

## Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2010: Highlights

### Overview of family violence

- According to police-reported data for 2010, there were almost 99,000 victims of family violence, accounting for one-quarter (25%) of all victims of violent crime. Almost an equal proportion of these family violence victims were spouses (49%) or other types of family members, such as children, parents, siblings or extended family members (51%).
- Unlike other forms of violent crimes, females had more than double the risk of males of becoming a victim of police-reported family violence (407 victims per 100,000 population versus 180 victims per 100,000). This increased risk was primarily attributed to females' higher representation as victims of spousal violence.
- A comparison of family and non-family violence victims indicates that similar offences were committed against family and non-family members, with the exception of physical assaults and robberies. Physical assaults accounted for a greater proportion of violence against family members, while robberies occurred more frequently against non-family members.
- In 2010, 56% of family violence incidents resulted in charges laid or recommended. This was higher than the proportion (43%) of non-family violence incidents.
- Mirroring trends in homicide overall, rates of family homicide have been generally decreasing over the past thirty years, with a rate in 2010 that was 41% lower than in 1980.

### Violence against intimate partners

- In 2010, there were over 102,500 victims of intimate partner violence, including spousal and dating violence. This translates into a rate of 363 per 100,000 population aged 15 years and older and was almost 2.5 times higher than the rate recorded for family violence against a child, parent or other family member (150 victims per 100,000).
- Dating violence was more prevalent than spousal violence, with a rate that was higher than all other relationship categories, including friends and acquaintances.
- Police-reported rates of intimate partner violence tended to be highest among female victims and among those aged 25 to 34 years. This contrasts non-intimate partner violence, where the victims were predominantly male and where rates were highest among those aged 15 to 24 years.
- Based on police-reported data, over half (51%) of victims of intimate partner violence suffered injuries, a greater proportion than non-intimate partner victims (39%).
- Findings from the 2009 General Social Survey (GSS) indicate that spousal victims were more likely than other victims to be first victimized as a child. This was true for spousal victims of physical and sexual assault.
- According to police-reported data, intimate partner violence was more likely than non-intimate partner violence to result in charges being laid or recommended (68% versus 38%). Charges were also more common when the victim of intimate partner violence was a woman (71%) than a man (57%).
- In general, rates of homicides against intimate partners have dropped over the previous twenty years. This decrease was seen for homicides against both spouses and dating partners, and was most pronounced for female victims of intimate partner homicides.

- Over the past decade, more than half (65%) of spouses accused of homicide had a history of family violence involving the victim. This was most often the case when the spousal victim was estranged from their partner, including those divorced or separated from a legal marriage or common-law relationship.

### Family violence against children and youth

- In 2010, 18,710 children and youth aged 17 and under were the victims of police-reported family violence. This represents about one-quarter of all violent offences committed against children and youth.
- Police-reported rates of family violence were generally higher among older children and youth, though this was not the case for homicides. Between 2000 and 2010, the rate of family homicide was highest among infants under one. Over this same ten year period, the vast majority of homicides of infants and toddlers were committed by parents (98% of family homicides against infants under one, and 90% of family homicides of children aged 1 to 3 years).
- Family violence was more prevalent among girls than boys (338 victims per 100,000 versus 212 per 100,000). The leading contributor to the higher rates of family violence among girls, particularly as they age, relates to their much higher risk of sexual violence. They were more than four times as likely as boys to be a victim of sexual assault or other sexual offences committed by a family member (134 victims per 100,000 population versus 30 per 100,000 population).
- In 2010, child and youth victims were nearly as likely to sustain physical injury by a family member or non-family member (40% versus 37%). This was true for physical and sexual assaults, but was not consistently evident for all offence types.
- Charges were more commonly laid or recommended when a family member was identified as the accused in violence against children or youth, compared to violence not involving family members (45% versus 34%).
- Children and youth were most at risk of police-reported family violence in small cities, towns and rural areas, with a rate more than double the rate recorded for census metropolitan areas (CMAs).
- Results from the GSS indicate that between 2004 and 2009, there was an increase in the proportion of spousal violence victims reporting that children heard or saw assaults on them (from 43% to 52% of spousal victims with children).
- According to the 2009 GSS, children seeing or witnessing spousal violence was most prevalent when the victim was female or was estranged from their legal or common-law spouse.
- The 2009 GSS indicates that parents were almost four times as likely to involve the police when a child witnessed the incident of spousal violence than when children were not present during the spousal violence incident (39% versus 10%).

### Family violence against seniors

- Based on police-reported data, nearly 2,800 seniors aged 65 years and older were the victims of family violence in 2010. Presented as a rate, the senior population had the lowest risk of violence compared to any other age group, irrespective of whether the incident involved a family member or someone outside the family.
- Overall, seniors were most at risk from friends or acquaintances (73 victims per 100,000 seniors), followed by family members (61 victims per 100,000) and strangers (51 victims per 100,000). Grown children were most often identified as the perpetrator of family violence against seniors.

- In 2010, the rate of spousal violence for senior women was more than double the male rate (22 versus 10 per 100,000 population). Senior women were also slightly more likely than senior men to be victimized by their children in 2010 (27 per 100,000 versus 24 per 100,000 population).
- In 2010, two-thirds (67%) of incidents of family violence against seniors involved physical assaults, a larger proportion than the share of non-family violence incidents (45%).
- For both sexes, grown children were the most common perpetrators of family violence (39% of women and 46% of men). This was particularly the case when the violence escalated to the killing of seniors. Over the past decade, half (50%) of all family homicides against seniors were committed by grown children.
- Despite annual fluctuations, rates of family homicides against seniors have been relatively steady over the previous fifteen years. Rates of family and non-family homicides against seniors are at near parity in recent years.
- The leading motives for family homicides of seniors were frustration and the escalation of an argument (32% and 26%). In contrast, financial gain was the leading motive in non-family homicides, reflecting the finding that one-quarter of all non-family homicides against seniors were committed during the commission of a robbery.