

Epidemiology of domestic violence

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Domestic violence occurs across the world, in various cultures, and affects people across society, irrespective of economic status.

In the United States, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics in 1995 women reported a six times greater rate of intimate partner violence than men. However, studies have found that men are much less likely to report victimization in these situations.

One analysis found that "women are as physically aggressive or more aggressive than men in their relationships with their spouses or male partners" However, studies have shown that women are more likely to be injured. Archer's meta-analysis¹ found that women suffer 65% of domestic violence injuries. A Canadian study showed that 7% of women and 6% of men were abused by their current or former partners, but female victims of spousal violence were more than twice as likely to be injured as male victims, three times more likely to fear for their life, twice as likely to be stalked, and twice as likely to experience more than ten incidents of violence.

Some studies show that lesbian relationships have similar levels of violence as heterosexual relationships, while other studies report that lesbian relationships exhibit substantially higher rates of physical aggression.

Information about domestic violence reported on A.A.R.D.V.A.R.C. An Abuse, Rape, and Domestic Violence Aid and Resource Collection.

One of the most common requests we receive is from students seeking statistics for their reports and from programs seeking statistics to bolster their requests for grant money and other funding. This page should point you in the right direction for finding up-to-date information covering a variety of statistical reporting on abuse issues, whether you are looking for frequently cited resources or for statistics by state.

It must be noted however, that there always remains the "gray element" in crime; that is, those incidents which occur but are never reported or are

classified in ways which make it difficult to determine the true nature of the incident.

A prime example of this is domestic violence in same sex couples. Whether it's because the officer taking the report didn't know, didn't care or didn't want to "call it that", or because the parties involved were reluctant to expose the nature of the relationship, most domestic violence incidents between gays and lesbians end up classified as "assault" or "battery" - seriously skewing the true statistics and making it almost impossible to use the common statistical reports for guidance or insight into the issue.

Another often problematic example occurs when trying to extrapolate information from statistical reports where external factors play an important role, yet aren't accounted for. Any amount of research concerning victimization is bound to run into strange and misleading numbers.

An obvious example of this concerns abuse in low vs. high income families. While on the surface, it may appear that low levels of income go hand-in-hand with higher levels of domestic violence, one must keep in mind that available income has significant weight on the options available to victims. While a low-income mother with three small infants might appear on statistical reports when getting a restraining order, when entering a domestic violence shelter, or when applying for TANF services due to family violence, the white collar mother with two in college might flee to a hotel for a few weeks, file for divorce, and move back to the city where the bulk of her family resides. In these scenarios, the low-income victim shows up all over the place in various statistical reports (from the court, from the shelter, and from the social services agency) while the white collar victim only shows up on a hotel register, on a civil court docket for divorce, and in the records of the local moving business. In other words, violence against her and/or her children, while every bit as dangerous and abusive, simply doesn't exist - on anyone's official paper.

Suffice it to say that when researching or using statistics, it's just as important to consider what the stats DON'T say, DON'T cover, or DON'T take into consideration.

With that said, check the left menu column for some of the most common sources for statistics. You'll note that with the exception of the FBI Uniform

Crime Reports (which are usually current to within 6 months), most of these reports run at least two years, usually more, behind (the FBI UCR reports run on a more automated system and tracks a relatively small scope of data, whereas info for the others needs to be compiled). Also, special task forces are usually setup to research numbers on a particular topic or covering a certain group and these may only run at 5 or even 10 year intervals due to the scope and cost of such undertakings.

If you need in-depth statistics or are seeking research summaries or reports, check under the topic areas above for research and additional reports. You can usually find crime maps and stats from your local sheriff's office.

Commonly Used Domestic Violence Citations

From the U.S. Dept. of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Violence against Women: A National Crime Victimization Survey Report, January 1994"

- Nearly 2 in 3 female victims of violence were related to or knew their attacker. (p. iii)
- Over two-thirds of violent victimizations against women were committed by someone known to them: 31% of female victims reported that the offender was a stranger. Approximately 28% were intimates such as husbands or boyfriends, 35% were acquaintances, and the remaining 5% were other relatives. (In contrast, victimizations by intimates and other relatives accounted for only 5% of all violent victimizations against men. Men were significantly more likely to have been victimized by acquaintances (50%) or strangers (44%) than by intimates or other relatives.) (p. 1)
- Almost 6 times as many women victimized by intimates (18%) as those victimized by strangers (3%) did not report their violent victimization to police because they feared reprisal from the offender. (p. 1)
- Annually, compared to males, females experienced over 10 times as many incidents of violence by an intimate. On average each year, women experienced 572,032 violent victimizations at the hands of an intimate, compared to 48,983 incidents committed against men. (p. 6)

From: "Violence by Intimates: Analysis of Data on Crimes by Current or Former Spouses, Boyfriends, and Girlfriends, U.S. Department of Justice, March, 1998"

- Estimates range from 960,000 incidents of violence against a current or former spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend each year to 4 million women who are physically abused by their husbands or live-in partners each year.
- While women are less likely than men to be victims of violent crimes overall, women are 5 to 8 times more likely than men to be victimized by an intimate partner.
- Violence by an intimate partner accounts for about 21% of violent crime experienced by women and about 2 % of the violence experienced by men.
- 31,260 women were murdered by an intimate from 1976-1996.
- Females accounted for 39% of the hospital emergency department visits for violence-related injuries in 1994 but 84% of the persons treated for injuries inflicted by intimates.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline has received more than 700,000 calls for assistance since February 1996. Source: National Domestic Violence Hotline, December 2001

It is estimated that 503,485 women are stalked by an intimate partner each year in the United States. Source: National Institute of Justice, July 2000

Studies show that child abuse occurs in 30-60% of family violence cases that involve families with children. Source: "The overlap between child maltreatment and woman battering." J.L. Edleson, Violence Against Women, February, 1999

Nearly one-third of American women (31 percent) report being physically or sexually abused by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives. Source: Commonwealth Fund survey, 1998

About 75% of the calls to law enforcement for intervention and assistance in domestic violence occur after separation from batterers. One study revealed that half of the homicides of female spouses and partners were committed by men after separation from batterers (Barbara Hart, Remarks to the Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect, April 1992)

Each year, medical expenses from domestic violence total at least \$3 to \$5

billion. Businesses forfeit another \$100 million in lost wages, sick leave, absenteeism and non-productivity. Source: Domestic Violence for Health Care Providers, 3rd Edition, Colorado Domestic Violence Coalition, 1991.

From 1983 to 1991, the number of domestic violence reports received increased by almost 117%. Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, 1983 and 1991.

Violence is the reason stated for divorce in 22% of middle-class marriages. Source: EAP Digest November/December 1991.

Every year, domestic violence results in almost 100,000 days of hospitalizations, almost 30,000 emergency department visits, and almost 40,000 visits to a physician. Source: American Medical Association. 5 issues American Health. Chicago 1991.

Studies by the Surgeon General's office reveal that domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women between the ages of 15 and 44, more common than automobile accidents, muggings, and cancer deaths combined. Other research has found that half of all women will experience some form of violence from their partners during marriage, and that more than one-third are battered repeatedly every year. Source: Journal of American Medical Association, 1990.

Battered women seek medical attention for injuries sustained as a consequence of domestic violence significantly more often after separation than during cohabitation; about 75% of the visits to emergency rooms by battered women occur after separation (Stark and Flitcraft, 1988).

Women who leave their batterers are at 75% greater risk of severe injury or death than those who stay. Source: Barbara Hart, National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 1988.

It is estimated that 25% of workplace problems such as absenteeism, lower productivity, turnover and excessive use of medical benefits are due to family violence. (Employee Assistance Providers/MN)

In 92% of all domestic violence incidents, crimes are committed by men against women. Source: "Violence Against Women", Bureau of Justice

Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, January, 1994.

Of women who reported being raped and/or physically assaulted since the age of 18, three quarters (76 percent) were victimized by a current or former husband, cohabitating partner, date or boyfriend. Source: "Prevalence Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey", U.S. Department of Justice, November, 1998.

In 1994, women separated from their spouses had a victimization rate 1 1/2 times higher than separated men, divorced men, or divorced women. Source: "Sex Differences in Violent Victimization", 1994, U.S. Department of Justice, September, 1997.

In 2003, among all female murder victims in the U.S., 30% were slain by their husbands or boyfriends. Source: Uniform Crime Reports of the U.S. 1996, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2003 (January - June).

A child exposed to the father abusing the mother is at the strongest risk for transmitting violent behavior from one generation to the next. Source: "Report of the American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Violence and the Family", APA, 1996

Forty percent of teenage girls age 14 to 17 report knowing someone their age who has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend. Source: Children Now/Kaiser Permanente poll, December, 1995.

Family violence costs the nation from \$5 to \$10 billion annually in medical expenses, police and court costs, shelters and foster care, sick leave, absenteeism, and non-productivity. Source: Medical News, American Medical Association, January, 1992.

Husbands and boyfriends commit 13,000 acts of violence against women in the workplace every year. Source: "Violence and Theft in the Workplace", U.S. Department of Justice, July, 1994.

The majority of welfare recipients have experienced domestic abuse in their adult lives and a high percentage are currently abused. Source: Trapped by Poverty, Trapped by Abuse: New Evidence Documenting the Relationship

Between Domestic Violence and Welfare, The Taylor Institute, April, 1997.

One in five female high school students reports being physically or sexually abused by a dating partner. Source: Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), August 2001.

WEAVE provides crisis intervention services to women, men and children who have experienced domestic violence or have been sexually assaulted. It is WEAVE's mission to bring an end to domestic violence and sexual assault in partnership with our community. WEAVE is the primary provider of crisis intervention services for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault in some Counties.

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Prevention and Education are critical in improving how our community responds to violence. WEAVE is committed to breaking the cycle of violence by educating the community to better understand the issues of domestic violence and sexual assault.

National Domestic Violence Hotline 1.800.799.7233