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Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile
2000

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Family Violence in Canada:

A Statistical Profile

2000

Edited by Valerie Pottie Bunge and Daisy Locke

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Highlights **5**

Introduction **7**

1.0 Measuring family violence **9**

2.0 Spousal violence **11**
2.1 The prevalence of spousal violence 11
Five-year rates of spousal violence 11
Provincial rates of spousal violence 12
Type of violence 12
Nature and severity of violence in marriages 14
Risk factors of spousal violence 15
Consequences of spousal violence 18
2.2 Trends in victim-reported wife assault 20
2.3 Police-reported spousal violence 21
Type of incident 22
Sex of victims 22
Physical injury 23
Laying charges 24
Location of the incident 24
2.4 Trends in police-reported spousal violence 24
2.5 International Comparisons of Spousal Violence 25
The US National Violence Against Women (NVAW) Survey 25
The British Crime Survey (BCS) 26

3.0 Abuse of older adults by family members **27**
3.1 Self-reported abuse of older adults 27
Physical and sexual violence 27
Emotional and financial abuse 27
Risk factors 28
3.2 Police-reported violence against older adults 29

Table of Contents – Concluded

Page

4.0 Violence against children and youth by family members 31
4.1 Violence against children and youth reported to police 31
Fathers more likely accused of assaulting their children 33
Girls primary victims of family assaults 33
Proportion of family assaults declines with age 34

5.0 Family homicide 39
5.1 Spousal homicide 40
Age as a risk factor 40
Shooting and stabbing the most common causes of death 41
Alcohol a factor in spousal homicides 41
5.2 Homicides against older adults 42
5.3 Homicides against children and youth 42

6.0 Family violence courts 45
6.1 Winnipeg Family Violence Court Report 45
6.2 Ontario Domestic Violence Courts Initiative 47

Appendix A 49

Data sources 55
Incident-based Uniform Crime (UCR2) Survey 55
Homicide Survey 55
Victimization surveys 55
Hospital Morbidity Database 55

References 57

HIGHLIGHTS

Spousal violence

(1999 General Social Survey on Victimization)

- According to the 1999 General Social Survey, it is estimated that, in Canada, 7% of people who were married or living in a common-law relationship experienced some type of violence by a partner during the previous 5 years. The 5-year rate of violence was similar for women (8%) and men (7%). Overall, this amounts to approximately 690,000 women and 549,000 men who had a current or former partner in the past five years and reported experiencing at least one incident of violence.

- Women were more likely than men to report what could be considered more severe forms of violence. Women were more than twice as likely as men to report being beaten, five times more likely to report being choked, and almost twice as likely to report being threatened by or having a gun or knife used against them. Men were more likely than women to report being slapped (57% versus 40%), having something thrown at them (56% versus 44%) and being kicked, bit or hit (51% versus 33%).

- Women were also more likely than men to report repeated victimizations. Sixty-five percent of women who were assaulted by a partner were victimized on more than one occasion, 26% more than 10 times. By comparison, 54% of men who experienced marital violence were the targets in more than one incident and 13% said it happened more than 10 times.

- Women were more likely than men to be injured by spousal violence. Women were three times more likely than men to be injured by spousal violence and five times more likely to require medical attention.

- During the 5-year period almost one-quarter (24%) of spousal violence victims feared their lives were in danger. This fear was much more prevalent among women than men: 38% of women compared to 7% of men feared for their lives because of the violence.

- Women were more likely than men to report negative emotional consequences as a result of the spousal violence. Twenty-two percent of men who reported spousal violence in the past 5 years reported that the violence did not have much impact on them compared to only 5% of women. Meanwhile, women were much more likely than men to report being fearful for themselves and their children, and to have depression or anxiety attacks, sleeping problems and lowered self-esteem.

- The General Social Survey also found that the police were more likely to find out about spousal violence against women than spousal violence against men. During the 5-year period, 37% of cases of spousal violence involving female victims compared to 15% of spousal violence involving male victims was reported to the police.

- Approximately half a million children have heard or witnessed a parent being assaulted during the 5-year period.

Violence against older adults

(Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey)

- According to the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey, which collects data from 164 police forces representing nearly one-half (46%) of the national volume of reported crime, adults aged 65 and over represented 2% of all victims of violent offences in 1999.

- Older adults were most likely to be victimized by non-family members (67%), the highest proportion of which were strangers. A smaller proportion of older adults were victimized by family members (27%).

- Among those victimized by a family member, older adults were most likely to be victimized by adult children (43%) and spouses (28%). The remaining 29% were victimized by extended family members (13%), siblings (10%) and parents (6%).

Emotional and financial abuse against older adults

(1999 General Social Survey on Victimization)

- According to the 1999 General Social Survey, older adults are more likely to experience emotional and financial abuse than physical or sexual violence. While 7% of older adults experienced some form of emotional or financial abuse only 1% experienced physical or sexual abuse by an adult child, caregiver, spouse or common-law partner with whom they had contact. The vast majority of emotional and financial abuse was committed by spouses.

- Older men (9%) were more likely than older women (6%) to report being victims of emotional or financial abuse.

- Emotional abuse (7%) was reported more frequently than financial abuse (1%). The most common form of emotional abuse reported by older adults was being put down or called names (3%), followed by limiting contact with family or friends (2%).

Violence against children and youth by family members

(Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey)

- In 1999, children and youth under 18 years of age made up 60% of all sexual assault victims and 20% of all physical assault victims reported to a sample of 164 police departments.

- Children and youth were most likely to be victimized by acquaintances (52%), followed by family members (24%) and strangers (19%).

- Parents were more likely than other family members to commit violent acts against children and youth. Parents were responsible for 66% of physical assaults and 42% of sexual assaults against children and youth under 18 years of age.

Family Homicides

(Homicide Survey)

- Data from the Homicide Survey indicate that in the past 20 years, one third of homicide victims were related to their killers.

- The rate of spousal homicide has declined gradually over the past two decades, particularly wife killings. The rate has declined by 52% for wives, from 15 per million couples in 1979 to 7 per million couples in 1998. For husbands, the rate has dropped from a high of 5 per million couples in 1987 to 2 per million in 1998.

- During the past 20 years, the majority of children killed by their parents were very young. From 1979 to 1998, 70% of the children killed by their mothers and 55% of the children killed by their fathers were 3 years of age and younger.

INTRODUCTION

As part of an ongoing initiative to inform the public about family violence issues, the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics produces this annual statistical profile on family violence. The purpose of the report is to provide current data on the nature and extent of family violence incidents in Canada and to monitor trends over time. Each year, the profile has a special focus. The focus of this year's report is the incidence of spousal violence reported by both women and men to Statistics Canada's 1999 General Social Survey on Victimization. The report also provides the most recent police-reported data on spousal violence, abuse of older adults, child abuse and family homicides.

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1.0 MEASURING FAMILY VIOLENCE

In Canada, a variety of data sources are available to examine the nature and extent of family violence. These fall into two general categories: victimization survey data based on victims' accounts of their experiences of family violence reported to survey interviewers, and those based on incidents reported to the police, hospitals, coroners, child welfare or other social agencies.

Definitions of family violence can have a significant effect on the estimates derived from both victimization surveys and reported incidents. The term "family violence" can encompass a wide range of experiences. Definitions vary according to the type of relationships considered under the definition of "family" (e.g., marriage, blood, adoption, foster care, step and blended family arrangements, and same-sex relationships), and the type of experiences to be included under the definition of "violence" (e.g., *Criminal Code* offences, threatening, psychologically controlling and emotionally abusive behaviour, and financial abuse). Clearly, more all-encompassing definitions of family violence will produce higher estimates of the extent of the problem.

Estimates of the prevalence of family violence based on incidents reported to police and other agencies are particularly susceptible to additional confounding factors, including the secrecy surrounding the issue, the dependency of the victim on the perpetrator, the lack of knowledge about available help, and the fear of repercussions for reporting the event. All of these factors contribute to underreporting and consequently to an underestimate of the extent of the problem (Johnson, 1996; Della Femina, Yeager, and Lewis, 1990; Widom, 1988).

The number of incidents reported to social agencies may also be affected by shifts in the level of scrutiny that official agencies maintain in suspected cases as a result of legislative or policy changes, or the changing availability of resources. For example, a change in legislation (Bill C-127, amendments to the *Criminal Code* related to assault and sexual assault) and the implementation of mandatory charging policies by many police agencies in the early 1980s, marked the beginning of year-over-year increases in assaults reported to the police through the early 1990s (Kingsley, 1993). Similarly, most provinces/territories now require investigations into deaths of children under the age of 2. This shift will likely lead to the reclassification of some deaths as homicides that previously would have been classified as accidental or natural deaths.

Victimization surveys are not susceptible to the same factors that lead to underestimates in data available through official agencies; thus estimates derived from these surveys are substantially higher. However, these surveys are sensitive to question wording, definitions of victimization, interviewer effects and the underlying approach (for example, a survey dedicated to violence against women versus one that focuses more generally on all forms of victimization).

Traditional victimization surveys have been criticized for their inability to measure the more sensitive kinds of victimizations that occur within families. This is due to a number of factors, including a reluctance on the part of victims to report their experiences to survey interviewers, an orientation in the early stages of the interview toward crime in one's neighbourhood (which may reduce reporting of family violence if it is not considered by respondents to be a crime), narrow question wording, and little or no specialized training for interviewers. The 1999 General Social Survey is the first attempt by Statistics Canada to measure spousal violence through detailed questions on a traditional victimization survey. Steps have been taken to improve question wording and provide special training for interviewers in order to encourage candid disclosures of violence that have occurred in the family. This publication contains the first analysis of spousal assaults by both women and men captured through the 1999 survey. More detailed analysis will be presented in future editions.

About the 1999 General Social Survey

The General Social Survey (GSS) is an annual survey that monitors changes in Canadian society and provides information on specific policy issues of current or emerging interest. Each year, the GSS focuses on various regular topics (including time use, social support, the family, technology and victimization). In 1999, the focus of the GSS was on the nature and extent of criminal victimization in Canada, including attitudes toward the various components of the justice system, use of services, perceptions of personal safety, and spousal violence.

The GSS is a telephone sample survey covering the non-institutionalized population aged 15 years or more in the ten provinces. It uses the Random Digit Dialing (RDD) technique to select the sample. Each province is divided into a few (from 1 to 3) broad geographic areas known as strata, and telephone numbers within each stratum have the same chance of being selected. If the phone number reaches a household, a person from the household is randomly selected among those aged 15 years or older. Since measures from the survey are based on a sample, they are always estimates of the true values and are subject to sampling error.

The 1999 GSS on Victimization was conducted between February and December 1999. As with past cycles of the General Social Survey, the response rate was relatively high: 81.3%. A total of approximately 26,000 people were interviewed for the 1999 survey, more than double the usual sample of 10,000. This increase in sample size leads to more reliable estimates through decreased sampling error, and allows more detailed analysis of small populations and crimes that occur less frequently.

The respondents in the sample have been weighted so that their responses represent the approximately 24,300,000 non-institutionalized persons aged 15 years or older in the 10 provinces. Using the 1999 GSS sample design and sample size, an estimate of a given proportion of the total population, expressed as a percentage, is expected to be within approximately 0.8% of the true proportion 19 times out of 20. Estimates of proportions of sub-populations will have wider confidence intervals.

The 1999 GSS respondents are composed of 14,269 women and 11,607 men whose responses, when weighted, represent the approximately 12,300,000 women and 11,900,000 men aged 15 years or older in the non-institutionalized Canadian population. Using the 1999 GSS sample design and sample size, an estimate of a given proportion of the total target population of women or men, expressed as a percentage, is expected to be within approximately 1.1% of the true proportion 19 times out of 20. Again, estimates of proportions of sub-populations will have wider confidence intervals.

For the purposes of this survey, when the coefficient of variation (CV) of an estimate is higher than 33.3%, this is considered too unreliable to be published and the symbol -- is printed in the corresponding cell of the data table. This symbol is also used to indicate that publication of the data in that cell would violate confidentiality rules. When the CV of the estimate is between 16.6% and 33.3%, the corresponding estimate is accompanied by the symbol "† " in the table. These estimates should be used with caution to support a conclusion. All estimates where the CV is lower than 16.6% can be used unconditionally.

2.0 SPOUSAL VIOLENCE

by Valerie Pottie Bunge

2.1 The prevalence of spousal violence

The incidence and prevalence of spousal violence was measured through the 1999 General Social Survey. Building on the success of Statistics Canada's Violence Against Women Survey (1993), the 1999 General Social Survey is the first attempt by Statistics Canada to measure spousal violence in a comprehensive way on a traditional victimization survey. Both women and men were asked a module of ten questions concerning violence by their current and/or previous spouses and common-law partners. The nature of the violence under study ranged in seriousness from threats to sexual assault and concerned acts that happened in the 12-month and 5-year period preceding the survey interview.

Five-year rates of spousal violence

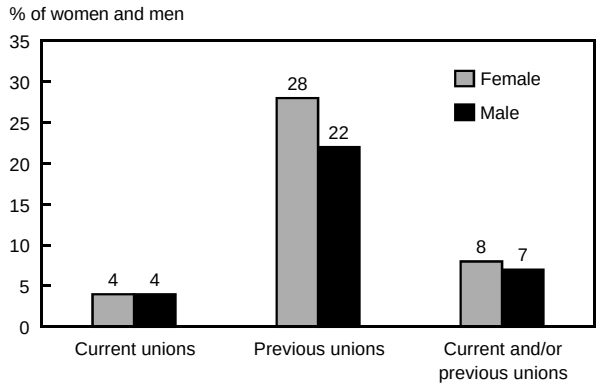
The results of the 1999 General Social Survey (GSS) suggest that violence in marriages and common-law unions is a reality that many women and men face. In Canada, it is estimated that 7% of people who were married or living in a common-law relationship during the past 5 years experienced some type of violence by their intimate partners. The 5-year rate of violence was similar for women and men (8% and 7%, respectively)[1] (Figure 2.1). Overall, this amounts to approximately 690,000 women and 549,000 men who had a current or former partner and reported experiencing at least one incident of violence.

A person is defined as having a current relationship if they are married, living common-law or have a same-sex partner[3]. A person is defined as having a previous relationship if they have been in a marriage or common-law relationship with a person other than their current spouse/partner and they have had contact with that person in the past 5 years. Those with a previous partnership may also be single, widowed, divorced or separated or remarried or living common-law, as long as they have a former partner with whom they have had contact in the past 5 years.

[3] *Less than 1% of the total sample identified themselves as living in a same-sex relationship. Therefore any statistics related to violence are too small to make reliable estimates of the extent of violence in these relationships.*

Figure 2.1

Rates of spousal violence similar for women and men, past 5 years



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999.

This survey also shows that violence in current unions[2] is different from violence in marriages that have ended. Of those who had a current partner in the 5-year period preceding the survey interview, 4% reported some type of spousal violence. Women (4%) and men (4%) were equally likely to report violence by a current partner. In previous relationships, women (28%) were more likely than men (22%) to report experiencing violence.

While this survey indicates that relatively equal proportions of women and men report spousal violence, it also indicates that women are abused more severely than men. For example, women are more likely to be subjected to severe forms of violence (e.g. beaten, choked, sexually assaulted), are three times more likely to suffer injury, five times as likely to receive medical attention, and five times more likely to fear for their lives as a result of the violence. In other words, the severity and the impact of spousal violence on women and men have different outcomes and consequences.

[1] *The difference in rates of spousal violence reported by women and men is statistically significant. It should also be noted that throughout this report rates are based on the appropriate population being examined, for example women 15 years and older who had a current or former partner in the 5-year period preceding the survey.*

[2] *"Marriages," "unions" and "relationships" refer to both legal marriages and common-law unions, unless otherwise stated.*

"**Spousal violence**" in the GSS is defined as experiences of physical or sexual assault that are consistent with *Criminal Code* definitions of these offences and could be acted upon by a police officer. Questions related to emotionally abusive behaviour were included in this survey to test theories about links between emotional abuse and physical violence. Rates of emotional abuse by marital partners are treated separately and are **not** included in the overall rates of spousal violence.

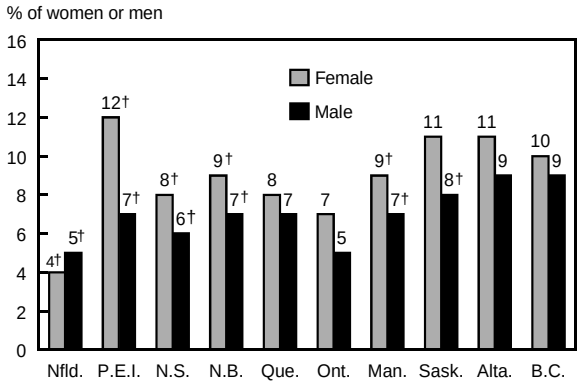
Provincial rates of spousal violence

Estimated provincial rates of spousal violence for women ranged from 4% to 12%. For men the range was from 5% to 9%. Women living in Prince Edward Island (12%), Alberta (11%), Saskatchewan (11%) and British Columbia (10%) reported the highest 5-year rates of spousal violence. Newfoundland women reported the lowest rates (4%), while women living in the remaining provinces reported rates around the national average (Figure 2.2).

Men living in the Western provinces of British Columbia (9%), Alberta (9%), and Saskatchewan (8%) reported the highest rates of spousal violence. The lowest rates were reported by men living in Newfoundland (5%), Ontario (5%), Nova Scotia (6%) and Manitoba (7%). It should be noted that other than in Ontario the differences in provincial rates of violence between women and men were not statistically significant.

Figure 2.2

Women more likely than men to experience spousal violence in most provinces, past 5 years



† Coefficient of variation is high (16.6% and 33.3%.)
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999.

Type of violence

More than half of the women and men who reported spousal violence, reported what might be considered the less serious forms of violence, such as pushing, grabbing and shoving (64%) or threats (63%) (Table 2.1). However, many episodes of violence have been serious, such as being kicked, bit or hit (41%), hit with something (24%), beaten (18%) and choked (13%).

Table 2.1
Number and percentage of women and men aged 15 years and over who reported violence by a current or previous spouse[1,2], by type of violence, past 5 years

Type of violence	Victims					
	Total		Female		Male	
	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%
Total violence by any spouse	**1,239**	**100**	**690**	**100**	**549**	**100**
Threatened to hit	782	63	449	65	333	61
Threw something	606	49	301	44	305	56
Pushed, grabbed, shoved	797	64	561	81	237	43
Slapped	589	48	276	40	313	57
Kicked, bit or hit	507	41	227	33	279	51
Hit with something	298	24	155	23	143	26
Beat	226	18	172	25	54	10
Choked	163	13	139	20	24	4†
Used or threatened to use a gun or knife	132	11	91	13	41	7†
Sexual assault	152	12	138	20	14	3†

† *Coefficient of variation is high (16.6% to 33.3%).*
1 *Includes common-law partners.*
2 *Excludes people who refused to state their marital status.*
Figures do not add to 100% due to multiple responses.
Source: *Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999*

Women and men reported experiencing somewhat different forms of violence. Women in violent relationships were more likely than men to report what could be considered more severe forms of violence. For example, women were more than twice as likely as men to report being beaten (25% versus 10%), five times more likely to report being choked (20% versus 4%) and almost twice as likely to report being threatened by, or having a gun or knife used against them (13% versus 7%). Men in violent relationships were more likely than women to report being slapped (57% versus 40%), having something thrown at them (56% of men versus 44% of women) and being kicked, bit or hit (51% versus 33%).

Violence by current partners

Of those who reported experiencing violence by a current partner in the five-year period preceding the survey interview, women were most likely to report being pushed, grabbed or shoved (72%), while men were most likely to report they had something thrown at them (54%) or were threatened with assault (53%). Women with current partners were three times as likely as men to report being

Measuring Spousal Violence

Violence by current and previous spouses is measured on the 1999 GSS by a module of ten questions. This approach describes specific actions rather than asking a single question about "violence" or "assaults". The module of questions was introduced by the following statement:

It is important to hear from people themselves if we are to understand the serious problem of violence in the home. I'm going to ask you ten short questions and I'd like you to tell me whether, in the past 5 years, your spouse/partner has done any of the following to you. Your responses are important whether or not you have had any of these experiences. Remember that all information provided is strictly confidential.

During the past 5 years, has your partner:

1. *Threatened to hit you with his/her fist or anything else that could have hurt you.*
2. *Thrown anything at you that could have hurt you.*
3. *Pushed, grabbed or shoved you in a way that could have hurt you.*
4. *Slapped you.*
5. *Kicked, bit, or hit you with his/her fist.*
6. *Hit you with something that could have hurt you.*
7. *Beaten you.*
8. *Choked you.*
9. *Used or threatened to use a gun or knife on you.*
10. *Forced you into any unwanted sexual activity by threatening you, holding you down, or hurting you in some way.*

beaten (13% versus 4% of men), and much more likely to report being choked and sexually assaulted (Table 2.2). Men on the other hand, were twice as likely as women to report being kicked, bit or hit (41% versus 19%) and one and a half times more likely to report having something thrown at them (54% versus 35%).

Table 2.2
Number and percentage of women and men aged 15 years and over who reported violence by a current spouse[1,2], by type of violence, past 5 years

Type of violence	Victims					
	Total		Female		Male	
	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%
Total violence by current spouse	**562**	**100**	**259**	**100**	**303**	**100**
Threatened to hit	306	54	145	56	162	53
Threw something	252	45	90	35	163	54
Pushed, grabbed, shoved	291	52	187	72	103	34
Slapped	230	41	77	30	153	51
Kicked, bit or hit	174	31	50	19	124	41
Hit with something	81	14	28	11†	53	17
Beat	46	8	33	13†	13	4†
Choked	32	6†	26	10†	--	--
Used or threatened to use a gun or knife	--	--	--	--	--	--
Sexual assault	22	4†	21	8†	--	--

† Coefficient of variation is high (16.6% to 33.3%).
-- amount too small to be expressed.
1 Includes common-law partners.
2 Excludes people who refused to state their marital status.
Figures do not add to 100% due to multiple responses.
***Source:** Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999*

Violence by former partners

Women and men who had been in contact with a previous partner in the 5 years preceding the survey interview were more likely than those in current relationships to report all types of violence. More than 70% reported being pushed, grabbed or shoved (Table 2.3). Perhaps of greatest concern are the number of people with previous violent relationships reporting severe forms of violence such as being beaten (26%), sexually assaulted (19%), choked (19%), or being threatened with/having a gun or knife used against them (17%).

As with violence in current relationships, the violence experienced by men with former partners was less severe than the violence suffered by women with former partners. Men who reported violence by a previous partner were more likely than women to report being slapped (63%), kicked, bit or hit (62%), having something thrown at them

Table 2.3
Number and percentage of women and men aged 15 years and over who reported violence by a previous spouse[1,2], by type of violence, past 5 years

Type of violence	Victims					
	Total		Female		Male	
	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%
Total violence by previous spouse	**697**	**100**	**437**	**100**	**259**	**100**
Threatened to hit	480	69	307	70	173	67
Threw something	358	51	211	48	147	57
Pushed, grabbed, shoved	513	74	378	87	135	52
Slapped	365	52	203	46	162	63
Kicked, bit or hit	338	49	177	41	161	62
Hit with something	220	32	127	29	93	36
Beat	179	26	139	32	41	16
Choked	132	19	114	26	18	7†
Used or threatened to use a gun or knife	121	17	86	20	35	14†
Sexual assault	129	19	117	27	12	5†

† Coefficient of variation is high (16.6% to 33.3%).
1 Includes common-law partners.
2 Excludes people who refused to state their marital status.
Figures do not add to 100% due to multiple responses.
***Source:** Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999*

(57%), or being hit with something (36%). On the other hand, women who reported violence by a previous partner were more likely than men to report being beaten (32%), sexually assaulted (27%), choked (26%) and threatened by, or having a gun or knife used against them (20%).

The difference in rates of violence reported by those who were currently married and those who were previously married may be the result of several different factors, including, the difficulty for many women and men living with a violent partner to disclose their experiences to an interviewer, the increased risk of violence during separation or the number of cases in which violence was the cause of separation or divorce (Johnson, 1996). All of these factors could partially explain why women and men are more likely to report violence in previous relationships than in current relationships.

Nature and severity of violence in marriages

While there was little variation in the overall five-year rates of marital violence reported by women and men, violence directed at women by their partners was more frequent and severe than violence directed at men.

Multiple victimizations

In the majority of cases, spousal violence is not an isolated incident (Table 2.4). Overall, 61% of people who reported spousal violence had been victimized on more than one occasion during the 5-year period preceding the survey interview. In addition to suffering more severe forms of violence, women were more likely than men to report repeated victimizations. Sixty-five percent of women who reported being assaulted by a partner were victimized on more than one occasion, 26% more than 10 times. By comparison, 54% of men who experienced marital violence were the targets of more than one incident, and 13% said it happened more than 10 times.

Table 2.4
Frequency of violent incidents reported by women and men, past 5 years

Type of violence	Victims					
	Total		Female		Male	
	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%
Total violence by any spouse	**1,239**	**100**	**690**	**100**	**549**	**100**
Once	452	37	225	33	227	41
2-5 times	390	32	197	29	194	35
6-10 times	107	9	72	10	35	6†
More than 10 times	250	20	178	26	72	13
Not stated/Don't know	38	3†	17	3†	21	4†

† *Coefficient of variation is high (16.6% to 33.3%).*
Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
Source: *Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999*

Physical injury and medical attention

Physical injury is another indicator of the severity of spousal violence. Respondents to the 1999 GSS were asked, "During this (these) incident(s) were you (ever) physically injured in any way?" Forty percent of women and 13% of men who had experienced violence in the 5 years preceding the survey interview reported experiencing a physical injury (Table 2.5). Women were three times more likely than men to report being physically injured by an assault. Women (15%) were also five times more likely than men (3%) to require medical attention as a result of a violent incident.

Table 2.5
Severity of spousal violence by sex of victim, past 5 years

Type of violence	Victims					
	Total		Female		Male	
	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%
Total violence by any spouse	**1,239**	**100**	**690**	**100**	**549**	**100**
Severity of the violence						
Physical injury	351	28	279	40	72	13
No physical injury	858	69	396	57	462	84
Not stated/Don't know	30	2†	15	2†	15	3
Received medical attention	119	10	104	15	15	3†
Did not receive medical attention	231	19	174	25	57	10
No physical injury	858	69	396	57	462	84
Not stated/Don't know	31	3†	16	2†	15	3†
Feared for their life	300	24	259	38	41	7†
Did not fear for their life	904	73	414	60	490	89
Not stated/Don't know	35	3†	16	2†	19	3†

† *Coefficient of variation is high (16.6% to 33.3%).*
Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
Source: *Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999*

Fear

In many cases of spousal violence, the violence or the threat of violence was so severe that victims said they feared for their lives. According to this survey, almost one-quarter (24%) of adults living in violent relationships during the 5 year period feared their lives were in danger (Table 2.5). Fear was much more prevalent among women than men. About four women in ten feared for their lives because of the violence, while the rate for men was less than one in ten; a strong indicator that women are subject to more severe violence than men. While the percentage fearing for their lives was higher in the case of past

marriages (35%), it is important to note that 11% of people reporting violence in current marriages had at some point in the previous 5 years felt their lives were in danger.

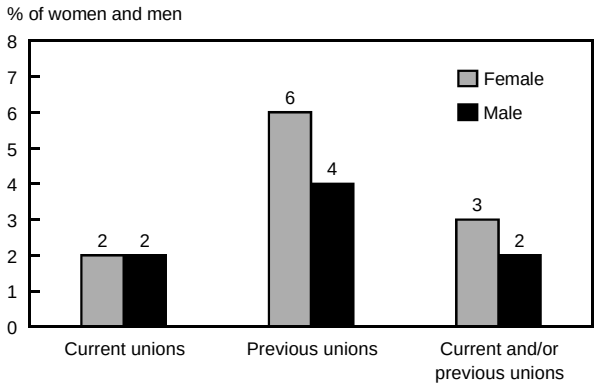
Risk factors of spousal violence

One-year rates of spousal violence

One-year rates of spousal violence follow a pattern similar to five-year rates (Figure 2.3). Rates of violence for women and men who have current partners are the same (2% of men and 2% of women). It is only with respect to previous partners that the difference between female and male rates of violence is evident. In the 12 months prior to the survey interview, 6% of women and 4% of men with previous partners experienced some form of violence within these relationships. Overall, this represents an estimated 220,000 women (3% of women) and 177,000 men (2% of men) with a current or previous partner, who have experienced some form of violence by a partner/spouse within this 12-month period.

Figure 2.3

Spousal violence most likely to be reported in unions that have ended, past 12 months



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999.

One-year rates of violence are useful for assessing the factors associated with the risk of violence. Socio-demographics such as age, marital status, income and education can change over a five-year period. Consequently, when assessing socio-demographic factors associated with the risk of spousal violence it is necessary to look at 12-month rates of violence for those who are currently in a relationship.

Data from the 1999 GSS indicate that experiences of violence that occurred in the 12-month period prior to the survey interview were reported by women and men from various socio-economic backgrounds (Table 2.6).

Table 2.6
One-year rates of spousal violence by personal characteristics of victims, current partners

Type of violence	Victims					
	Total		Female		Male	
	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%
Total violence by a current partner	**250**	**2**	**120**	**2**	**129**	**2**
Age group						
Under 25	23	5 †	14	5†	--	--
25-34	87	3	40	3†	47	4
35-44	82	2	37	2†	45	2†
45 and over	57	1	29	1†	28	1†
Type of union						
Married	172	1	85	1	88	1
Common-law	77	4	36	4†	41	4†
Household income[1]						
Less than $30,000	58	3	35	3†	23	2†
$30,000-$59,999	85	2	40	2†	45	2†
$60,000 or more	66	1	21	1†	45	2†
Not stated/Don't know	41	1 †	25	1†	16	1†
Education						
Less than high school	48	2	27	2†	21	1†
High school diploma	35	2 †	17	1†	18	2†
Some post secondary[2]	112	2	54	2	58	2
University degree	49	2	21	1†	27	2†
Not stated/Don't know	--	--	--	--	--	--
Place of residence						
Urban	204	2	97	2	107	2
Rural	45	1 †	23	1†	22	1†

† *Coefficient of variation is high (16.6% to 33.3%).*
-- *amount too small to be expressed.*
[1] *Subgroups of the population do not always equal the total population due to rounding and unreporting.*
[2] *Some post secondary includes diploma or a certificate from a community college.*
Source: *Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999*

Age

Generally speaking, younger people are at greater risk of experiencing spousal violence than are older people. Young women under 25 years of age reported the highest rates of violence (5%) compared to 1% of women 45 and over. Similarly, younger men aged 25-34 reported higher rates of violence (4%) than their older counterparts (1%). (Small samples for men in the under 25 age category who reported violence prohibit productions of reliable estimates).

Type of union

The estimated risk of being a victim of spousal violence is higher for women and men living in common-law unions. Four percent of those living in common-law unions reported spousal violence compared to only 1% of those who were married. This was the case regardless of whether the victim was male or female.

Income and education

Women and men from all income levels reported experiencing spousal violence. Rates of spousal violence ranged from a high of 3% for those with a household income of less than $30,000 to a low of 1% for those households with an income of $60,000 or more.

Women and men from all educational backgrounds also reported experiencing spousal violence. Victims' level of education showed no relationship to exposure to spousal violence as rates of violence were similar for people from varying educational backgrounds.

Place of Residence

Women and men living in large urban centres reported comparable rates of violence (2%) to those living in rural areas (1%). (Urban areas have minimum population concentrations of 1,000 and a population density of at least 400 per square kilometre, based on the previous census population counts. All territory outside urban areas is considered rural).

Role of alcohol

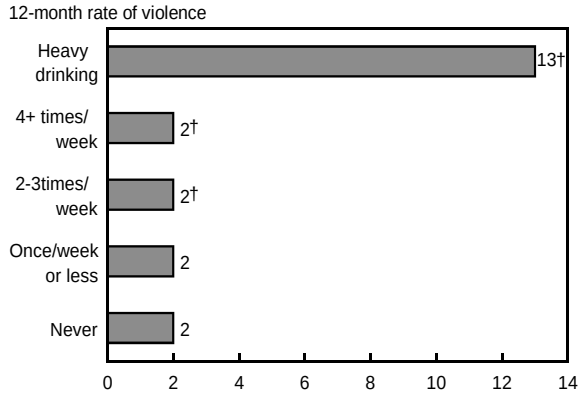
Usually, a number of interacting factors are involved when violence occurs within the context of alcohol abuse, including personality, a predisposition toward the use of violence, mental set, and the setting, all of which can have a bearing on the outcome of interactions (see Sumner and Parker, 1995, for a summary of research). Heavy drinking can result in misinterpretation of social cues and can reduce the partner's ability to cope with stressful situations, sometimes resulting in violence.

Respondents to the GSS were asked how frequently their partner drank in the past month and how many times in the past month their partner had consumed 5 or more drinks on one occasion. Results do not show a strong relationship between 12-month rates of spousal violence and *frequency* of drinking; however, periodic heavy drinking is associated with elevated rates of violence. Twelve month rates of spousal violence were 6 times higher for people whose partners drank heavily (those who consumed five or more drinks on five or more occasions in the past month) compared to those whose partners drank moderately or not at all (Figure 2.4).

The 1999 GSS also asked respondents who had a violent partner in the past 5 years the following question, "During (these) this incident(s) was your spouse/partner drinking?" Results indicate that in 35% of violent relationships a partner was drinking at the time of the incident. Women were more likely to report that their partner had been drinking at the time of the incident (43%) than were men (25%).

Figure 2.4

Alcohol abuse elevates rates of spousal violence



† Coefficient of variation is high (16.6% and 33.3%.)
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999.

The generational cycle of violence

Some research has suggested that witnessing violence against one's mother will increase the likelihood that men may be violent towards their spouses (Jaffe, 1990; Allan, 1991; Rodgers, 1994). The 1993 Violence Against Women Survey (VAWS) showed evidence to support the theory of the generational cycle of violence (Rodgers, 1994). According to the VAWS, men who witnessed violence by their fathers were three times more likely than men without these childhood experiences to be violent toward their wives. The VAWS also found that in 39% of violent relationships, children witnessed the violence.

The GSS indicates that a great number of children continue to witness violence between their parents and should therefore be considered to be at an increased risk of being abused or becoming abusers. In the 5 years preceding the survey interview, 37%[4] of spousal violence victims reported that children had heard or seen violence in the home. This amounts to approximately half a million children who have heard or witnessed a parent being assaulted during the past 5 years.

In many cases, children have resided in households where severe acts of violence have taken place. In those households where a child reportedly witnessed or heard the violence, 41% of victims had feared for their lives at some point in the past 5 years and 45% of victims had been physically injured (Table 2.7). Children were more likely to witness violence against mothers (47%) than

[4] *Figures from the VAWS count marital unions; one victim may have had more than one violent union. If GSS data were calculated to represent unions, the percentage of marital unions where children witnessed violence would be 39%.*

against fathers (25%). In addition, children were most likely to see or hear serious assaults on their mother. In 53% of cases where a child heard or saw a violent incident against their mother, the women had, at some point in the past 5 years, been subject to a threat or an attack so severe that she feared for her life. The same was also true of incidents resulting in physical injury. Children were more than twice as likely to see or hear violence in a home in which their mother had been physically injured.

Table 2.7
Severity of violence witnessed or heard by children, past 5 years

	Total		Violence against women		Violence against men	
	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%
Total violence by any spouse	**1,239**	**100**	**690**	**100**	**549**	**100**
Children saw or heard violence	461	37	321	47	140	25
Children did not see or hear violence	421	34	197	29	225	41
No children at the time	316	26	157	23	159	29
Not stated/Don't know	40	3†	14	2†	26	5†
Total with children who saw or heard violence	461	100	321	100	140	100
Parent feared for their life	188	41	172	53	16	12†
Parent did not fear for their life	270	59	148	46	122	87
Total with children who saw or heard violence	461	100	321	100	140	100
Parent was physically injured	206	45	172	53	34	24
Parent was not physically injured	252	55	148	46	104	74

† *Coefficient of variation is high (16.6% to 33.3%).*
Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
Source: *Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999*

Presence of emotional and financial abuse

Research in the area of family violence has indicated that some women find emotional abuse to be more disturbing than physical assaults, especially if the emotional abuse continues over an extended period of time (Walker, 1984; MacLeod, 1987). Reportedly, the deleterious effects of emotional abuse can leave women feeling demeaned, hopeless and powerless. The concept of emotional abuse was measured by the 1999 General Social Survey through seven different items. All of these items asked women and men about various demeaning and controlling forms of behaviour.

Measuring emotional and financial abuse

Emotional abuse was measured on the 1999 GSS with the following:

I'm going to read a list of statements that some people have used to describe their spouse/partner. I'd like you to tell me whether or not each statement describes your spouse/partner.

1. *He/she tries to limit contact with family or friends.*
2. *He/she puts you down or calls you names to make you feel bad.*
3. *He/she is jealous and doesn't want you to talk to other men/women.*
4. *He/she harms, or threatens to harm, someone close to you.*
5. *He/she demands to know who you are with and where you are at all times.*
6. *He/she damages or destroys your possessions or property.*
7. *He/she prevents you from knowing about or having access to the family income, even if you ask.*

Table 2.8
Number and percentage of women and men reporting emotional abuse by type of abuse, past 5 years

Type of emotional abuse	Victims					
	Total		Female		Male	
	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%
Total with current or previous spouse	16,702	100	8,356	100	8,346	100
Any emotional/financial abuse	**3,038**	**18**	**1,552**	**19**	**1,487**	**18**
He/She tried to limit contact with family and friends	1,053	6	606	7	447	5
He/She put you down or called you names to make you feel bad	1,560	9	1,006	12	554	7
He/She was jealous and did not want you to talk to other men/women	1,773	11	888	11	885	11
He/She harmed, or threatened to harm, someone close to you	405	2	320	4	84	1
He/She demanded to know who you were with and where you were at all times	1,477	9	750	9	727	9
He/She damaged or destroyed your possessions or property	653	4	456	5	198	2
He/She prevented you from knowing about or having access to the family income, even if you asked	446	3	322	4	124	1

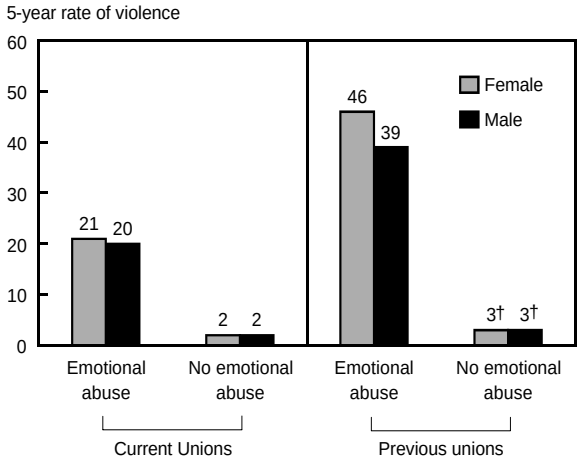
Source: *Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999*

Overall, women and men were equally likely to report experiencing emotional abuse. Results indicate that 19% of women and 18% of men with current or previous partners have experienced some form of emotionally abusive behaviour (Table 2.8). Women were more likely than men to report all forms of emotionally abusive behaviour with the exception of jealousy and demanding to know the whereabouts of the person at all times. Both women and men were equally likely to report experiencing these two forms of controlling behaviour.

Previous research has also indicated that violence often occurs within a context of emotional abuse and controlling behaviours (Dobash & Dobash, 1979, 1984; Gelles & Straus, 1988; Wilson, Johnson & Daly, 1995). The 1999 GSS lends support to this finding. Five-year rates of violence in current relationships were 10 times higher for women and men who reported emotional abuse versus those who did not report emotional abuse (Figure 2.5). The difference was more pronounced in relationships that had ended. Five-year rates of violence were 15 times higher for women and 13 times higher for men who reported emotional abuse by a previous partner, indicating that emotional abuse is an important predictor of physical violence in intimate relationships.

Figure 2.5

Violence most likely to occur in relationships with emotional abuse



† Coefficient of variation is high (16.6% and 33.3%.)
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999.

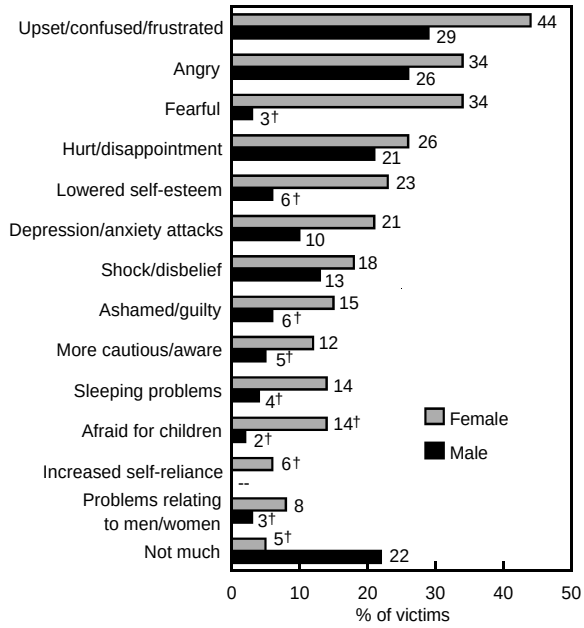
Consequences of spousal violence

Emotional consequences

Of those who reported violence by a partner in the five-year period prior to the survey interview, the most commonly reported consequence for both women and men was being upset, confused and frustrated (Figure 2.6). Anger and hurt/disappointment were also commonly cited consequences for both women and men.

Figure 2.6

Emotional consequences more pronounced for female victims, past 5 years[1]



-- Amount too small to be expressed.
† Coefficient of variation is high (16.6% and 33.3%.)
[1] Total exceeds 100% due to multiple responses.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999.

While women report more serious forms of violence with more serious consequences, women also tend to suffer more negative emotional consequences as a result of the violence than do men. Twenty-two percent of men who reported spousal violence in the past 5 years indicated the violence did not have much impact on them, compared to only 5% of women. Meanwhile, women were much more fearful than men as a result of the violence (34% versus 3%), were more likely to report being afraid for their children (14% compared to 2%), to have sleeping problems (14% compared to 4%), to suffer from depression or anxiety attacks (21% and 10%) and were much more likely to report having lowered self-esteem (23% versus 6%).

Use of Support Services

Various types of social services are available to women and men who are abused by their partners, including counselors, crisis lines, community centres, women's centres, men's centres, and support groups. A total of

48% of women and 17% of men abused by a marital partner used a social service (Table 2.9). Overall, women were more likely than men to report using all types of social services. This may reflect the less severe nature of the violent incidents experienced by men, and the fact that social services for male victims are relatively few in number.

The most frequently used social service for both women and men was a counselor or psychologist (28%), followed by a crisis centre or crisis line (10%) and community centre or family centre (10%). Transition homes were used by 11% of female victims of violence while men's centres or support groups were used by 2% of male victims.

Many male victims (80%) and female victims (48%) did not use a social service. Forty-nine percent of male victims and 44% of female victims reported they did not use a social service because they did not want or need help. A further 26% of male victims and 17% of female victims reported the incident was too minor to require social services. Furthermore, equal proportions of women and men (6%) who did not use a social service stated they did not know of any social services available.

Table 2.9
Use of social services by those who experienced spousal violence, past 5 years

	Victims					
	Total		Female		Male	
	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%
Total violence by any spouse	1,239	100	690	100	549	100
Total who used a social service	**425**	**34**	**334**	**48**	**91**	**17**
Crisis centre or crisis line	128	10	116	17	12	2†
Counselor or psychologist	343	28	261	38	82	15
Community centre or family centre	123	10	103	15	20	4†
Shelter or transition home[1]	73	11	73	11	…	…
Women's centre[1]	74	11	74	11	…	…
Men's centre or support group[2]	12	2†	…	…	12	2†
Police-based or court-based victim services	42	3†	40	6†	--	--
Total who did not use a social service	**774**	**63**	**334**	**48**	**440**	**80**

† *Coefficient of variation is high (16.6% to 33.3%).*
-- *amount too small to be expressed*
… *not applicable*
[1] *Asked only if respondent was female.*
[2] *Asked only if respondent was male.*
Total exceeds 100% due to multiple responses.
Source: *Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999*

Reporting to police

In the early 1980's mandatory charging policies were implemented across Canada to increase charging by the police and prosecution by the Crown in cases of wife assault. Most provinces currently have policies and procedures in place to respond to spousal violence, and some provinces have specialized courts to deal with family violence cases (see Chapter 6).

The 1993 VAWS found that 29% of cases were reported to the police in the 5 years preceding the survey,[5] while according to the 1999 GSS, 37% of violence involving female victims was reported to police over a similar time period (Table 2.10). This may suggest an increased willingness on the part of female victims to become involved in the criminal justice system, perhaps due to efforts by police and Crown prosecutors to improve the way they respond to these types of cases. By contrast, data from the 1999 GSS indicate that 15% of violence involving male victims was reported to the police during the same time period. In cases of wife assault, the police were more likely to find out about the incident from the woman herself (78% of incidents reported to the police) while police were equally likely to find out about cases of husband assault from the man himself or from someone else (50%).

Table 2.10
Violence reported to the police by sex of the victim, past 5 years

	Victims					
	Total		Female		Male	
	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%
Total violence by any spouse	**1,239**	**100**	**690**	**100**	**549**	**100**
Total reported to police	338	27	256	37	82	15
Total not reported to police	864	70	414	60	450	82
Not stated/Don't know	37	3†	20	3†	17	3†
Total reported to police	338	100	256	100	82	100
Reported to police by respondent	240	71	199	78	41	50
Reported to police by someone else	97	29	57	22	41	50

† *Coefficient of variation is high (16.6% to 33.3%).*
Source: *Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999*

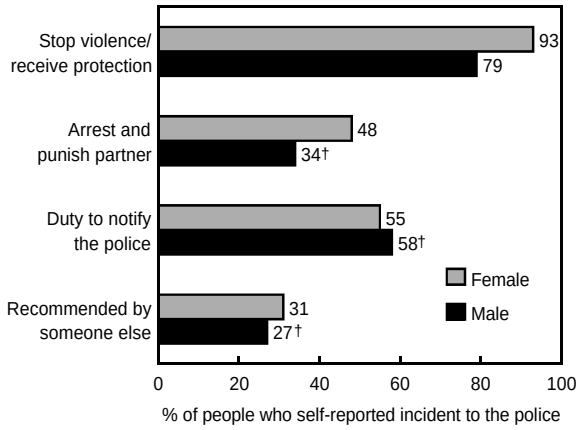
[5] *Readers are cautioned not to compare figures cited here from the 1993 Violence Against Women Survey (VAWS) to figures published elsewhere. Analysis of the VAWS in this text is restricted to reports of violence in the five-year period preceding the survey in order to compare results with the same reference period measured by the 1999 GSS.*

Reasons for Reporting

The majority of women (93%) and men (79%) who reported an incident to the police said they did so to stop the violence or to receive protection from the abuser (Figure 2.7). Women and men were also likely to notify the police because they felt it was their duty (55% and 58% respectively). In addition, women were likely to report the incident to the police so the abuser would be arrested and punished (48% of abused women versus 34% of abused men). Again, this is likely due to the relatively more severe violence experienced by women.

Figure 2.7

Motivations for involving the police somewhat different for women and men, past 5 years[1]



† Coefficient of variation is high (16.6% and 33.3%.)
[1] Asked only of those respondents who reported the incident to the police.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999.

2.2 Trends in victim-reported wife assault

by Dr. Holly Johnson

Statistics Canada has now conducted two in-depth surveys to assess the level of spousal violence in Canada: the 1993 Violence Against Women Survey (VAWS), which measured all types of male violence against women; and the 1999 General Social Survey, which included a special module to measure spousal violence against both women and men. For many years now, various levels of governments and community organizations have put considerable effort into reducing the level of family violence. An important question for these groups and for society in general is whether the prevalence of spousal violence has changed in recent years.

Victimization surveys, in some respects, are preferable to police statistics in assessing changes in the level of spousal violence because variations in police-reported crime may be a function of changes in victims' reporting behaviour or police practices. However, comparisons between different victimization surveys must be made with an appreciation of the methodologies used. Differing contexts, approaches, and even small changes to the wording of questions can affect the manner in which questions are understood by respondents and the way in which concepts are measured. While the 1999 GSS and the 1993 Violence Against Women Survey used a similar module of questions to measure spousal violence, comparisons between the two must be made cautiously due to the somewhat different approaches undertaken.

For example, the VAWS contained a single focus on acts of male violence against women. This helped to focus the attention of respondents on various dimensions of sexual harassment, sexual and physical violence, and women's fear in considerable detail. By contrast, multi-faceted crime victimization surveys are much broader in focus and typically do not have space available to elaborate on any one topic. The 1999 GSS deviated from this method by including a lengthy number of items on spousal violence, and by providing special training for interviewers. Questions on spousal violence were preceded by a detailed introduction about the importance of hearing about violence in the home.

Other methodological differences complicate comparisons between these two surveys. For example, in the 1999 GSS, only those who had contact with a previous spouse during the five years preceding the survey were questioned about violence in those relationships. In the VAWS, all women with previous partners were asked these questions. Had responses to the 1999 GSS not been restricted to a subgroup of those who had contact with past partners, rates of violence in previous relationships would have been somewhat lower (see Tables A5 and A6 for adjusted rates). Results of the GSS are also based on interviews with a sample of women and men 15 years of age and older while respondents to the VAWS were 18 and older.

Changes in rates of violence over time

By limiting analysis of the 1993 VAWS to incidents that occurred in the five-year period prior to the survey interview, rough comparisons can be made to the 1999 GSS. There is some evidence of a decline in wife assault[6] in recent years. Although both surveys estimate one-year rates of 3%, five-year rates declined from 12% in 1993 to 8% in 1999, a drop which is statistically significant.

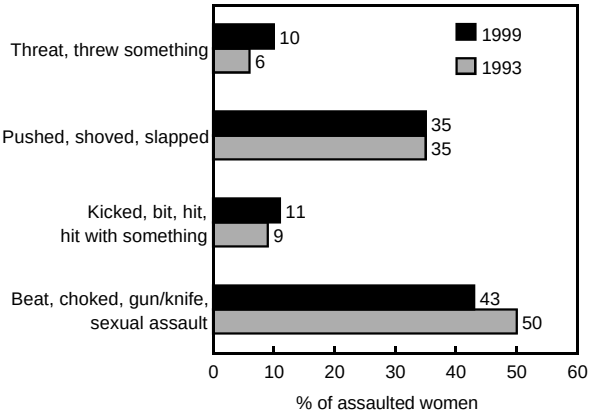
Most indicators point to a decline in the severity of violence committed against women over this time period. The

[6] *Wife assault includes common-law partners.*

proportion of women reporting the more serious forms of violence, including being beaten up, choked, threatened with a gun or knife, or sexually assaulted, was lower in 1999 than in 1993 (43% compared to 50%, a slight but significant decline) (Figure 2.8). Assaults also tended to occur less frequently, were less likely to result in injuries, and were less likely to require medical attention for injuries (Figure 2.9). But, victims of more recent cases were slightly more likely to fear that their lives were in danger from a violent spouse.

Figure 2.8

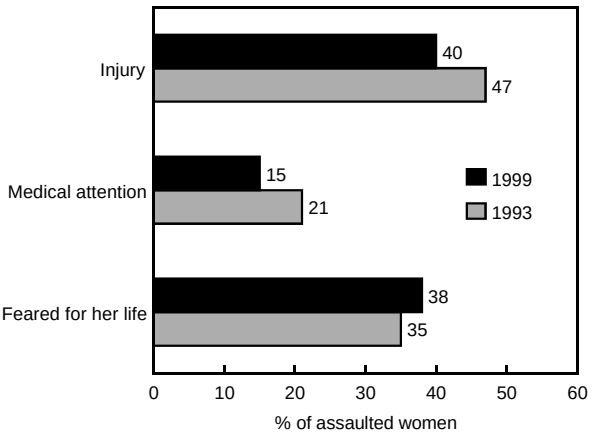
Slight decline in the most serious violence against wives[1,2]



[1] Includes common-law partners.
[2] Counts each victim once according to the most serious type of violence during the 5 years preceding the survey.
Sources: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999, Violence Against Women Survey, 1993.

Figure 2.9

Change in severity of assaults on wives[1]



[1] Includes common-law partners.
Sources: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999, Violence Against Women Survey, 1993.

The differences in the 5-year rates of wife assault produced by the GSS and the VAWS may be due to the fact that these surveys were conducted in different reference periods and the decline may reflect real societal changes. Widespread efforts to reduce family violence and provide support to victims may have contributed to this decline. This result is consistent with homicide data which also point to a decrease in lethal forms of violence between spouses (see Chapter 5).

2.3 Police-reported spousal violence

by Valerie Pottie Bunge

The Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics has been tracking trends in crimes reported to the police since 1962 through the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey. It was not until 1988, however, that the method of data collection was expanded to include the relationship between victims and accused, their age and sex and other details of criminal incidents. There are currently 164 police forces in 7 provinces that participate in this Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey, representing nearly one-half (46%) of the national volume of reported crime. Although UCR2 data are not nationally representative, they provide useful descriptive information about the type of crimes that come to the attention of the police.

In 1999, victims of spousal violence[7] represented 18% of all victims of violent offences reported to this sample of police agencies in Canada. Women were more than 6 times as likely to be the victims of these offences than were men: 31% of female victims and 5% of male victims were attacked by a spouse. Of the more than 27,000 victims of spousal violence reported to a sub-set of police departments in 1999, women accounted for the majority of victims (87%) (Table 2.11). This is partially because women are more likely than men to report the violent incident to the police. As previously mentioned, the 1999 GSS found that in the past 5 years, 37% of cases of spousal violence involving female victims were reported to the police versus 15% of spousal violence involving male victims.

[7] *In this section, spousal violence refers to* Criminal Code *violent offences committed against women and men. This differs from data collected by the 1999 GSS, in that information was collected on physical and sexual assault only.*

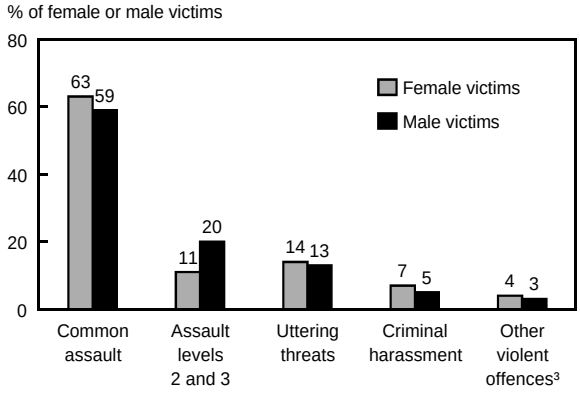
Table 2.11
Violence reported to police by sex of victims and relationship to accused, 1999[1,2]

Relationship of victim to accused[3]	Victim Sex					
	Total		Female		Male	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total Family	**42,433**	**28**	**32,715**	**42**	**9,718**	**13**
Total spouse	*27,100*	*18*	*23,502*	*31*	*3,598*	*5*
Spouse[4]	17,543	11	15,350	20	2,193	3
Ex-spouse	9,557	6	8,152	11	1,405	2
Other family	*15,333*	*10*	*9,213*	*12*	*6,120*	*8*
Parent	5,526	4	3,215	4	2,311	3
Child	2,873	2	1,917	2	956	1
Other immediate	4,207	3	2,491	3	1,716	2
Extended family	2,727	2	1,590	2	1,137	1
Total acquaintances	**61,776**	**40**	**28,231**	**37**	**33,545**	**44**
Close friend	10,555	7	7,883	10	2,672	3
Business relationship	11,932	8	4,241	6	7,691	10
Casual acquaintance	39,289	26	16,107	21	23,182	30
Stranger	**49,578**	**32**	**16,050**	**21**	**33,528**	**44**
Total number of victims	**153,787**	**100**	**76,996**	**100**	**76,791**	**100**

1 Excludes cases where the sex of the victim is unknown.
2 Data are not nationally representative. Based on a sample of 164 police departments, representing 46% of the national volume of crime in 1999.
3 Excludes cases where the relationship between the victim and the offender is unknown.
4 Spouse includes both married and common-law partners.
***Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey .*

Figure 2.10

Common assault most frequent type of police-reported spousal violence, 1999[1,2]



[1] Data are not nationally representative. Based on a sample of 164 police departments, representing 46% of the national volume of crime in 1999.
[2] Includes all cases where the accused-victim relationship is spouse or ex-spouse, including both married and common-law relationships.
[3] Other violent offences includes sexual assault, discharging a firearm with intent, kidnapping, hostage taking, abduction, robbery, extortion, homicide and attempts, criminal negligence, and other offences causing death, unlawfully causing bodily harm, assault against a peace-public officer and other assaults.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey.

Type of incident

In 1999, common assault represented the largest proportion (63%) of spousal violence incidents reported to the sample of police forces. Women were slightly more likely to be victims of common assault (63%) than were men (59%) (Figure 2.10).

Uttering threats was the second most frequently reported crime, accounting for 14% of all crime against spouses. Women and men were equally likely to be the victims of this offence (14% and 13% respectively). Assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm and aggravated assault (level 2 and level 3) were the third most frequently reported crimes, accounting for 12% of all crime against spouses. Men were proportionately more likely to be the victims of this more violent offence: 20% compared to 11% of women. This is partially because, according to police statistics, female aggressors are more likely to rely on weapons when committing spousal assault while males are more likely to rely on physical force.

Criminal harassment (stalking) accounted for 7% of offences against spouses – the proportions being similar for female and male victims (Figure 2.10). Four percent of victims experienced other violent offences[8] (4% of females and 3% of males).

Sex of victims

Women made up the vast majority of victims of all forms of spousal violence reported to the police. This was particularly the case for sexual assault and kidnapping/ hostage taking. The proportions changed for offences such as murder in the 2nd degree, aggravated assault and extortion where men were the victims in approximately 30% of the cases.

8 Other violent offences include sexual assault, discharging a firearm with intent, kidnapping, hostage taking, abduction, robbery, extortion, homicide and attempts, criminal negligence, other offences causing death, unlawfully causing bodily harm, assault against a peace-public officer and other assaults.

Two distinct sets of crime indicators: police-reported and victim-reported data

Police-reported and victim-reported criminal victimization data produce two distinct sets of crime indicators.

The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey collects information on criminal offences reported to, or detected by, the police. However, it is well documented that only a small portion of all criminal events are reported to the police. To become "known to the police" a crime must survive a succession of victim and police decisions, including recognition by the victim that a crime has occurred, a willingness to report it, and, steps taken by police to enter the occurrence into official police records. Consequently, any measure of criminal activity based on officially recorded crime statistics will be an underestimate.

Victimization surveys evolved out of a recognized need for information about the "dark figure of crime", those crimes which are not reported to the police and therefore not included in police statistics. These data are gathered from the victims themselves, regardless of whether the incident came to the attention of the police. The following chart briefly outlines the major differences between police-reported and victim-reported data.

Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey	General Social Survey (Victimization Survey)
Data are collected using police records.	Data are collected from a random sample of the population.
Collects information on all recorded criminal incidents regardless of victim's age.	Target population is persons aged 15 and over, excluding full-time residents of institutions.
Counts only those incidents reported to and recorded by police.	Collects crimes reported and not reported to police.
Collects information from all victims who report the incident to the police regardless of whether they have a telephone.	Excludes households without telephones (2%).
Includes all reported crimes, regardless of language capabilities of victims.	Excludes people who speak neither English nor French.
Sources of error:	**Sources of error:**
Reporting by the public.	Sampling error.
Processing error, edit failure, non-responding police departments.	Non-sampling error related to the following: coverage, respondent error (e.g., recall error), non-response, coding, edit and estimation.
Police discretion, changes in policy and procedures.	

For more information on the differences between police-reported and victim-reported crime please see "An Overview of the Differences between Police-Reported and Victim-Reported Crime, 1997" by Lucie Ogrodnik and Cathy Trainor, Statistics Canada. Catalogue 85-542-XPE.

Physical injury

The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey defines minor injuries as those that require no professional medical treatment or only some first aid, whereas major injuries require professional medical attention at the scene or transportation to a medical facility. In 1999, victims of spousal violence who reported these crimes to the police were equally likely to suffer no injuries (46%) or minor physical injuries (47%) and less likely to suffer major physical injuries or death (2%). It should be noted that minor injuries include very serious bruising and that many injures are not immediately apparent to the police officer investigating the offence. If injuries are visible and do not require medical attention, they are coded as minor by the police officer.

Table 2.12
Level of injury by sex of victims in police-reported spousal violence, 1999[1]

Level of injury	Victims					
	Total		Female		Male	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total	**27,100**	**100**	**23,502**	**100**	**3,598**	**100**
Unknown	1,315	5	1,148	5	167	5
No injuries[2]	12,442	46	10,733	46	1,709	48
Minor injuries	12,720	47	11,098	47	1,622	45
Major physical injuries or death	623	2	523	2	100	3

[1] *Data are not nationally representative. Based on a sample of 164 police departments, representing 46% of the national volume of crime in 1999.*
[2] *No visible injuries were noted at the time of the incident or the violation did not involve the use of weapons or physical force against the victim.*
Source: *Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey*

Laying charges

When a criminal investigation leads to the identification of a suspect and a charge is laid, the incident is recorded as "cleared by charge". When an accused has not been identified in connection with an incident the incident is classified as "not cleared". If there is not enough evidence or if the police decide not to lay a charge for a variety of other reasons (e.g., the victim requests that charges not be laid or refuses to cooperate with the police, or the police recommend alternative measures), the incident is recorded as "cleared otherwise".

Of the spousal violence incidents where an accused was identified, charges were laid in the majority (79%) of violent incidents between spouses (Table 2.13). This was more often the case for female victims (81%) than male victims (62%) of spousal violence. The remaining 21% of police-reported incidents were cleared otherwise. In 15% of incidents, the police did not lay charges at the request of the victim. This happened more frequently with male victims (26%) than female victims (14%). In 3% of cases, the police did not lay charges at their own discretion. Again, the police were three times more likely to use departmental discretion with male victims than female victims (7% versus 2%). This pattern of clearing cases other than by a charge, for female and male victims of spousal violence has remained relatively consistent between 1995 and 1999.

Table 2.13
Incident clearance status by sex of victims in police-reported spousal violence, 1999[1,2]

Incident clearance status	Victims					
	Total		Female		Male	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total cleared	**24,468**	**100**	**21,328**	**100**	**3,140**	**100**
Cleared by charge	19,338	79	17,310	81	2,028	62
Cleared otherwise total	5,130	21	4,018	19	1,112	38
Complainant requests charges not be laid	3,732	15	2,949	14	783	26
Department discretion	655	3	487	2	168	7
Other[3]	743	3	582	3	161	5

[1] *Excludes cases where no accused was identified in connection with the case.*
[2] *Data are not nationally representative. Based on a sample of 164 police departments, representing 46% of the national volume of crime in 1999.*
[3] *Other includes suicide of accused, death of accused, death of the complainant, reasons beyond the control of the department, diplomatic immunity, accused is less than 12 years old, committal of the accused to a mental hospital, accused is involved in other incidents, accused is already sentenced, and admittance into a diversionary program.*
Source: *Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey*

Location of the incident

As would be expected, a large majority (88%) of reported incidents of spousal violence occur in homes[9]. This is generally true whether the accused was a current spouse (92%) or an ex-spouse (82%). For violent incidents occurring in homes, the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey also collects information on occupancy of the dwelling. Occupancy is defined as having legal ownership of, or a legal right to reside in that dwelling. The majority of spousal incidents occurred in residences that were legally occupied by both partners (65%). However, a significant percentage of spousal violence incidents occurred in homes that were occupied solely by the victim (26%). Of those incidents that occurred in a victim-occupied dwelling, 78% involved ex-spouses. These ex-spouses were most likely to be charged with common assault (46%), criminal harassment (28%) and uttering threats (13%).

2.4 Trends in police-reported spousal violence[10]

Variations in police-reported spousal assaults between 1995 and 1999 may have been influenced by many factors, including reporting by the public to the police; reporting by the police to the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics; and the impact of new initiatives such as changes in legislation, policies or enforcement practices.

Based on a sample of 106 police agencies in 6 provinces that have consistently participated in the Revised Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey since 1995, it is possible to examine certain emerging trends in police-reported spousal violence in Canada.

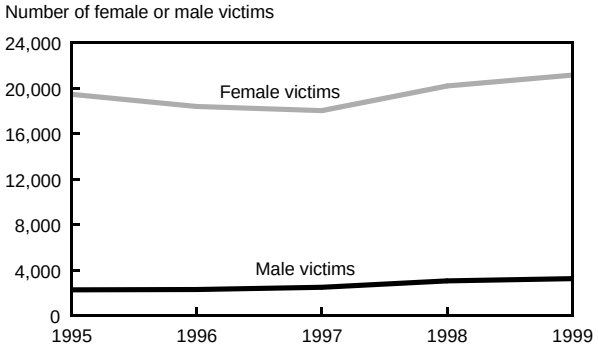
Overall, the number of incidents reported to the police between 1995 and 1999 has increased 13%. However, there was great variation in the number of incidents reported to police within these years. Between 1995 and 1997 the number of incidents reported to the police dropped 5%, then rose 19% between 1997 and 1999. The number of female and male victims of spousal violence increased between 1997 and 1999 (Figure 2.11).

The decline in reporting of spousal assault incidents to the police between 1995 and 1997 was driven by the number of women who reported spousal violence incidents to the police. Between 1995 and 1997, the number of spousal incidents reported to the police by women dropped 7%, while the number of spousal incidents reported to the police by men increased 10%.

[9] *Based on a non-representative sample of 164 police departments, representing 46% of the national volume of crime in 1999.*
[10] *Police departments across Canada began participating at various times throughout the history of the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey. As a result, this analysis is limited to 106 police departments that have consistently reported data for 5 years (1995-1999). The data represent approximately 41% of the national volume of crime in Canada. With the exception of Quebec, data are collected from urban police departments and are not nationally representative.*

Figure 2.11

Recent increase in the number of spousal assaults reported to the police, 1995-1999[1]



[1] Data are not nationally representative. Based on a sample of 106 police departments, representing 41% of the national volume of crime in 1999.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey.

2.5 International Comparisons of Spousal Violence

While not directly comparable to the 1999 General Social Survey, surveys have been conducted in the United States and Great Britain which have interviewed both women and men about their experiences with spousal violence. What follows is a brief overview of the results of these surveys (For more information see Table 2.15 and the referenced publications).

The US National Violence Against Women (NVAW) Survey[11]

A national telephone survey on violence against both women and men was conducted from November 1995 to May 1996 in the United States. It was funded by the National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This nationally representative survey of 8,000 women and 8,000 men, aged 18 years and over, asked about experiences with rape, physical assault and stalking.

The NVAW Survey found that women experience significantly more partner violence than do men: 25% of women, compared with 8% of men, said they were raped and/or physically assaulted by a current or former spouse, cohabiting partner, or date in their lifetime. The rate of rape and/or physical assault by spouses in the previous 12 months was 1.5% for women and 0.9% for men. According to survey estimates, this amounts to approximately 1.5 million women and 834,700 men being raped and/or physically assaulted by an intimate partner in a one-year period in the United States.

Table 2.14
Percentage of persons physically assaulted by an intimate partner in their lifetime by type of assault and sex of the victim[1], United States

Type of Assault	Women	Men
	%	%
Total assault by an intimate partner	**25**	**8**
Threw something	8	4
Pushed, grabbed, shoved	18	5
Pulled hair	9	2
Slapped, hit	16	6
Kicked, bit	6	3
Choked, tried to tie down	6	1
Hit with object	5	3
Beat up	9	1
Threatened with gun	4	-
Threated with knife	3	2
Used gun	1	-
Used knife	1	1
Rape	8	-

- nil or zero.
[1] Intimate partner includes current or former spouses, opposite-sex or same-sex cohabiting partners, dates and boyfriends/girlfriends.
Source: *Tjaden, P and Thoennes, N. (2000).*

The NVAW Survey also found that women were two to three times more likely than men to report that an intimate partner threw something that could hurt them or pushed, grabbed or shoved them (Table 2.14). Women were also 6 to 9 times more likely to report that an intimate partner beat them up, choked or tried to tie them down.

Like the Canadian GSS, results from the NVAW Survey indicate that women suffer more severe consequences as a result of the violent incident. For example, 41% of women were injured in physical assaults between intimates compared with 19% of men. Women were also more likely than men to require medical attention (11% versus 4% of men), hospitalization (9% versus 3%), lose time from work (18% versus 11%) and receive counseling (27% versus 22%) as a result of the violent incident.

[11] For more information on the National Violence Against Women Survey please see Tjaden, P. and Thoennes, N., 2000. "Prevalence and Consequences of Male-to-Female and Female-to-Male Partner Violence as Measured by the National Violence Against Women Survey". Violence Against Women 6(2): 142-161.

The British Crime Survey (BCS)[12]

The BCS has been measuring the extent of crime against adults living in private households since 1982. Face-to-face interviews are conducted with a large sample of adults who are representative of the household population of England and Wales. In 1996, over 16,000 people were interviewed. To improve measurement of domestic violence, the 1996 BCS included a specially designed computer-assisted self-interviewing (CASI) component for both women and men aged 16 to 59. The self-completion format emphasized anonymity and confidentiality, and covered physical assaults and frightening threats committed by current and former partners. In the CASI questionnaire, domestic violence was defined to include only incidents between people who were currently, or had been, in an 'intimate' partnership. Same-sex partnerships were counted.

The BCS found that 4% of women and 4% of men had been physically assaulted by a current or former partner in the last year. When frightening threats were also counted, the rates increased slightly to 6% of women and 5% of men.

Women were twice as likely as men to have been injured by a partner in the last year, and three times as likely to have suffered frightening threats. They were also more likely to have been assaulted three or more times.

Women were more likely to say they had experienced domestic assault at some time in their lives: 23% of women and 15% of men aged 16 to 59 said they had been physically assaulted by a current or former partner at some time. The inclusion of frightening threats increases these figures to 26% and 17%, respectively. One-half of female victims and one-third of male victims had been assaulted on three or more occasions.

Like the Canadian GSS, pushing, shoving, and grabbing were the most common types of assaults reported (almost two-thirds involved this type of action). Kicking, slapping and hitting with fists took place in nearly half of the incidents (47%). Throwing objects at the victim was also reported quite frequently (21%) in the British Crime Survey, although the Canadian GSS found this happened much more frequently (49%). Less common were choking, strangling, and suffocating – although nearly one in ten victims said they had suffered this during the last assault. Nearly all victims admitted they were upset by the experience, with women more likely to say so than men. The majority of female victims said they had been very frightened, compared to a minority of men.

[12] *For more information on the British Crime Survey, please see Mirrlees-Black, C. 1999.* Domestic Violence: Findings from a new British Crime Survey self-completion questionnaire. *London: Home Office.*

Table 2.15
International comparisons of spousal violence

Survey	Sample size	Mode of interviewing	Prevalence rates	Definition of spousal violence
Canada General Social Survey, 1999	14,269 women and 11,607 men age 15 and over	Telephone	3% of women and 2% of men	A module of questions on sexual and physical violence by a current or former spouse[13] with whom they had contact with in the past 5 years, among questions about other types of crimes.
United States National Violence Against Women Survey, 1996[14]	8,000 women and 8,000 men age 18 and over	Telephone	1.5% of women and 0.9% of men	Rape and physical assault by a date, current or former spouse.
England and Wales British Crime Survey, 1996[15]	6,000 women and 5,000 men, 16 to 59 years of age	Computer-assisted self-interviewing	4.2% of women and 4.2% of men	A module of questions on physical violence by spouses among questions about other types of crimes.

[13] *Spouses include common-law partners.*
[14] *Tjaden and Thoennes, 2000.*
[15] *Mirrlees-Black, 1999.*

3.0 ABUSE OF OLDER ADULTS BY FAMILY MEMBERS[16]

by Valerie Pottie Bunge

In 1999, 3.8 million persons, or 12% of the Canadian population, were aged 65 years and older. The proportion of older adults in the population has grown from 9% in 1977. It is projected to grow further, reaching 17% by 2016 and 23% by the year 2041. This increase will have significant impacts on all facets of Canadian society, in particular, health and social services, consumer and financial markets, volunteer organizations that serve older adults, and the criminal justice system.

Since the 1980s, abuse of older Canadians has gained the attention of service providers, researchers, lobbyists, as well as policy makers. Abuse can include physical, psychological or financial mistreatment of adults over the age of 65 years. To date, a lack of data has made it difficult to quantify and truly understand the nature of abuse against older adults.

There is no one theory that can adequately account for the abuse of older adults. Some researchers would argue that abuse of older adults is spousal abuse grown old (Sacco, 1993). Other researchers believe that abusive behaviours are learned within the family and that adult children imitate behaviours which were modeled by their parents (Pittaway et al, 1995). Others believe that abuse results from the various dependencies between the abuser and the victim. Yet other researchers look to the psychological and behavioural patterns of the abuser to explain the abusive behaviours. And finally, some investigators and practitioners believe that abuse of older adults occurs because of the negative societal attitudes towards the elderly.

3.1 Self-reported abuse of older adults

The 1999 GSS asked older Canadians a series of questions about emotional and financial abuse by children, caregivers[17] and spouses[18], as well as questions about physical and sexual assaults by children,[19] caregivers, and spouses. In total, 4,324 Canadians aged 65 and over living in private dwellings were interviewed for this survey. The GSS does not interview residents of institutions (e.g., retirement homes, or hospitals), consequently these results pertain only to those older Canadians who are living in a private household. Currently, there exist very little empirical data regarding the incidence or prevalence of neglect, or physical or sexual violence against older Canadians who reside in institutions.

In reviewing this analysis, it should be kept in mind that the study's findings are based on what victims themselves disclosed to interviewers. Despite the relative merits of the telephone survey method, including its anonymity, it seems reasonable to assume that some respondents do not report incidents of abuse, or under-report their frequency. In particular, telephone surveys are expected to undercount incidents of abuse directed at victims who are confined to their rooms without access to telephones, or who are isolated in some other manner.

Physical and sexual violence

Very little physical and sexual violence[20] was reported to the GSS by older Canadians who were residing in private dwellings. In fact, only 1% of this population of seniors indicated they had been physically or sexually assaulted by a spouse, adult child or caregiver in the five years prior to the survey. This is very similar to a 1989 study (Podnieks et al, 1990) which found that 0.5% of older persons living in private dwellings had experienced some form of physical violence. There were too few cases of physical and sexual violence against older persons reported to the GSS to permit detailed analysis by personal characteristics of victims.

Emotional and financial abuse

Seven percent of older adults reported experiencing some form of emotional or financial abuse by a child, caregiver, or spouse. The vast majority of this abuse was committed by spouses. Virtually no abuse by caregivers was reported to this survey. Emotional abuse (7%) was reported more frequently than financial abuse (1%). The most common

[16] *For the purposes of this analysis, "older adults" refers to Canadians aged 65 and over.*

[17] *A caregiver is defined as anyone, either paid or unpaid, who provides assistance or healthcare in the respondent's home. This includes meal preparation, personal care or medical assistance.*

[18] *Spouses include current and former partners as well as common-law partners.*

[19] *Respondents were not asked about sexual assaults by children.*

[20] *Physical violence against older adults was measured using the same technique as was used to measure physical violence against spouses/partners.*

form of emotional abuse reported by older adults was being put down or called names (3%), followed by limiting contact with family or friends (2%) (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1
Percentage of older adults reporting emotional and financial abuse by adult children, caregivers, current or previous spouses[1], by type of abuse, past 5 years

Type of emotional abuse	Total	
	No. (000s)	%
Any emotional/financial abuse	**232**	**7**
Limits contact with family and friends	68	2
Puts you down or calls you names to make you feel bad	103	3
Damages or destroys possessions or property	19	1†
Harms, or threatens to harm, someone close to you	17	1†
Prevents you from knowing about or having access to the family income, even if you ask	32	1†
Financial abuse[2]	44	1†

† *Coefficient of variation is high (16.6% to 33.3%).*
[1] *Includes common-law partners*
[2] *Financial abuse includes forcing someone to relinquish control over their finances, forcing someone to give up something of value, and forcing someone to change their Last Will and Testament or Power of Attorney.*
Source: *Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999*

Measuring emotional and financial abuse of older adults

Emotional and financial abuse of older adults is measured on the 1999 GSS by a module of questions regarding abuse by spouses, children and caregivers. Due to the distinct nature of these relationships, variations of the emotional and financial abuse questions were asked depending on the relationship between the respondent and the perpetrator. Respondents were asked the same module of emotional and financial abuse questions by spouses regardless of age. However, to measure financial and emotional abuse by children and caregivers, a slightly different module of questions was asked (see below).

Respondents aged 65 and over were read the following:

I'm going to read a list of statements that some people have used to describe their children (caregiver). I'd like you to tell me whether or not each statement describes any of them.

1. *They try to limit your contact with family or friends (asked of children only).*
2. *They put you down or call you names.*
3. *They damage or destroy your possessions or property.*
4. *They harm, or threaten to harm, someone close to you.*
5. *They prevent you from knowing about or having access to your income, even if you ask (asked of children only).*
6. *They try to force you to relinquish control over your finances when you don't want to.*
7. *They try to force you to give up something of value when you don't want to.*
8. *They try to force you to change your Last Will and Testament or try to obtain Power of Attorney over your finances when you don't want them to.*

Risk factors

Data from the 1999 GSS indicate that emotional and financial abuse of older adults cuts across all socio-economic lines (Table 3.2). Older adults from all income brackets, education levels and age groups reported some form of emotional or financial abuse.

Table 3.2
Personal characteristics of older adults 65+ who reported emotional and financial abuse by an adult child, caregiver, current or previous spouse[1], past 5 years

	Total	
	No. (000s)	%
Total emotional/financial abuse	**232**	**7**
Sex of respondent		
Male	124	9
Female	108	6
Marital status		
Married/common-law	174	8
Widowed	34	4†
Divorced/Separated	21	13†
Single	--	--
Not stated/Don't know	--	--
Household income		
Less than $15,000	25	8†
$15,000-$29,999	69	10
$30,000-$39,999	35	11†
$40,000-$59,999	23	8†
$60,000 or more	22	11†
Not stated/Don't know	57	4
Education		
Less than high school	110	8
High school diploma	26	6†
Some post secondary[2]	61	9
University degree	27	8†
Not stated/Don't know	--	--
Place of residence		
Urban	164	7
Rural	67	9

† *Coefficient of variation is high (16.6% to 33.3%).*
-- *amount too small to be expressed*
[1] *Includes common-law partners.*
[2] *Some post secondary includes diploma or a certificate from a community college.*
Source: *Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999*

Sex

Men were more likely than women to report being victims of emotional or financial abuse by adult children, caregivers, or spouses. Nine percent of older men and 6% of older women reported being victims of emotional or financial abuse.

Marital Status

Older adults who were divorced or separated were at the highest risk of being emotionally or financially abused by a caregiver, adult child, or spouse. Thirteen percent of older adults who were divorced or separated reported experiencing emotional or financial abuse. This is more than three times the rate for those who are widowed (4%) and almost double the rate of those who were married or living in a common-law union (8%).

Household income

The highest rates of emotional and financial abuse were reported by older adults whose household income was between $30,000 and $39,999 (11%) and by those whose household income was $60,000 or more per year. Those reporting household incomes of less than $15,000 and household incomes between $40,000 and $59,999 per year reported similar rates of emotional and financial abuse (8%).

Education

The highest rates of emotional and financial abuse were reported by older adults with some post secondary education (9%), while the lowest rates were reported by those with a high school diploma (6%). Older adults with a university degree and less than high school reported similar rates of emotional and financial abuse (8%).

Place of residence

Older adults living in rural areas reported higher rates of emotional and financial abuse (9%) than their urban counterparts (7%).

3.2 Police-reported violence against older adults[21]

In 1999, adults aged 65 and over represented 2% of all victims of violent offences reported to a sample of police agencies in Canada[22]. According to police reported statistics, older adults are most likely to be victimized by non-family members (67%), the highest proportion of which were strangers. A smaller proportion of older adults were victimized by family members (27%). As is the case with other types of family violence, police statistics likely underestimate the extent of the problem, since many older adults who are abused by family members may be reluctant to report it to the authorities. They may fear that intervention from outsiders may aggravate family problems or that they will be removed from their families and placed in an institution. The following analysis should be interpreted with these caveats in mind.

In 1999, there were 802 cases of violence against older adults by family members reported to a sample of police forces. Among those who were victimized by a family member, older adults were most likely to be victimized by adult children (43%) and spouses (28%) and least likely to be victimized by elderly parents or siblings (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3
Number and proportion of older adult victims of violent crime by sex of victims and relationship to accused, 1999[1,2]

Relationship of victim to accused	Victim					
	Total		Female		Male	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total	**3,019**	**100**	**1,528**	**100**	**1,491**	**100**
Unknown	185	6	80	5	105	7
Non-family	2,032	67	918	60	1,114	75
Family	802	27	530	35	272	18
Total family	**802**	**100**	**530**	**100**	**272**	**100**
Spouse	226	28	181	34	45	17
Parent	50	6	27	5	23	8
Adult child	341	43	196	37	145	53
Sibling[3]	78	10	53	10	25	9
Extended family[4]	107	13	73	14	34	13

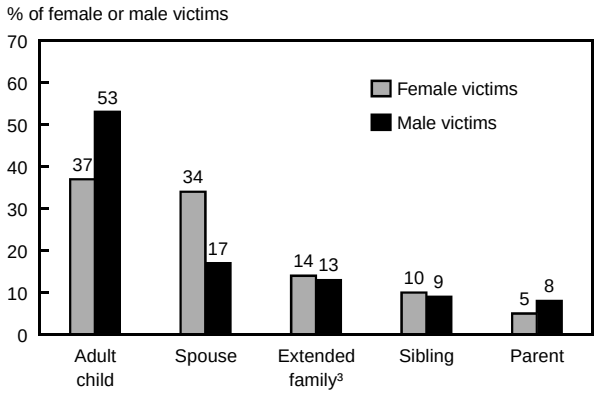
Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
1 *Includes only cases where victim sex and family victim-accused relationship are known. Excludes cases where age of the victim is unknown.*
2 *Data are not nationally representative. Based on a sample of 164 police departments, representing 46% of the national volume of crime in 1999.*
3 *Sibling includes natural, step, foster, or adopted siblings.*
4 *Extended family includes others related by blood or marriage, e.g., grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and in-laws.*
Source: *Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey*

21 *In this section, violence refers to* Criminal Code *violent offences committed against persons aged 65 and over.*
22 *In 1999, there were 164 police forces in 7 provinces that participated in this Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey, representing nearly one-half (46%) of the national volume of reported crime.*

Violence against older adults by family members is different for women and men. The majority of older men were victimized by an adult child (53%), while older women were likely to be victimized by both adult children (37%) and spouses (34%) (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1

Older adults most frequently victimized by adult children and spouses, 1999[1,2]



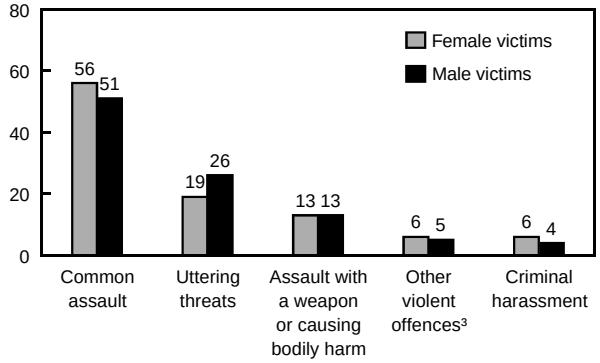
[1] Data are not nationally representative. Based on a sample of 164 police departments, representing 46% of the national volume of crime in 1999.
[2] Includes all violent offences against victims 65 years and older.
[3] Extended family includes grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, sister/brother-in-laws, parents-in-law, etc.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey.

The majority of older adults were the victims of common assault (54%), followed by uttering threats (22%) and assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (13%). This was the case regardless of whether the victim was female or male (Figure 3.2).

According to police-reported statistics, most victimized older adults suffered no injuries as a result of the incident (51%). However, 42% did suffer some form of injury; 38% reported minor injuries while 4% of older victims suffered major injuries or death as a consequence of their victimization (Table 3.4). Given the age of the victims, the implications of minor injuries can be far reaching. For example, injuries may complicate existing health problems and reduce a person's ability to function independently. Furthermore, the resulting fear of a repeat victimization can also have immobilizing effects.

Figure 3.2

Common assault most frequent offence by family members against older adults, 1999[1,2]



[1] Data are not nationally representative. Based on a sample of 164 police departments, representing 46% of the national volume of crime in 1999.
[2] Includes all violent offences against victims 65 years and older.
[3] Other violent offences includes sexual assault, discharging a firearm with intent, kidnapping, hostage taking, abduction, robbery, extortion, homicide and attempts, criminal negligence, and other offences causing death, unlawfully causing bodily harm, assault against a peace-public officer and other assaults.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey.

Table 3.4
Level of injury by sex of older adult victims, 1999[1]

Level of injury	Victims					
	Total		Female		Male	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total	**802**	**100**	**530**	**100**	**272**	**100**
Unknown	50	6	34	6	16	6
No injuries[2]	411	51	257	48	154	57
Minor injuries	306	38	215	41	91	33
Major physical injuries or death	35	4	24	5	11	4

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
[1] Data are not nationally representative. Based on a sample of 164 police departments, representing 46% of the national volume of crime in 1999.
[2] No visible injuries were noted at the time of the incident or the violation did not involve the use of weapons or physical force against the victim.
Source: *Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey.*

4.0 VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN AND YOUTH BY FAMILY MEMBERS

by Daisy Locke

Maltreatment of children and youth is a complex issue that can have devastating consequences on not only the children and youth involved, but on society in general. However, there is no single source for national data on the nature and extent of child maltreatment in Canada. Current information on child maltreatment is limited primarily to data based on police-reported incidents of assault and homicide, hospitalizations for violence-related injury, and provincial/territorial child welfare caseload data. Although these sources can begin to provide information about the incidence and characteristics of cases that come to the attention of authorities, they cannot provide information about the vast number of unreported cases. Despite the existence of mandatory reporting laws in provinces and territories requiring all citizens to report child abuse and neglect to authorities, it has been estimated that as many as 90% of cases are not reported to child welfare agencies (MacMillan et al, 1996).

There are many factors that lead to the underreporting of these incidents including children not comprehending that they are being abused (Duffy and Momirov, 1997); the dependency of children on their abusers; the fear of the consequences of speaking out; and inadequate training of health care professionals to recognize signs of child abuse and neglect (Loo et al, 1999). While maltreatment can encompass a range of behaviours including physical assault, sexual assault, emotional/psychological abuse, neglect, and witnessing family violence, this chapter focuses on physical and sexual assaults of children and youth by family members.

4.1 Violence against children and youth reported to police[23]

While police-reported incidents of violence against children can represent only a partial image of the extent of violence against children and youth, police reports provide an opportunity to analyze cases of maltreatment that are detected and acted on by a sample of police agencies in Canada.

In 1999, children and youth under 18 years of age made up 23% of the Canadian population and were the victims in 24% of assaults reported to a sample of police departments. They represented a disproportionately high majority of all sexual assault victims (60%), and one-fifth of physical assault victims. It should be noted, however, that in actual numbers, there were almost three times as many physical assaults against children and youth as sexual assaults due to the higher prevalence of physical assaults overall (Table 4.1).

Children and youth were most likely to be victimized by acquaintances (52%), followed by family members (24%) and then strangers (19%) (Table 4.2). Five percent of children and youth were assaulted by persons with whom their relationship was unknown. Children and youth were assaulted by family members in 30% of sexual assaults, and 22% of physical assaults reported to the police in 1999. Girls and boys were the victims of sexual assault by family members in roughly similar proportions (31% and 29% respectively). In the case of physical assault, however, girls were almost twice as likely as boys to be assaulted by family members (30% and 16%) and less likely to be assaulted by strangers (14% and 24% respectively). This is consistent with the pattern of physical assaults against adults, where a higher proportion of women were victimized by family members (57%), more specifically by spouses (47%), than was the case for men (14% and 8% respectively).

Within families, children and youth were most often assaulted by parents. Sixty-six percent of child and youth victims of physical assault and 42% of the child and youth victims of sexual assault were victimized by their parents. (Figure 4.1). Nineteen percent of children and youth were physically assaulted and 29% were sexually assaulted by siblings. Eight percent of children and youth were physically assaulted and 28% were sexually assaulted by

[23] *Data are not nationally representative. Data are based on a sample of 164 police departments representing 46% of the national volume of crime in 1999.*

Table 4.1
Type of assault by age group of victim, 1999[1,2]

Type of Assault	Total Victims	Total	Total Child & Youth (<18)	Total Adult (18+)	Age Breakdown as a Proportion of Total Children and Youth (under 18)			
					Total	<3	3-11	12-17
	No.	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Sexual Assault - Total	**10,805**	**100**	**60**	**40**	**100**	**2**	**45**	**53**
Aggravated Sexual Assault	95	100	39	61	100	3	43	54
Sexual Assault With A Weapon	202	100	27	73	100	-	17	83
Sexual Assault	9,073	100	57	43	100	2	43	55
Other Sexual Crimes[3]	1,435	100	85	15	100	2	57	40
Physical Assault - Total	**94,095**	**100**	**20**	**80**	**100**	**2**	**22**	**76**
Aggravated Assault	1,298	100	13	87	100	16	6	77
Assault with weapon/Causing bodily harm	19,423	100	19	81	100	2	20	78
Common Assault	69,542	100	21	79	100	2	22	76
Discharge Firearm With Intent	79	100	29	71	100	-	17	83
Assault Against Peace-Public Officer	2,567	100	-	100	-	-	-	-
Other Assaults[4]	1,186	100	14	86	100	9	23	68
Assault - Total	**104,900**	**100**	**24**	**76**	**100**	**2**	**28**	**70**

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
- Nil or zero.
[1] Data are not nationally representative. Data are based on a sample of 164 police departments, representing 46% of the national volume of crime in 1999.
[2] Includes only cases where age is known.
[3] The UCR2 Survey groups other sexual crimes including sexual interference, sexual touching, sexual exploitation, incest, etc., into one category. Most of these are directed at children.
[4] The UCR2 Survey groups other assault, including unlawfully causing bodily harm and criminal negligence causing bodily harm, etc., into one category.
***Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey*

Table 4.2
Child and youth victims of assault reported to police by accused-victim relationship, 1999[1,2]

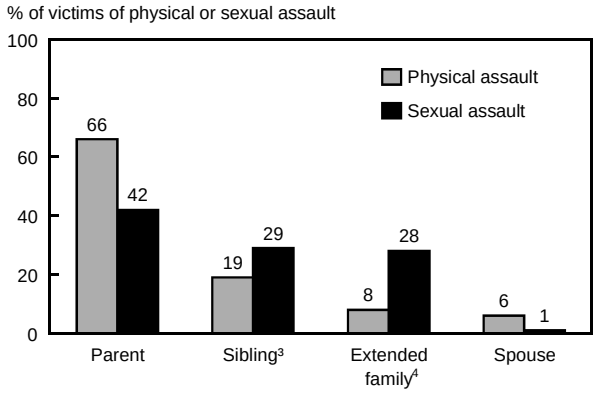
Relationship of accused to victim		Total Assault	Victim Sex					
			Sexual Assault[3]			Physical Assault		
			Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
Total	**No.**	**25,231**	**6,461**	**5,141**	**1,320**	**18,770**	**7,092**	**11,678**
	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Family	%	24	30	31	29	22	30	16
Acquaintance[4]	%	52	49	48	54	53	51	54
Stranger	%	19	15	16	12	20	14	24
Unknown	%	5	5	5	5	5	5	6

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
[1] Data are not nationally representative. Data are based on a sample of 164 police departments, representing 46% of the national volume of crime in 1999.
[2] Includes victims under the age of 18 years.
[3] Sexual assault includes the "other sexual crimes" category which includes sexual interference, sexual touching, sexual exploita tion and incest, etc.
[4] Aquaintance includes any relationship in which the accused and the victim are familiar with each other, but not related, or in a legal guardianship relationship.
***Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey*

extended family members.[24] Finally, 6% of the youth victims of physical assault and 1% of the youth victims of sexual assault were assaulted by spouses (Table 4.3). Females were most often the victims in these assaults which lends support to data from both the 1993 Violence Against Women Survey and the 1999 General Social Survey which indicate that younger wives are at a disproportionately higher risk of spousal violence.

Figure 4.1

Parents most frequently accused in assaults against children and youth committed by family members, 1999[1,2]



Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
[1] Data are not nationally representative. Data are based on a sample of 164 police departments, representing 46% of the national volume of crime in 1999.
[2] Includes victims under the age of 18 years where sex of the victim is known.
[3] Sibling includes natural, step, half, foster or adopted siblings.
[4] Extended family includes others related by blood, marriage, adoption or foster care.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey.

Fathers more likely accused of assaulting their children

Regardless of the type of abuse or the child's age, children and youth were most often assaulted by their fathers.[25] In incidents involving parents, in 1999, children were the victims of their fathers in nearly all (98%) sexual assault incidents, and a large majority (71%) of physical assault incidents.

Girls primary victims of family assaults

Eighty percent of the child and youth victims sexually assaulted and 53% of the victims physically assaulted by their families were girls. The majority of children and youth who were physically assaulted by strangers were boys (74%). Differences also exist between the ages at which boys and girls were at greatest risk of reported abuse. For example, more girls were sexually assaulted at older ages than were boys. In 1999, more girls were sexually assaulted between the ages of 12 to 14 while more boys were sexually assaulted between the ages of 3 to 6 (Figure 4.2). Physical assaults increased with age for both boys and girls. The frequency of these assaults increased up to age 17 for girls and peaked at age 14 for boys (Figure 4.3). Much of the increase in physical assaults against girls as they get older is due to an increase in the number of spousal assaults, which accounted for 41% of family related assaults against girls aged 17.

[24] *Extended family members include all others related by blood, marriage, adoption or foster care.*
[25] *Analysis of accused and victim characteristics in this paragraph is based only on those incidents for which there is a single accused and a single victim. Thus, percentages are derived from a sample of incidents from the UCR2 Survey which itself represents only 46% of the national volume of crime.*

Table 4.3
Child and youth victims of assault by family members, 1999[1,2]

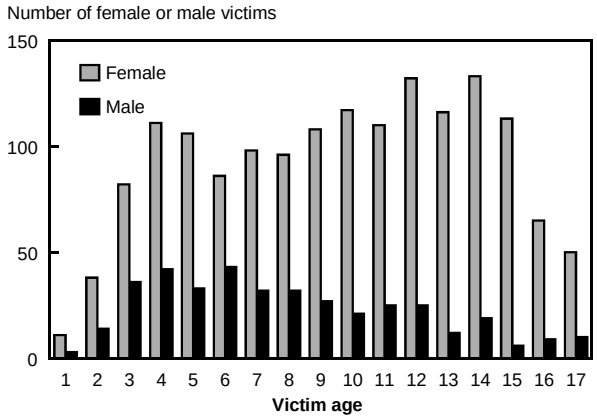
Relationship of accused to victim		Total Assault	Victim Sex					
			Sexual Assault			Physical Assault		
			Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
Total	No.	**6,007**	**1,961**	**1,575**	**389**	**4,046**	**2,158**	**1,888**
	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Parent	%	58	42	43	38	66	61	71
Sibling[3]	%	23	29	29	32	19	20	18
Extended family[4]	%	15	28	28	30	8	8	10
Spouse	%	5	1	1	-	6	11	2

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
- Nil or zero.
[1] Data are not nationally representative. Data are based on a sample of 164 police departments, representing 46% of the national volume of crime in 1999.
[2] Includes victims under the age of 18 years where sex of the victim is known.
[3] Sibling includes natural, step, half, foster or adopted siblings.
[4] Extended family includes others related by blood, marriage, adoption or foster care.
***Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey*

Although girls under the age of 18 make up 53% of victims of physical assault perpetrated by family members, it is only from age 13 that they actually outnumber boys as victims. Up to age 13, more victims of physical assault are boys.

Figure 4.2

Victims of family-related sexual assaults by age and sex of victims, 1999[1,2]



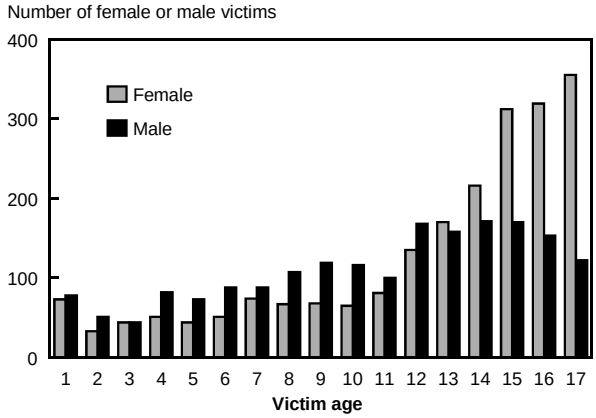
[1] Data are not nationally representative. Data are based on a sample of 164 police departments, representing 46% of the national volume of crime in 1999.
[2] Includes cases where the victim and accused were related by blood, marriage, adoption, or foster care. Excludes cases in which the victim's sex and age are unknown.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey.

Proportion of family assaults declines with age

The pattern of assaults against children reflects their expanding sphere of relationships as they mature. For victims less than three years of age, family members were responsible for the majority of assaults in 1999. Almost two-thirds (63%) of physical assaults against children under 3 years of age were committed by family members, and, of these, parents were responsible for 89%. Similarly, children under 3 were more likely to be sexually assaulted by family members (53%), and the majority of these were perpetrated by parents (55%) (Tables 4.4 and 4.5).

Figure 4.3

Victims of family-related physical assaults by age and sex of victims, 1999[1,2]



[1] Data are not nationally representative. Data are based on a sample of 164 police departments, representing 46% of the national volume of crime in 1999.
[2] Includes cases where the victim and accused were related by blood, marriage, adoption, or foster care. Excludes cases in which the victim's sex and age are unknown.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey.

As children become older, enlarging their sphere of relationships and lessening their dependence on the family, the proportion of incidents committed by non-family members increases. For example, in 1999 youth aged 15 to 17 years were most likely to be physically assaulted by acquaintances (54%) followed by strangers (23%), and then family members (18%). This was also the case for sexual assaults where youth aged 15 to 17 years were victimized most frequently by acquaintances and strangers (57% and 22% respectively), followed by family members (16%) (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4
Age of victim and type of assault by accused-victim relationship, 1999[1,2]

Relationship of accused to victim		Age of Victim													
		Sexual Assault							Physical Assault						
		Total	<3	3-5	6-8	9-11	12-14	15-17	**Total**	< 3	3-5	6-8	9-11	12-14	15-17
Total Assault	**No.**	**6,462**	**125**	**861**	**974**	**1,101**	**1,861**	**1,540**	**18,789**	**376**	**531**	**1,103**	**2,434**	**6,234**	**8,111**
Total	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Family	%	30	53	48	40	37	23	16	22	63	64	43	23	16	18
Acquaintance	%	50	34	40	42	44	55	57	53	19	20	37	53	60	54
Stranger	%	15	3	7	12	13	16	22	20	6	10	13	19	19	23
Unknown	**%**	5	10	5	6	5	5	4	5	12	6	6	6	4	5

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
[1] *Data are not nationally representative. Data are based on a sample of 164 police departments, representing 46% of the national volume of crime in 1999.*
[2] *Includes only cases where the age of the victim is known.*
Source: *Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey.*

Table 4.5
Age of victim and type of assault by family members, 1999[1,2]

Relationship of accused to victim		Age of Victim													
		Sexual Assault							Physical Assault						
		Total	<3	3-5	6-8	9-11	12-14	15-17	**Total**	< 3	3-5	6-8	9-11	12-14	15-17
Family Total	**No.**	**1,961**	**66**	**410**	**387**	**408**	**437**	**253**	**4,050**	**236**	**340**	**475**	**549**	**1,019**	**1,431**
Total	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Spouse	%	1	-	-	-	-	1	3	6	-	-	-	-	3	16
Parent	%	42	55	46	36	38	40	51	66	89	80	81	76	64	51
Sibling[3]	%	29	24	27	34	34	28	22	19	5	9	12	15	24	25
Extended Family[4]	%	28	21	28	30	27	31	24	8	6	11	7	9	9	8

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
- *Nil or zero.*
[1] *Data are not nationally representative. Data are based on a sample of 164 police departments, representing 46% of the national volume of crime in 1999.*
[2] *Includes only cases where the age of the victim is known.*
[3] *Sibling includes natural, step, half, foster or adopted siblings.*
[4] *Extended family includes others related by blood, marriage, adoption or foster care, e.g., grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and in-laws.*
Source: *Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey.*

Child maltreatment reported to hospitals in Canada

Hospitalization records for injuries to children resulting from assaults or other violence provide an additional source of information about child maltreatment and intentional injuries caused by violence. These data provide a national estimate of the number of children who are admitted to hospitals (staying at least one night) and have sustained an injury as a result of one of the forms of violence listed in Table 4.6. These data are limited to the extent that they include only those injuries that come to the attention of a physician and are acknowledged as having resulted from violence, and exclude cases where the child is seen on an outpatient basis. Information from hospitalization records indicates that the youngest children are most often injured as a result of child battering and other maltreatment, while older children are most frequently injured as a result of fights. In 1997-98, 38 in 100,000 children under the age of 1 year in Canada were reported by doctors in hospitals to have suffered injuries as a result of maltreatment. This rate dropped to 1 in 100,000 for teenagers aged 15 to 19 years.

Table 4.6
Childhood hospitalizations for assault and other maltreatment, Canada, 1997-98[1]
(Annual number and annual rate per 100,000)[2]

	Victim age																	
Cause of injury[3]	Total			<1			1-4			5-9			10-14			15-19		
	No.	**%**	**Rate**	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate	No.	%	Rate
Total	**2,359**	**100**	**29**	**165**	**100**	**45**	**154**	**100**	**10**	**79**	**100**	**4**	**243**	**100**	**12**	**1,366**	**100**	**67**
Fight, brawl, rape	**1,112**	**47**	**14**	2	1	1	9	6	1	28	35	1	142	58	7	788	58	39
Poisoning, strangulation[4]	**29**	**1**	**--**	1	1	--	4	3	--	1	1	--	6	2	--	9	1	--
Firearm	**31**	**1**	**--**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	--	--	25	2	1
Cutting, piercing instrument	**315**	**13**	**4**	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	5	--	15	6	1	273	20	13
Child battering and other maltreatment	**394**	**17**	**5**	138	84	38	113	73	7	33	42	2	40	16	2	29	2	1
Other	**478**	**20**	**6**	24	15	7	28	18	2	13	16	1	39	16	2	242	18	12

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
- Nil or zero
-- Amount too small to be expressed
1 Period April 1, 1997 to March 31, 1998.
2 Rates based on revised July 1 figures from Annual Demographic Statistics 1999.
3 Based on the International Classification of Diseases 9th revision (ICD-9) codes E960-E969.
4 Includes corrosive and caustic substances, poisoning, hanging, strangulation and submersion.
***Source:** Canadian Institute for Health Information, Hospital Morbidity Database.*

Kid's Help Phone

The Kid's Help Phone is a national, bilingual, confidential help-line for children and adolescents. It is funded by the Canadian Children's Foundation, and provides services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Counsellors respond and make referrals to other agencies. Approximately 800 calls are answered each day. The age of callers ranges from 5 to 20 years.

In 1999, the Kid's Help Phone answered approximately 289,000 calls originating from almost 3,000 rural and urban communities across Canada. Fourteen percent of these (40,460) were related to abuse. Among the provinces, Prince Edward Island had the highest proportion of calls related to abuse (19%), followed by Alberta (18%) (Table 4.7)

Table 4.7
Type of calls received by Kid's Help Phone, 1999

Province/Territory	Relation-ship	Abuse[1]	Health/ Medical	Sexuality	Substance Abuse	Suicide	Other[2]
				%			
Canada	39	14	12	11	6	4	14
Nfld.	39	15	13	13	7	3	12
P.E.I.	37	19	9	7	7	9	13
N.S.	36	14	15	9	6	5	15
N.B.	39	12	12	11	8	5	13
Que.	44	11	9	10	8	4	14
Ont.	38	14	14	10	5	4	15
Man.	38	15	13	12	6	4	13
Sask.	37	15	13	9	8	4	13
Alta.	35	18	13	9	6	5	13
B.C.	37	17	13	7	6	5	16
Y.T.	32	16	8	8	7	8	19
N.W.T.	37	14	4	5	14	9	16
Nvt.	44	7	7	6	4	11	21

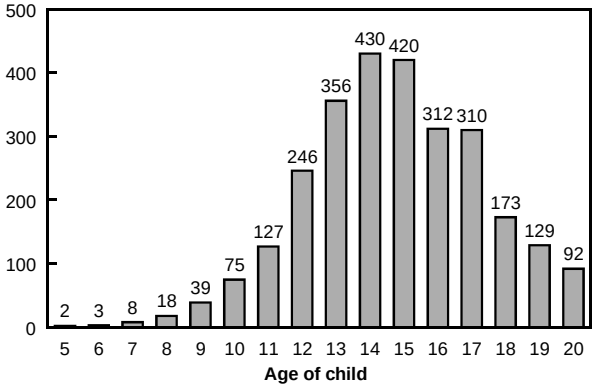
Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
[1] Abuse includes physical, sexual, verbal and emotional abuse, and is not limited to abuse by family members.
[2] Other includes calls about feelings, practical issues, self-concept, social adjustment and other issues.
***Source:** Kid's Help Phone, Canadian Children's Foundation.*

Adolescents aged 14 years had the highest rate of calls to the Kid's Help Phone regarding abuse or violence: a rate of 430 calls per 100,000 children aged 14 in Canada (Figure 4.4). The distribution of rates may reflect the likelihood of children to use the Help Phone rather than the actual rate of abuse.

Figure 4.4

Highest rate of calls to Kid's Help Phone about abuse and violence from youths aged 14-15, Canada, 1999[1]

Rate per 100,000 children and youth



[1] Rates based on revised July 1 population estimates from Annual Demographic Statistics1999.
Source: Kid's Help Phone, Canadian Children's Foundation.

The toll free number for the Kid's Help Phone is 1-800-668-6868. They can also be reached online at http://kidshelp.sympatico.ca.

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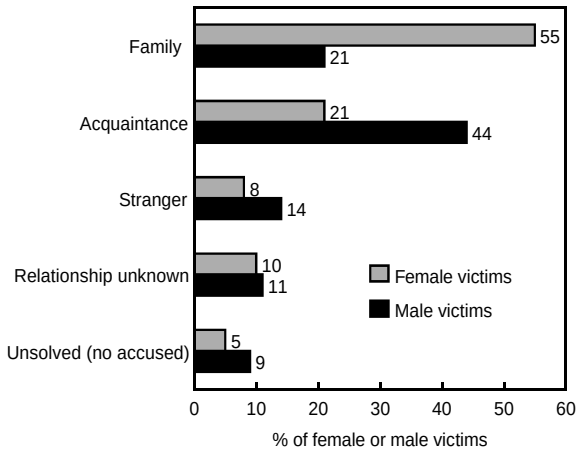
5.0 FAMILY HOMICIDE[26]

by Daisy Locke

From 1979 to 1998, there were 12,767 victims of homicide in Canada. One-third of the victims were killed by family members, another 36% were committed by acquaintances, and 12% by strangers. The other homicides involved suspects who were not charged[27] (8%) or an accused with an unknown relationship to the victim (11%). Throughout this period, women and girls were most likely to be killed by a family member (55%), whereas men and boys were most likely to be killed by an acquaintance (44%) (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1

Homicides by type of relationship, Canada, 1979-1998[r 1]



Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
[r] revised
[1] Includes only those cases in which the sex of the victim is known.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

From 1979 to 1998, 33% of homicide victims were killed by family members. The relationship between accused family members and female and male victims of family-related homicides was different. Female victims were most likely to be killed by their husbands (66%) followed by their fathers and mothers (18%)(Table 5.1). In contrast, male victims of family homicide were most likely to have been killed by fathers or mothers (28%), followed by wives (26%) and extended family members such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and in-laws (20%).

Table 5.1
Family homicides by accused-victim relationship and sex of the victim, 1979-1998[r 1]

Relationship of accused to victim	Victims					
	Total		Female		Male	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total family homicides	**3,877**	**100**	**2,233**	**100**	**1,644**	**100**
Husband	**1,469**	**38**	**1,468**	**66**	**1**	**--**
Married	810	21	810	36	-	-
Common-law[2]	511	13	510	23	1	--
Separated	134	3	134	6	-	-
Divorced	14	--	14	1	-	-
Wife	**432**	**11**	**-**	**-**	**432**	**26**
Married	179	5	-	-	179	11
Common-law	240	6	-	-	240	15
Separated	13	--	-	-	13	1
Parent[3]	**864**	**22**	**396**	**18**	**468**	**28**
Father	524	14	233	10	291	18
Mother	340	9	163	7	177	11
Child	**395**	**10**	**177**	**8**	**218**	**13**
Son/step	365	9	160	7	205	12
Daughter/step	30	1	17	1	13	1
Sibling	**251**	**6**	**54**	**2**	**197**	**12**
Brother	224	6	43	2	181	11
Sister	27	1	11	--	16	1
Other family[4]	**466**	**12**	**138**	**6**	**328**	**20**

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
- Nil or zero.
[r] revised
-- Amount too small to be expressed
[1] Excludes cases in which the sex of the victim is unknown.
[2] Includes same sex spouse.
[3] Parent includes natural, step, foster and adoptive parents.
[4] Other family includes all others related to the victim through blood, marriage, foster care or adoption.
***Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.*

[26] The data source for these statistics is the Homicide Survey, which provides police-reported data on the characteristics of all homicide incidents, victims and accused persons since 1961. When a homicide becomes known to the police a survey questionnaire is completed. The count for a particular year represents all homicides reported in that year, regardless of when the death actually occurred. Because the Homicide Survey is a census and has full national coverage it is possible to calculate rates of homicide.

[27] With these homicides there is sufficient evidence to lay a charge, however the accused is processed by other means for one of the following reasons: death of accused other than suicide, death of an essential witness, reason beyond control of the department, diplomatic immunity, accused is less than 12 years old, accused is committed to a mental hospital without hope of early release, accused is in a foreign country with which Canada does not have an extradition treaty and departmental discretion.

5.1 Spousal homicide

Spousal homicide accounts for a substantial proportion of all homicides in Canada. From 1979 to 1998, spouses represented 15% of all victims of solved homicides and 49% of family-related incidents.[28] Over the two decades, more than three times as many wives as husbands were killed by spouses (1,468 women and 433 men) (Figure 5.2).

Between 1979 and 1998, the annual rate of spousal homicide was, on average, 10 wives and 3 husbands per million couples in Canada. Despite yearly fluctuations, the rate has gradually declined over the period. This was particularly the case for wives, for whom the rate decreased by 52%, from 15 per million couples in 1979 to 7 per million couples in 1998. For husbands, the rate has dropped from a high of 5 per million couples in 1987 to 2 per million in 1998.

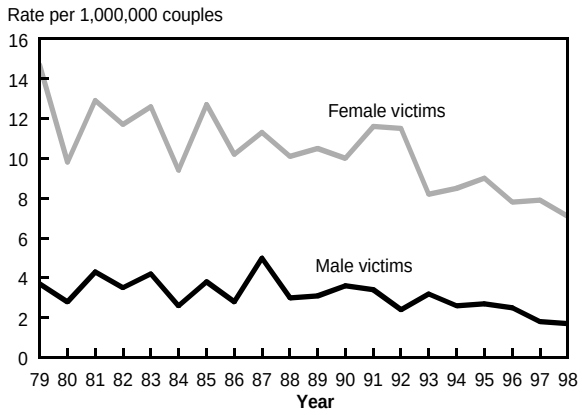
The rates of spousal homicide for male and female victims vary across the country. Over the 20-year period being discussed, the number of wife victims per one husband victim was 3.4 in Canada. (Table 5.2). The ratio of wife to husband victims was highest in the provinces of New Brunswick (7.6 wives to 1 husband) and Quebec (5.5 wives to 1 husband). The lowest ratios were found in the Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia.

Age as a risk factor

Young wives were at the greatest risk of being victims of spousal homicide. In the 1990s, women under the age of 25 years were killed at a rate of 22 per million couples (Figure 5.3). Women between the ages of 25-34 and 35-44 were the next most likely to be killed by their husbands (11 per million couples). Husbands under the age of 25 were most likely to be killed by their wives at the rate of 10 per million couples, almost half that of wives under age 25.

Figure 5.2

Spousal homicide rate, Canada, 1979-1998[r1]



[r] revised.
[1] Based on revised July 1 population estimates from Annual Demographic Statistics 1999 for men and women legally married, in common-law relationships, divorced or separated.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

[28] *Analysis of spousal homicides is based on victims age 15 years and older. Spouses include people in legal marriages, those separated or divorced from legal marriages, and those in common-law relationships.*

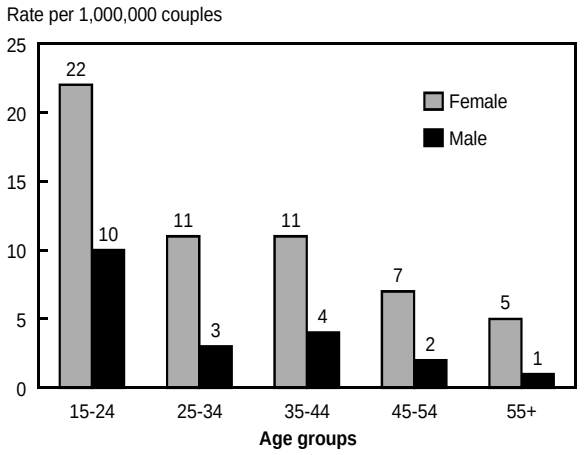
Table 5.2
Rates of spousal homicide in the provinces and territories, 1979-1998[r]

Province/Territory	Number of spousal homicide victims		Number of wife victims per one husband victim	Spousal homicide rate per million couples[1]	
	Wives	Husbands		Wives	Husband
Canada	1,468	433	3.4	10.4	3.1
Nfld.	10	4	2.5	3.5	1.4
P.E.I.	2	-	-	3.0	-
N.S.	44	22	2.0	9.4	4.7
N.B.	38	5	7.6	10.3	1.4
Que.	326	59	5.5	9.2	1.7
Ont.	526	125	4.2	10.0	2.5
Man.	84	33	2.5	15.0	6.0
Sask.	65	35	1.9	12.9	6.9
Alta.	163	62	2.6	12.4	4.8
B.C.	187	76	2.5	10.7	4.4
Y.T.	7	2	3.5	53.3	13.3
N.W.T.	16	10	1.6	78.5	46.4

- Nil or zero.
[r] revised
[1] Rates based on revised July 1 figures from Annual Demographic Statistics 1999 of legally married, common-law, divorced and separated men and women over 15 years, 1979 to 1998.
***Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.*

Figure 5.3

Spousal homicide by age group, 1990-1998[r 1,2]



[r] revised.
[1] Excludes cases in which victim sex, accused-victim relationship or age are unknown.
[2] Rate per 1,000,000 legally married, separated, divorced and common-law males and females by age group. Rates based on July 1st population estimates from Annual Demographic Statistics 1999.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

Shooting and stabbing the most common causes of death

Firearms were the most frequently used weapon in the commission of spousal homicides between 1979 and 1998, accounting for more than one in three cases (36%) (Table 5.3).[29] This was primarily due to the fact that husbands, who made up the majority of accused, tended to use firearms (40%), followed by knives (25%). In contrast, the majority of cases in which women killed their husbands involved knives or other sharp instruments (60%). Firearms were the second most often used weapon by women (25%). These differences between men and women in their relative use of weapons have been consistent in Canada over time, and are paralleled in the United States (Wilson and Daly, 1994).

As was the case with police-reported assaults, homicide data show that men were more likely than women to use physical force. In 1998, beatings and strangulation were more frequently the means of death used by husbands (30%) than by wives (10%).

Alcohol a factor in spousal homicides

From 1979 to 1998, there were reports of alcohol and/or drug abuse in over one-third (39%) of spousal homicide cases. Alcohol had been consumed by an accused wife in 59% of cases and by an accused husband in 30% of cases. Drugs alone were reported to be used infrequently by both male and female accused (Table 5.4).

Table 5.3
Cause of death in spousal homicides, 1979-1998[r1]

Cause of death	Total victims		Wife victim		Husband victim	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total	**1,889**	**100**	**1,457**	**100**	**432**	**100**
Shooting	**682**	**36**	576	40	106	25
Stabbing	**631**	**33**	371	25	260	60
Beating	**284**	**15**	253	17	31	7
Strangulation[2]	**208**	**11**	195	13	13	3
Other[3]	**84**	**4**	62	4	22	5

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
[r] revised
[1] Includes only those cases in which victim sex and cause of death are known.
[2] Strangulation includes all deaths caused by asphyxiation, e.g., suffocation and drowning.
[3] Other includes poisoning, smoke inhalation and burns, motor vehicle, causing a heart attack, exposure, etc.
***Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.*

Alcohol was also identified as a spousal violence risk factor in both the 1993 Violence Against Women Survey (VAWS) and the 1999 General Social Survey where it was found that women and men married to, or living with, heavy drinkers were more likely to be assaulted than those who did not live with heavy drinkers.

Table 5.4
Alcohol, drugs or intoxicants consumed by the accused in spousal homicides, 1979-1998[r1]

Alcohol or substance consumption	Accused					
	Total		Wife		Husband	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total	**1,732**	**100**	**394**	**100**	**1,338**	**100**
No alcohol or drugs consumed	924	53	142	36	782	58
Alcohol only	569	33	217	55	352	26
Drugs only	28	2	5	1	23	2
Both alcohol and drugs	63	4	14	4	49	4
Intoxicating substance[2]	1	--	1	--	-	-
Unknown	147	8	15	4	132	10

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
- Nil or zero.
-- Amount too small to be expressed
[r] revised
[1] Analysis based on only those homicides for which there was a single accused and a single victim. Thus the percentages are derived from a sample of incidents representing 91% of the total number of spousal homicides from 1979-1998.
[2] Intoxicating substance includes inhalants such as glue, gasoline and paint thinner; not collected prior to 1997.
***Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.*

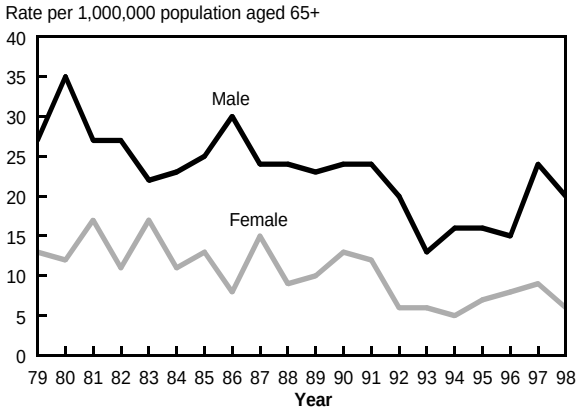
[29] In 1998, the most common types of firearms used in spousal homicides were rifles and shotguns (63%) followed by sawed-off rifles and shotguns (21%) and handguns (16%).

5.2 Homicides against older adults

From 1979 to 1998, the average annual rate of homicides against adults aged 65 years and over was 16 per million, fluctuating from a high of 22 in 1980 to a low of 9 in 1993 and 1994. The 1998 rate was 12 per million population aged 65 and over. The rate of homicides against male victims aged 65 years and over has been consistently higher than the rate for female victims over 65 years of age, ranging from 1.3 to 3.6 times higher (Figure 5.4). The 1998 rate was 20 per million for male victims and 6 per million for female victims.

Figure 5.4

Homicide rate, population 65+, Canada, 1979-1998[r 1]



[r] revised.
[1] Rate per 1,000,000 based on revised July 1 population estimates from Annual Demographic Statistics 1999.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

Between 1979 and 1998, 49% of older male victims of homicide were killed by acquaintances, 25% by strangers, 20% by family members and 7% by spouses. Older female victims of homicide were equally likely to be killed by spouses (28%) as by acquaintances (28%) and other family members (27%). The other 16% of female victims 65 years of age and older were killed by strangers.

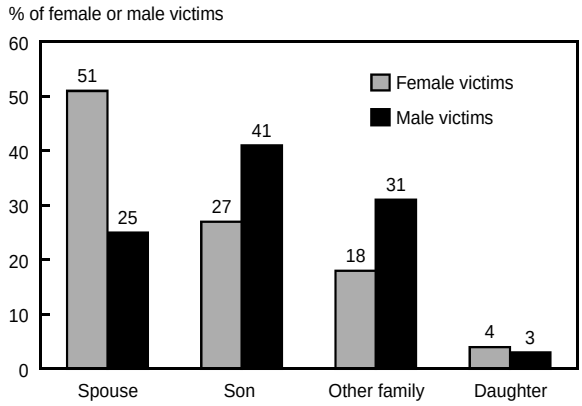
The relationship between accused family members and older homicide victims is different for female and male victims of family homicides. Over one-half (51%) of all family homicides against women over 65 were committed by spouses (including ex-spouses). Older men were more likely to be killed by sons (41%), followed by other family members (31%), spouses (25%) and daughters (3%) (Figure 5.5).

5.3 Homicides against children and youth

In 1998, there were 82 (78 solved) homicides against children and youth under the age of 18. This represented 15% of all homicides in Canada. The homicide rate for children and youth under 18 has remained relatively constant, fluctuating between 0.9 and 1.5 homicides per 100,000 population under 18 years between 1979 and 1998. In contrast, the rate for adults aged 18 years and older has gradually declined from 3.2 to 2.1 homicides per 100,000 adult population, a decrease of 34% (Figure 5.6). The 1998 rate for males aged 18 years and over (3.0) was more than double that of females aged 18 years and over (1.2). For children and youth, the rates broken down by sex were 1.2 per 100,000 for males and 1.0 per 100,000 for females.

Figure 5.5

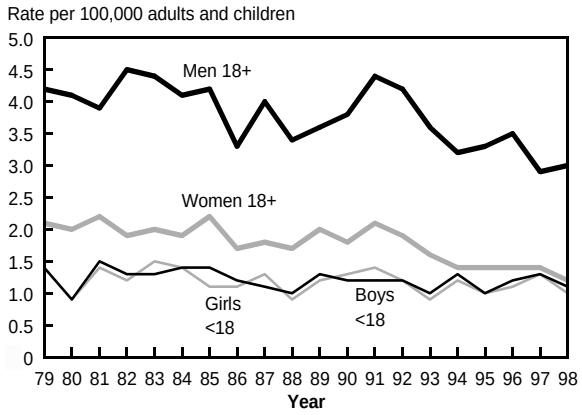
Older women killed by spouses, older men killed by sons, Canada, 1979-1998[r 1]



[r] revised.
[1] Includes older Canadians over age 65, where victim sex and accused-victim relationship are known.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

Figure 5.6

Homicide rates for adults and children, 1979-1998[r 1]



[r] revised.
[1] Rates based on revised July 1 population estimates from Annual Demographic Statistics 1999.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

In 1998, the majority (72% or a total of 56) of victims under 18 years of age were killed by family members (Table 5.5). This has increased over the past 20 years when an average of 61% of victims under 18 were killed each year by a family member.

As was the case in child and youth assaults reported to the police, the majority of child and youth victims of homicide were killed by parents (93% of all child homicides committed by family members in 1998). Overall, of children killed by parents, the majority of the children were killed by fathers. In 1998, there were 34 children and youth victims killed by their fathers, 30 by biological fathers and 4 by step-fathers. Eighteen children and youth were killed by mothers, 17 by biological mothers and 1 by a step-mother. Because of multiple victims per incident the actual number of accused biological fathers was 22, the number of step-fathers was 3 and the number of biological mothers and step-mothers was 16 and 1, respectively. Five of the fathers and 3 of the mothers also committed suicide.

Table 5.5
Solved homicides of victims under age 18 by accused-victim relationship, 1998[r1]

Relationship of accused to victim	Number of victims			
	1998[r]		Average 1988-1997	
	No.	%	No.	%
Total family homicides	**56**	**72**	**46**	**61**
Total fathers	34	44	23	30
Biological fathers	30	38	20	26
Step-fathers	4	5	3	4
Total mothers	18	23	17	22
Biological mothers	17	22	17	22
Step-mothers	1	1	--	--
Other family[2]	3	4	4	5
Sibling	1	1	2	3
Husband	-	-	--	--
Total non-family homicides	**22**	**28**	**30**	**39**
Acquaintance[3]	15	19	21	28
Stranger	7	9	6	7
Unknown	-	-	3	4
Total solved homicides	**78**	**100**	**76**	**100**

Columns may not add up due to rounding.
Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
- *Nil or zero*
-- *Amount too small to be expressed.*
[r] *revised*
[1] *Includes only homicide incidents in which there are known suspects. If there was more than one suspect, only the closest relationship to the victim is recorded.*
[2] *Includes all other family members related through blood, marriage, adoption or foster care.*
[3] *Includes intimate relationships such as boyfriend/girlfriend as well as business associates, criminal associates and casual acquaintances.*
Source: *Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.*

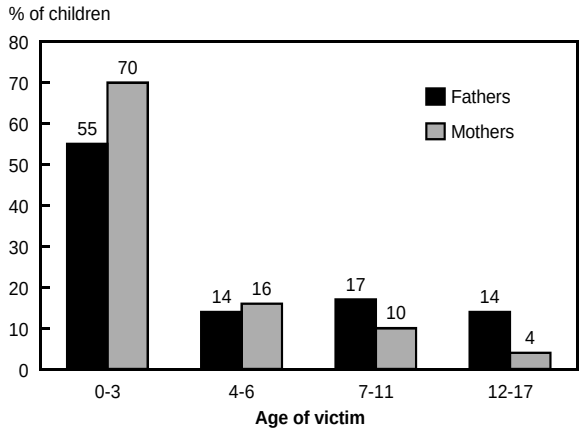
Most of the children killed by their parents were very young. From 1979 to 1998, 70% of the children killed by their mothers were age 3 or younger and a large majority were age 6 or younger (86%). More than half (55%) of the children killed by their fathers were age 3 or younger and 69% were age 6 years or younger (Figure 5.7).

Shaken Baby Syndrome

Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) is a cause of infant death resulting from an abrupt or repeated motion that causes the infant's head to roll back and forth. In some cases, less violent but repeated shaking may cause deafness, blindness, seizures, paralysis or developmental delay. SBS occurs most often at 2 to 6 months of age but babies up to 2 years are at risk. In 1998, there were 6 reported infant homicides for which the cause of death was Shaken Baby Syndrome.

Figure 5.7

More younger children killed by parents, Canada, 1979-1998[r1]

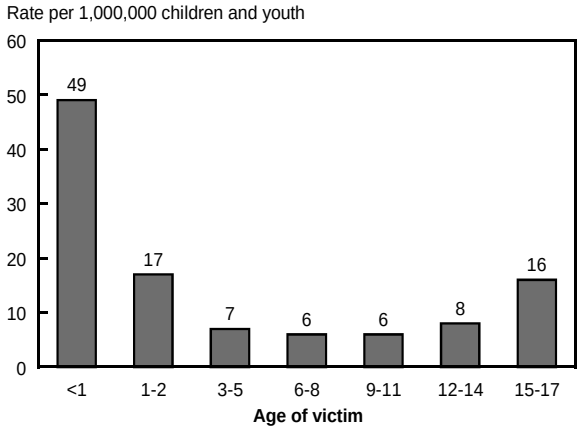


Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
[r] revised.
[1] Includes younger Canadians under age 18, where victim sex and accused-victim relationship are known.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

From 1994 to 1998, among children and youth under 18 years of age, infants under the age of 1 were at the highest risk of being killed: 49 per 1,000,000 infants (Figure 5.8). A majority (92%) of these homicides were committed by family members. Forty-eight percent of these infants were killed by fathers, 38% by mothers, 6% by another family member and 6% by a non-family member (Table 5.6).

Figure 5.8

Children under one have highest rate of homicide, 1994-1998[r1]



[r] revised.
[1] Rate based on revised July 1 population estimates for children and youth under 18, Canada from Annual Demographic Statistics 1999.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

Table 5.6
Homicides of children less than age one by accused-victim relationship, 1994-1998[r1]

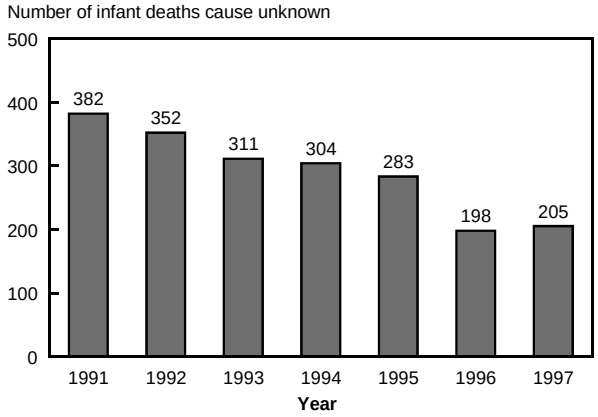
Relationship of accused to victim	1994-1998[r]	
	No.	%
Total homicides	**81**	**100**
Father	37	46
Step-father	2	2
Mother	30	37
Step-mother	1	1
Brother	2	2
Other family[2]	3	4
Acquaintance	2	2
Authority figure	2	2
Stranger	2	2

[r] revised
Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
[1] Includes only homicide incidents in which there are known suspects. If there was more than one suspect, only the closest relationship to the victim is recorded.
[2] Includes all other family members related through blood, marriage, adoption or foster care.
***Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.*

Despite these relatively high rates, infant homicide may be underreported since claims of accidental childhood deaths such as falls, sudden or unexplained deaths could actually be due to intentional injury or neglect. A review in Ontario of all deaths of children under the age of two suggested that as many as 10% of deaths prior to 1995 that were attributed to causes such as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) may have been due to homicide (Trocmé and Brison 1997). In 1995, most provinces passed legislation requiring a coroner's inquest into all deaths of children under two years of age. Recent statistics based on death certificates in Canada show that the number of infant deaths in which the cause of death was unknown is much lower than in the past. From 1991 to 1997, the number of unexplained infant deaths dropped 46% (Figure 5.9). This may be the result of an increased awareness of the issues surrounding sudden or unexplained deaths and a higher level of scrutiny by official agencies.

Figure 5.9

Decrease in number of infant deaths with unknown cause, 1991-1997[1]



[1] Information is abstracted from death certificates and does not take into account ongoing coroners' or police investigations. Categories of death included in unknown cause are Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, instantaneous death, death occurring less than 24 hours from the onset of the symptoms not otherwise explained, and unattended deaths.
Source: Statistics Canada, Health Statistics Division, Canadian Vital Statistics Database.

6.0 FAMILY VIOLENCE COURTS

Changes in legislation, policies and programs on the part of both federal and provincial/territorial governments have occurred as part of a response to the problem of family violence. This section highlights innovative court responses to the problem of family violence in the two provinces which currently have specialized courts to deal with family violence cases; Manitoba and Ontario.

6.1 Winnipeg Family Violence Court Report

by Dr. Jane Ursel, University of Manitoba

Manitoba was the first jurisdiction in Canada to develop a specialized criminal justice system response for family violence cases. This response is composed of five components: 1) a pro arrest policy known as the Zero Tolerance Policy; 2) a women's advocacy and child victim witness program for victims of family violence; 3) a specialized prosecutorial unit of eleven crown attorneys in Winnipeg; 4) specially designated court rooms and dockets for intake, screening court and trials; and 5) a special unit in the probation office to deliver court mandated treatment programs.

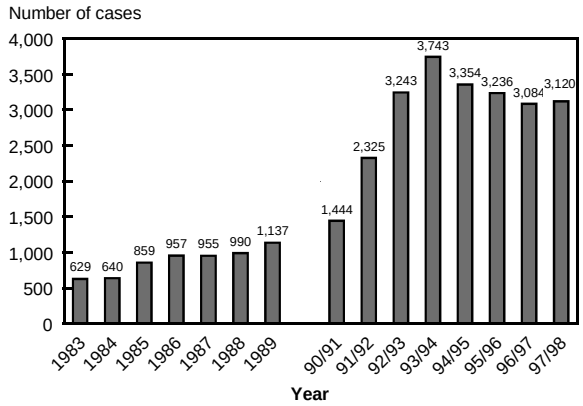
The specialized court process began operation in September 1990. Between 1990 and 1997, the Family Violence Court (FVC) dealt with 23,009 family violence cases; 89% were spousal abuse cases, 10% were child abuse, and 1% were abuse of older adults cases. There was a steady increase in cases coming before the court in the first four years of operation, with the highest level in 1993/1994 and levelling off thereafter. The source of the increase was spousal abuse cases. Figure 6.1 illustrates the dramatic increase in arrests before and after the introduction of the Family Violence Court.

Spousal Abuse[30]

Between 1992 and 1997, 14,958 cases of spouse abuse came to the attention of the Family Violence Courts in Winnipeg (Table 6.1). Among these cases, 85% of the accused were men and 85% of the victims were women. The majority (73%) of cases involved on-going partnerships, while estranged partners accounted for 24% of the cases that came to court. In 82% of the cases (11,082) the victim called the police, while in 4% of the cases it was another family member who called (e.g. child, parent or relative). Overall, 76% of the accused had a prior record and of those, 73% had a record for crimes against persons.

Figure 6.1

Charges more likely to be laid in spousal assault cases after the introduction of Family Violence Courts



Source: Winnipeg Family Violence Courts, 1983-1998.

Type of Offence

The overwhelming majority (85%) of spousal abuse cases involved physical assault. Sexual assault and criminal harassment constitute a very small percentage of the caseload, 2% and 1% respectively. However, there were a significant number of cases that involved breaches of court orders or probation orders. This suggests that the police are vigorous in pursuing reported cases of breaches.

Case Outcome

The most significant pattern that has emerged in the history of the family violence court has been the increase in the stay[31] rate since the court first opened. The stay rate for spousal violence cases was 22% in the first year,

[30] *Spouse abuse includes all cases of intimate relations in which the victim is between the ages of 18 and 59 years. This includes estranged intimate relations (eg. ex-spouse).*

[31] *A "stay" is a halt in judicial proceedings where, by its order, the court will not take further action until the Crown re-initiates the case by giving notice to the clerk of the Court. Notice must be given within a year, otherwise the proceedings are nullified.*

Table 6.1
Type of spousal offences in the Winnipeg Family Violence Court, 1992-1997

Type of offence	N	%
Total	**14,958**	**100**
Physical Assault	12,723	85
Breaches Alone	1,903	13
Sexual Assault	230	2
Criminal Harassment	102	1

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
Source: *Winnipeg Family Violence Court*

28% in the second year and steadily increased in subsequent years to a level of 47% in 1997. There are a number of factors underlying these trends. In the first four years of the FVC, there was a dramatic increase in charges of spousal assault. As police widened the net of cases entering the system, not all cases had sufficient evidence to proceed. Furthermore, the policy of zero tolerance implemented in 1993 had the effect of severely restricting police discretion, thus transferring the decision making power to the specialized crown attorneys. Both of these factors contributed to the rising stay rate. Perhaps the most significant factor contributing to the rising stay rate has been a change in Crown culture.

The specialized prosecutors developed policy guidelines designed to ensure that the court process would not unintentionally revictimize victims. The policy specified that, in all cases, rigorous prosecution should be pursued, but not at the expense of the victim. This dual and contradictory mandate comes closer to reflecting the complex nature of domestic violence than the older, simplistic standard that equates success with conviction. Over time, the FVC prosecutors have redefined success.

Prosecutors have made the shift from assessing their work on a single event outcome (conviction) to a process-oriented definition of their work. Like shelter workers, prosecutors understand that a single stay in a shelter or a single court appearance cannot, in and of itself, undo lifetime patterns. The prosecutor's role is to provide a service; each woman must determine how much of that service she needs. She may not be ready to testify today, but she may be back in a month or in a year when she can view the courts as a resource for her. Provisions are made in the policy to provide for a prosecution without victim cooperation in cases where serious risk to the victim or the community is involved. There have been a small number of such cases since the provision was added to the policy in 1998 and each of these cases has resulted in a conviction.

The sentencing pattern in FVC has been consistent over the last 7 years. The message from the bench is that family violence is a serious crime with serious consequences. Together with this strong message, is an equally strong commitment to rehabilitation, as the most frequent disposition is supervised probation and court mandated treatment for abusers. Sixty-two percent of all convicted offenders had supervised probation as one of their sentencing outcomes. Sixty-eight percent of those who received a supervised probation sentence were mandated to batterer's treatment groups. Furthermore, all provincial institutions now run batterer's treatment groups in the facility.

Table 6.2
Sentencing patterns for spouse abuse cases, 1992-1997

Type of sentence	Number of cases	% of cases proceeding to sentence[1]	% of all cases
Total	**6,899**	**100**	**100**
Probation alone	3,514	50	24
Incarceration and probation	1,330	20	9
Incarceration (of any type)	2,358	35	16
Fine	1,193	18	1
Conditional sentence	12	--	--
Absolute discharge	130	2	1
Conditional discharge	1,131	17	8

-- amount too small to be expressed.
[1] Total exceeds 100% due to multiple responses.
Source: *Winnipeg Family Violence Court*

Child Abuse[32]

Between 1992 and 1997, there were 1,349 cases of child abuse which came before the Winnipeg Family Violence Courts. Forty-five percent were cases of sexual abuse (604) while 55% were cases of child physical abuse (745). For all types of abuse, the majority of victims were female (83%), while the majority of the accused were male (91%). More specifically, 88% of child sexual abuse victims and 79% of child physical abuse victims were female and 97% of those accused of sexual abuse and 86% of those accused of physical abuse were male.

The most common category of offender in child sexual abuse cases was a friend of the family (31%), with parents the second most frequent (24%). Other family members accounted for 14% of child sexual abuse cases. In physical abuse cases, the most frequent offender of younger

[32] *Child abuse includes cases where the victim is under 18 years of age, has been physically or sexually abused, and includes cases of girls under 18 abused by a spouse/boyfriend who is over 18. This category does not include cases in which both spouse and child are abused (354 such cases) and it does not include historical abuse cases, (i.e. adult complainants of childhood abuse).*

children was the parent, while for older children, it was a boyfriend or common-law partner of the child's parent. The court data suggest that age increases girls' vulnerability to abuse, while age appears to decrease boys' vulnerability.

Through all stages of the court process, sexual abuse appears to be treated more seriously than physical abuse. For example, sexual abuse cases had a lower stay rate (31%) than physical abuse cases (37%). Further, 29% of sexual abuse cases went to trial compared to 13% of physical abuse cases. At trial, 50% of the sexual abuse cases were found guilty compared to 39% of physical abuse cases.

The different response to sexual and physical abuse cases by the criminal justice system is also reflected in sentencing (Table 6.3). Among convicted sexual abuse offenders, 68% were sentenced to a jail term compared to 33% of convicted physical abuse offenders. For sexual abuse offenders, guilty verdicts dramatically increased the likelihood of a jail sentence: 80% compared to 63% for guilty pleas. For physical abuse offenders jail sentences were equally likely to be given for a guilty verdict and a guilty plea (34% and 33% respectively). Among offenders who received a jail sentence for physically or sexually abusing a child, 43% received a sentence of 3 months or less, 72% were sentenced to less than 2 years while 28% were sentenced to more than 2 years.

Table 6.3
Sentencing by type of child abuse case, 1992-1997

	Total		Sexual abuse		Physical abuse	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total convictions	**738**	**55**	**328**	**54**	**410**	**55**
Incarceration of any type[1]	358	49	222	68	136	33
Probation	330	45	98	30	232	57
Fine	75	10	21	6	54	13
Conditional Sentence	14	2	14	4	--	--
Conditional Discharge	87	12	15	5	72	18
Absolute Discharge	10	1	--	--	10	3

-- amount too small to be expressed.
[1] Includes incarceration, intermittent and time in custody.
Source: *Winnipeg Family Violence Court*

6.2 Ontario Domestic Violence Courts Initiative[33]

by Tom McCallum

In early 1997, two Domestic Violence Court (DVC) pilot projects were established in Toronto, one at Old City Hall and one at North York. Throughout 1997 and 1998, the pilots were expanded to six additional sites: Brampton, Durham Region, Hamilton, London, North Bay, and Ottawa.

The Ontario Domestic Violence Courts initiative has the following objectives: 1) to intervene early in domestic abuse situations; 2) to provide better support to victims of domestic abuse throughout the criminal justice process; 3) to more effectively prosecute domestic violence cases; 4) to hold offenders accountable for their behaviour if they are found guilty of a domestic violence-related offence.

Early Intervention Component

This component of the Ontario Domestic Violence Courts Initiative is designed for situations where both the accused and the victim express a desire to reconcile, provided certain conditions are met. To be eligible, the accused must meet the following criteria: 1) no prior conviction for a domestic violence-related offence; 2) no use of a weapon in the commission of the offence; 3) no significant harm caused to the victim.

At the time of the incident, the police provide the victim with an information card, containing emergency phone numbers, community resources, and details of the Victim/Witness Assistance Program (V/WAP) and the DVC process. A domestic violence Crown screens the case for eligibility, and V/WAP consults with the victim. If eligible, the accused can opt to plead guilty, and be ordered by the court to attend a Partner Assault Response (PAR) program as a condition of bail.

During treatment, the program maintains contact with the victim to assess the offender's progress and to ensure the victim's safety. The Crown may consent to a request to vary, on an interim basis, the non-contact/non-communication bail conditions where the accused has a positive interim report from the program, and where the victim consents to the variation.

Upon completion, the PAR program provides a follow-up report to the Crown. Upon the accused's return to court for sentencing, the satisfactory completion of the program can be considered as a mitigating factor in sentencing. Often, the Crown will recommend a conditional discharge. If the offender does not attend, participate fully and successfully complete the program or re-offends during the course, the person can be considered to have breached bail conditions, and is liable to be charged and processed through the Coordinated Prosecution stream.

[33] *Excerpted from "Ontario Domestic Violence Courts Strategy".* Flash Report, *November 1999. Ontario Ministry of Attorney General.*

Coordinated Prosecution Component

Traditionally, the ability to proceed with a prosecution has largely depended on the victim's testimony. Because of fear or intimidation, victims often recant their original statement to the police or refuse to testify altogether. This often necessitates withdrawal of charges by the prosecution because, without the victim's testimony, there maybe no reasonable prospect of conviction. The specialized DVC process is designed to ensure that domestic violence cases are prosecuted more effectively.

In addition to taking the victim's statement, the police obtain copies of 911 tapes, medical reports, photographs of injuries, interviews with family and neighbours, and audio- and/or video-taped victim statements. The police also lay charges where there are reasonable grounds to believe the offender has breached conditions of bail or probation. Specially trained domestic violence Crowns rely on the "enhanced evidence" to proceed with the prosecution, particularly if the victim recants the original statement made to police.

Cases

As of February 2000, 4,549 cases have been processed through these specialized courts in Ontario, 76% (3,452) have been processed in the Coordinated Prosecution sites, and 24% (1,097) in the Early Intervention sites.

Type of Evidence in Domestic Violence Cases

One objective of the Coordinated Prosecution model is to make available additional evidence with which the Crown can continue prosecuting in the face of recantation by victims. To date, 29% (1,309) of cases had statements from independent witnesses; 24% (1,080) had evidence of prior convictions, and 26% (1,161) had evidence of prior occurrences.

Disposition and Sentencing

Two objectives of the DVC process are to more effectively prosecute domestic violence cases and to hold offenders accountable for abusive behaviour. As of February 2000, 69% of cases resulted in a guilty disposition, including 72% at the Early Intervention sites and 68% at the Coordinated Prosecution sites. Most (63%) of the guilty pleas occurred before trial; 23% were guilty pleas at trial. Overall, about 22% of the cases were withdrawn, with or without a Peace Bond: 20% at the Early Intervention sites and 23% at the Coordinated Prosecution sites.

Appendix A

Table A1
Number and percentage of women and men aged 15 years and over who reported violence by a spouse[1,2], by sex of victim, past 5 years

	Total		Female		Male	
	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%
Violence by any spouse	1,239	7	690	8	549	7
No violence in the past 5 years	14,504	87	7,234	87	7,271	87
Refused	959	6	433	5	526	6
Total with current or previous spouse	16,702	100	8,356	100	8,346	100
Violence by current spouse	562	4	259	4	303	4
No violence in the past 5 years	13,501	91	6,678	91	6,823	90
Refused	806	5	373	5	433	6
Total with current spouse	14,869	100	7,310	100	7,558	100
Violence by previous spouse	697	25	437	28	259	22
No violence in the past 5 years	2,022	73	1,100	71	922	76
Refused	41	1†	17	1†	24	2†
Total with previous spouse[3]	2,760	100	1,554	100	1,205	100

† *Coefficient of variation is high (16.6% to 33.3%).*
1 *Includes common-law partners.*
2 *Excludes those who refused to state their marital status.*
3 *Includes those who had contact with a previous partner within the five year period.*
Source: *Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999*

Table A2
Number and percentage of women and men aged 15 years and over who reported violence by a spouse[1,2], by sex of victim, past 12 months

	Total		Female		Male	
	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%
Violence by any spouse	397	2	220	3	177	2
No violence in the past 12 months	15,272	91	7,671	92	7,601	91
Refused/Don't know	1,033	6	465	6	569	7
Total with current or previous spouse	16,702	100	8,356	100	8,346	100
Violence by current spouse	250	2	120	2	129	2
No violence in the past 12 months	13,759	93	6,796	93	6,963	92
Refused/Don't know	860	6	394	5	466	6
Total with current spouse	14,869	100	7,310	100	7,558	100
Violence by previous spouse	148	5	101	6	48	4
No violence in the past 12 months	2,546	92	1,425	92	1,122	93
Refused/Don't know	65	2†	29	2†	36	3†
Total with previous spouse[3]	2,760	100	1,554	100	1,205	100

† *Coefficient of variation is high (16.6% to 33.3%).*
[1] *Includes common-law partners.*
[2] *Excludes those who refused to state their marital status.*
[3] *Includes those who had contact with a previous partner within the five year period.*
Source: *Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999*

Table A3
Number and percentage of women and men who reported violence by a spouse[1,2], by most serious type of violence, past 5 years

	Victims					
	Total		Female		Male	
	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%
Total violence by any spouse	1,239	100	690	100	549	100
Threats, threw something	158	13	70	10	87	16
Pushed, shoved, slapped	375	30	240	35	135	25
Kicked, bit, hit, hit with something	311	25	78	11	233	42
Beat, choked, gun/knife, sexual assault	388	31	300	43	88	16
Refused/Don't know	--	--	--	--	--	--

-- *Amount too small to be expressed.*
[1] *Includes common-law partners.*
[2] *Excludes those who refused to state their marital status.*
Source: *Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999*

Table A4
Number and percentage of women and men aged 15 years and over who reported violence by a spouse[1,2], by province, past 5 years

	Total		Female		Male	
	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%
Total with current or previous spouse	16,702	100	8,356	100	8,346	100
Total with violence - ten provinces	1,239	7	690	8	549	7
Newfoundland	14	5	6	4†	8	5†
Prince Edward Island	7	10†	5	12†	3	7†
Nova Scotia	38	7	22	8†	16	6†
New Brunswick	34	8	18	9†	16	7†
Québec	312	7	167	8	145	7
Ontario	366	6	212	7	153	5
Manitoba	46	8	26	9†	19	7†
Saskatchewan	51	10	30	11	20	8†
Alberta	158	10	90	11	68	9
British Columbia	214	9	113	10	101	9

† *Coefficient of variation is high (16.6% to 33.3%).*
1 *Includes common-law partners.*
2 *Excludes those who refused to state their marital status.*
Source: *Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999*

Table A5
Number and percentage of men and women who reported violence by a spouse[1], by sex of victim, past 5 years, 1993 and 1999

	Female, 1993[4]		Female, 1999[2,3]		Male, 1999[2,3]	
	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%
Violence by any spouse	1,074	12	690	8	549	7
No violence in the past 5 years	7,834	87	7,234	87	7,271	87
Refused	147	2	433	5	526	6
Total with current or previous spouse	9,055	100	8,356	100	8,346	100
Violence by current spouse	523	8	259	4	303	4
No violence in the past 5 years	6,054	90	6,678	91	6,823	90
Refused	113	2	373	5	433	6
Total with current spouse	6,690	100	7,310	100	7,558	100
Violence by previous spouse[5]	576	15	437	28	259	22
No violence in the past 5 years	3,064	82	1,100	71	922	76
Refused	99	2	17	1†	24	2†
Total with previous spouse	3,738	100	1,554	100	1,205	100

† *Coefficient of variation is high (16.6% to 33.3%).*
1 *Includes common-law partners.*
2 *Excludes those who refused to state their marital status.*
3 *Includes those who are 15 years of age and over.*
4 *Includes women who are 18 years of age and over.*
5 *In the 1999 GSS, only those who had been in contact with a previous partner were asked questions about violence in those relationships. This differs from the method used in the VAWS, where all women with previous partners were asked these questions. Had the same procedure been used in the GSS the relevant rates of violence would be somewhat lower: 22% for women and 14% for men.*
Source: *Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999; Violence Against Women Survey, 1993*

Table A6
Number and percentage of men and women who reported violence by a spouse[1], by sex of victim, past 12 months

	Female, 1993[4]		Female, 1999[2,3]		Male, 1999[2,3]	
	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%
Violence by any spouse	312	3	220	3	177	2
No violence in the past 12 months	8,632	95	7,671	92	7,601	91
Refused	112	1	465	6	569	7
Total with current or previous spouse	9,055	100	8,356	100	8,346	100
Violence by current spouse	201	3	120	2	129	2
No violence in the past 12 months	6,401	96	6,796	93	6,963	92
Refused	89	1	394	5	466	6
Total with current spouse	6,690	100	7,310	100	7,558	100
Violence by previous spouse[5]	114	3	101	6	48	4
No violence in the past 12 months	3,540	95	1,425	92	1,122	93
Refused	85	2	29	2[†]	36	3[†]
Total with previous spouse	3,738	100	1,554	100	1,205	100

[†] *Coefficient of variation is high (16.6% to 33.3%).*
[1] *Includes common-law partners.*
[2] *Excludes people who refused to state their marital status.*
[3] *Includes those who are 15 years of age and over.*
[4] *Includes women who are 18 years of age and over.*
[5] *In the 1999 GSS, only those who had been in contact with a previous partner were asked questions about violence in those relationships. This differs from the method used in the VAWS, where all women with previous partners were asked these questions. Had the same procedure been used in the GSS the relevant rates of violence would be somewhat lower: 5% for women and 2% for men.*
Source: *Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999; Violence Against Women Survey, 1993*

Table A7
Number and percentage of women aged 18 years and over who reported violence by a spouse[1], by type of violence, past 5 years, 1993

	Victims					
	Total		Current spouse		Previous spouse	
	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%
Total with violence	1,074	12	523	8	576	15
Threatened to hit	701	65	265	51	424	74
Threw something	466	43	146	28	302	52
Pushed, grabbed, shoved	918	86	424	81	498	86
Slapped	535	50	153	29	349	61
Kicked, bit or hit	414	39	101	19	285	50
Hit with something	242	22	57	11	160	28
Beaten	328	31	63	12	234	41
Choked	267	25	52	10	195	34
Gun or knife	177	16	29	6	135	24
Sexual assault	308	29	57	11	224	39

[1] *Includes common-law partners.*
Source: *Statistics Canada, Violence Against Women Survey, 1993*

Table A8
Number and percentage of women aged 18 years and over who reported violence by a spouse[1], by most serious type of violence, past 5 years, 1993

	Total		Current spouse		Previous spouse	
	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%	No. (000s)	%
Total	1,074	100	523	100	576	100
Threats, threw something	64	6	47	9	30	5
Pushed, shoved, slapped	365	34	279	53	129	22
Kicked, bit, hit, hit with something	93	9	55	10	42	7
Beat, choked, gun/knife, sexual assault	530	49	130	25	363	63
Not stated	23	2	12	2	11	2

[1] *Includes common-law partners.*
Figures may not add to totals due to rounding.
Source: *Statistics Canada, Violence Against Women Survey, 1993*

Table A9
Number and percentage of violent unions by severity of violence, past 5 years, 1993

	Total victims	
	No. (000s)	%
Total	**1,217**	**100**
Feared their lives were in danger	432	36
Did not fear their lives were in danger	775	64
Not stated/Don't know	10	1
Physical injury	570	47
No physical injury	641	53
Not stated/Don't know	7	1
Received medical attention	254	21
Did not receive medical attention	315	26
No physical injury	641	53
Not stated/Don't know	7	1

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
Source: *Statistics Canada, Violence Against Women Survey, 1993*

Table A10
Number and percentage of women aged 18 years and over who reported violence by a spouse[1], by frequency of assaults, past 5 years, 1993

	Total victims	
	No. (000s)	%
Total	**1,074**	**100**
Once	299	28
2-5 times	287	27
6-10 times	121	11
More than 10 times	354	33
Not stated	14	1

[1] *Includes common-law partners.*
Source: *Statistics Canada, Violence Against Women Survey, 1993*

Table A11
Number and percentage of violent unions reported to the police, past 5 years, 1993

	Total victims	
	No. (000s)	%
Total	**1,217**	**100**
Reported to the police	349	29
Not reported to the police	860	71
Not stated/Don't know	8	1

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
Source: *Statistics Canada, Violence Against Women Survey, 1993*

DATA SOURCES

Incident-based Uniform Crime (UCR2) Survey

The Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS), in co-operation with the policing community, collects police-reported incident-based crime statistics through the UCR2 Survey. The survey allows detailed examination of accused and victim characteristics, and characteristics of the incident itself. Collection began in 1988; by 1999, 164 police agencies in 7 provinces, representing 46% of the national volume of reported crime were responding to the UCR2 Survey. The sample of police forces is not nationally representative and therefore it is not possible to calculate rates of occurrence. The largest proportion of cases originates in Ontario and Quebec.

Homicide Survey

The Homicide Survey provides police-reported data on the characteristic of all homicide incidents, victims and accused person since 1961. When a homicide becomes known to the police a survey questionnaire is completed. The count for a particular year represents all homicides reported in that year, regardless of when the death actually occurred. The survey remained unchanged from 1961 to 1974 at which time more detailed information was collected. A question regarding the history of domestic violence between the accused and victim was added to the survey in 1991. Data on Shaken Baby Syndrome as a cause of death was captured in 1997.

Victimization surveys

Criminal victimization surveys are undertaken by Statistics Canada on a cyclical basis. Statistics Canada conducted a victimization survey as part of the General Social Survey in 1988. The survey was repeated in 1993 and 1999. Individuals 15 years and older were asked about their experiences with crime and their opinions concerning the justice system. The GSS measures victimization for 8 types of crime, according to *Criminal Code* definitions. The 1999 survey included special modules to measure spousal violence and violence against older adults by family members.

Households in the 10 provinces were selected using random digit dialing techniques. Once a household was chosen, any individual 15 years or older was randomly selected to respond to the survey. Households were excluded from the survey when they had no telephone or when the chosen respondent could not speak English or French. Also excluded were individuals living in institutions.

The sample size in 1999 was 25,876 persons, up significantly from 10,000 for the previous two cycles.

The Violence Against Women Survey (1993) provided detailed national data on all forms of sexual and physical violence perpetrated by men against women. Households in the 10 provinces were selected using random digit dialing techniques. Once a household was chosen, a female 18 years or older was randomly selected to respond to the survey. Households were excluded from the survey when they had no telephone or when the chosen respondent could not speak English or French. Also excluded were individuals living in institutions. A total of 12,300 women 18 years of age and older were interviewed about their experiences of physical and sexual violence since the age of 16.

Hospital Morbidity Database

The Hospital Morbidity Database provides a count of inpatient cases separated (discharge or death) during the data year from general and allied special hospitals in Canada, including acute care, convalescence and chronic facilities (with the exception of Ontario), by primary diagnosis. Data do not include outpatients or patients treated in psychiatric hospitals. The collection and publication of national hospital morbidity statistics began in 1960. As of the 1994-95 data year, the Canadian Institute for Health Information has taken over from Statistics Canada the responsibility of collection, production and custody of the Hospital Morbidity Database.

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