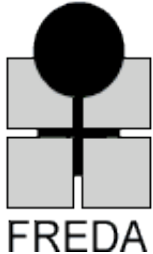




The FREDA Centre for Research on Violence against Women and Children



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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: Statistical Highlights

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN RELATIONSHIPS

- In 88% of all violent incidents males are identified as the suspects; half of all incidents involve a male perpetrator and a female victim (Johnson 1996).
- Of persons charged: 98% of sexual assaults are by men and 86% of violent crimes are committed by men (Johnson 1996).
- Women are almost 8 times more likely to be victimized by a spouse than are men (Fitzgerald 1999).
- 30% of women currently or previously married have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence at the hands of a marital partner (Fitzgerald 1999).
- 21% of women abused by a marital partner were assaulted during pregnancy; 40% of these women stated that the abuse began during their pregnancy (Fitzgerald 1999).
- In a recent survey, 12% of women aged 18 to 24 reported at least one incident of violence by a marital partner in a one-year period - 4 times the national average (Fitzgerald 1999).
- Marital partnerships of 2 years or less have the highest rate of wife assault (Rodgers 1994).
- One-third of women who were assaulted by a partner feared for their lives at some point during the abusive relationship (Rodgers 1994).
- In almost two-thirds of wife assault cases, violence occurred on more than one occasion (Rodgers 1994).
- 45% of women who experienced spousal violence indicated that they had suffered injury, and 43% of these women required medical attention (Rodgers 1994).
- Women married to or living with heavy drinkers, are 5 times more likely to be

assaulted by their partners than are women who live with non-drinkers (Fitzgerald 1999).

- Women constitute 98% of spousal violence victims of kidnapping/hostage-taking and sexual assault (Fitzgerald 1999).

Spousal Homicide

- "Spousal homicides increased in 2001 for the first time in six years" (Statistics Canada 2002).
- "In 2001, about 45% of all solved homicides were committed by an acquaintance, and 43% by a family member" (Statistics Canada 2002).
- "Police classified a total of 183 homicides in 2001 as family-related, 52 more than in 2000" (Statistics Canada 2002).
- "A total of 86 spousal homicides were reported in 2001, up from 68 in 2000, the first increase since 1995. Spousal slayings accounted for 47% of all family homicides and one-fifth of solved homicides in 2001" (Statistics Canada 2002).
- "The number of men accused of killing their current wife or ex-wife rose from 52 in 2000 to 69 in 2001" (Statistics Canada 2002).
- "In total, 52% of all female victims and 8% of all male victims in 2001 were killed by an individual with whom they had an intimate relationship at one time, either through marriage or dating" (Statistics Canada 2002).
- "Most multiple-victim homicides and murder-suicides were family-related, and the vast majority of accused persons in these types of incidents were male" (Statistics Canada 2002).
- Male spouses constitute 67% of family members who kill their female partners (Fitzgerald 1999).
- Over the past two decades, 3 times more wives than husbands were killed by their spouses (Fitzgerald 1999).
- Young wives are at the greatest risk of spousal homicide (in the 1990s, women under the age of 25 married, separated, or in common-law relationships were killed at a rate of 29 per million) (Fitzgerald 1999).
- In 56% of spousal homicides from 1991-1997, there was a history of reported domestic violence between victims and perpetrators (Fitzgerald 1999).
- Between 1974 and 1992, the rate for women killed by their husbands while separated was 6 times higher than the rate for women killed by their husbands while co-residing (Kong 1996).

- Evidence from various sources suggests that a large majority of wife killings are precipitated by: a man accusing his partner of sexual infidelity; by her decision to terminate the relationship; and/or by his desire to control her (Wilson and Daly 1994).

Stalking/Criminal Harassment

- Of harassment incidents reported to police in 1994-95, 8 in 10 victims were female, and 9 in 10 of the accused were male (Kong 1996).
- "Between 1991 and 1999, police were aware of previous domestic violence in 74% of homicides perpetrated by ex-husbands, 57% of homicides perpetrated by common-law husbands and 41% perpetrated by husbands in legal marriages" (Hotton 2001).
- "Women have a heightened risk of spousal homicide after marital separation" (Hotton 2001).
- Female victims are most frequently stalked by a current or former partner: 39% by an ex-husband; 2% by a current husband; and 17% by a current/former boyfriend (Kong 1996).
- Previous violence is reported in 50% of criminal harassment cases involving current or former partners (Kong 1996:4)
- Criminal harassers usually follow, watch, or make contact with their victims at the victim's home or place of work (Kong 1996).
- Victims decline to lay charges in 1 in 6 incidents (Kong 1996).
- In 20% of court cases where criminal harassment charges are dropped, they are done so at the victim's request or because she is reluctant to take part in the prosecution (Kong 1996).

RESPONSES TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN RELATIONSHIPS

- The 1993 National Survey on Violence Against Women found that police were informed of about 26% of wife assault cases; police responded to 84% of the cases reported to them; but charges were laid in only 28% of the cases (Rodgers 1994).
- The 1993 National Survey also found that in 45% of the cases male violence decreased or stopped following police intervention; in 40% of the cases there was no change in the men's behaviour; and in 10% of the cases male violence increased (Rodgers 1994).
- 29% of women in shelters had reported the most recent incident of abuse to the police (Fitzgerald 1999).
- 49% of those who contacted the police also contacted a social service, compared to

only 19% who did not contact police (Rodgers 1994).

- 74% of women who reported an incident to the police indicated that they had left or stayed away from their partner, compared to only 18% who did not report the incident to the police (Rodgers 1994).
- 81% of women whose partners receive counselling for abusive behaviour return home; although 70% of women whose partners did not receive counselling also return home (Fitzgerald 1999).
- 22% of women who experienced wife assault did not tell anyone prior to their disclosure in the National Survey; 18% of these women had been injured, and 10% had feared for their lives (Fitzgerald 1999).

Transition Houses and Shelters

- According to the 1997-1998 Transition Home Survey, there were 470 shelters for abused women across Canada (Fitzgerald 1999).
- "On a one-day snapshot of shelter residents on April 17, 2000, there were 2,281 women and 2,310 children fleeing abuse" (Dauvergne and Johnson 2001).
- The majority of shelters offer the following in-house services to women residents: individual short term counselling (91%); advocacy (87%); parenting skills (82%); and housing referral (82%) (Trainor 1999).
- Women aged 25 to 34 made up the largest proportion (36%) of abused women residing in shelters as of April 20, 1998 (Trainor 1999).
- 85% of abused women in shelters are seeking refuge from someone with whom they had an intimate relationship (Fitzgerald 1999).
- 77% of women who reside in shelters are there to escape abuse (Fitzgerald 1999).
- Over 80% of women who use shelters have suffered an injury at some point during an abusive relationship; 63% of abused women in shelters have at some point been injured severely enough to seek medical attention (Trainor 1999).
- Women who feared for their lives at some point during the relationship are more likely to have left their partner (57%) than those who did not (36%) (Rodgers 1994).
- 90,792 women and dependant children were admitted to 413 shelters for battered women across Canada in 1997-98 (Trainor 1999).
- 56% of women escaping abusive situations are admitted with children, and many of these women are protecting their children from abuse (Fitzgerald 1999).
- "During the one-year period ending March 31, 2000, a total of 57,182 women

together with 39,177 children were admitted to 448 shelters" (Dauvergne and Johnson 2001).

- "The majority of children accompanying their mothers to shelters were very young: 41% were under 5 years of age and 32% were 5-9 years of age" (Dauvergne and Johnson 2001).
- Women whose children had witnessed the violence were twice as likely to leave (60%) than in cases where the children had not witnessed the violence (30%) (Rodgers 1994).
- 9 out of 10 women who had contact with a shelter reported that it had been very or somewhat helpful (Trainor 1999).
- In a recent survey, only 8% of abused women had contacted a transition house, for the following reasons: 40% of abused women did not want or need help; 25% felt the incident was too minor; 16% lacked awareness of services; and 14% lacked the availability of services (Fitzgerald 1999).
- 77% of women who leave their partners stay with friends or relatives; 13% go to transition houses or shelters; 13% move into places of their own; and 5% stay in hotels (Rodgers 1994).
- Almost 75% of women who leave or stay apart eventually return home to their partners: for the sake of the children (31%); to give the relationship another chance (24%); when their partner promises to change (17%); because of a lack of money or housing (9%) (Rodgers 1994).

EFFECTS OF SPOUSAL VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN

- 4 in 10 women who experience violence report that their children also witness the violence. This means that one million Canadian children have witnessed violence by their fathers against their mothers (Fitzgerald 1999).
- In 52% of violent relationships in which children witnessed the violence the woman feared for her life; and in 61% of these relationships, she was injured by her partner (Fitzgerald 1999).
- Between 80 and 90% of children in homes where there is spousal violence are aware of and affected by the violence (Fitzgerald 1999).
- Child behaviours associated with witnessing family violence include aggression, and internalization of problems, with negative effects on social and academic development (Fitzgerald 1999).
- "Generational cycle of violence" women currently in violent marriages were 3 times as likely as women in non-violent marriages to state that their fathers-in-law were violent to their spouses, and were twice as likely to have witnessed their own

fathers assaulting their mothers (Rodgers 1994).

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NOTE:

These statistics are based on available data collated from a variety of different sources, some of which are quoted verbatim. Where possible, the most recent statistics have been used, though in many cases these are based on the 1993 Statistics Canada Survey on Violence Against Women.

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