

# Mapping sexual harassment in nightlife: Prevalence, contexts, reporting barriers, and implications for prevention,

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Onderzoekscentrum  
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# Study sample

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- Online survey
- **Flanders**
- N = **750**
- Age: **18-49**
- Gender: **50% women**
- Sample representative for Flanders in terms of **age, education level, and province**

# Sexually-transgressive behavior (STB)

in Dutch: SGG

- **Sexually-transgressive behavior (STB) is any form of undesired sexual behavior**

	Examples
<b>Hands-off STB</b>	staring, catcalling, comments of a sexual nature, exhibitionism, sexting
<b>Hands-on STB</b>	kissing, touching, undressing
<b>(Attempted) rape</b>	any form of penetration (with an object or body part in any body opening)



# Focus on 3 settings

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- **Nightlife**

- Discotheque or (dance)club
- Danscafé
- Bar, café, or pub
- Music festival or other festival/event
- Concert hall
- Party (student union, sports, youth or other clubs)

- **Public space**

- **Public transport**



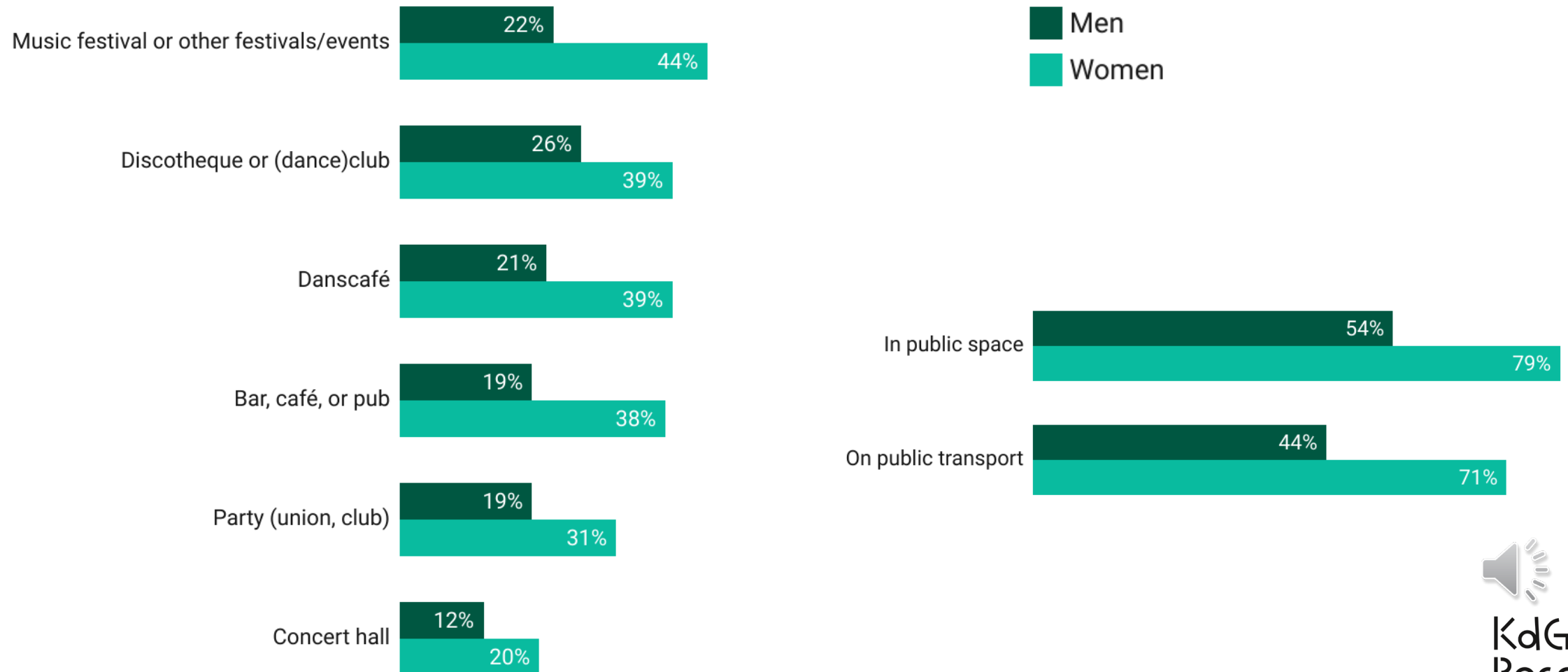
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# Feelings of unsafety and coping strategies



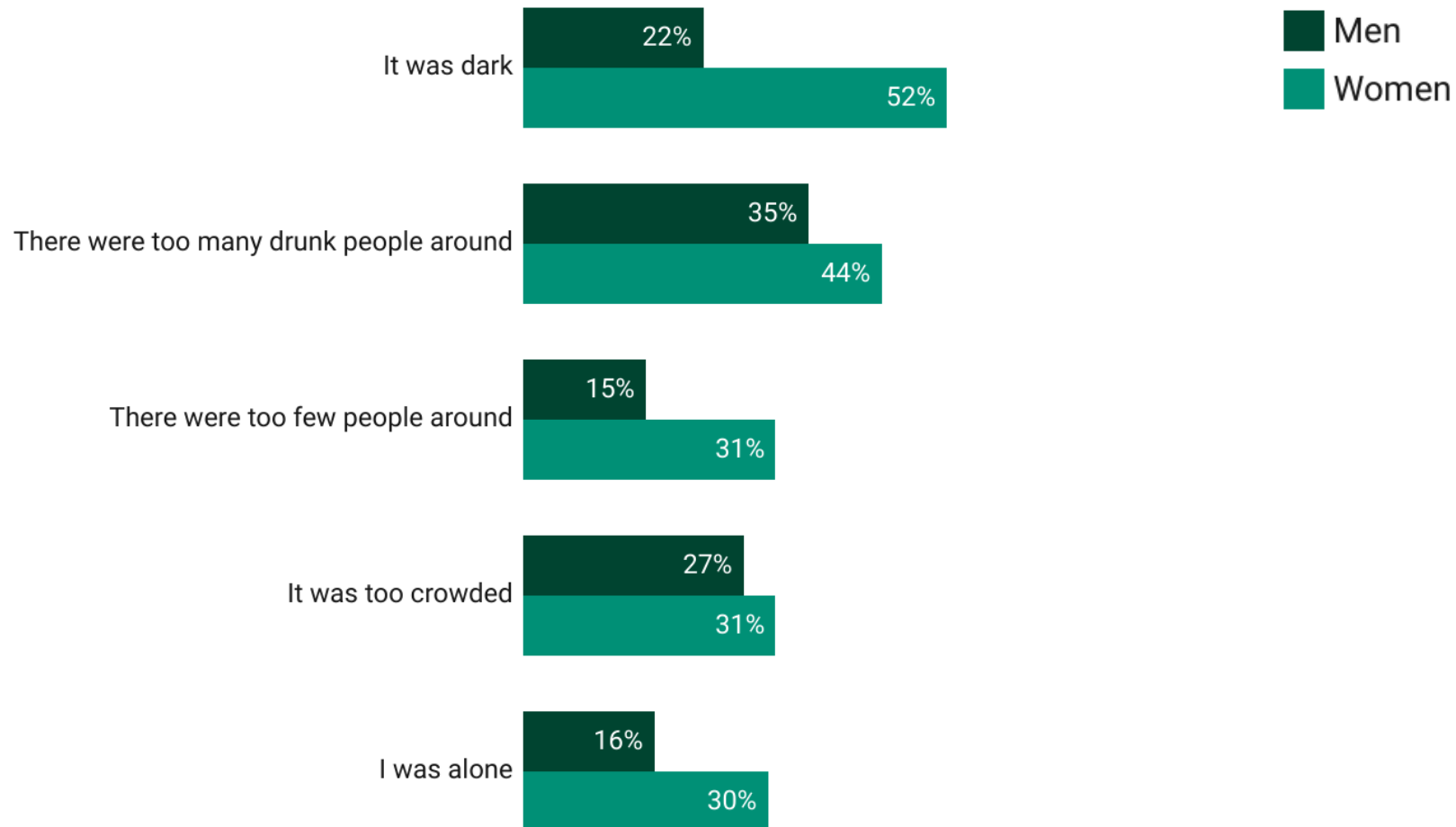
# Feelings of unsafety across nightlife settings

last 12 months, n=720, *sometimes - always*



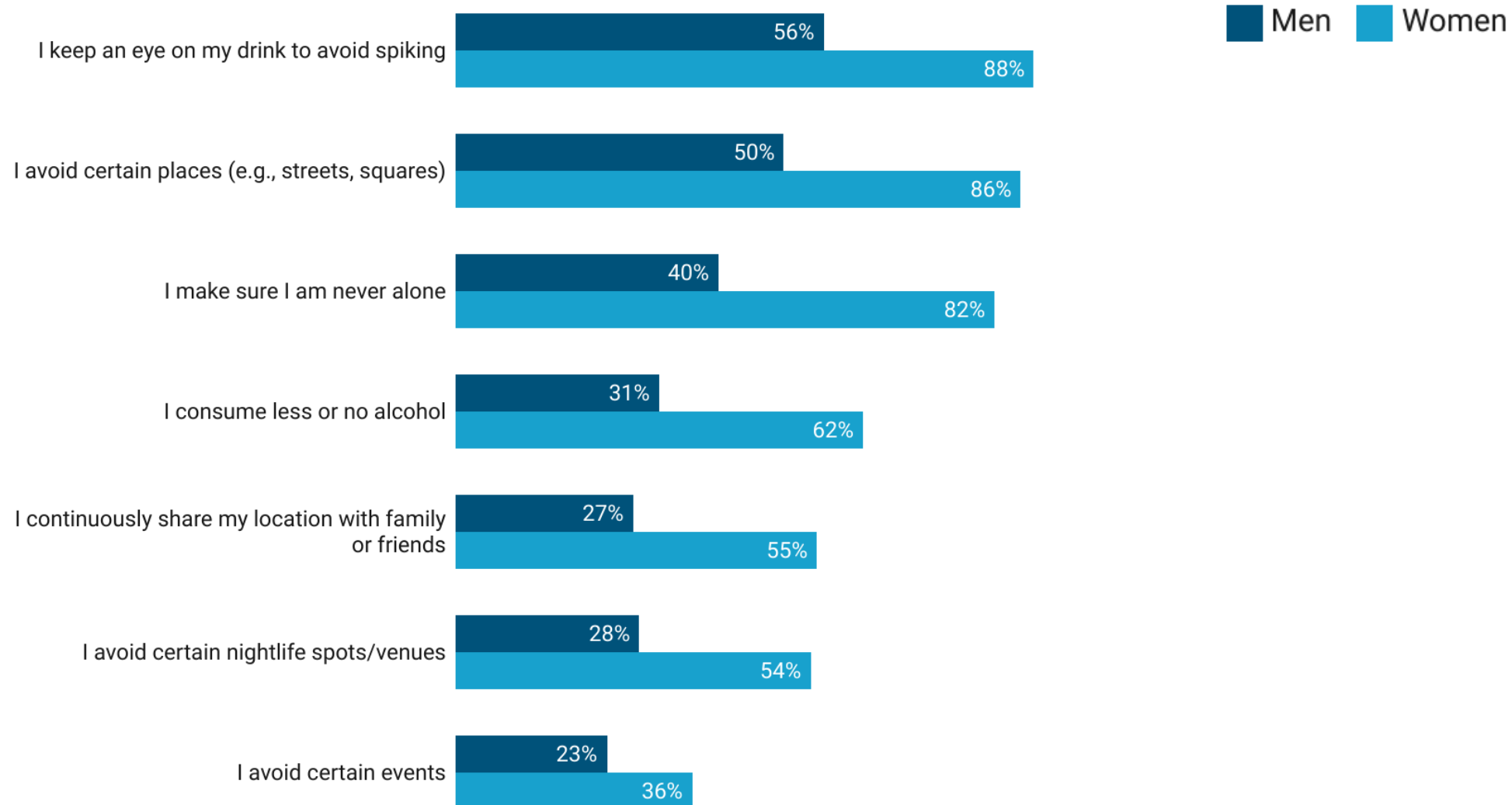
# Reasons for feeling unsafe on a night out

last 12 months, n=589



# Coping strategies (safety work)

n=720, *sometimes - always*





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# Prevalence and nature of STB in nightlife settings



# STB victimization rate: last 12 months (n=720)



**22% of men**



**44% of women**



# STB: lifetime prevalence (n=720)



**46% of men**

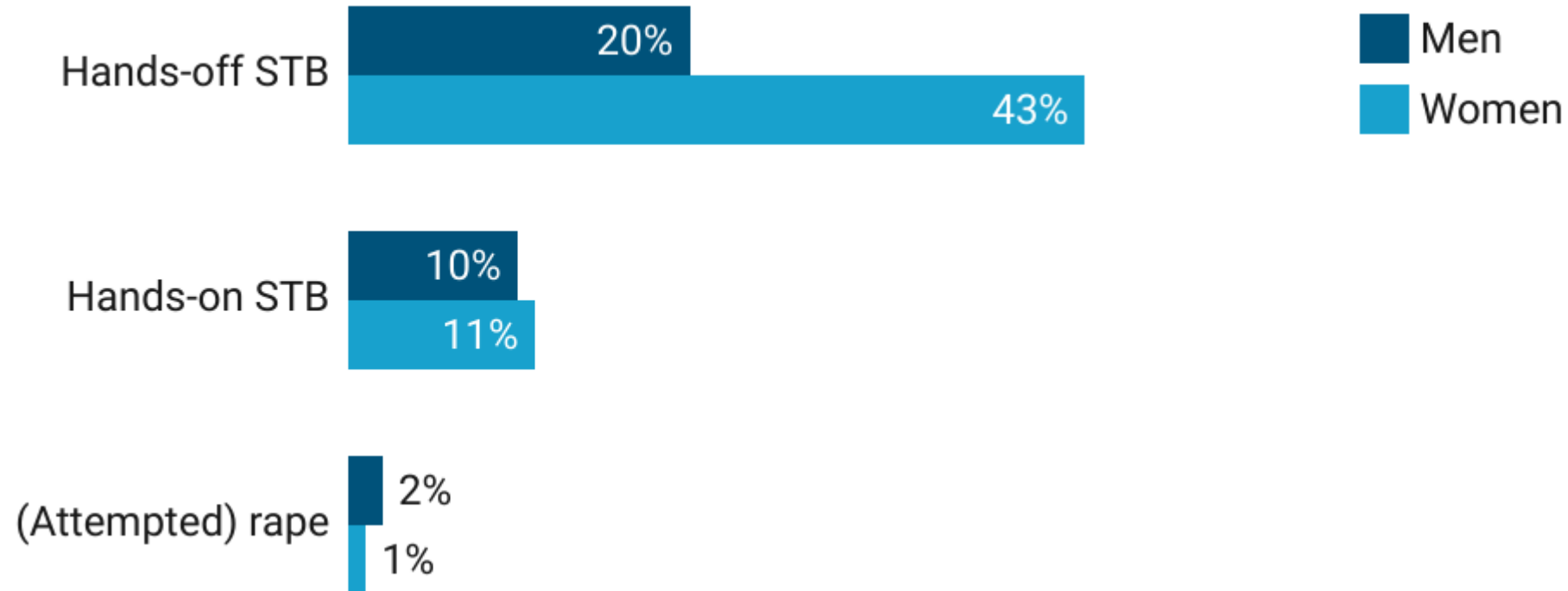


**86% of women**



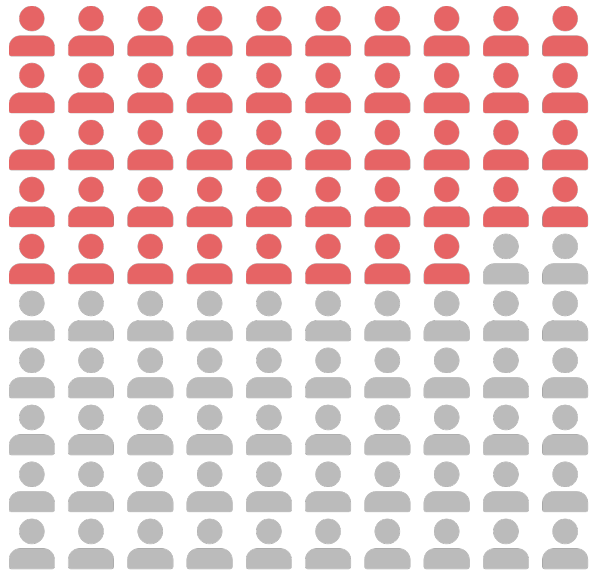
# Victimization rate per type of STB

last 12 months, n=227

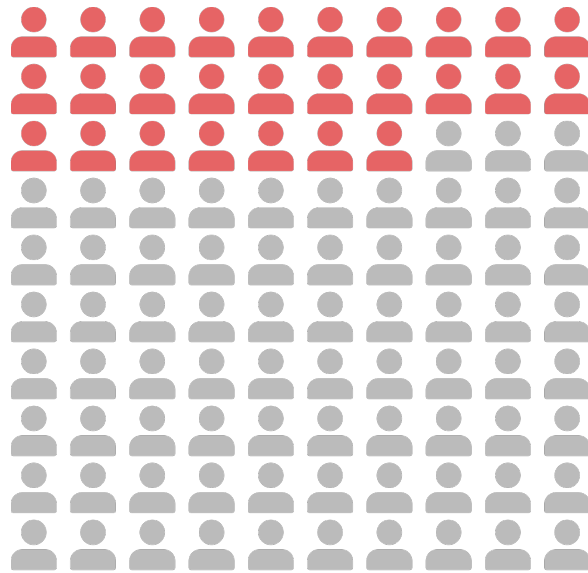


# Victimization rate per age category

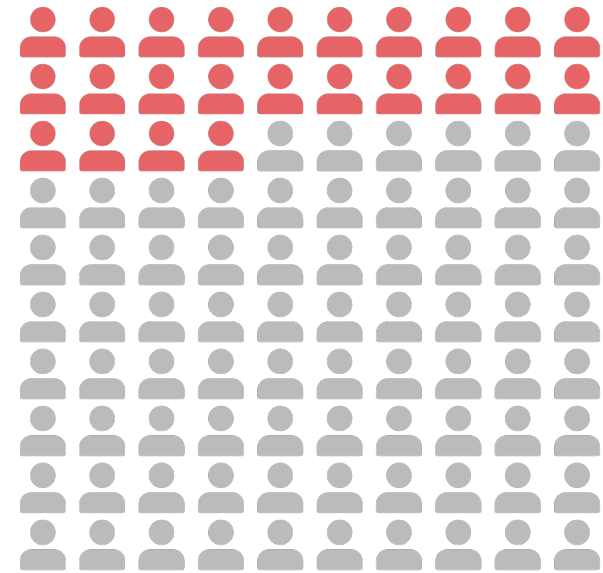
last 12 months, n=227



**18-29: 48%**



**29-39: 27%**



**39-49: 24%**



# Victimization rate across nightlife settings

last 12 months, n=227

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- **75%** in nightlife spots/venues/events
- **58%** in public space (on the way to/back from going out)
- **33%** on public transport (on the way to/back from going out)



# Witnessing STB in nightlife settings

last 12 months, n=278

- **37%** witnessed **hands-off** STB
  - **52%** of 18-29-year-olds
- **12%** witnessed **hands-on** STB
- **75%** in **nightlife** spots/venues/events
- **39%** in **public space** (on the way to/back from going out)
- **17%** on **public transport** (on the way to/back from going out)



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# Reporting STB incidents





# Reporting rates

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- Only **3% of victims** and **6% of witnesses of STB** reported incidents to the police or another institution

# Reasons for **not** reporting STB: **Victims**

	<b>Hands-off STB</b> (n=431)	<b>Hands-on STB</b> (n=294)
I didn't think it was serious enough	56%	37%
I hadn't considered this option	41%	24%
I didn't think it would change anything	23%	22%

# Reasons for **not** reporting STB: **Victims**

	(Attempted) rape (n=56)
I was ashamed	36%
I was feeling blocked	29%
I didn't want others to find out this happened to me	27%
I thought they would think I was exaggerating	27%
I was afraid it would make everything worse	25%



# Reasons for **not** reporting STB: **Bystanders**

Any form of STB (n=469)	
I hadn't considered this option	25%
It was resolved on the spot	21%
I didn't think it was serious enough	19%

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# Prevention and support measures



# I would feel safer if...

(rather + definitely yes)

	Men (n=363)	Women (n=357)
I know that <b>access is denied</b> to repeat offenders	71%	<b>87%</b>
I know that <b>staff are trained</b> in recognizing and dealing with STB	68%	<b>84%</b>
I know that <b>bystanders will intervene</b>	68%	<b>83%</b>
there is <b>proper lighting</b> in and around the venue/event	64%	<b>80%</b>
there is <b>security personnel/stewards</b>	61%	<b>79%</b>
I know that the <b>way to/from</b> the venue/event is also monitored	60%	<b>79%</b>
I know that the venue/event has a <b>Zero tolerance policy</b> for STB	54%	<b>70%</b>



# I would feel safer if...

(rather + definitely yes)

	Men (n=363)	Women (n=357)
I know I can <b>inform the staff discreetly</b> (e.g., Ask for Angela)	46%	<b>65%</b>
there are <b>police</b> in the vicinity	54%	61%
there is continuous <b>video surveillance</b>	47%	<b>61%</b>
there is a <b>hotline</b> and/or <b>information stand</b> on site	48%	<b>58%</b>
there is a <b>safe(r) space</b> (to report, get support, get referred)	47%	<b>56%</b>
clear info is provided on site on <b>how to react as a bystander</b>	44%	<b>53%</b>
clear info is provided on site on <b>how to respond as a victim</b>	38%	<b>51%</b>



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# Conclusions





# Conclusions

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- **Feelings of unsafety** in nightlife settings are widespread.
- STB takes place in **all nightlife spots/venues** and **on the way there**.
- **Women** are more likely to **feel unsafe** and to engage in “**safety work**”.
- Women are more often **victimized**, but rates among **men** are also high.
- **The youngest group (18-29)** is most strongly affected.
- Incidents are **very rarely reported** (due to multiple barriers).
- There is **broad support** for a host of preventive measures.
- But **systematic evaluation** of existing and new initiatives is crucial
- **...as is multi-stakeholder collaboration.**



# Ongoing project: “A Safe(r) Night Out”

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- **Aim:** to develop effective **communication strategies** for awareness raising and prevention of STB in nightlife settings
- ...that do **not** have a negative impact on safety perceptions and overall visitor experience
- **How:** in **co-creation** with nightlife patrons (Antwerp students), venue owners, local governments, and special interest organizations
- **Partners:** City of Ghent, City of Antwerp, Sensoa

# More details? Collaboration?



Download the research report  
(in Dutch)



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# Thank you!

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