Danish police nationwide and regular registration of comprehensive data
Denmark 2001- ongoing

In brief

The Danish Police collects nationwide, comprehensive data on all police-reported offences. Data are recorded by a unique case number that indicates the given police office, the reported criminal offence with reference to the national penal code, and the individual case number. Data registration includes both the individual personal number of the alleged perpetrator and that of the reported victim. The police administrative system (POLSAS), in operation since 2001, regulates a uniform data registration and updating of the central criminal statistics in Denmark Statistics.

The public has access to summary tables through the Denmark Statistics website, which presents data on annual and quarterly reported specific criminal offences, regional distribution, age and sex of alleged offender and of reported victim, as well as an overview of judicial outcomes of the reported cases e.g. court trial, rejection, judgements.

Denmark Statistics regularly publishes an overview on trends in specific criminal offences and on the profile of alleged offenders and of victims in police-reported crimes.

The Research Unit of the Ministry of Justice publishes results of specific analyses based on the criminal statistics. Researchers may gain access to encrypted data and draw up a specific data set based on linkages with the various registers in Denmark Statistics. Specific legislation regulates data access and linkage for research purposes.

Danish data collection system and crime prevention strategy

In Denmark, national legislation and tradition have facilitated the collection of nationwide and comprehensive data on all police-reported cases of criminal offences. Data collection includes information on both the alleged offender and the reported victim, registered on the personal identification number that enables information to be drawn from other national registers to illustrate e.g. civil status, level of education, country of origin and the household of both offender and victim.

The aim of the data collection is to ensure the monitoring of trends in criminality and evaluation of national strategies for the prevention of specific criminal offences. The Ministry for Gender Equality regularly reports on different aspects of gender, including violence against women, stalking, sexual harassment and other sexual offences. The national action plans to combat different forms of gender-based violence and gender inequality are regularly adjusted with reference to current trends and forms of violations highlighted by the national register data. Within this intention, the comprehensive Danish register data play an important role.

Danish national register structure and the importance of a unique personal identification number

With regards to statistics on violence against women, the structure of the Danish national registers, including the criminal statistics and the victim register, ensures access to nationwide and comprehensive data both on police-reported cases of violence and on hospital visits due to exposure to violence. Furthermore, it is possible to draw information on the victims of such violence from other national

registers in Denmark Statistics. Data in criminal statistics is nationwide and includes both Danish citizens and non-citizens, e.g. asylum seekers, foreign students and tourists. It is possible by using the specific case number to combine register data about the victim and the alleged perpetrator and, for instance, retrieve information about their address and family status, and thus, to identify reported violence perpetrated by a husband or a cohabiting partner.

In the criminal statistics and the victim register, all data are recorded by the personal identification number of the given person and by a case-specific number containing information about the reported criminal offence by the particular penal code specifying the reported criminal act. It thus allows an identification of different forms of violence such as:

- homicide
- severe, potential lethal violence
- threats of violence.

The victim's personal identification number is composed of the date of birth and a code, indicating the sex/gender of the victim – similarly, information about the alleged perpetrator is recorded by the personal identification number (date of birth and sex).

Denmark Statistics' various databases make it possible by the personal identification number of the victim and the alleged perpetrator to draw various data about each police-reported case. These data include for example:

- residence (region and municipality)
- civil status (married, co-habiting, divorced, single)
- family status (including number of children in the family)
- level of education (e.g. length of education)
- occupational status
- social allowances
- income
- nationality.

Statistics Denmark and the police administrative system (POLSAS) collaboration
Statistical information about criminal acts originates from the files of police records and is contained in the crime statistics and the victim register, administered through a collaboration of Statistics Denmark and the police. The police administrative system (POLSAS), in operation since 2001, combines information about the crime (including the appropriate section of the penal code), the perpetrator, (age and gender), and the victim (age and gender) by the personal ID-number of victim and perpetrator. POLSAS is only concerned with crimes of an interpersonal character, such as violence, rape and robbery. Crimes such as theft are thus not included. The crime statistics contain data regarding verdicts, and is updated in accordance with changes to the charge, appearances during the investigation and court procedures.

Danish criminal law

In relation to violence against women, the relevant sections of the penal code are:

- section 237, homicide
- section 244 less severe violence
- section 245 more severe violence
- section 246 severe violence, generally with permanent injury to the victim
- sections 216 – 217 regarding rape.

Since 2003, female genital mutilation is also criminalised in the criminal code. Pursuant to the Danish Criminal Code section 245a, any person who assaults a girl or woman by cutting or otherwise removing external female genitals in full or in part, whether with or without consent, is sentenced to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six years.

Danish criminal law has taking regulative measures against stalking since 2012. The Danish Law on Gender Equality regulates against sexual harassment: section 1 (6). By this act, sexual harassment is defined as follows:

> It is sexual harassment when anyone is exposed to non-consenting (unwanted) verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct with sexual undertones with the purpose or effect of harming/violating the person's dignity – especially by creating a threatening, debasing, hostile, humiliating or unpleasant climate.

No specific penal code exists for domestic violence. However, the registration is based on the personal identification number of the reported victim. The end-number of the identification number indicates the sex – hence, in the statistics data police-reported cases of violence against women are available to report. By linking register data on residence, using the personal ID-number, it is also possible to reveal the relationship between victim and perpetrator, for example whether they have lived at the same address at some stage. Similarly, the victim statistics (from POLSAS) can be combined with other registers in order to assess the social profile of victim and perpetrator. Crime statistics combined with data in the national patient register enable the identification of victims of violence having been in contact with both police and hospital within a given period, and thus the annual number of individual victims of violence in the population that contact healthcare and/or the judicial system can be calculated.

Nationwide and regular registration of comprehensive data

The success of the Danish registers is that they are nationwide and the regulations ensure registration of comprehensive data – in the case of gender-based violence, on both the assumed offender and on the victim – and national legislation and rules regulate access to register data. Hence, trends in gender-based violence and other crimes are followed regularly, risk factors are identified and different hypotheses concerning effective prevention can be tested.

The main obstacles to establishing a nationwide register on police-reported violence against women are that it demands:

- uniform rules of registration
- an easily accessible registration system
- broad attention by the police on the importance of regular data registration.

It also demands continuous training of the police and administrative personnel – and recognition and awareness on the importance and utility of comprehensive register data.

Strict regulations regulate the updating and access to the nationwide Danish registers. These regulations maintain limited access to encrypted data, restricted to administrative personnel and researchers only. In this way, there is no public resistance to data registration. It is widely recognised that the nationwide, comprehensive data registers are an important tool in identifying gender inequality among these gender-based violence incidents.

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Links to audio-visual materials and websites with additional information/context (if available)
Annual data at national and regional level, by specific penal code, by age groups and by sex of victim and of alleged offender, their ethnicity (country of birth), and data about outcomes of court trials (verdicts) are publicly available on the Denmark Statistics website:
Reported criminal offences: http://www.dst.dk/da/Statistik/emner/kriminalitet/anmeldte-forbrydelser

Victim statistics: http://www.dst.dk/da/Statistik/emner/kriminalitet/ofre-for-anmeldte-forbrydelser

Verdicts: http://www.dst.dk/da/Statistik/emner/kriminalitet/domme

Tables and analyses on victims of violence for example can be produced from Denmark Statistics website:
http://www.statistikbanken.dk/statbank5a/default.asp?w=1280

To implement a similar, nationwide and comprehensive data collection in other EU member states, the Danish Act on Processing of Personal Data might very well serve as an inspiration:
http://www.datatilsynet.dk/english/the-danish-data-protection-agency/introduction-to-the-danish-data-protection-agency/