). The Y-axis corresponds to percentage estimates (%).

In your work/studies, how often have you experienced sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made you feel offended?

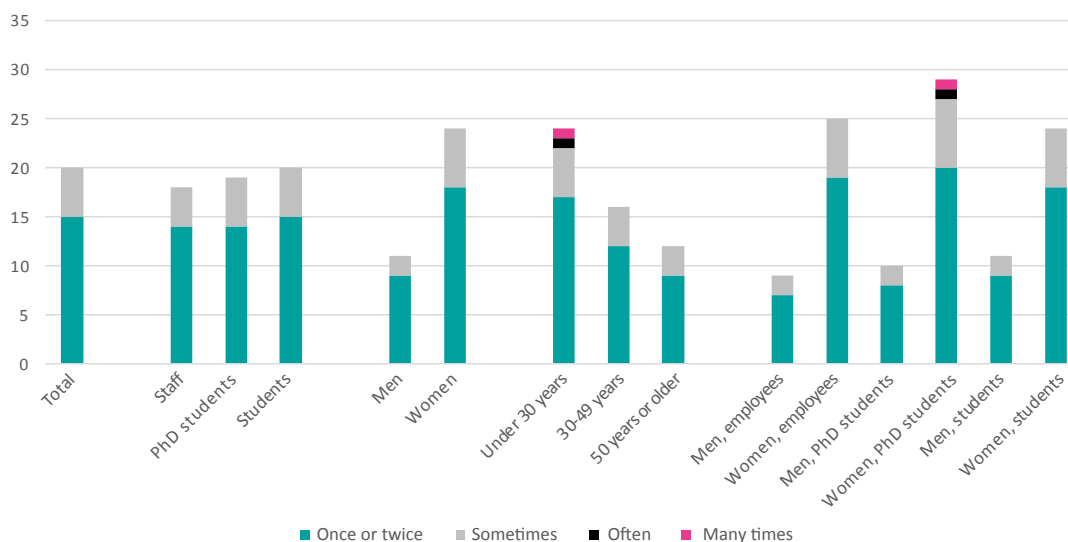


Diagram 3b. Yes answer to the question “in your work/studies, how often have you experienced inappropriately staring or leering that made you feel intimidated?”, broken down by legal gender, age and group (students, PhD students, employees). The Y-axis corresponds to percentage estimates (%).

In your work/studies, how often have you experienced intrusive questions about your private life that made you feel uncomfortable?

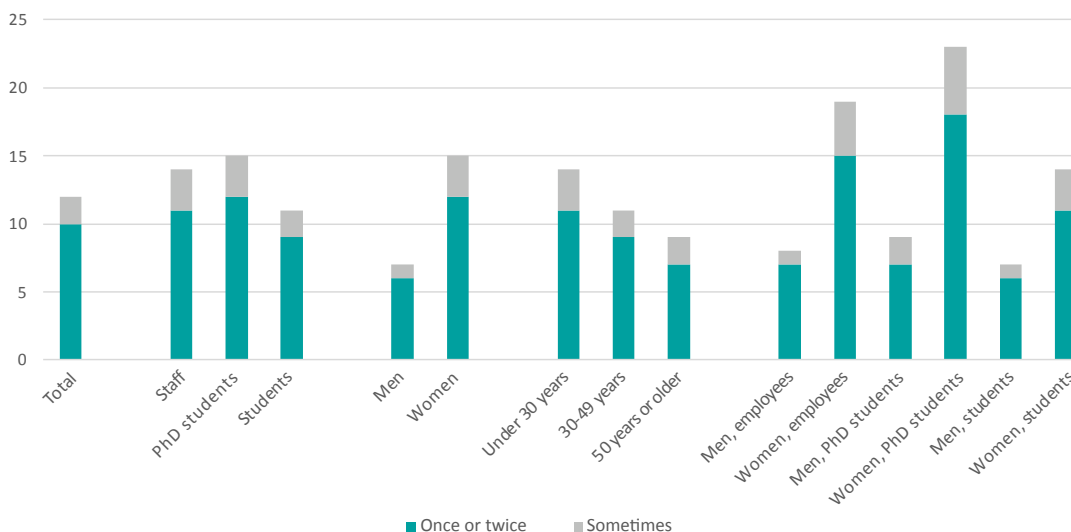


Diagram 3c. Yes answer to the question “...sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made you feel offended?”, broken down by legal gender, age and group (students, PhD students, employees). The Y-axis corresponds to percentage estimates (%).

In your work/studies, how often have you experienced inappropriate advances that offended you on emails, SMS or social media?

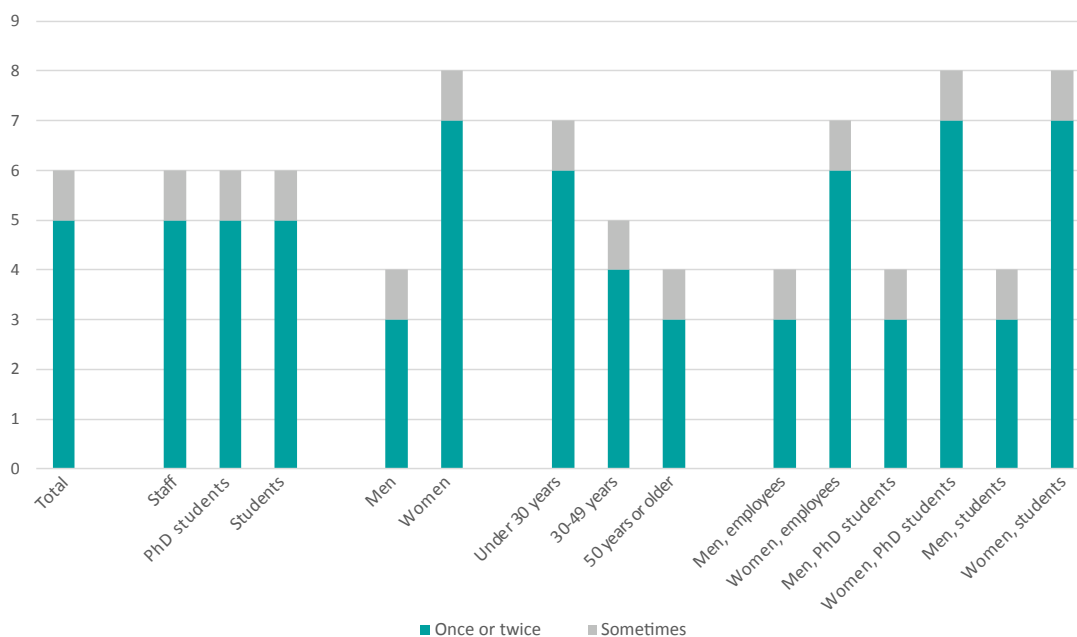


Diagram 3d. Yes answer to the question “...inappropriate advances that offended you on emails, SMS or social media?” broken down by legal gender, age and group (students, PhD students, employees). The Y-axis corresponds to percentage estimates (%).

In your work/studies, how often have you experienced unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing?

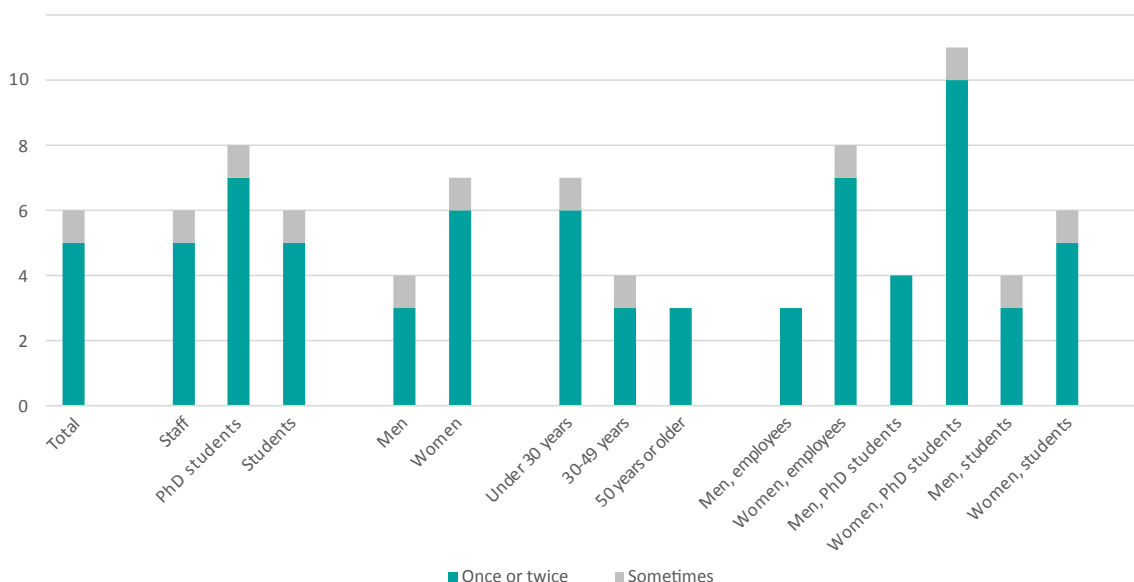


Diagram 3e. Yes answer to the question “...unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing?” broken down by legal gender, age and group (students, PhD students, employees). The Y-axis corresponds to percentage estimates (%).

It can be noted that the percentage estimate for the question “In your work/studies, how often have you experienced intrusive questions about your private life that made you feel uncomfortable?” is particularly high for the group of women PhD students.

Latcheva (2017) also reports the fraction of those who chose some of the Yes options to one or more of the eleven questions. In the current survey, this measure of behaviour can be derived from the primary data by identifying all individuals who answered one or more of the questions above with Once/twice, Sometimes, Often, and/or Many times.

Chart 3f shows the percentage of respondents who answered one or more of the eleven sub-questions above with Once/twice, Sometimes, Often, and/or Many times. The results are reported for the total sample and broken down by legal gender, group and age (95% confidence interval approx. +/- 0.2% - +/- 1.8%). Teaching/research staff and technical/administrative staff do not exhibit any differences as regards this measure (data not shown).

Overall metrics, undesired sexual attention (Latcheva 2017)

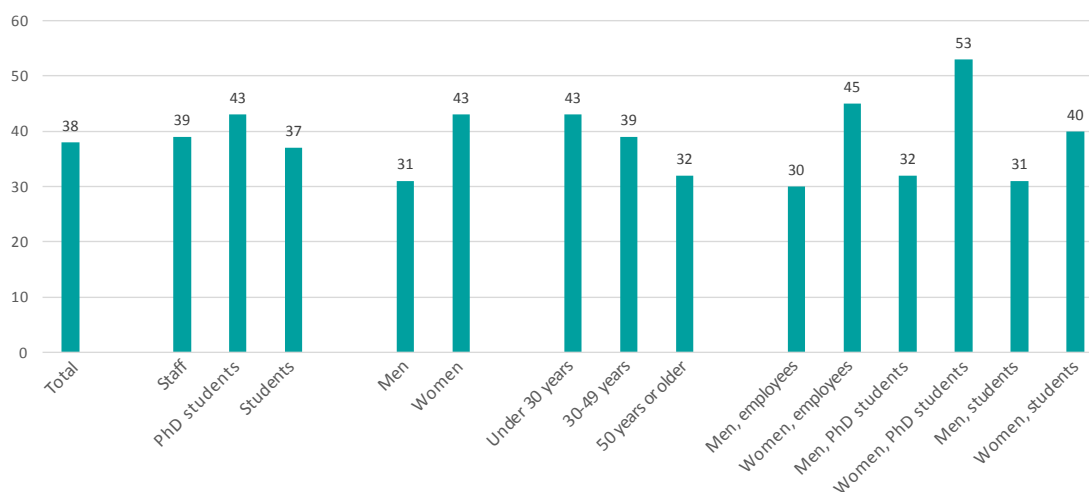


Diagram 3f. Being exposed to undesired sexual attention, the share who selected any of the Yes options to one or more of the 11 questions (Latcheva 2017), broken down by legal gender, age and group (employees, PhD students, students). The Y-axis corresponds to % of the studied population (N= 38,918).

The diagram shows that the share of people exposed to one or more behavioural patterns that can be interpreted as undesired sexual attention is slightly lower overall than the results in the corresponding study of the EU labour market, and significantly lower than the corresponding results for the Swedish labour market (FROM 2014; Latcheva 2017).

Bullying and incivility

Below are the results of the survey questions on bullying and cyberbullying. The results are discussed focusing on differences between women and men (legal gender).

Diagrams 4a and 4b show being exposed to bullying over the past 12 months (COPSOQ), based on percentage estimates (95% confidence interval approx. +/- 0.4% - +/- 1.4%). Several trends can be observed. Being exposed to bullying is more common among women than among men for the employees and PhD students group, but not for the students group. Younger people as well as students report a lower degree of being exposed to bullying. The percentage estimate is higher for teaching staff/researchers than for technical/administrative staff, 12% and 10% respectively (data not shown).

Have you been exposed to bullying at your place of work/study within the past 12 months?

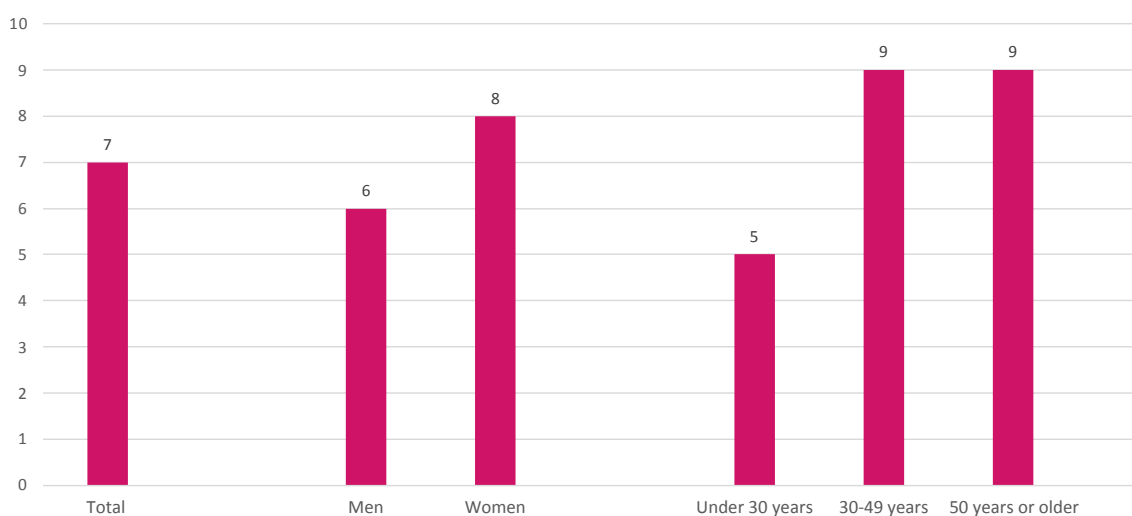


Diagram 4a. Being exposed to bullying broken down by legal gender and age, respectively. The Y-axis corresponds to percentage estimates for the answer option Yes (%).

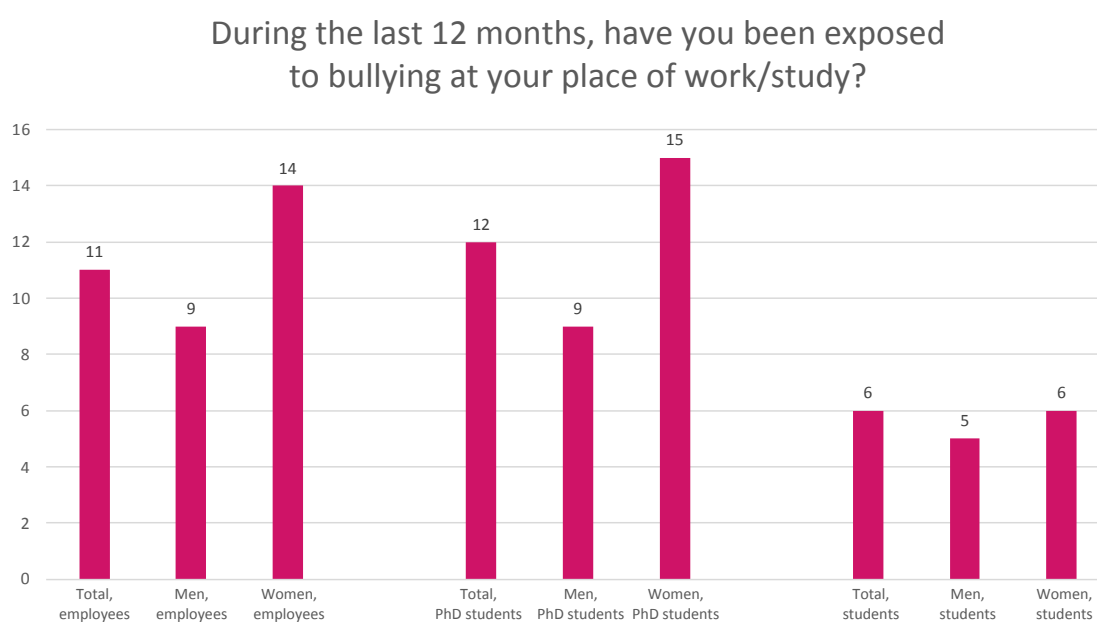


Diagram 4b. Being exposed to bullying, broken down by legal gender and group (students, PhD students, employees). The Y-axis corresponds to percentage estimates for the answer option Yes (%).

It can be noted that the percentage estimate for being exposed to undesired sexual vulnerability is highest among students and younger people, while the percentage estimate for being exposed to bullying is lowest in these groups.

Diagrams 5a and 5b show, in parallel with data from diagram 4, the question “During the last 12 months, has it come to your attention that someone else has been exposed to bullying at your place of work/study?” based on percentage estimates (95% confidence interval approx. +/- 0.5% +/- 1.7 %).

Women report to a greater extent than men knowledge of someone else who has been exposed to bullying at their place of work/study, which is particularly evident in the employees and PhD students groups. Those who have become aware that someone else has been exposed to bullying at their place of work/study in the past twelve months is higher than those who have been exposed to it personally. As regards the share who have become aware that someone else has been exposed to bullying at their place of work/study in the past twelve months, the percentage estimate is the same for teaching staff/researchers and technical/administrative staff, 25% and 24% respectively (data not shown).

During the last 12 months, have you been exposed to bullying at your place of work/study? Respectively, during the last 12 months, has it come to your attention that someone else has been exposed to bullying at your place of work/study?

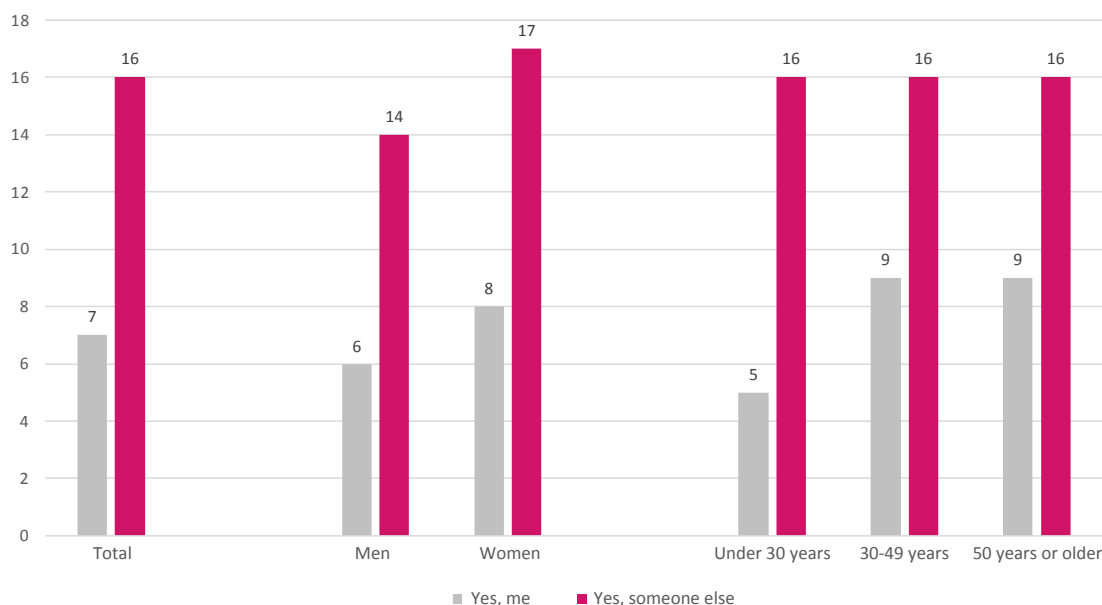


Diagram 5a. Being exposed to bullying (grey bar) and awareness that someone else has been exposed to bullying (pink bar) at your place of work/study in the past twelve months broken down by legal gender and age. The Y-axis corresponds to percentage estimates (%).

During the last 12 months, have you been exposed to bullying at your place of work/study? Respectively, during the last 12 months, has it come to your attention that someone else has been exposed to bullying at your place of work/study?

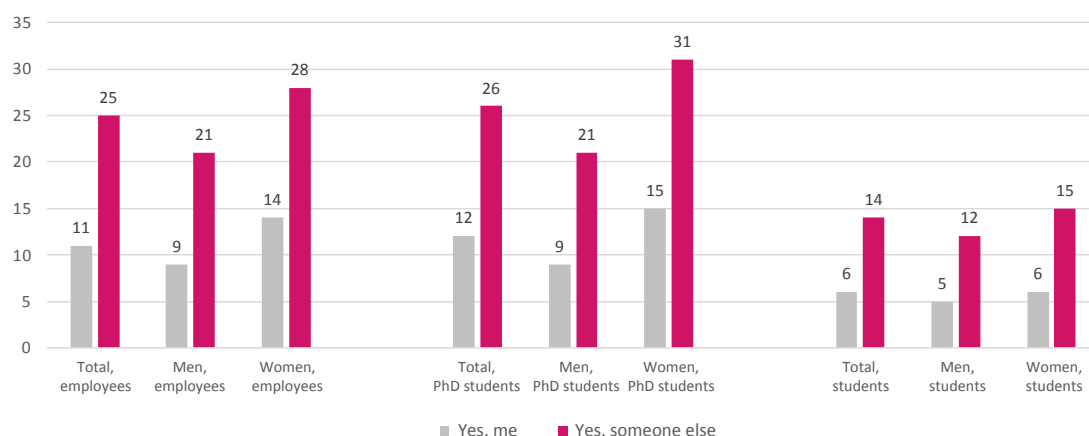


Diagram 5b. Being exposed to bullying (grey bar) and awareness that someone else has been exposed to bullying (pink bar) at your place of work/study in the past twelve months broken down by legal gender and group (students, PhD students and employees). The Y-axis corresponds to percentage estimates (%).

Table 3a shows the percentage estimates for those who answered Yes to one or more of the twelve questions from the Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS). Table 3b shows the corresponding breakdown between women and men (legal gender).

Table 3a, Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS), presented for the group in total.

During the LAST 12 MONTHS, were you ever in a situation in which any of your supervisors or co-workers / your teachers or fellow students...	Once or twice (%)	Some-times (%)	Often (%)	Many times (%)
...paid little attention to your statements or showed little interest in your opinions?	30	15	3	2
...doubted your judgement on a matter over which you had responsibility?	23	10	2	1
...gave you hostile looks, stares or sneers?	11	4	1	1
...addressed you in unprofessional terms, either publicly or privately?	16	5	1	1
...interrupted or "spoke over" you?	30	16	4	2
...rated you lower than you deserve on an evaluation?	19	6	2	1
...yelled, shouted or swore at you?	3	1	-	-
...made insulting or disrespectful remarks about you?	9	2	-	-
...ignored you or failed to speak to you?	16	5	1	1
...targeted you with anger outbursts or "temper tantrums"?	4	1	-	-
...accused you of incompetence?	19	5	1	1
...made jokes at your expense?	16	6	1	1

Table 3b, Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS), by legal gender (men/M and women/W).

During the LAST 12 MONTHS, were you ever in a situation in which any of your supervisors or co-workers / your teachers or fellow students.....	Once or twice (%)		Sometimes (%)		Often (%)		Many times (%)	
	M	K	M	K	M	K	M	K
...paid little attention to your statements or showed little interest in your opinions?	28	32	14	16	2	3	2	2
...doubted your judgement on a matter over which you had responsibility?	22	24	9	10	2	2	1	1
...gave you hostile looks, stares or sneers?	10	12	3	4	1	1	1	1
...addressed you in unprofessional terms, either publicly or privately?	14	18	4	5	1	1	1	1
...interrupted or "spoke over" you?	28	31	14	17	3	5	1	2
...rated you lower than you deserve on an evaluation?	19	20	5	6	2	2	1	1
...yelled, shouted or swore at you?	4	3	1	-	-	-	-	-
...made insulting or disrespectful remarks about you?	8	10	2	2	-	-	-	-
...ignored you or failed to speak to you?	15	17	5	5	1	1	1	1
...targeted you with anger outbursts or "temper tantrums"?	4	4	1	1	-	-	-	-
...accused you of incompetence?	17	21	5	6	1	1	1	1
...made jokes at your expense?	18	15	7	5	2	1	1	1

The tables show that the highest prevalence is reported for the questions "has interrupted or spoke over you" (55% of women and 46% of men, respectively; all options summarised) and "has paid little attention to your statements or showed little interest in your opinions" (53% of women and 46% of men, respectively; all options summarised). Women report a higher degree of being exposed to bullying than men on nine of the twelve situations, but the differences are small. On two questions, men report a higher prevalence, the questions "has yelled, shouted or sworn at you" (5% of men and 3% of women, respectively; all options summarised) and "has made jokes at your expense" (28% of men and 22% of women, respectively; all options summarised), but here too the differences are small. To the question "has targeted you with anger outbursts or temper tantrums", women and men report an equally high prevalence (5%; all answer options summarised). It should also be noted that most respondents have marked the options "Once or twice" and "Sometimes", while fewer have marked the options "Often" and "Many times".

Harassment on social media, via email or SMS

Diagrams 6a and 6b show being exposed to harassment on social media, via emails or text messages, in the past 12 months based on percentage estimates (95% confidence interval approx. +/- 0.3% - +/- 0.8%). The questions are taken from the COPSQ scale. A trend that can be observed is that women report a higher degree of being exposed to harassment than men. It is also noted that there are no differences between the different age groups. Regarding being exposed to harassment on social media, via emails or text messages in the past twelve months, the percentage estimate is higher for teaching staff/researchers than for technical/administrative staff, 7% and 3% respectively (data not shown).

Have you been exposed to work-related harassment on social media (e.g. Facebook) by email or text messages during the last 12 months?

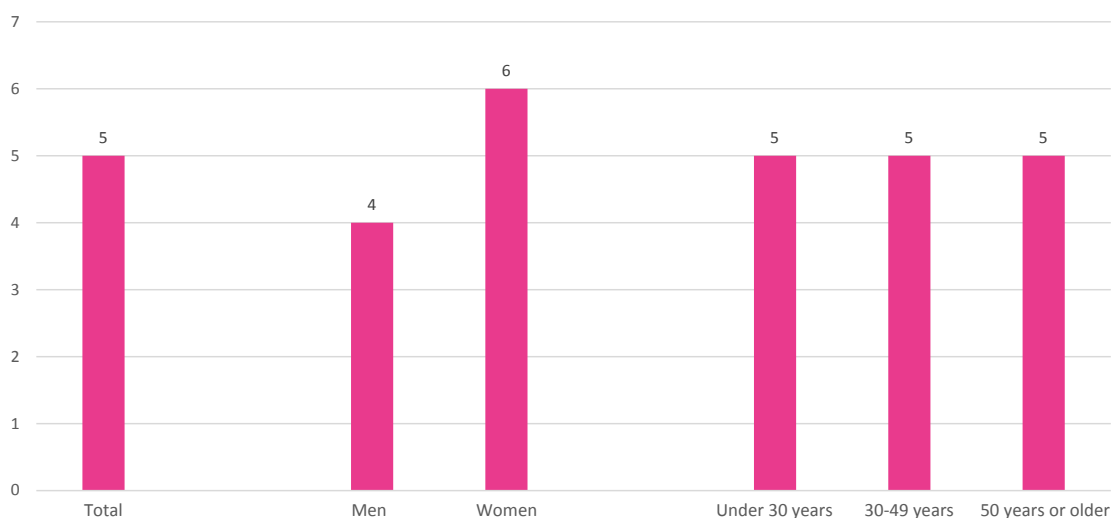


Diagram 6a. Being exposed to harassment on social media, via emails or text messages, broken down by legal gender and age. The Y-axis corresponds to percentage estimates for the answer option Yes (%).

Have you been exposed to work-related harassment on social media (e.g. Facebook) by email or text messages during the last 12 months?

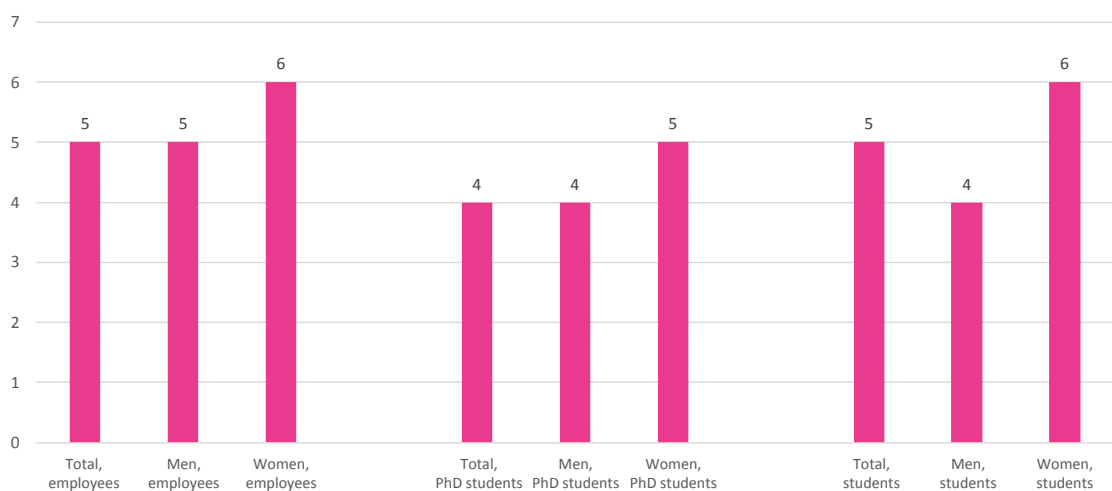


Diagram 6b. Being exposed to harassment on social media, via emails or text messages, broken down by legal gender and group (students, PhD students, employees). The Y-axis corresponds to percentage estimates for the answer option Yes (%).

It can be noted that percentage estimates for being exposed to harassment on social media, via emails or text messages, show little variation between the different groups of students, PhD students and employees. There is no variation between the different age groups unlike undesired sexual attention that is most common in the younger age group and bullying that is most common in the older age group.

Covid-19 and vulnerability

The following diagram on undesired sexual attention is based on the question “During the last twelve months, have you been exposed to undesired sexual attention at your place of work/study?” (COPSOQ). The following results are based on primary data, as these data are not available as percentage estimates from Statistics Sweden.

Diagrams 7a-7b show how being exposed to undesired sexual attention has been affected by COVID-19 (95% confidence interval approx. +/- 0.05% - +/- 0.2%). It should be noted that less than 10% of the respondents report an impact, i.e. for the large share of respondents, COVID-19 has not affected being exposed to undesired sexual attention. The results show that where being exposed to undesired sexual attention has been affected, it has decreased. A clear trend is that women report a decrease to a greater extent than men.

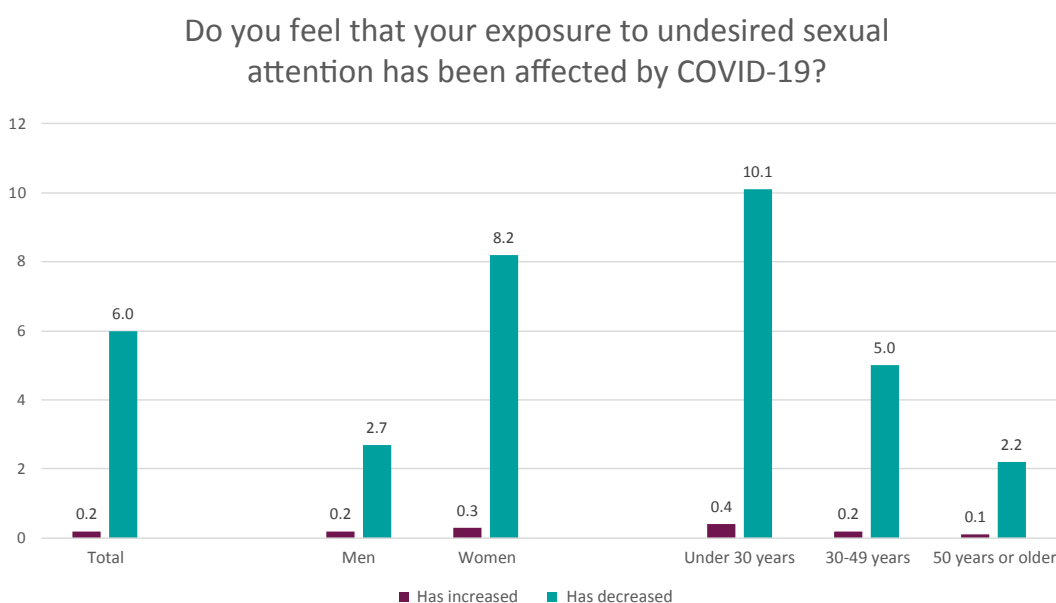


Diagram 7a. Increased (burgundy bar) and decreased (turquoise bar) undesired sexual attention due to COVID-19 broken down by legal gender and age. The Y-axis corresponds to % of the studied population (N= 38,918).

Do you feel that your exposure to undesired sexual attention has been affected by COVID-19?

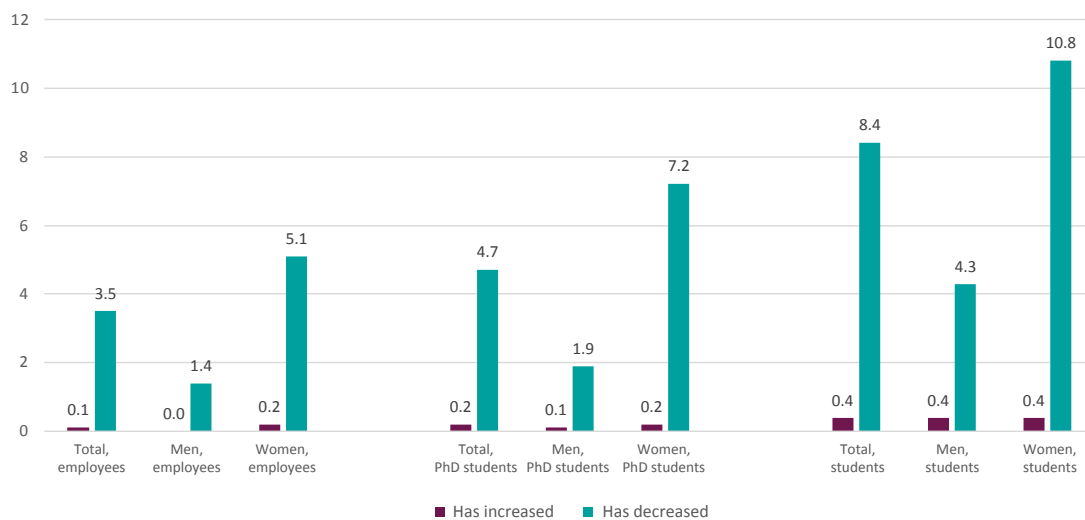


Diagram 7b. Increased (burgundy bar) and decreased (turquoise bar) undesired sexual attention due to COVID-19 divided by legal gender and group (students, PhD students and employees). The Y-axis corresponds to % of the studied population (N= 38,918).

Below, the primary data from the pilot study conducted in 2020 (N=3,172), i.e. early phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, are compared with the primary data from the main study (N= 38,917) conducted later during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021 (95% confidence interval, +/- 0.8% - +/- 1% for early phase and +/- 0.2% - +/- 0.3% for later phase).

During the last 12 months, have you been exposed to undesired sexual attention at your place of work/study?

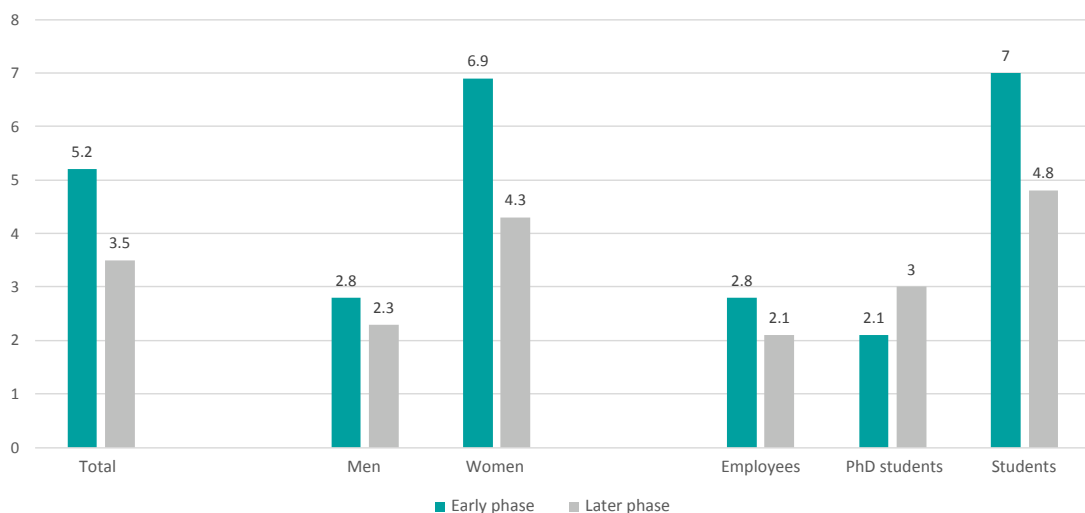


Diagram 7c. Undesired sexual attention during the early and later phases of the COVID-19 pandemic, broken down by legal gender and group (employees, PhD students and students).

Figure 7d shows how being exposed to bullying was affected by COVID-19 (95% confidence interval approx. +/- 0.1% - +/- 0.3%). Regarding bullying, some report that it has increased, however, the share who reported that the level of being exposed to bullying has decreased is greater.

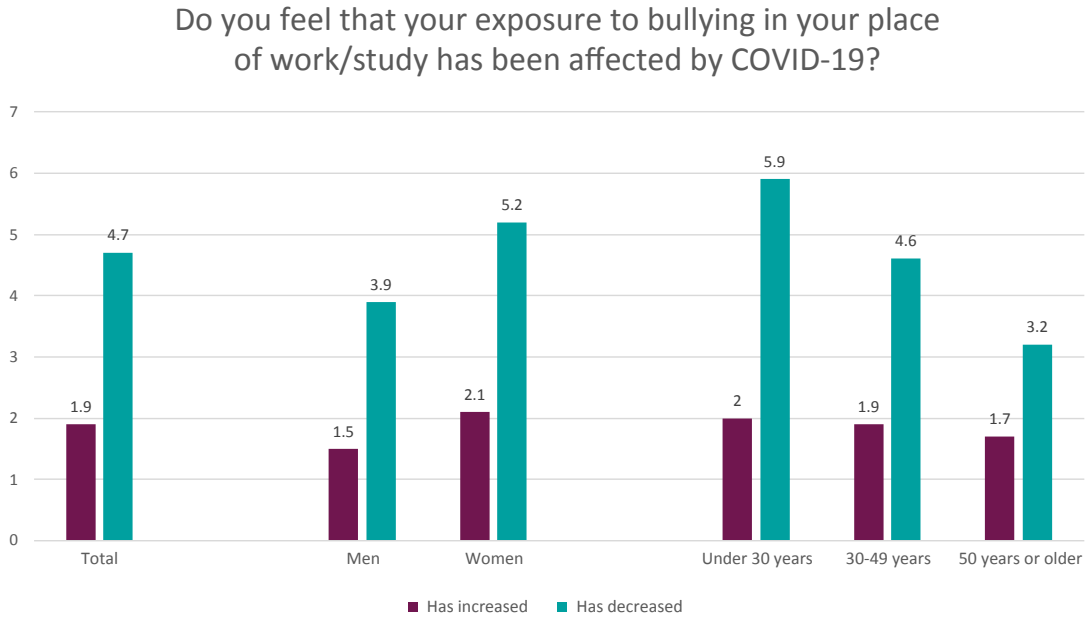


Diagram 7d. Increased (burgundy bar) and decreased (turquoise bar) bullying due to COVID-19 broken down by legal gender and age. The Y-axis corresponds to % of the studied population (N= 38,918).

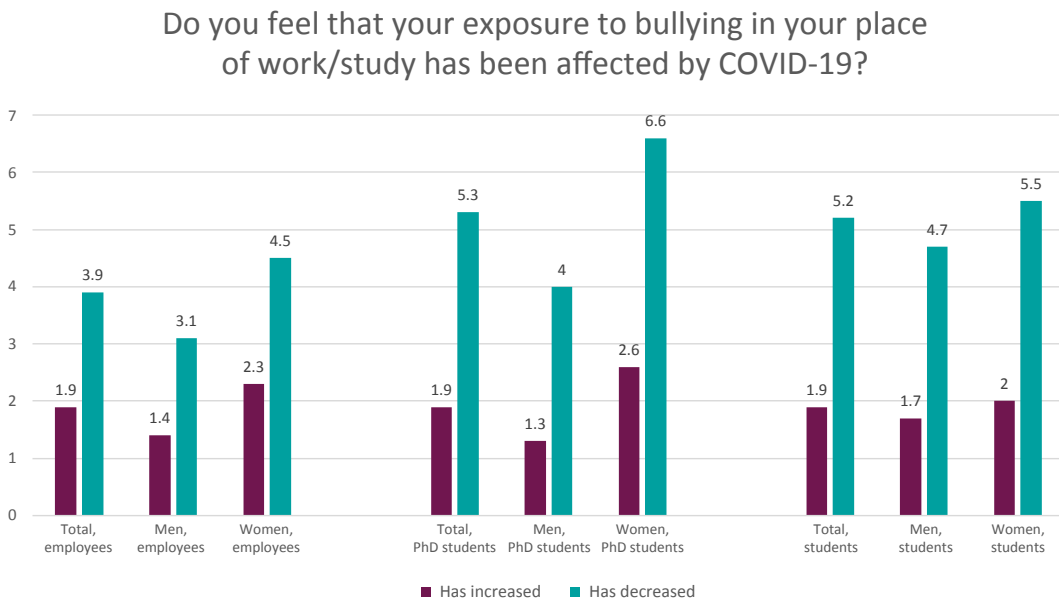


Diagram 7e. Increased (burgundy bar) and decreased (turquoise bar) bullying due to COVID-19 broken down by legal gender and group (students, PhD students and employees) The Y-axis corresponds to % of the studied population (N= 38,918).

It should be noted that undesired sexual attention has decreased to a greater extent than bullying during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Part 2. In-depth analyses

Undesired sexual attention: Relationships between the one exposed to undesired sexual attention and the one who subjects others

Diagram 8 shows the gender of the person reported to have exposed others to undesired sexual attention, broken down by students, PhD students and employees. The diagram only includes responses from those who have reported that they have been exposed to undesired sexual attention. The diagram shows that men are over-represented among those who subject students, PhD students and employees to undesired sexual attention.

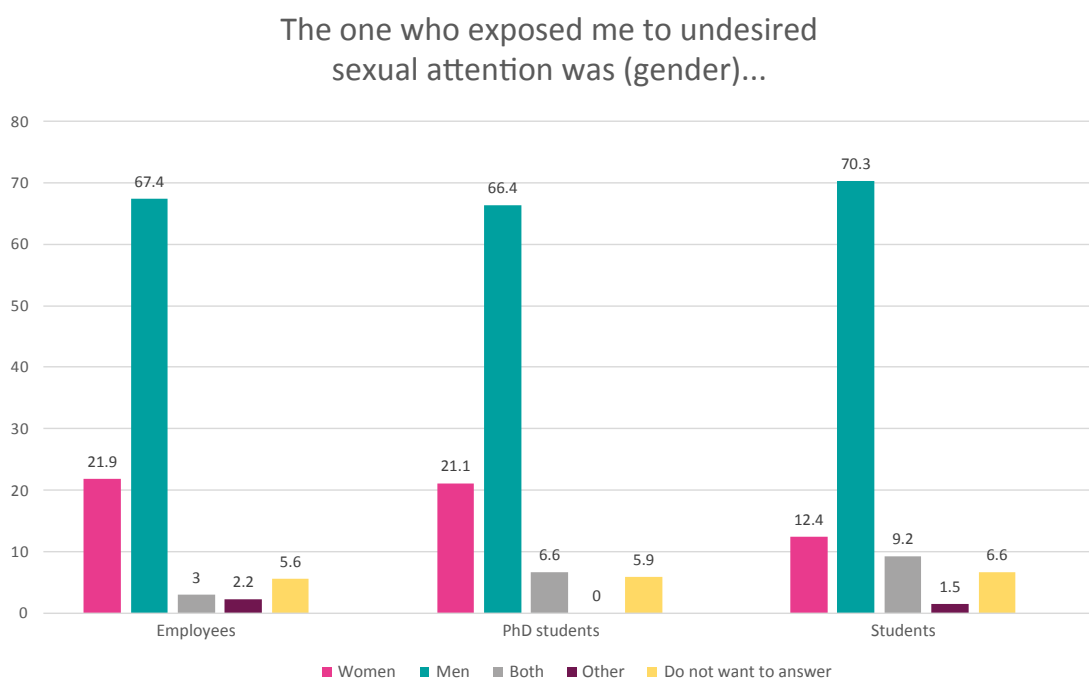


Diagram 8. The person who exposed me to undesired sexual attention was... broken down by gender (Men/Women/Both/Other) for each group (students, PhD students and employees).

The Y-axis indicates %. Note that respondents were given the opportunity to fill in several options.

Diagrams 9a-9c show employees and PhD students separated from students, because the response options for the different groups differed. Diagrams 9a-9b show the relationships between employees and PhD students who report being exposed to undesired sexual attention and the one who subjects them to it, broken down by group (employees and PhD students) (9a) and legal gender (9b).

Diagram 9c shows the relationships between students who report being exposed to undesired sexual attention and the one who subjects them to it. The diagram is only based on responses from those who have reported that they have been exposed to undesired sexual attention.

The diagram shows that among PhD students, it is primarily employees/colleagues within the organisation who are reported to have exposed others to undesired sexual attention followed by employees/colleagues outside the organisation and other PhD students (Diagram 9a). In the employees group, it is reported that mainly employees/colleagues within the organisation have exposed others to undesired sexual attention, followed by students and employees/colleagues outside the organisation (Diagram 9a). In the employees/PhD students group broken down by gender, it is primarily employees/colleagues within the organisation followed by employees/colleagues outside the organisation and students who have exposed women to undesired sexual attention (Diagram 9b). For men, it is mainly employees/colleagues within the organisation followed by students and superiors/managers who have exposed them to undesired sexual attention (Diagram 9b). In the women students group, it is reported that it was students who most frequently exposed them to undesired sexual attention (Diagram 9c), followed by teachers/supervisors. In the students group, it is reported that it was students who most frequently exposed them to undesired sexual attention followed by Other (Diagram 9c).

The one who exposed me to undesired sexual attention was...
Breakdown by group (PhD students and employees)

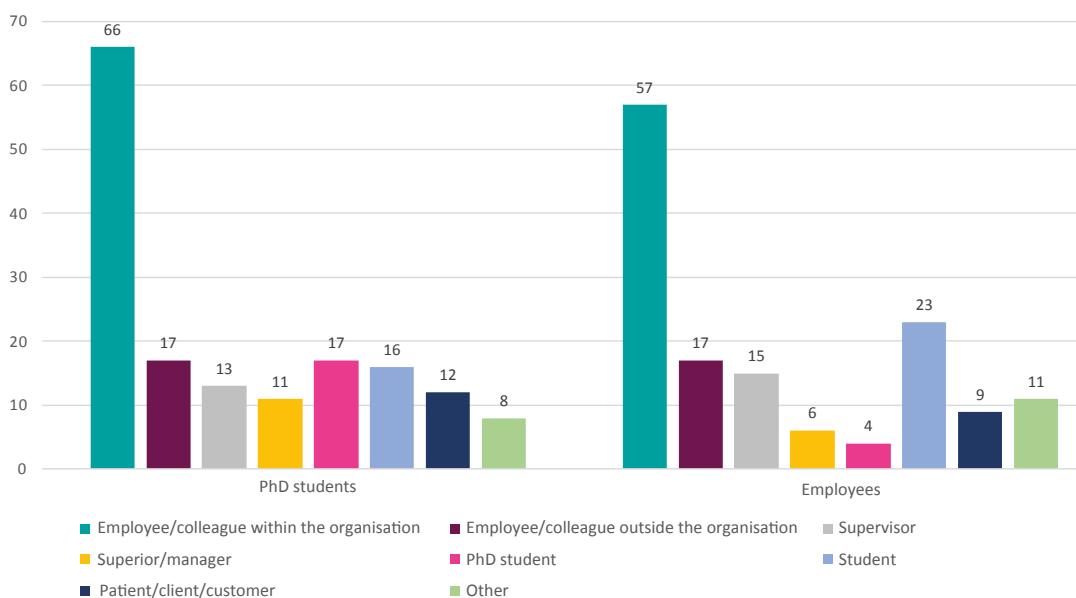


Diagram 9a. The person who exposed me to undesired sexual attention was...broken down by group (PhD students and employees). The Y-axis indicates %. Note that respondents were given the opportunity to fill in several options.

The person who exposed me to undesired sexual attention was... Breakdown by gender (employees and PhD students)

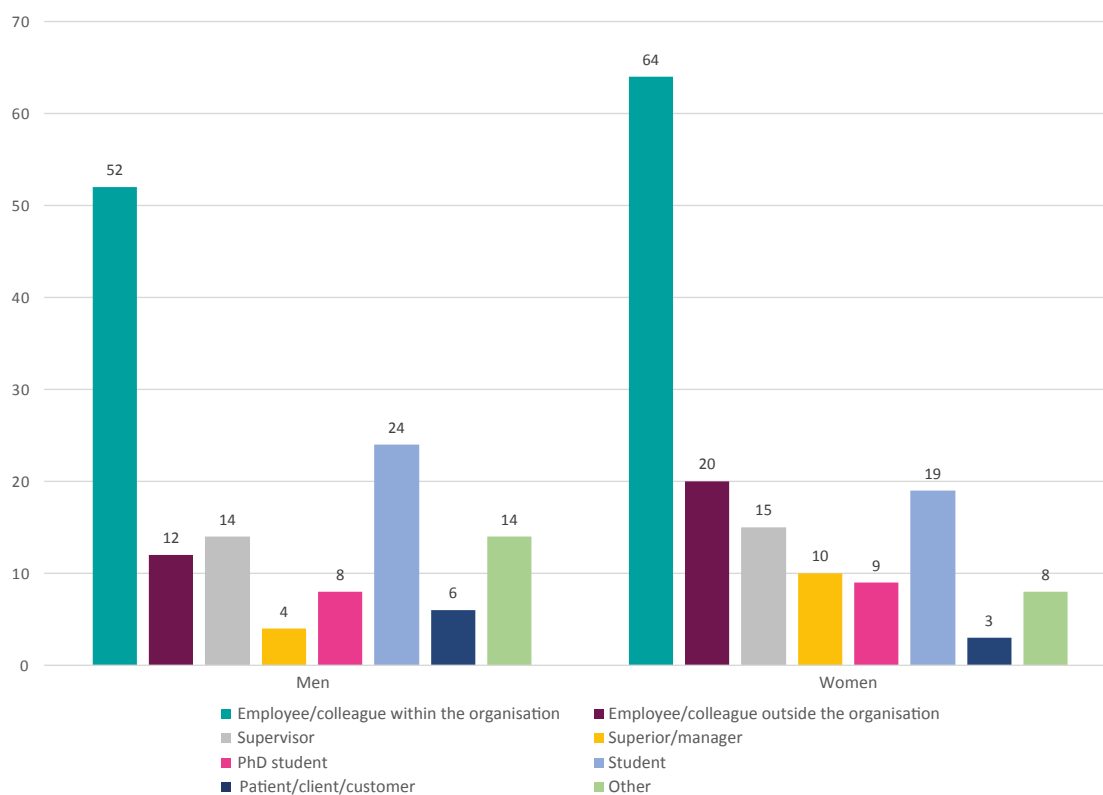


Diagram 9b. The person who exposed me to undesired sexual attention was...broken down by legal gender (only PhD students and employees). The Y-axis indicates %. Note that respondents were given the opportunity to fill in several options.

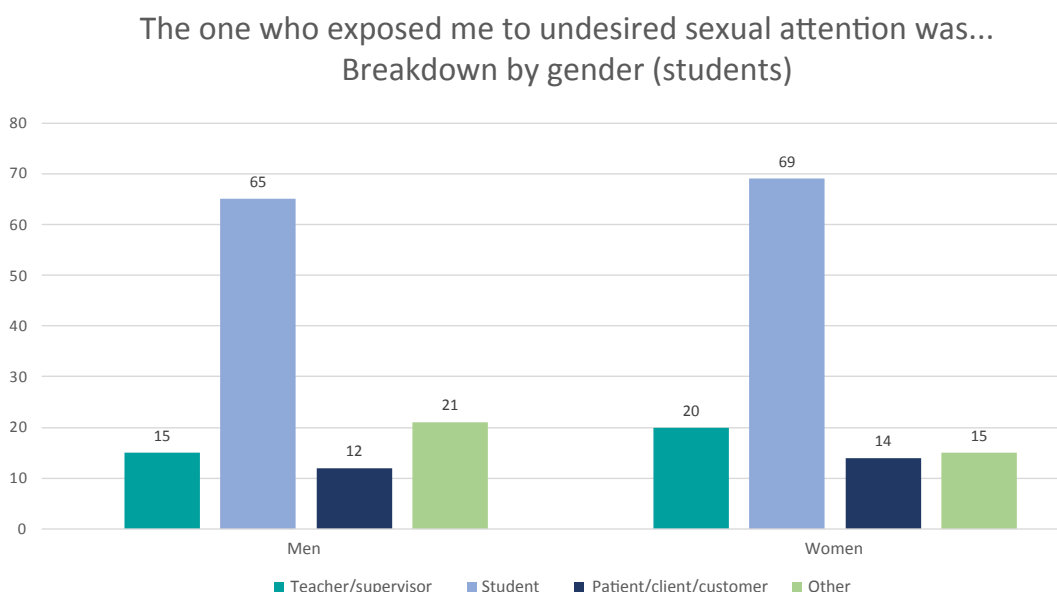
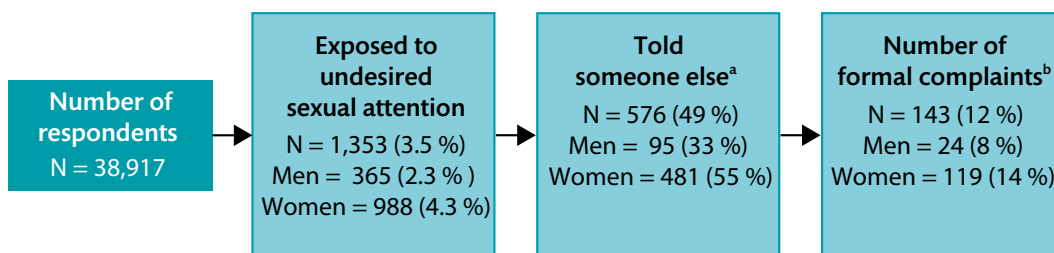


Diagram 9c. The person who exposed me to undesired sexual attention was...broken down by legal gender (only students). The Y-axis indicates %. Note that respondents were given the opportunity to fill in several options.

Formal reporting of undesired sexual attention

Figure 1 shows the total number of respondents, the number who reported that they have personally been exposed to undesired sexual attention (COPSOQ), the number who told someone else and the number who stated that they made a formal complaint of the incident. Note that the figure is based on primary data.



a% indicates the share of respondents in each group who answered the question, N=1,169 of whom Men = 290; Women= 879
b% indicates the share of respondents in each group who answered the question N=1,166 of whom Men = 289; Women = 877

Figure 1. Relationship between total number of respondents, number of persons exposed to undesired sexual attention, told someone and formal complaint.

The figure shows that of the total number of respondents who have reported that they have been exposed to undesired sexual attention (N=1,353), only 12% (N=143) have stated that they have filed a formal complaint. The share of women who have filed a formal complaint was higher than that of men (14% and 8% respectively).

Diagram 10 shows the reasons given for not filing a formal complaint, broken down by legal gender. Note that the diagram is based on the respondents who have answered that they have been exposed to undesired sexual attention within the past twelve months (COPSOQ), and that no formal complaint has been filed (N=1,023). Note that respondents were given the opportunity to fill in several options, which is why the percentage can exceed 100.

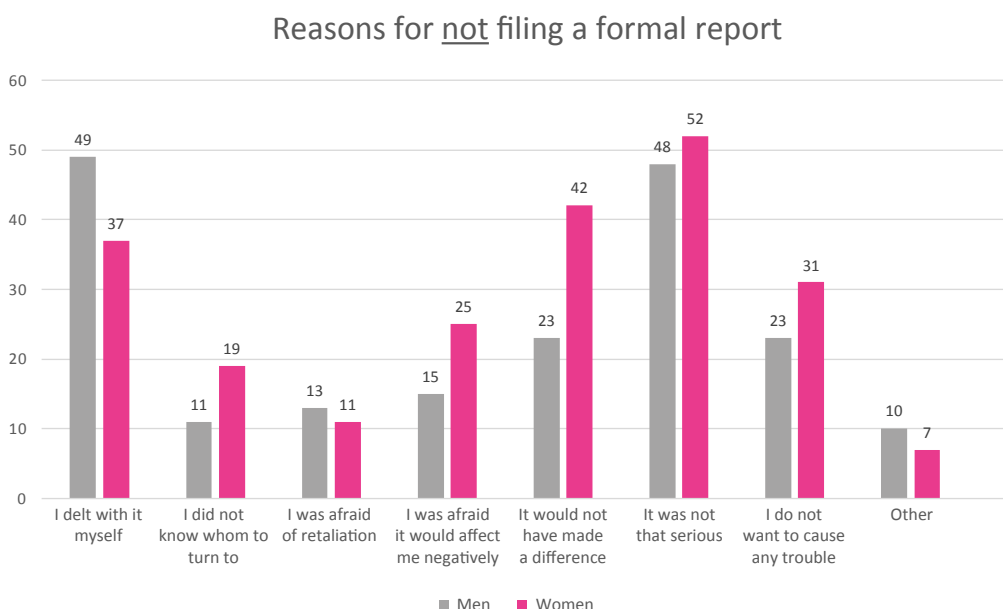


Diagram 10. Reasons given for not filing a formal complaint, broken down by legal gender. The Y-axis corresponds to %. Note that respondents were given the opportunity to fill in several options.

The diagram shows that the most common reason for not filing a formal report was “It wasn’t that serious” for women and “I dealt with it myself” for men. The second most common reason for not filing a formal report was “It wouldn’t have made any difference” for women and “It wasn’t that serious” for men. The diagram also shows that the main differences between women and men were that women reported the options “It wouldn’t have made any difference” and “I was afraid that it would affect me negatively” more frequently than men, while men reported the option “I dealt with it myself” to a greater extent.

Consequences of being exposed to undesired sexual attention

Below are differences between the group of respondents who have reported that they have been exposed to undesired sexual attention (COPSOQ) and the respondents who have not reported that they have been exposed to undesired sexual attention in the same question. The results are presented focusing on organisational consequences (reported support from colleagues and managers, as well as a degree of recognition in their place of work/study), as well as focusing on individual consequences (general health, stress, burnout and considering resigning from their current work/studies). The results are reported for the total group and broken down by legal gender. The data are reported as mean value, standard deviation and significance level. The confidence interval is set to 95%.

Tables 4 and 5 show differences between exposed and non-exposed respondents, in terms of i) support from colleagues (the questions “how often do you get help and support from your colleagues/fellow students, if needed?”, “how often are your colleagues/fellow students willing to listen to your problems at work/place of study, if needed?”; ii) support from the superior (the questions “how often do you get help and support from your immediate superior/teacher/supervisor, if needed?”; “how often is your immediate superior willing to listen to your problems related to your work/studies, if needed?” and iii) degree of recognition (the questions “are you treated fairly at your place of work/study?”, “is your work recognized and appreciated by the management/teachers/supervisors?”). All these questions are from COPSOQ.

Table 4. Relation to organisational factors, differences between respondents who report that they have been exposed to undesired sexual attention (marked in pink) and those who report that they have not been exposed to undesired sexual attention (marked in turquoise). The results are reported for the total cohort..

Total	Exposed			Not exposed			p-value
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	
Undesired sexual attention							
Support from colleagues*	1348	3.55	1.08	37 129	3.82	1.02	<.001
Support from superior**	1349	3.18	1.11	37 109	3.78	1.05	<.001
Recognition***	1353	3.46	0.91	37 257	3.93	0.78	<.001

*Higher values – higher degree of support from colleagues/fellow students

** Higher values – higher degree of support from superior/teacher/supervisor

*** Higher values – higher degree of perceived recognition

N = number

M = mean value (marked in pink = exposed, turquoise marked = not exposed)

SD = standard deviation

p-value = significance level based on t-test.

Table 5. T-test for organisational factors, differences between respondents reporting that they have been exposed to undesired sexual attention. The results are reported by legal gender.

Women		Exposed			Not exposed			p-value
Undesired sexual attention	N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
Support from colleagues*	987	3.61	1.05	21 973	3.85	1.01	<.001	
Support from superior**	987	3.17	1.07	21 961	3.73	1.05	<.001	
Recognition***	988	3.47	.85	22 031	3.89	.77	<.001	

Men		Exposed			Not exposed			p-value
Undesired sexual attention	N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
Support from colleagues*	361	3.39	1.15	15 156	3.77	1.03	<.001	
Support from superior**	362	3.21	1.22	15 148	3.85	1.05	<.001	
Recognition***	365	3.44	1.05	15 226	4.00	.78	<.001	

*Higher values – higher degree of support from colleagues/fellow students

** Higher values – higher degree of support from superior/teacher/supervisor

*** Higher values – higher degree of perceived recognition

N = number

M = mean value (marked in pink = exposed, turquoise marked = not exposed)

SD = standard deviation

p-value = significance level based on t-test.

Tables 6 and 7 show differences between respondents who have been exposed and who have not been exposed to undesired sexual attention with respect to (i) General health (the question “In general, would you say your health is...”), (ii) Stress (the questions “during the last 4 weeks, how often have you had problems relaxing?”, “how often have you been irritable?”, “how often have you been tense?”), and (iii) Burnout (the questions “How often have you felt worn out”, “How often have you been physically exhausted”, “How often have you been emotionally exhausted”). All these questions are from COPSOQ. Considering resigning (the question “Have you considered resigning from your current work/studies?”) is also being tested.

Table 6. T-test for individual factors, differences between respondents reporting that they have been exposed to undesired sexual attention. The results are reported for the total cohort.

Total	Exposed			Not exposed			p-value
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	
Undesired sexual attention							
General health*	1351	3.13	1.02	37 279	3.41	0.096	<.001
Stress**	1352	3.07	0.95	37 298	2.50	0.91	<.001
Burnout***	1352	3.14	1.06	37 295	2.48	0.99	<.001
Considering resigning from****	1342	2.43	1.31	37 182	2.04	1.11	<.001

*Higher value - better general health

** Higher value - higher stress level

*** Higher value - higher degree of burnout

**** Higher value - considering resigning from more

N = number

M = mean value (marked in pink = exposed, turquoise marked = not exposed)

SD = standard deviation

p-value = significance level based on t-test.

Table 7. T-test for individual factors, differences between respondents reporting that they have been exposed to undesired sexual attention. The results are reported by legal gender.

Women			Exposed			Not exposed			p-value
Undesired sexual attention	N	M	SD	N	M	SD			
General health*	987	3.08	1.00	22 041	3.35	0.94		<.001	
Stress**	988	3.14	0.93	22 058	2.59	0.93		<.001	
Burnout***	988	3.24	1.03	22 055	2.58	1.017		<.001	
Considering resigning from****	983	2.42	1.28	21 973	2.04	1.12		<.001	
Men			Exposed			Not exposed			p-value
Undesired sexual attention	N	M	SD	N	M	SD			
General health*	364	3.24	1.05	15 238	3.49	0.98		<.001	
Stress**	364	2.87	0.99	15 240	2.37	0.88		<.001	
Burnout***	364	2.88	1.08	15 240	2.34	0.94		<.001	
Considering resigning from****	359	2.46	1.37	15 209	2.03	1.10		<.001	

*Higher value - better general health

** Higher value - higher stress level

*** Higher value - higher degree of burnout

**** Higher value - considering resigning from more

N = number

M = mean value (marked in pink = exposed, turquoise marked = not exposed)

SD = standard deviation

p-value = significance level based on t-test.

The tables show that in comparison to respondents not exposed to undesired sexual attention, respondents (both women and men) who have been exposed to undesired sexual attention report a lower degree of perceived support from colleagues/fellow students and from superiors/teachers/supervisors. They also report a lower level of recognition. The differences are significant, $p < .001$. Furthermore, in comparison to respondents not exposed to undesired sexual attention, respondents (both women and men) who have been exposed to undesired sexual attention indicate worse general health, higher stress level and higher degree of burnout. They also report a higher degree of ambition to quit. The differences are significant, $p < .001$.



Discussion

The survey provides for the first time a sector wide picture of the extent and consequences of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment in the Swedish higher education sector. The results show some of the common challenges the Swedish higher education sector faces, and the results presented can contribute to future preventive work at the national level. The survey is a research study and is not to be regarded as an employee survey for an entire sector.

Methodological reflections

The overall response rate was 31.9% with highest values for employees (47.5%) and lowest for students (24.3%). The response rate for PhD students was 37.7%. This can be compared to the Tellus study where the response rate in the quantitative part was 34% for the survey aimed at employees and PhD students, and 32% for the survey aimed at students (Agardh et al. 2020). The inclusion criteria in our survey was broad and everyone receiving a salary was included as employee, while everyone registered on a course in 2020 was included as student. In possible future studies, the possibility of narrowing down the inclusion criteria should be considered. It is also possible that the COVID-19 pandemic made it less relevant to respond to the survey. In this context, a pilot study carried out at an earlier stage of the pandemic had a higher response rate, 41%.

The possibility of systematic non-responders must always be considered. The Swedish higher education sector is international and although the survey itself appeared in both Swedish and English, the invitation to the study was sent out only in Swedish. Persons who, for various reasons, are in a vulnerable situation could find it unpleasant to answer questions about sexual harassment and therefore choose not to participate in the survey. However, the opposite is also possible, in other words, that a

person who has not been exposed to sexual harassment thinks that their participation in the survey is not prioritized.

Data are presented in the report as percentage estimates and as results for the collected cohort of almost 39,000 individuals. The percentage estimates are estimates for the sector as a whole, although only a sample was surveyed and not all of them responded. The estimates have been calculated by Statistics Sweden and used in this report when available.

The study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic when a large part of teaching, research and administration was carried out remotely. However, the results show no major differences in the extent of being exposed to sexual harassment compared to, for example, the Tellus report (see Agardh 2020). A future study could potentially examine a possible difference after the pandemic.

The overall results in this report show varying degrees of the prevalence of sexual harassment, bullying, online abuse and incivility.

Sexual harassment – Discussion of results

The survey used two different scales to measure sexual harassment, by the question “within the past twelve months, have you been exposed to undesired sexual attention” (COPSOQ), and by listing eleven different behaviours that can be perceived as sexual harassment (FRA 2014; Latcheva 2017). Both of these methods (single question and listed behaviours) of measuring sexual harassment are in line with quantitative measurements in previous research (e.g. Littleton et al. 2018). However, different samples, definitions and measuring instruments and a wide variation in prevalence in previous studies make comparisons difficult (e.g. Rangathan et al. 2021; Thakur & Paul 2017).

The results show that 4% have been exposed to sexual harassment in the past twelve months (students, PhD students and employees). Young people, students and women report highest level of harassment. The prevalence of sexual harassment on the among employees in Sweden is estimated at 2.7 % (Berthelsen et al. 2020), which shows that the prevalence does not differ significantly from the group of employees in the higher education sector (2% according to the results of this study).

Analyses of combined measures of different forms of undesired sexual attention (Latcheva 2017) show that 38% of respondents have experienced at least one of these behaviours at least once in their work/studies. The group “women PhD students” reports highest level of being exposed to undesired sexual attention in this measure of behaviour. Examples of behaviours reported were privacy issues and experiencing uncomfortable or unpleasant glances. These figures are lower than the results in the corresponding study of the EU labour market, and also lower than the corresponding results for the Swedish labour market (FRA 2014; Latcheva 2017). However, comparisons between these studies are difficult because the scale was in the present survey used in a different way: as an online survey instead of a structured interview. Latcheva only examines women, sets a time limit to since the individual reaches the age of 15 or during the past twelve months, but in the present study there is no such time limit (the question was instead limited by the wording “In your work/studies”). The present study offered four response options, while Latcheva had three. Future studies should develop and validate the scale.

In-depth analyses show that men are overrepresented as those who subject others to sexual harassment. Men as a primary group exposing others to sexual harassment is a robust finding in previous research (McDonald 2012; Ranganathan, 2021; Sheldon, 2021). PhD students and employees (both women and men) report that it was mainly employees/colleagues within the organisation who have exposed them to sexual harassment. Students report that it was mainly other students who have exposed them to sexual harassment followed by Teachers/supervisors for women and students and Others for men.

Among those who have replied that they have been exposed to sexual harassment in the past twelve months, only 12% have filed a formal complaint. The most common reason given for not filing a complaint was “it wasn’t that serious” for women and “I dealt with it myself” for men. Women stated more often than men the option “it wouldn’t have made any difference” and “I was afraid that it would affect me negatively”, while men stated more often than women the alternative “I dealt with it myself”. This result can be compared with the quantitative part of the Tellus study (Aagardh et al. 2020) where the respondents who reported experiences of sexual harassment were asked if they had told anyone about the incident(s). In the survey aimed at employees and PhD students, the most common answer was that the incident had been shared with a colleague (16% of men and 27% of women), while only 5% of men and 3% of women contacted the HR department. In addition, younger women (32%) contacted a person in managerial position much more often than older women (8%). In the survey aimed at students, even fewer told someone in a position associated with responsibility at Lund University (2% of women and 1% of men). The most common response was that the incident had been shared with a person involved with student life (7% of women and 4% of men), although this also occurred to a low degree. However, it should be noted that the Tellus study is structured in a partially different way, as a qualitative part preceded the survey. Tellus also reports the results of the employees and PhD students group separately from the students group.

Results from the present study show that those who report that they have been exposed to sexual harassment (women and men) report a lower degree of perceived support from colleagues/fellow students and from superiors/teachers as well as a lower degree of recognition. Women and men who report that they have been exposed to sexual harassment also report worse general health, higher level of stress and higher degree of burnout. They also report to a greater extent considering resigning from their job/studies. This result is in line with previous international studies, which showed links between sexual harassment, poor health and well-being of the person being exposed to sexual harassment and (e.g. Ranganathan et al. 2021) and

less satisfaction with work (e.g. McDonald (2012). This is also a finding in previous Swedish studies (e.g. Muhonen 2016). The Tellus study also found that employees and PhD students as well as students (women and men) with experience of being exposed to sexual harassment assess their health (general and mental health, sleep and work capacity) to be consistently worse compared to those who have not been exposed to sexual harassment (Agardh et al. 2020). These results are relevant in relation to the global objectives (Agenda 2030) for the higher education sector, related to equality (SDG 5), quality in education (SDG 3) and sustainable working conditions (SDG 8).

Other forms of gender-based violence – discussion of results

Results from the present study show that 5% have been exposed to online abuse and 7% have been exposed to bullying in the past twelve months (students, PhD students and employees). Older people, employees and women report the highest vulnerability to bullying. Previous international research reports prevalence of bullying in higher education institutions to approximately 10% (3-4% for severe cases ; Heffernan & Bosetti 2021). The prevalence of bullying among employees in Sweden in general is about 10% (Berthelsen et al. 2020), which shows that the prevalence among employees in the higher education sector from this study (11%) is in line with other sectors. The students and young people groups had the highest degree of being exposed to sexual harassment, while bullying is lowest in these groups. It thus appears that different forms of gender-based violence affect the different groups differently.

Previous research reports that aggression in universities increasingly takes the form of various forms of incivility (Smith & Rae Coel 2018). Heffernan and Bosetti (2021) describe incivility as behaviors of “smart bullies” (p. 641), that is, incivility is a way of circumventing definitions and policies concern-

ing bullying in order to avoid reprimand. Incivility prevalence in higher education institutions is reported in previous research to be approx. 20% (Heffernan & Bosetti 2021). Using the incivility scale (WIS), the results in the present study show that the highest prevalence is reported for the questions “has interrupted or talked over you” (55% of women and 46% of men) and “has not paid attention to your statements or has been uninterested in your opinions” (53% of women and 46% of men, respectively). The high estimate of women and men reporting various forms of incivility shows a need to address incivility in the Swedish higher education sector.

Concluding comment

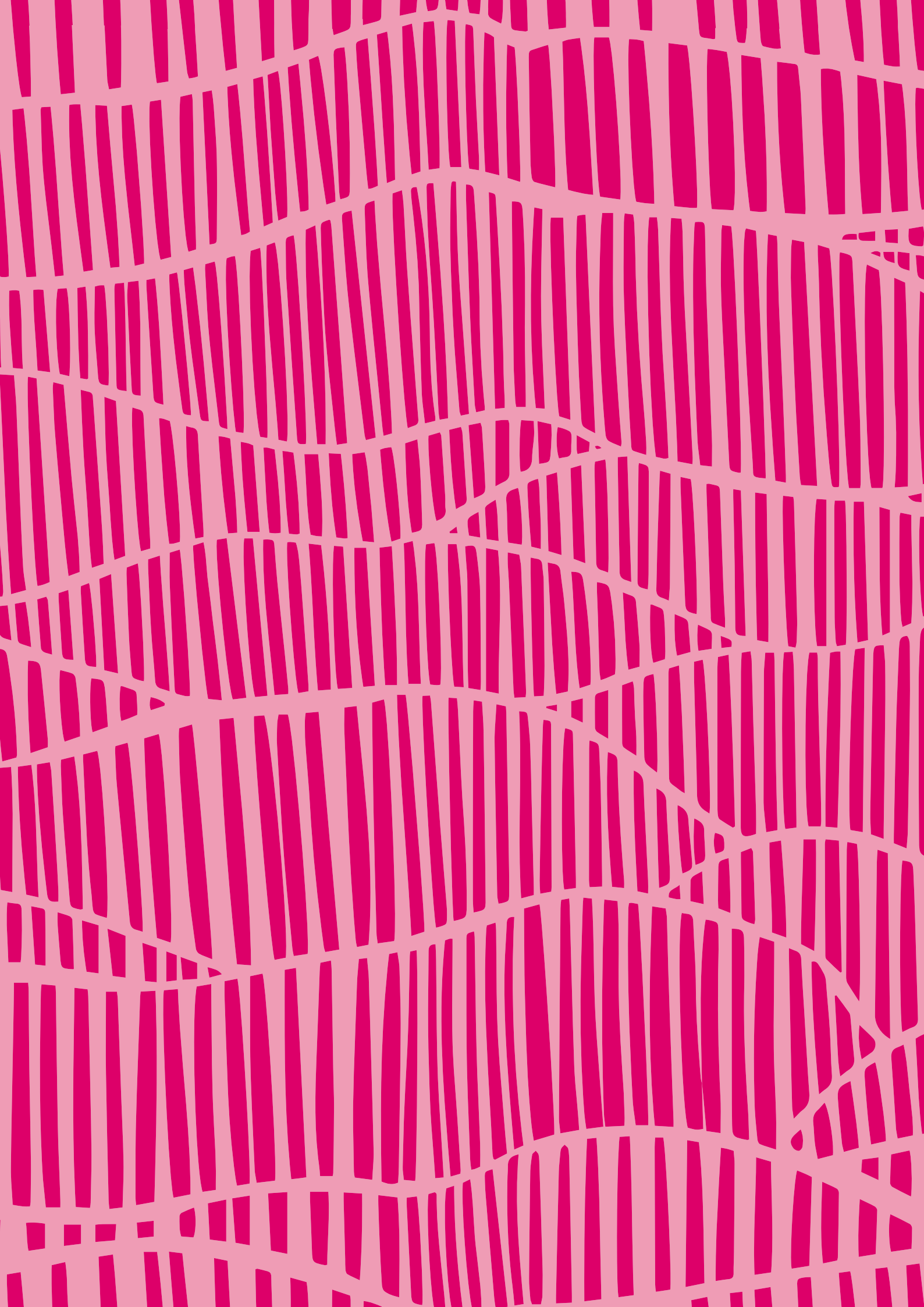
The reported results describe only a selection of analyses from the study. Researchers will further analyse the cohort as regards further questions, for example based on subject area, foreign background and form of employment. The Swedish higher education sector can jointly improve the working and study environment at our higher education institutions. A fundamental idea behind the programme is that together we can generate more and better knowledge through knowledge exchange and common practices. The programme is looking forward to more qualitative and quantitative research studies on gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, where the present report and results can be used as a starting point.

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