

Catalogue no. 85-224-X

# Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile



2009



Statistics  
Canada

Statistique  
Canada

Canada

## How to obtain more information

For information about this product or the wide range of services and data available from Statistics Canada, visit our website at [www.statcan.gc.ca](http://www.statcan.gc.ca), e-mail us at [infostats@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:infostats@statcan.gc.ca), or telephone us, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the following numbers:

### Statistics Canada's National Contact Centre

Toll-free telephone (Canada and the United States):

Inquiries line	1-800-263-1136
National telecommunications device for the hearing impaired	1-800-363-7629
Fax line	1-877-287-4369

Local or international calls:

Inquiries line	1-613-951-8116
Fax line	1-613-951-0581

### Depository Services Program

Inquiries line	1-800-635-7943
Fax line	1-800-565-7757

## To access this product

This product, Catalogue no. 85-224-X, is available free in electronic format. To obtain a single issue, visit our website at [www.statcan.gc.ca](http://www.statcan.gc.ca) and select "Publications."

## Standards of service to the public

Statistics Canada is committed to serving its clients in a prompt, reliable and courteous manner. To this end, Statistics Canada has developed *standards of service* that its employees observe. To obtain a copy of these service standards, please contact Statistics Canada toll-free at 1-800-263-1136. The service standards are also published on [www.statcan.gc.ca](http://www.statcan.gc.ca) under "About us" > "Providing services to Canadians."

Statistics Canada  
Canadian Centre For Justice Statistics

# Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile

2009

Published by authority of the Minister responsible for Statistics Canada

© Minister of Industry, 2009

All rights reserved. The content of this electronic publication may be reproduced, in whole or in part, and by any means, without further permission from Statistics Canada, subject to the following conditions: that it be done solely for the purposes of private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary, and/or for non-commercial purposes; and that Statistics Canada be fully acknowledged as follows: Source (or "Adapted from", if appropriate): Statistics Canada, year of publication, name of product, catalogue number, volume and issue numbers, reference period and page(s). Otherwise, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, by any means—electronic, mechanical or photocopy—or for any purposes without prior written permission of Licensing Services, Client Services Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0T6.

October 2009

Catalogue no. 85-224-X

ISSN 1480-7165

Frequency: Annual

Ottawa

Cette publication est également disponible en français.

---

#### **Note of appreciation**

*Canada owes the success of its statistical system to a long standing partnership between Statistics Canada, the citizens of Canada, its businesses, governments and other institutions. Accurate and timely statistical information could not be produced without their continued cooperation and goodwill.*

# *User information*

## **Symbols**

The following standard symbols are used in Statistics Canada publications:

- . not available for any reference period
- .. not available for a specific reference period
- ... not applicable
- 0 true zero or a value rounded to zero
- 0<sup>s</sup> value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
- P preliminary
- r revised
- x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
- E use with caution
- F too unreliable to be published

# *Table of contents*

<b>Preface</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Highlights</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>A profile of Canada's shelters for abused women</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Fact sheet — Police-reported spousal violence in Canada</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Fact sheet — Police-reported family violence against children and youth</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Fact sheet — Police-reported family violence against older adults</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Fact sheet — Family homicides</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Data quality, concepts and methodology</b>	
Data Sources	57
Definitions	59
References	61

# Preface

This is the twelfth annual *Family Violence in Canada* report produced by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics under the Federal Family Violence Initiative. This annual report provides the most current data on the nature and extent of family violence in Canada, as well as trends over time, as part of the ongoing initiative to inform policy makers and the public about family violence issues.

Each year the report has a different focus. This year, the focus of the report is a profile of shelters that provide residential services to women and children fleeing abusive situations. Data for this profile come from the Transition Home Survey, a biennial census of residential facilities for female victims of family violence in Canada.

In addition, using police-reported data, the report also presents fact sheets, data tables and figures examining spousal violence, family violence against children and youth, family violence against seniors (aged 65 years and older), and family-related homicides.

# Highlights

## A profile of Canada's shelters for abused women

- In 2008, there were 569 shelters across Canada providing residential services to women and children escaping abusive situations.
- Transition homes (47%), providing short- to moderate-term housing, and emergency-type facilities (26%) made up the majority of shelters in Canada.
- Prince Edward Island had the greatest number of shelters per capita at 14 per 100,000 married, common-law and separated women, followed by New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador and Manitoba.
- While 57% of shelters serve a suburban or urban population exclusively, 4% are exclusively village or rural-area facilities (this includes rural shelters serving reserves).
- In addition to housing, the services most commonly offered to residents were transportation, short-term counselling, advocacy, safety or protection planning and housing referral, each provided by about 9 in 10 shelters.
- About three-quarters of facilities offered services for children accompanying their mother to shelters.
- About two-thirds of facilities provided former and non-residents with services such as crisis telephone lines, safety or protection planning, individual short-term counselling and advocacy.

## Police-reported spousal violence in Canada

- In 2007, nearly 40,200 incidents of spousal violence (i.e., violence against legally married, common-law, separated and divorced partners) were reported to police. This represents about 12% of all police-reported violent crime in Canada.
- Police-reported spousal violence has steadily declined over the past 10 years, decreasing 15% between 1998 and 2007.
- The majority of victims of spousal violence continue to be females, accounting for 83% of victims.
- Spousal violence is twice as common between current partners (legally married or common-law) as ex-partners.
- Accounting for nearly two-thirds of offences, common assault was the most frequent type of spousal violence according to police-reported data, followed by major assault, uttering threats and criminal harassment or stalking.
- Police laid charges in more than three-quarters of spousal violence incidents reported in 2007. Incidents involving female victims were more likely to result in charges being laid than those involving male victims.

## Police-reported family violence against children and youth

- Police-reported data for 2007 indicate that children and youth under the age of 18 were most likely to be physically or sexually assaulted by someone they know (85% of incidents).
- Nearly 53,400 children and youth were the victims of a police-reported assault in 2007, with about 3 in 10 incidents of assaults against children and youth perpetrated by a family member.

- When children and youth were victims of family violence, a parent was identified as the abuser in nearly 6 in 10 incidents.
- Girls under the age of 18 reported higher rates of both physical and sexual assault by a family member than boys. In 2007, the rate of family-perpetrated sexual assault was more than 4 times higher for girls than for boys.
- Male family members were identified as the accused in a sizable majority of family-related sexual (96%) and physical assaults (71%) against children and youth.

### Police-reported family violence against older adults

- In 2007, 1,938 incidents of family violence against seniors were reported to police, representing more than one-third of all violent incidents committed against older adults.
- The rate of family violence for seniors (48 per 100,000) was much lower than for those in younger age groups. Compared to seniors, the family violence rate was twice as high for adults aged 55 to 64 (104 per 100,000) and was more than 8 times higher among adults aged 25 to 34 (406 per 100,000).
- Senior men (163 per 100,000) had a higher overall rate of violent victimization compared to senior women (114 per 100,000). However, senior women had higher rates of violent victimization by a family member (52 per 100,000) compared to senior men (43 per 100,000).
- Spouses and adult children were the most common perpetrators of family violence against senior women, while adult children were most often the accused in family violence against senior men.
- Just over half of police-reported family violence incidents against seniors were common assaults.
- Half of police-reported incidents of family violence against seniors did not result in physical injury. When physical injuries were sustained, the vast majority (91%) were minor.

### Family homicides

#### Spousal homicides

- Rates of spousal homicide, which involve persons in legal marriages, those who are separated or divorced from such unions, and those in common-law relationships, declined over the 3 decades from 1978 to 2007. In 2007, the spousal homicide rate of 4 per million spouses was the lowest in over 30 years.
- Women continue to be more likely than men to be victims of spousal homicide. In 2007, almost 4 times as many women were killed by a current or former spouse as men.
- During the most recent decade, between 1998 and 2007, about 41% of spousal homicides involved common-law partners and more than one-third involved legally married persons.
- Spousal homicide rates were highest for persons in the 15 to 24 year-old age group.

#### Family homicides against children and youth

- Homicides of children and youth (under the age of 18) represented about 9% of all homicides in 2007. Most child and youth homicide victims were killed by someone they knew. In 2007, 41% of child and youth homicides were committed by a family member, 27% by someone known to the victim but other than a family member, 20% by strangers and the remaining 13% of child and youth homicides were unsolved.
- Parents were the perpetrators in the majority of child and youth homicides committed by family members. Fathers (54%) were more likely than mothers (34%) to be the perpetrators.



- Infants under the age of one experienced higher rates of family homicide compared to older children. From 1998 to 2007, baby boys (35 per million population) had somewhat higher rates than baby girls (27 per million population).
- In family homicides of infants, half of victims (51%) were killed by their mother and 47% by their father, whereas in family homicides of older children fathers were the most likely perpetrators.

#### **Family homicides against older adults**

- The overall homicide rate was lower among adults aged 65 years and older (9 per million population) compared to persons under 65 years of age (23 per million population). However, rates of family-perpetrated homicide for seniors (3.8 per million population) and non-seniors (4.5 per million population) were comparable.
- Senior female victims killed by a family member were most commonly killed by their spouse (40%) or adult son (36%). In nearly two-thirds of family homicides of senior men, an adult son was the accused killer.
- Most often, frustration, anger or despair was the apparent motive for family-perpetrated homicides against seniors. In contrast, financial gain was the most commonly identified reason behind senior homicides committed by non-family members.

# Section 1

## **A profile of Canada's shelters for abused women**

**by Mike Burns and Andrea Taylor-Butts**

### **1.1 Introduction**

For more than three decades, the shelter system in Canada has provided women and their children who are fleeing abuse with a safe haven from the violence, counselling to help cope with the abuse, legal advice and countless other services.

Information on shelters in Canada is collected through the Transition Home Survey (THS), a biennial census of all residential facilities for female victims of family violence. The THS was developed as part of the Federal Family Violence Initiative and provides an overview of shelters in Canada that offer residential services to abused women and their children, as well as a profile of the people using the shelters. Since approximately 9 in 10 shelters prohibited the admission of men, information on men using these facilities is limited (see Text box 3: Shelters admitting men).

According to the THS, in 2008, there were 569 shelters across Canada providing residential services to women and children attempting to escape abusive situations. Admissions to these shelters reached a little over 101,000 (approximately 62,000 women and 38,000 children)<sup>1</sup> in the 12-month period from

1. The actual annual admissions breakdown for women and children is unknown for approximately 1% of the survey respondents. In these cases, the shelters provided only the total admissions for a period of 12 months but it was not possible to determine the precise number of women and children. As a result, the total number of annual admissions does not correspond to the sum of admissions for women and children.

April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008. While women and children escaping family violence did not account for all admissions to shelters serving abused women, they did represent the vast majority (see Text box 2: A brief profile of shelter residents).<sup>2</sup>

Using data collected through the THS, this chapter provides information on the shelter system in Canada, including the number of facilities, the types of shelter they provide and the services they offer. In addition, a brief profile of the women and children using shelters in Canada is presented.<sup>3</sup>

### **1.2 Transition homes the most common forms of refuge available to women fleeing abuse**

The 569 facilities providing refuge to abused women and their children varied in the lengths-of-stay and types of services they offered to clients (see Text box 1). Some facilities, such as emergency shelters and women's emergency centres, specialize in providing very short-term stays; others, such as second stage housing, focus on longer-term solutions. And while some shelters serve a broad population of clientele and offer few services beyond room and board (e.g., emergency shelters), others provide comprehensive programming specifically targeting

2. The Transition Home Survey (THS) covers a 12-month fiscal period (e.g., April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008). However for the purposes of this report, the surveys' respective ending years will be used to refer to each cycle of the THS. Therefore, for example, the 2007/2008 THS will be referred to simply as the 2008 THS; the 2005/2006 THS will be referred to as the 2006 THS and so on.

3. For more detailed information on residents in shelters for abused women, see the *Juristat* article "Residents of Canada's shelters for abused women, 2008" by Julie Sauvé and Mike Burns in *Juristat* Vol. 29, no. 2, May 2009, catalogue no. 85-002-X.

**Text box 1: Types of residential facilities for abused women and children on the Transition Home Survey**

The term 'shelter' is used broadly to refer to all residential facilities for abused women and their dependent children. In addition, for the purposes of the Transition Home Survey (THS), the following generic categories were developed to further define the various types of shelters. Referring to these definitions, those responding to the THS selected the facility-type that **best described** their shelter.

**Second stage housing:** Facility offering long-term (3 to 12 months) secure housing with support and referral services designed to assist women while they search for permanent housing.

**Transition home or shelter:** Facility offering short- or moderate-term (1 day to 11 weeks) secure housing for abused women with or without children; also referred to as first stage emergency housing.

**Family resource centre:** Residential services provided through an Ontario government initiative that serves a wide range of clients and provides an extensive array of information and referrals.

**Women's emergency centre or shelter:** Facility offering short-term (1 to 21 days) respite for women and their dependent children.

**Emergency shelter:** Facility offering short-term (1 to 3 days) respite for a wide population range, not exclusively abused women. Some facilities may provide accommodation for men as well as women. This type of facility may accommodate residents who are not associated with family abuse but are without a home due to an emergency situation (e.g., eviction for non-payment of rent). Other than room and board services, these shelters offer few additional client services.

**Safe home network:** Network of private homes in rural or remote areas where there is no full-fledged operating shelter. It offers subsidiary very short term (1 to 3 days) emergency housing.

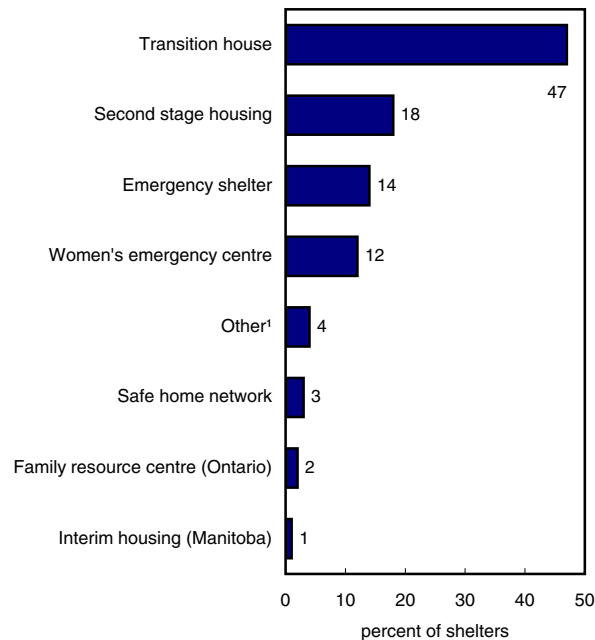
**Other:** Includes all other residential facilities offering services to abused women with or without children, not otherwise classified. This category includes Rural Family Violence Prevention Centres in Alberta, Interim Housing in Manitoba and other types of emergency shelters, such as YWCAs. These services may not be exclusive to abused women.

the needs of abused women (e.g., transition homes, women's emergency centres).

Transition homes and emergency-type facilities have been, and continue to be, the most common types of shelters available to abused women in Canada (Chart 1.1). In 2008, transition homes, which provide

short- to moderate-term housing, made up nearly half (47%) of all shelters in Canada. Emergency-type facilities, such as general emergency shelters and women's emergency centres, accounted for more than one-quarter (26%) of sheltering facilities in 2008.

**Chart 1.1**  
**Transition homes and emergency-type facilities the most common types of shelters available, 2008**



1. Includes other facilities not otherwise classified.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey, 2007/2008.

The use of emergency-type shelters by abused women has grown over time, while admissions to transition homes, as a share of all shelter admissions, have decreased. A sample of 354 shelters that have participated in five consecutive cycles of the THS showed that in 2000, admissions to transition homes represented 65% of admissions to all types of shelters, but decreased to 53% in 2008. At the same time, admissions to emergency-type facilities increased from 26% in 2000 to 40% in 2008.

### 1.3 The number and types of facilities vary across the country

In 2008, about 70% of the shelters in Canada were located in 3 provinces, Ontario (28%), Quebec (22%) and British Columbia (19%). However, if

4. Rates are calculated based on 100,000 population of married, common-law and separated women. Separated includes persons currently married, but who are no longer living with their spouse (for any reason other than illness or work) and have not obtained a divorce. Persons who are separated but who live with a common-law partner are not included.

population differences between the provinces are taken into consideration, Prince Edward Island (14 per 100,000 married, common-law and separated women) had the greatest number of shelters per capita, followed by New Brunswick (12), Newfoundland and Labrador (11) and Manitoba (11). Nationally, there were about 7 shelters for every 100,000 married, common-law and separated women (Table 1.1).<sup>4</sup>

The distribution of the various types of sheltering facilities differs by province and territory. Transition homes were most prevalent in Quebec, accounting for 80% of shelters in that province, followed by Nova Scotia (69%) (Table 1.2). In contrast, transition houses were least common in Alberta (8%) and Manitoba (10%). Emergency-type facilities, including women's emergency centres and general emergency shelters, were most common in the Prairies, the territories and in Ontario (Table 1.2). Alberta, in particular, had the highest proportion of women's emergency centres, which constituted nearly two-thirds of the shelters for abused women in that province. While second stage housing represented about one-fifth of the shelters for abused women in a majority of provinces and Yukon, most facilities in Prince Edward Island (80%) were second stage shelters. Northwest Territories and Nunavut (0%) as well as Quebec (10%) had the lowest prevalence of second stage housing.

### 1.4 Facilities offering life skills training to their residents on the rise

As in past years, in addition to housing, many shelters offered a wide range of in-house programs and services to those staying in their facilities in 2008. Shelters provided services aimed at assisting women in dealing with complex issues associated with leaving an abusive situation and overcoming their victimization. The services most commonly offered were transportation and accompaniment (i.e., to court, medical appointments), individual short-term counselling, advocacy, safety or protection planning and housing referral—almost 9 in 10 shelters provided each of these services to their women residents (Table 1.3).

Many shelters offer services to assist residents further develop life skills. The THS found that life-skills training was offered by 76% of shelters in 2008, an 8%

increase over 2002.<sup>5</sup> This represented the largest increase among services provided to women residents during this time period.<sup>6</sup>

### **1.5 Short-term counselling more likely to be offered by transition homes than by other types of shelters**

The types of services and programs available vary based on the type of facility. For instance, the services most frequently offered to residents of transition homes were safety or protection planning, transportation and accompaniment, as well as individual short-term counselling (Table 1.4). Furthermore, individual short-term counselling and transportation were more likely to be offered by transition homes than by almost any other type of shelter.

5. According to the 2007/2008 trend file of 354 shelters who have participated in each cycle of the THS.

6. Several government funded initiatives have been developed to help victims cope with the violence and provide shelters with funding for programming and services aimed at improving victims' life skills. For instance, in 2007, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) implemented the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS). Among other things, this strategy aims to help strengthen the shelter system and improve its ability to meet victim needs, while helping individuals and families become more self-sufficient (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, n.d.).

Second stage housing facilities most often provided advocacy and housing referral services to residents. However, these facilities, which are typically oriented towards helping women develop permanent solutions to abusive situations, were generally more likely to provide life skills and long-term counselling services than other types of facilities (Table 1.4).

Women's emergency centres were most likely to offer advocacy and safety or protection planning, and, along with general emergency shelters, provided advocacy as well as specialized services for women with disabilities, visible minorities and lesbian women more often than other types of shelters (Table 1.4).

### **1.6 About three-quarters of shelters offered services or programming for children**

Results from the 2008 THS indicate that on April 16, 2008, 44% of residents in shelters for abused women were children (see Text box 2). As most mothers coming to shelters to escape abuse bring their children with them (70%), about three-quarters of shelters offered some type of service or programming for children (Table 1.5). Outdoor and indoor recreational facilities for children were the most prevalent types of children's services available, each offered by about three-quarters of shelters. Services to help children cope with family violence, such as group and individual counselling, as well as specialized

**Text box 2: A brief profile of shelter residents**

Results from the 2008 Transition Home Survey (THS) indicate that admissions of women and children to the 569 shelters across Canada exceeded 101,000 during the 12-month period from April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008. In addition to these annual figures, the THS provides a snapshot of the women and children using shelters by collecting information on selected characteristics of residents on a particular day, which in 2008 was April 16th. This information can then be used to build a profile of women and children staying in shelters on that snapshot day. (For more detailed information on residents in shelters for abused women, see "Residents of Canada's shelters for abused women, 2008" by Julie Sauvé and Mike Burns in *Juristat* Vol. 29, no. 2, May 2009.)

**More than three-quarters of women in shelters were fleeing abuse**

Across Canada, approximately 4,300 women and their 3,400 dependent children resided in shelters on April 16, 2008.<sup>7</sup> While about one-quarter of the women were in shelters for reasons such as housing or addiction problems,<sup>8</sup> three-quarters (3,222) were there to escape an abusive situation (Table 1.6). Frequently, the women staying in shelters due to abuse were 25 to 34 years of age (36%), with nearly 8 in 10 under the age of 45.

**Psychological and physical abuse by a spouse or common-law partner were the main reasons women went to shelters**

Similar to previous years, the 2008 THS indicates that about two-thirds (65%) of all women in shelters on April 16, 2008 (regardless of whether or not escaping abuse was the primary reason for their stay) were there to escape psychological abuse, while more than half had fled physical violence (55%).

The vast majority of women in shelters were seeking refuge from abuse by a current spouse or common-law partner (64%), or a former spouse or partner (12%) (Table 1.6). The rate of women in shelters escaping an abusive spouse or partner (either current or former) on April 16, 2008 was 31 per 100,000 population.<sup>9</sup>

About one-quarter of abused women residing in shelters on snapshot day had reported their most recent incident of violence to the police.<sup>10</sup>

**Children accompanied about 70% of mothers to shelters**

Over 2,200 women in shelters to escape abuse on April 16, 2008 had children (Table 1.6). About 70% of these women brought their dependent children with them to the shelter.<sup>11</sup> Of the nearly 2,900 children accompanying mothers fleeing abuse to shelters, more than two-thirds (69%) were under the age of 10. Women accompanied by their children were staying primarily in transition homes (39%) and second stage housing (31%).

programming for child witnesses and victims of abuse, were also provided by more than half of shelters.

## 1.7 Providing support to former residents and non-residents a significant part of day-to-day shelter operations

Many shelters extend their resources to those who are not staying in the facility by offering services to former residents as well as those who have not stayed in the shelter previously. Shelters offer assistance to ex- and non-residents in need of support in order to deal with a variety of situations including threats of abuse, safe housing, employment and legal assistance.

7. In addition to gathering data on residential services provided to female victims of violence and their children during a 12-month period, the THS also produces a snapshot of the persons who received services on a given day. The data collected on April 16, 2008, the survey snapshot day, provides a reliable overview of the shelter residents.

8. Includes housing-related issues, for example.

9. The rate is based on 100,000 population of women who are currently married, in a common-law relationship or are separated.

10. In almost half of cases, the incident had not been reported to the police and in 29% of cases, the information was unknown.

11. Shelters were asked to report on whether or not residents were admitted to the shelter with or without their children. However, it is unknown whether women not accompanied by their children had legal and/or physical custody of those children prior to coming to the shelters.

In 2008, the services most frequently provided to former and non-residents included crisis telephone lines, safety or protection planning, individual short-term counselling and advocacy, each offered by about two-thirds of facilities (Table 1.3).

In general, the services frequently provided to residents such as transportation and accompaniment, housing referral, parenting skills training and life-skills training were much less likely to be offered to those not staying in the shelter. Still, some services such as crisis telephone lines, individual long-term counselling and family counselling programs were offered to current residents, former residents and non-residents by a similar number of shelters (Table 1.3). Overall, transition homes were more likely than other shelter-types to provide services to people not staying in their facilities (Table 1.4).

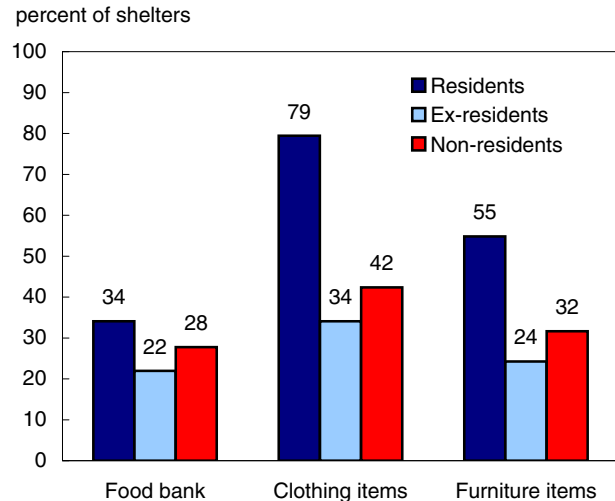
## 1.8 Shelters also help provide items such as clothing and furniture

Some women may lack the basic necessities to set-up a new home once they depart from the shelter. Many facilities help residents as they move on by providing items such as clothing (79%) and furniture (55%), as well as food bank services (34%). A notable number of shelters also provided these services to former residents and non-residents (Chart 1.2).

While shelters offered a wide variety of services to both current and former residents as well as non-residents, very few shelters extended their resources to provide in-house services to the partners of residents, with 5% offering treatment or counselling for abusive partners. However, about one-third of shelters did refer these partners to an external agency for assistance.

12. 'Other shelter types' includes all other facilities not otherwise classified. This category may include other types of emergency shelters, such as YWCAs, homeless shelters, senior's residences and other similar facilities not exclusive to abused women.

**Chart 1.2**  
Many shelters provided clothing, furniture items, and food bank services, 2008



Source(s): Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey, 2007/2008.

### Text box 3: Shelters admitting men

Throughout 2008, shelters responding to the Transition Home Survey (THS) admitted a total of 736 men. More than half of these admissions were in New Brunswick, while another 43% were in Ontario. About 9% of men came to the shelters seeking refuge from spousal abuse, while the remainder were admitted for reasons other than abuse, such as housing-related issues.

While approximately 9 in 10 shelters prohibited the admission of men, about 5% of shelters for abused women did permit men to be admitted; 4% had no such policies in place.

Of the 5% of facilities or 29 shelters allowing adult male residents, transition homes constituted the largest number (24%) followed by other shelter types<sup>12</sup> (21%), second stage housing (17%) and emergency shelters (17%).



## 1.9 Shelters received over one-hundred requests from non-residents per month

Rather than refuge, people may seek other types of assistance from shelters. Responding to these requests and providing outreach assistance was a part of the day-to-day operations of many shelters. Over a 12-month period (i.e., April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008) shelters committed an estimated total of 28,770 hours to outreach work. In particular, Quebec, the province with the second largest number of shelters, devoted more than 11,600 hours in total or an average of 92 hours per shelter to outreach work, the most of any province in Canada. With an average of 54 hours per shelter, Ontario had the second highest number of annual outreach hours per shelter.

In a typical month, shelters received a total of over 62,000 inquiries—approximately 110 inquiries per shelter, per month, up 16% over 2006. On April 16, 2008, shelters received more than 4,700 inquiries and requests for assistance from non-residents. More than two-thirds of these inquiries were for non-housing related issues such as crisis and emotional support, medical assistance or general information.

## 1.10 Fewer services offered by village and rural-area shelters

Women living in small villages and rural areas seeking to escape spousal violence may have specific needs due to their location. For example, the geographic isolation of many villages and rural settings may mean limited access to social supports such as family and friends. Similarly, small or remote communities may

offer little in the way of resources such as shelters, child care and affordable housing (Purdon, 2004; Lunn, 2001; Jiwani, Kachuk and Moore, 1998).

According to the THS, there were very few shelters for abused women exclusively serving villages and rural populations (i.e., under 1,000 people), with most shelters serving suburban and urban populations or a combination of suburban/urban and village/rural populations.<sup>13</sup> In 2008, 57% of all shelters served suburban and urban areas exclusively; 39% served an urban-rural mix and 4% served either a village/rural area exclusively or served a village/rural area as well as a reserve. Nearly half of all suburban/urban-area shelters were transition homes, while emergency-type facilities were the most common kind of shelter found in villages and rural locations (Table 1.7).

There were a number of similarities between the 324 suburban/urban-area shelters and the 24 shelters that served villages and rural populations exclusively.<sup>14</sup> For example, like suburban/urban-area shelters, individual short-term counselling, advocacy, safety or protection planning, and housing referrals were among the in-house services most commonly offered by village/rural-area facilities. Overall, the assortment of programs and services available to current, former and non-residents in suburban/urban-area facilities was more extensive compared to village and rural-area shelters (Table 1.8).

However, village/rural-area facilities (67%) were more likely than suburban/urban-area shelters (53%) to provide residents with culturally sensitive services for Aboriginal women; and individual long-term counselling was found more frequently among village/rural-area shelters (50%) compared to facilities that only served suburban and urban populations (38%). Village and rural-area shelters were also more likely than suburban/urban-area facilities to provide non-residents with certain services including advocacy, individual short-term counselling, long-term counselling, housing referrals and mental health services (Table 1.8).

13. Shelters serving suburban and urban populations exclusively are also referred to as suburban/urban-area shelters. Suburban/urban-area shelters serve populations of 1,000 people or more, exclusively. Shelters serving villages and a rural area or villages and a rural area as well as a reserve are referred to as village/rural-area shelters. Village/rural-area shelters serve a population of less than 1,000 people exclusively, or a village/rural area as well as a reserve.

14. Ibid.

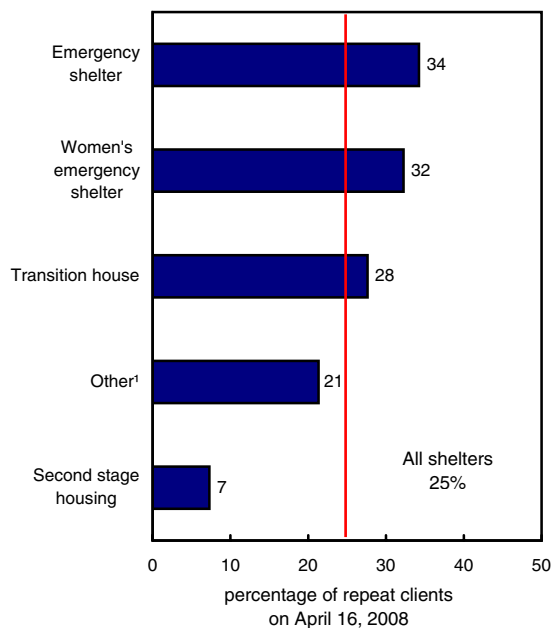


**Text box 4: Repeat stays in shelters**

Whether an abused woman has been to a shelter once or on multiple occasions can have an impact on the types of services she will require. One-quarter of women in shelters on April 16, 2008 had stayed in the facility on at least one prior occasion, down from 38% on the previous Transition Home Survey in 2006. Re-admissions to shelters occurred most often in emergency-type facilities (Chart 1.3).

In 2008, nearly three-quarters of re-admissions to shelters occurred within a year. Among returning residents, the largest proportion (32%) had been to the shelter on one prior occasion in the last year, 23% had two to four previous stays and 13% had been there on five or more occasions. For the remainder of repeat clients, it had been more than a year since their previous stay (27%) or it was unknown how many times they had stayed in the facility in the last year (5%).

**Chart 1.3**  
Re-admissions more common in emergency shelters



1. Includes safe home networks, Ontario family resource centres, and Manitoba interim housing as well as any other facilities not otherwise classified.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey, 2007/2008.

## 1.11 Shelters employed measures to make facilities more accessible

Shelters serve abused women from diverse cultural, ethnic and racial backgrounds. Similar to previous years, about 6 shelters in 10 offered culturally sensitive services for ethno-cultural and visible minority women, including access to language interpreters, resource materials in various languages and counsellors familiar with immigration issues and parenting styles in different cultures. As well, a number of facilities were able to deliver services in a variety of languages, in addition to English and French, such as Spanish (28%), Cree (13%), Punjabi (12%), Arabic (11%) and German (10%), to name a few (Table 1.9).

People with disabilities or those who experience limitations to their daily activities due to a physical or mental condition were 2 to 3 times more likely to be victims of the most severe forms of spousal violence, according to results from the 2004 General Social Survey on victimization (Perreault, 2009). Findings from the 2008 THS indicate that about 10% of women residing in shelters on April 16, 2008 had some form of disability.<sup>15</sup>

In 2008, three-quarters of shelters reported having at least one building entrance that was wheelchair accessible and two-thirds of shelters had wheelchair-accessible bedrooms and bathrooms. In addition, about one-quarter (22%) of shelters provided TTY/TDD equipment (i.e., specially equipped telephones) for people who are hearing impaired; 17% provided sign language or interpretation services, 17% provided large print reading materials to people who are visually impaired and 5% provided Braille reading materials.

## 1.12 Sometimes shelters unable to meet the demand for services

More than half (58%) of shelters responding to the THS in 2008 indicated the need for additional or improved services to meet the needs of their clients. In particular, the need for extra or enhanced child care services (17%); outreach services, public education and prevention programs (15%); affordable housing and housing resources (14%); specialized services for specific populations (e.g., culturally sensitive services)

<sup>15</sup>. Includes mobility, visual, hearing and any other disabilities specified by respondents.

(8%); second stage housing (7%); and counselling (7%) were mentioned most often by shelters.

When shelters are full, they may be unable to provide services to abused women. While women seeking refuge may not be admitted to shelters for many reasons, including alcohol, drug or mental health issues, the most common reason given by shelters for turning people away is lack of space. On April 16, 2008, more than 1 shelter in 5 had to turn away women and children seeking refuge. On that day, 117 facilities had to turn away a total of 299 women and 148 children—more than three-quarters of these shelters indicated they had to refer people seeking shelter elsewhere because the facility was full.

### 1.13 Shelters spent approximately \$18.7 million on improvements to facilities

Shelters spent an estimated \$18.7 million on improvements and repairs to their facilities in the 12-month period preceding the 2008 THS. Two-thirds of shelters reported that they had made some repairs to their facility over the previous year. Of these repairs, 43% were classified as major or essential repairs, necessary for ensuring that the facility meets municipal standards. Another 30% of repairs were structural improvements, which were significant but not necessary for safety reasons or meeting government standards (e.g., making rooms wheelchair accessible, adding ramps, adding an outside play area for children or adding a new security system).

The costs of these renovations were covered through a variety of means including: private donations (39%), provincial or territorial funding (38%), fundraising efforts (28%) and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Shelter Enhancement Program<sup>16</sup> (22%).

16. The Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP) provides financial assistance for physical repairs and improvements to shelters for women, children and youth fleeing domestic violence, as well as the acquisition or construction of new shelters where needed.

Financial information on shelters' expenses and revenues is not available from the 2008 THS. This information is collected on every second cycle of the THS and was last collected in 2006. That year, shelters reported total estimated revenues of \$333 million for the 12-month period ending March 31, 2006. These monies came largely from provincial ministries (71%), but other government sources, as well as fundraising dollars and donations also contributed to shelter revenues. Total annual expenditures for the year ending March 31, 2006 were estimated at \$317 million with 70% of shelter expenditures going to salary costs. While just over half (58%) of shelters reported a net gain, 42% had expenditures that either exceeded or equalled their revenues.

### 1.14 Summary

Shelters for abused women provide refuge and services to women and children fleeing family violence. In 2008, the 569 shelters serving abused women across Canada recorded admissions of more than 101,000 women and children. Similar to previous years, almost half of shelters were transition homes facilities providing short- to moderate-term housing, while about one-quarter were facilities offering short-term, emergency refuge.

Canada's shelters for abused women provide a range of services to women staying in their facilities such as transportation, counselling, advocacy and housing referral; life skills training is a growing service. In addition, services and programming for residents' children, as well as continued support for former residents and services extended to the general public are all part of the work undertaken by shelters.

Shelters serve diverse populations and this reality is reflected in the wide range of services provided by many facilities. However, the availability of services and programming can vary depending on the type of facility and its location.

**Table 1.1**  
**Number of shelters, Canada, provinces and territories, 2007/2008**

	Shelters in operation		Licensed shelter <sup>1</sup> beds
	number	rate <sup>2</sup>	number
<b>Canada</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10,704</b>
Newfoundland and Labrador	15	11	179
Prince Edward Island	5	14	55
Nova Scotia	16	7	216
New Brunswick	22	12	307
Quebec	126	7	1,783
Ontario	160	5	4,021
Manitoba	29	11	691
Saskatchewan	24	10	460
Alberta	50	6	1,285
British Columbia	110	10	1,569
Yukon	5	65	64
Northwest Territories and Nunavut <sup>3</sup>	7	47	74

1. Licensed or funded beds may not truly reflect shelter capacity, as they do not count emergency or overflow beds (i.e., cots and sofas) that may be offered when the facility is full.
2. Rates are calculated based on 100,000 population of married, common-law and separated women. Separated includes persons currently married, but who are no longer living with their spouse (for any reason other than illness or work) and have not obtained a divorce. Persons who are separated but who live with a common-law partner are not included. Population estimates are provided by Statistics Canada, Demography Division. Populations as of July 1: preliminary post-censal estimates for 2007.
3. Due to a limited number of facilities in conjunction with low response rates for Northwest Territories and Nunavut, information for shelters in these territories has been combined for reasons of confidentiality and data quality.

**Note(s):** Facilities that house or operate more than one type of shelter (e.g., transition home, emergency shelter and second stage housing) are asked to complete a separate survey for each shelter type. However, in a small number of cases it was not possible to obtain separate questionnaires for each shelter and information for more than one shelter type had to be included on one survey. In such cases, the determination of facility-type was based on the main focus of the facilities' activities.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey, 2007/2008.

**Table 1.2**  
**Distribution of shelters by type, Canada, provinces and territories, 2007/2008**

	Type of facility						Total <sup>2</sup>
	Transition house	Second stage housing	Women's emergency centre	Emergency shelter	Safe home network	Other <sup>1</sup>	
	number						
<b>Canada</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>569</b>
Newfoundland and Labrador	6	4	1	2	0	2	15
Prince Edward Island	0	4	0	1	0	0	5
Nova Scotia	11	4	0	1	0	0	16
New Brunswick	14	4	0	2	1	1	22
Quebec	101	12	2	1	0	10	126
Ontario	49	29	20	47	0	15	160
Manitoba	3	7	6	5	1	7	29
Saskatchewan	8	6	3	6	0	1	24
Alberta	4	10	31	3	0	2	50
British Columbia	64	23	1	6	15	1	110
Yukon	2	1	1	1	0	0	5
Northwest Territories and Nunavut <sup>3</sup>	3	0	2	2	0	0	7
	percent						
<b>Canada</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100</b>
Newfoundland and Labrador	40	27	7	13	0	13	100
Prince Edward Island	0	80	0	20	0	0	100
Nova Scotia	69	25	0	6	0	0	100
New Brunswick	64	18	0	9	5	5	100
Quebec	80	10	2	1	0	8	100
Ontario	31	18	13	29	0	9	100
Manitoba	10	24	21	17	3	24	100
Saskatchewan	33	25	13	25	0	4	100
Alberta	8	20	62	6	0	4	100
British Columbia	58	21	1	5	14	1	100
Yukon	40	20	20	20	0	0	100
Northwest Territories and Nunavut <sup>3</sup>	43	0	29	29	0	0	100

1. Includes Ontario's family resource centres, Manitoba's interim housing and other facilities not otherwise classified.

2. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

3. Due to a limited number of facilities in conjunction with low response rates for Northwest Territories and Nunavut, information for shelters in these territories has been combined for reasons of confidentiality and data quality.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey, 2007/2008.

**Table 1.3**  
**Shelters providing in-house services to women residents, ex-residents and non-residents, Canada, 2007/2008**

Services	Shelters providing services in-house					
	To residents		To ex-residents		To non-residents	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
Transportation and accompaniment	510	90	310	54	264	46
Individual short-term counselling	509	89	372	65	357	63
Advocacy	509	89	380	67	359	63
Safety or protection planning	506	89	387	68	382	67
Housing referral	485	85	298	52	286	50
Parenting skills	446	78	281	49	239	42
Life skills	432	76	251	44	209	37
Crisis telephone line	385	68	366	64	389	68
Group counselling	365	64	232	41	234	41
Services for women with disabilities	357	63	209	37	218	38
Lesbian sensitive services	350	62	227	40	227	40
Financial assistance or welfare services	350	62	233	41	222	39
Legal services	350	62	252	44	255	45
Culturally sensitive services for ethno-cultural and visible minority women	347	61	214	38	211	37
Culturally sensitive services for Aboriginal women	334	59	216	38	212	37
Mental health services	290	51	187	33	187	33
Medical services	268	47	156	27	167	29
Addiction counselling	260	46	158	28	154	27
Recreation services	251	44	104	18	73	13
Services for older women (55 and over)	231	41	152	27	154	27
Individual long-term counselling	228	40	253	44	214	38
Job training/employment counselling	160	28	89	16	72	13
Family counselling programs	120	21	75	13	77	14

**Note(s):** Percentages will not add up to 100% due to multiple responses.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey, 2007/2008.

**Table 1.4**  
**Shelters providing in-house services to women residents and non-residents by type of shelter, Canada, 2007/2008**

Services	Types of shelters providing services in-house to women										All shelters	
	Transition house		Second stage housing		Women's emergency centre		Emergency shelter		Other <sup>1</sup>		Residents	Non-residents
	Residents	Non-residents	Residents	Non-residents	Residents	Non-residents	Residents	Non-residents	Residents	Non-residents		
percent												
Transportation and accompaniment	95	54	80	23	93	51	88	45	83	21	90	46
Advocacy	90	70	87	39	100	78	96	60	67	38	89	63
Individual short-term counselling	94	72	82	38	87	69	87	58	100	38	89	63
Safety or protection planning	95	82	83	36	96	72	86	60	58	29	89	67
Housing referral	85	49	86	40	90	64	92	52	75	38	85	50
Parenting skills	84	48	72	25	82	55	82	36	58	29	78	42
Life skills	75	35	82	29	81	48	71	39	83	21	76	37
Crisis telephone line	79	87	38	21	79	87	81	73	21	13	68	68
Group counselling	69	51	65	24	58	40	60	36	58	21	64	41
Services for women with disabilities	65	40	40	17	79	51	74	40	54	29	63	38
Legal services	68	55	54	29	45	28	64	45	71	25	62	45
Financial assistance or welfare	65	45	59	30	45	30	65	42	83	25	62	39
Lesbian sensitive services	62	43	50	16	76	52	70	45	38	21	62	40
Culturally sensitive services for ethno-cultural and visible minority women	62	40	51	13	70	46	69	43	42	29	61	37
Culturally sensitive services for Aboriginal women	54	35	52	17	70	52	74	48	42	29	59	37
Mental health services	52	35	45	23	48	28	55	40	79	25	51	33
Medical services	49	31	43	18	48	30	49	36	46	21	47	29
Addiction counselling	44	27	40	15	46	31	56	35	75	29	46	27
Recreation services	49	18	43	8	40	4	51	12	33	13	44	13
Services for older women (55 and over)	46	35	24	5	37	22	44	27	42	17	41	27
Individual long-term counselling	40	46	59	25	27	33	21	36	54	13	40	38
Job training or employment search	23	11	37	13	31	12	32	16	42	21	28	13
Family counselling programs	19	14	24	10	22	19	26	14	29	13	21	14

1. Includes all other facilities not otherwise classified. This category may include safe home networks, rural family violence prevention centres in Alberta, interim housing in Manitoba, and other types of emergency shelters, such as YWCA's. These services may not be exclusive to women.

**Note(s):** Percentages will not add up to 100% due to multiple responses. Excludes ex-residents.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey, 2007/2008.

**Table 1.5**  
**Shelters providing in-house services to child residents, Canada, 2007/2008**

Services	Shelters	
	number	percent
Outdoor recreation spaces for children	421	74
Indoor recreation spaces for children	416	73
Individual counselling	379	67
Group counselling or support	304	53
Programs for child witnesses or victims of abuse	296	52
Culturally sensitive services for ethno-cultural and visible minority children	240	42
Culturally sensitive services for Aboriginal children	237	42
Baby-sitting services	229	40
Child protection or family services	114	20
Total other services for children	99	17
School classes or tutoring for children	88	15
Supervised visiting for non-resident parent	34	6
Temporary placement of children without parents	19	3

**Note(s):** Percentages will not add up to 100% due to multiple responses.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey, 2007/2008.

**Table 1.6**  
**Selected characteristics of abused women residing in shelters on April 16, 2008, Canada**

Selected characteristics	Abused women	
	number	percent
Parental status		
Admitted with child(ren)	1,562	48
Admitted without child(ren) <sup>1</sup>	677	21
No child(ren) and parenting responsibilities	800	25
Unknown	183	6
Relationship to abuser		
Common-law partner	1,207	37
Spouse	860	27
Ex-common-law partner	231	7
Dating or ex-dating relationship	210	7
Relative (e.g., parent, child)	199	6
Ex-spouse	155	5
Other <sup>2</sup>	107	3
Unknown	253	8
<b>Total women admitted due to abuse</b>	<b>3,222</b>	<b>100</b>

1. It is not known if women admitted without their children had custody of those children at the time of admittance.

2. 'Other' includes all other relationships not otherwise classified.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey, 2007/2008.

**Table 1.7**  
**Shelters exclusively serving suburban/urban-areas and village/rural-areas, Canada, 2007/2008**

	Canada		Suburban/urban-area		Village/rural-area	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
Transition house	265	47	157	48	7	29
Second stage housing	104	18	71	22	4	17
Emergency shelter	77	14	38	12	5	21
Women's emergency centre	67	12	31	10	4	17
Other <sup>1</sup>	24	4	15	5	0	.
Safe home network	17	3	10	3	3	13
Family resource centre (Ontario)	10	2	1	0	1	4
Interim housing (Manitoba)	5	1	1	0	0	.
<b>Total</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>

1. Includes any other facilities not otherwise classified.

**Note(s):** Suburban/urban-area shelters serve populations of 1,000 people or more, exclusively. Village/rural-area shelters are shelters serving a population of less than 1,000 people exclusively, or a population of less than 1,000 people as well as a reserve. Excludes the 39% of shelters serving a mix of suburban/urban-area and village/rural-area populations.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey, 2007/2008.

**Table 1.8**  
**Shelters providing in-house services to women residents, ex-residents and non-residents for suburban/urban-area and village/rural-area facilities, Canada, 2007/2008**

Services	Shelters providing services in-house					
	To residents		To ex-residents		To non-residents	
	Suburban/ urban-area	Village/ rural-area	Suburban/ urban-area	Village/ rural-area	Suburban/ urban-area	Village/ rural-area
	percent <sup>1</sup>					
Advocacy	88	79	64	50	56	63
Safety or protection planning	87	75	66	50	61	63
Individual short-term counselling	86	83	58	50	54	63
Transportation/accompaniment	86	71	52	33	41	38
Housing referral	82	79	45	46	42	54
Life skills	75	67	39	33	30	29
Parenting skills	74	63	46	29	35	21
Crisis telephone line	64	63	59	50	63	50
Financial assistance or welfare services	62	42	39	29	34	29
Group counselling	61	50	34	38	34	38
Culturally sensitive services for ethno-cultural and visible minority women	60	38	36	17	33	21
Lesbian sensitive services	60	50	35	29	34	38
Legal services	59	38	42	25	39	38
Services for women with disabilities	59	54	31	21	31	29
Culturally sensitive services for Aboriginal women	53	67	33	25	31	33
Mental health services	49	42	32	29	29	33
Recreation services	45	25	20	8	12	4
Medical services	45	29	28	17	27	17
Addiction counselling	44	33	24	21	23	21
Services for older women (55 and over)	39	21	25	8	23	17
Individual long-term counselling	38	50	41	46	32	46
Job training/employment counselling	27	13	14	4	10	4
Family counselling programs	20	8	12	8	10	8

1. Percentages will not add up to 100% due to multiple responses. Percentages for suburban/urban-area shelters are based on the 324 shelters that serve suburban/urban populations exclusively. Percentages for village/rural-area shelters are based on the 24 shelters that serve a village/rural population exclusively or a village/rural population and a reserve. Excludes the 39% of shelters serving a mix of suburban/urban-area and village/rural-area populations.

**Note(s):** Suburban/urban-area shelters serve populations of 1,000 people or more, exclusively. Village/rural-area shelters serve a population of less than 1,000 people exclusively, or a population under 1,000 people as well as a reserve.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey, 2007/2008.



**Table 1.9**  
**Service accessibility, Canada, 2007/2008**

	Shelters	
	number	percent
<b>Total</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>100</b>
Languages of service delivery (spoken)		
English	545	96
French	332	58
Spanish	161	28
Cree	76	13
Punjabi	71	12
Arabic	61	11
German	57	10
Hindi	54	9
Chinese	51	9
Polish	49	9
Portuguese	49	9
Italian	45	8
Persian	45	8
Ojibway	42	7
Urdu	38	7
Russian	36	6
Ukrainian	31	5
Dutch	31	5
Tagalog	25	4
Vietnamese	23	4
Greek	19	3
Inuktitut	12	2
Other	121	21
Shelters with wheelchair accessibility		
Entrance	426	75
Bedroom	368	65
Bathroom	368	65
Services for the deaf and hearing impaired		
TTY/TDD	125	22
Sign language or interpretation	96	17
Other	58	10
Services for the blind and visually impaired		
Braille	26	5
Large print reading materials	99	17
Other	30	5

**Note(s):** Percentages will not add up to 100% due to multiple responses.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey, 2007/2008.

## Section 2

### Fact sheet — Police-reported spousal violence in Canada

by *Andrea Taylor-Butts*

This fact sheet examines incidents of spousal<sup>1</sup> violence that were reported to police across Canada in 2007. Criminal offences that most commonly apply to cases of spousal violence include assault, sexual assault, criminal harassment (or stalking), threats of violence, forcible confinement and homicide. Other forms of spousal abuse, such as emotional, psychological or financial abuse, often are not offences chargeable under the *Criminal Code* and as such, are not included in this analysis.

Spousal violence generally encompasses violent behaviour that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm between persons in an intimate relationship. Spousal violence does not appear as a specific offence under the Canadian *Criminal Code*.

The primary data source used to analyze spousal violence for this section of the report was the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey.<sup>2</sup> The UCR2 Survey collects detailed information on individual criminal incidents reported to or detected by police, and includes details about the victim and accused such as age, sex and relationship. The UCR2 Survey covered approximately 94% of the Canadian population in 2007. In addition, data from the UCR2 Trend Database, which captures police-reported information over time, was used to examine trends in spousal violence. The UCR2 Trend Database is a non-representative sample based on 63 police services that have reported to the survey consistently since 1998, representing 53% of the population of Canada in 2007.

Disclosing spousal violence can be difficult for many victims. As such, not all incidents are reported to

the police. The 2004 General Social Survey (GSS) on victimization found that fewer than 3 in 10 (28%) victims of spousal violence reported the abuse to the police (36% of female victims and 17% of male victims) (Mihorean, 2005).

While the following section presents data at the provincial and territorial levels, any variations that exist across the provinces and territories regarding police charging and prosecution practices, resource and service availability, and victim-oriented policies may have an impact on these results.

#### 2.1 Prevalence of police-reported spousal violence

In 2007, police reported nearly 335,700 incidents of violent crime across Canada. About one-third of reported violent crimes were committed by friends or acquaintances (38%) of the victim, 23% by family members and 23% by strangers (Table 2.1).

Of the nearly 75,800 incidents of police-reported family violence in 2007, nearly 40,200 were violent incidents perpetrated by a current spouse, common-law partner or ex-spouse. Spousal violence represented more than half (53%) of family violence in 2007, and about 12% of all police-reported violent crime in Canada.

Female victims (61%) of family violence were nearly twice as likely as males (32%) to have been victimized by a spouse. In comparison, male victims of family violence were more likely to be victimized by other family members such as a parent, sibling or someone in their extended family.

Nationally, the police-reported spousal violence rate stood at 188 per 100,000 in 2007.<sup>3</sup> While police-reported data are not completely geographically representative, among those provinces with nearly full

1. Throughout this report, the term 'spouse' refers to legally married, common-law, separated and divorced partners.  
2. In 2007, a subset of 153 police services reported to the UCR2 Survey, representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada. UCR2 coverage was at least 97% in all provinces and territories, with the exception of British Columbia which had 59% coverage.

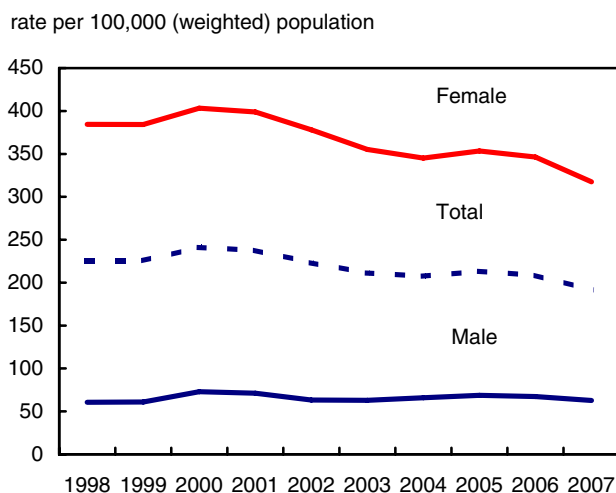
3. Rate per 100,000 population for the geographic areas policed by the UCR2 respondents. To enhance the comparability of data across the provinces and territories, it was necessary to calculate weighted rates of spousal violence for each province and territory. Weighting was necessary in order to compensate for those jurisdictions reporting a high proportion of incidents where the relationship between a victim and their perpetrator was unknown. For further information, refer to the section on 'Data sources'.

coverage, rates of spousal violence were highest in Saskatchewan (329 per 100,000 population), Alberta (249), Quebec (241) and Manitoba (215), and lowest in New Brunswick (84), Newfoundland and Labrador (123) and Prince Edward Island (128) (Table 2.2).<sup>4</sup>

## 2.2 Steady decline in police-reported spousal violence

Consistent with the general downward trend in all police-reported violent crimes, police-reported spousal violence has steadily declined over the past 10-year period.<sup>5,6</sup> Rates of spousal violence decreased 15% between 1998 and 2007 (Chart 2.1).

**Chart 2.1**  
Police-reported spousal violence declined steadily, 1998 to 2007



**Note(s):** Excludes incidents where the sex and/or age of the victim was unknown. Includes victims aged 15 to 89. Weighted rates are calculated on the basis of total violent incidents reported to police. Data are not nationally representative. Based on data from 63 police services across Canada, representing 53% of the national volume of crime in 2007. Rate per 100,000 population for the geographic areas policed by the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey respondents, based on populations provided by Demography Division, Statistics Canada.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey Trend Database.

This decline was primarily the result of the drop in police-reported rates of spousal violence committed against female victims, which fell 17% between 1998 and 2007. The rates of spousal violence

committed against males remained relatively steady over the past decade.

## 2.3 Majority of spousal violence victims continue to be female

The overwhelming majority of victims of spousal violence continue to be female. In 2007, more than 8 in 10 victims of police-reported spousal violence were female, while 17% were male (Table 2.1). This pattern was consistent for every province and territory across Canada (Table 2.2).

Overall, the police-reported rate of spousal violence was nearly 5 times higher for female victims (305 per 100,000 population) compared to male victims (67 per 100,000 population).

For female victims, the rate of spousal violence was highest among women aged 25 to 34 (632 per 100,000 population), while for male victims, the rate was highest among those aged 35 to 44 (125 per 100,000 population) (Table 2.3). However, for both male and female victims alike, the police-reported rate of spousal violence was lowest among adults aged 55 or older (46 per 100,000 for women, and 20 per 100,000 for men).

Spousal violence was more likely between current spouses or common-law partners (71%), than between former spouses or partners (29%) (Table 2.1).<sup>7</sup>

## 2.4 Over three-quarters of spousal violence offences were assaults

Assault was the most frequent type of violent offence committed by a spouse or ex-spouse, according to police-reported data. Nearly two-thirds (62%) of these assaults<sup>8</sup> were classified as common assault. Common

4. The rate of police-reported spousal violence in British Columbia was 124 per 100,000. However, the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) coverage for British Columbia was 59%, compared to at least 97% for all other provinces and territories. The reader is cautioned that these data are not geographically representative at the national or provincial level; inter-provincial/territorial comparisons should be made with caution.

5. See the *Juristar* "Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2008" by Marnie Wallace for more information on trends in violent crime.

6. The UCR2 Trend Database is used to examine trends in spousal violence.

7. Ex-spouse includes separated and divorced partners.

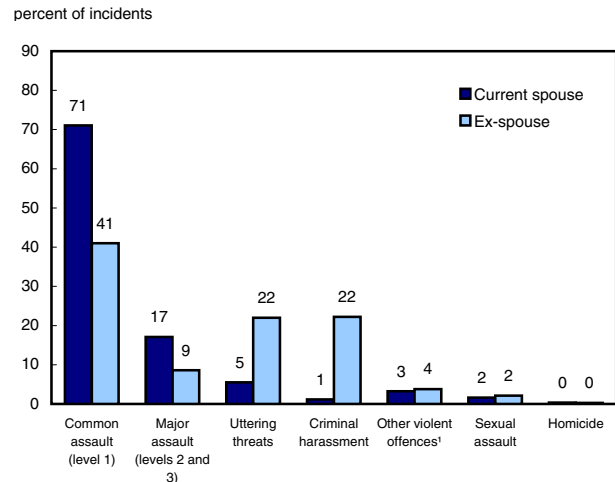
8. Assault is classified into either one of three levels according to the seriousness of the incident. Level 1 or common assault is the least serious form of assault and includes pushing, slapping, punching, and face-to-face verbal threats. Major assault includes assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (level 2) and aggravated assault, defined as assault that wounds, maims, disfigures or endangers the life of the victim (level 3).

or level 1 assault—the category of least physical harm—includes pushing, slapping and punching, and does not involve weapons or serious physical injury. The next most frequently reported offence was major assault (15%) which involves a weapon and/or causes bodily harm (assault levels 2 and 3). Together, common assault (level 1) and major assault (levels 2 and 3) accounted for more than three-quarters of all reported violent offences committed against current and former spouses in 2007 (Table 2.4).

Some differences were evident between the types of offences committed against current spouses compared with former spouses. Current spouses were nearly twice as likely as ex-spouses to be the victims of common and major assault, while criminal harassment and threats were much more likely to be committed against ex-spouses, according to police-reported data (Chart 2.2). Similar patterns were found across most of the provinces and territories.

Police-reported data show that while the types of criminal offences committed against female and male victims of spousal violence were generally similar, there were a few exceptions. For example, major assault was more common among male victims of spousal violence than among female victims, with 23% and 13%, respectively (Table 2.4). One possible reason for this difference may be that male victims of spousal violence were more likely to have had a weapon used against them (15% of male victims versus 5% of female victims), while physical force was more likely used against female victims (46% of female victims versus 38% of male victims).

**Chart 2.2**  
**Level 1 assault the most common offence against current and former spouses, criminal harassment and threats more common among ex-spouses, 2007**



1. Includes robbery, unlawfully causing bodily harm, discharge firearm with intent, assault against peace-public officer, criminal negligence causing bodily harm, other assaults, kidnapping, hostage-taking, explosives causing death/bodily harm, arson, and other violent violations.

**Note(s):** Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. Data are not nationally representative. The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey collected data from 153 police services representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada in 2007. Hamilton Police Service is excluded from the analysis due to data quality of the relationship variable. Excludes incidents where the sex and/or age of the victim was unknown. Includes victims aged 15 to 98. Current spouse includes legally married and common-law partners. Ex-spouse includes separated and divorced partners.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

## 2.5 Spousal violence against female victims more likely to result in charges laid by police

As in previous years, while the majority (78%) of reported incidents of spousal violence resulted in charges laid by police, in 2007, incidents involving

female victims (80%) were more likely to result in charges being laid than those involving male victims (66%) (Table 2.5).<sup>9</sup> Charges were also more likely to be laid for incidents of spousal abuse involving a current spouse (82%), compared to a former spouse (67%).

Over the past 5-year period, the percentage of spousal violence incidents resulting in charges being laid by police has been steadily declining. After reaching a peak of 80% in 2002, the proportion of reported spousal violence incidents resulting in charges decreased to 73% in 2007 (Table 2.6).

9. In addition to laying charges, police cleared an additional 16% of spousal violence cases by other means. Reasons for an incident being cleared otherwise include: the complainant declined to lay charges, departmental discretion, suicide of accused, death of accused, death of witness/complainant, committal of accused to mental hospital, accused in foreign country, accused involved in other incidents, reason beyond departmental control and diversionary program.

**Table 2.1**  
**Number of violent crimes by sex of victim and relationship to accused, reported to a subset of police services, 2007**

Relationship of accused to victim	Total		Sex of victim			
	number	percent	Female		Male	
number			percent	number	percent	
<b>Total victims of violent crime</b>	<b>335,676</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>167,994</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>167,682</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total family</b>	<b>75,779</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>54,186</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>21,593</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Total spouse</b>	<b>40,165</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>33,227</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>6,938</b>	<b>4</b>
Current spouse <sup>1</sup>	28,637	9	23,726	14	4,911	3
Ex-spouse <sup>2</sup>	11,528	3	9,501	6	2,027	1
<b>Total other family</b>	<b>35,614</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>20,959</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14,655</b>	<b>9</b>
Parent <sup>3</sup>	11,064	3	6,412	4	4,652	3
Child <sup>3</sup>	6,640	2	4,282	3	2,358	1
Sibling <sup>4</sup>	8,317	2	4,782	3	3,535	2
Extended family <sup>5</sup>	9,593	3	5,483	3	4,110	2
<b>Total friends/acquaintances</b>	<b>125,918</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>66,412</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>59,506</b>	<b>35</b>
Boyfriend/girlfriend	19,851	6	16,333	10	3,518	2
Ex-boyfriend/girlfriend	11,886	4	9,817	6	2,069	1
Close friend	11,143	3	5,534	3	5,609	3
Casual acquaintance	64,858	19	27,754	17	37,104	22
Business relationship	12,534	4	4,767	3	7,767	5
Criminal relationship	1,863	1	399	0	1,464	1
Authority figure	3,783	1	1,808	1	1,975	1
Stranger	77,250	23	22,888	14	54,362	32
Unknown <sup>6</sup>	56,729	17	24,508	15	32,221	19

1. Includes legally married and common-law partners.

2. Includes separated and divorced partners.

3. Includes some cases where age or the relationship to the accused may have been miscoded.

4. Includes natural, step, half, foster or adopted brother or sister.

5. Includes others related to the victim either by blood or marriage, e.g., aunts, uncles, cousins and in-laws.

6. Includes cases where the relationship between the victim and the accused is unknown.

**Note(s):** Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. Excludes incidents where the sex and/or age of the victim was unknown. Data are not nationally representative. The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey collected data from 153 police services representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada in 2007. Hamilton Police Service is excluded from the analysis due to data quality of the relationship variable. Current spouse and ex-spouse categories include victims aged 15 to 98. Violent crime includes violations causing death, attempted murder, sexual assaults, assaults, robbery, criminal harassment, uttering threats and other violations involving violence or the threat of violence.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

**Table 2.2**  
**Number and rate of spousal violence incidents by province, territory and sex of victim, reported to a subset of police services, 2007**

	Total		Sex of victim	
	number	rate <sup>1</sup>	Female	Male
			number	rate <sup>1</sup>
<b>Canada</b>	<b>40,165</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>67</b>
Newfoundland and Labrador	461	123	194	49
Prince Edward Island	104	128	219	31
Nova Scotia	826	145	221	64
New Brunswick	410	84	137	28
Quebec	14,025	241	394	82
Ontario	12,561	141	225	51
Manitoba	1,628	215	351	76
Saskatchewan	2,177	329	536	116
Alberta	4,707	249	415	88
British Columbia <sup>2</sup>	2,456	124	197	48
Yukon	86	421	749	107
Northwest Territories	321	1,605	2,866	456
Nunavut	403	2,472	4,116	945

1. To enhance the comparability of data across the provinces and territories, rates have been weighted. Weights were calculated based on total violent incidents against spouses. For further information, refer to the Data sources section. Rate per 100,000 population for the geographic areas policed by the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey respondents, based on populations provided by Demography Division, Statistics Canada.
2. The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey coverage for British Columbia was 59%, compared to at least 97% for all other provinces and territories. Inter-provincial/territorial comparisons should be made with caution.

**Note(s):** Data are not nationally or provincially representative. The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey collected data from 153 police services representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada in 2007. Coverage was at least 97% in all provinces and territories in 2007, with the exception of British Columbia which had 59% coverage. Hamilton Police Service is excluded from the analysis due to data quality of the relationship variable. Excludes incidents where the sex and/or age of the victim was unknown. Includes victims aged 15 to 98. Spousal violence refers to violence committed by legally married, common-law, separated and divorced partners.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

**Table 2.3**  
**Number and rate of spousal violence by age group and sex of victim, reported to a subset of police services, 2007**

Age groups	Total		Sex of victim	
	number	rate <sup>1</sup>	Female	Male
			number	rate <sup>1</sup>
15 to 24 years	6,660	185	340	37
25 to 34 years	13,051	371	632	114
35 to 44 years	12,394	321	522	125
45 to 54 years	5,953	149	231	67
55 years and over	2,107	34	46	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,165</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>67</b>

1. To enhance the comparability of data across the provinces and territories, rates have been weighted. Weights were calculated based on total violent incidents against spouses. For further information, refer to the Data sources section. Rate per 100,000 population for the geographic areas policed by the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey respondents, based on populations provided by Demography Division, Statistics Canada.

**Note(s):** Excludes incidents where the sex and/or the age of the victim was unknown. Includes victims aged 15 to 98. Spousal violence refers to violence committed by legally married, common-law, separated and divorced partners. Data are not nationally representative. The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey collected data from 153 police services representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada in 2007. Hamilton Police Service is excluded from the analysis due to data quality of the relationship variable.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

**Table 2.4**  
**Victims of spousal violence by offence type and sex of victim, reported to a subset of police services, 2007**

Offence type	Total		Sex of victim			
			Female		Male	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
Homicide/attempts	127	0	105	0	22	0
Sexual assault <sup>1</sup>	708	2	692	2	16	0
Major assault (levels 2 and 3) <sup>2</sup>	5,889	15	4,266	13	1,623	23
Common assault (level 1) <sup>3</sup>	25,074	62	20,836	63	4,238	61
Criminal harassment	2,891	7	2,565	8	326	5
Uttering threats	4,109	10	3,545	11	564	8
Other violent offences <sup>4</sup>	1,367	3	1,218	4	149	2
<b>Total offences</b>	<b>40,165</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>33,227</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6,938</b>	<b>100</b>

1. Includes sexual assault, classified as one of three levels according to the seriousness of the incident, as well as other sexual crimes. Level 1 sexual assault is the category of least physical injury to the victim; level 2 includes sexual assault with a weapon, threats to use a weapon, or causing bodily harm; and level 3 includes aggravated sexual assault which wounds, maims, disfigures or endangers the life of the victim.

2. Includes assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (level 2) and aggravated assault, defined as assault that wounds, maims, disfigures or endangers the life of the victim (level 3).

3. Common or level 1 assault is the least serious form of assault and includes pushing, slapping, punching, and face-to-face verbal threats.

4. Includes robbery, unlawfully causing bodily harm, discharge firearm with intent, assault against peace-public officer, criminal negligence causing bodily harm, other assaults, kidnapping, hostage-taking, explosives causing death/bodily harm, arson, and other violent violations.

**Note(s):** Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding. Excludes incidents where the sex and/or the age of the victim was unknown. Includes victims aged 15 to 98. Spousal violence refers to violence committed by legally married, common-law, separated and divorced partners. Data are not nationally representative. The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey collected data from 153 police services representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada in 2007. Hamilton Police Service is excluded from the analysis due to data quality of the relationship variable.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

**Table 2.5**  
**Incident clearance status of spousal violence cases by sex of victim, reported to a subset of police services, 2007**

Incident clearance status	Total		Sex of victim			
			Female		Male	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
<b>Total cleared</b>	<b>37,420</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>31,159</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>6,261</b>	<b>90</b>
Cleared by charge	31,149	78	26,554	80	4,595	66
Cleared otherwise total <sup>1</sup>	6,271	16	4,605	14	1,666	24
Not cleared <sup>2</sup>	2,745	7	2,068	6	677	10
<b>Total victims of spousal violence</b>	<b>40,165</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>33,227</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6,938</b>	<b>100</b>

1. Reasons for an incident being cleared otherwise include: departmental discretion, complainant declined to lay charges, reasons beyond department control, suicide of accused, death of accused, death of witness/complainant, committal of accused to mental hospital, accused in foreign country, accused involved in other incidents, already sentenced, and diversionary program.

2. Refers to incidents where there is evidence of the identity of the accused in relation to the victim but where the incident was not cleared by charge or cleared otherwise (e.g., incidents where there is not enough information available about the accused to issue a warrant for arrest).

**Note(s):** Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding. Excludes incidents where the sex and/or the age of the victim was unknown. Includes victims aged 15 to 98. Spousal violence refers to violence committed by legally married, common-law, separated and divorced partners. Data are not nationally representative. The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey collected data from 153 police services representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada in 2007. Hamilton Police Service is excluded from the analysis due to data quality of the relationship variable.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.



**Table 2.6**  
**Trends in clearance rates for spousal violence incidents, reported to a subset of police services, 1998 to 2007**

Incident clearance rates	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
	percent									
<b>Total cleared</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>
Cleared by charge	73	73	73	79	80	78	76	76	74	73
Cleared otherwise total <sup>1</sup>	19	22	21	16	15	16	18	18	18	19
Not cleared <sup>2</sup>	8	6	6	5	5	5	6	7	8	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

1. Reasons for an incident being cleared otherwise include: departmental discretion, complainant declined to lay charges, reasons beyond department control, suicide of accused, death of accused, death of witness/complainant, committal of accused to mental hospital, accused in foreign country, accused involved in other incidents, already sentenced, and diversionary program.

2. Refers to incidents where there is evidence of the identity of the accused in relation to the victim but where the incident was not cleared by charge or cleared otherwise (e.g., incidents where there is not enough information available about the accused to issue a warrant for arrest).

**Note(s):** Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding. Excludes incidents where the sex and/or the age of the victim was unknown. Includes victims aged 15 to 89. Spousal violence refers to violence committed by legally married, common-law, separated and divorced partners. Data are based on a non-representative sample of 63 police services across Canada, representing 53% of the population of Canada in 2007.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Trend Database.

## Section 3

### **Fact sheet — Police-reported family violence against children and youth**

*by Racha Nemr*

This fact sheet examines incidents of physical and sexual violence committed by family members against children and youth (under the age of 18) that came to the attention of police during 2007.

Information on physical and sexual violence against children and youth come from the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey. The UCR2 Survey collects detailed information on individual criminal incidents reported to or detected by a subset of police. In 2007, a subset of 153 police services reported to the UCR2, representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada.<sup>1</sup>

Police-reported violence against children and youth represents only a portion of the violence committed against young people.<sup>2</sup> Some crimes are not reported or do not come to the attention of police and thus, are not captured by police statistics. In addition, young people may be victims of other types of physical, psychological and emotional harm not included in this report, including child maltreatment and neglect, abduction, criminal harassment and sexual exploitation.<sup>3</sup>

1. In 2007, Incident-based UCR2 Survey coverage was at least 97% in all provinces and territories, with the exception of British Columbia which had 59% coverage.
2. Police-reported data reflect incidents that have come to the attention of police, including those that occurred or were reported in a given year but occurred in a previous year.
3. For additional information pertaining to violence against children and youth see: Trocmé et al., 2005; AuCoin, 2005; and Loughlin and Taylor-Butts, 2009.
4. For more detailed information about these offences, refer to the 'Definitions' section.

### **3.1 Police-reported assault rates higher for children and youth than for adults**

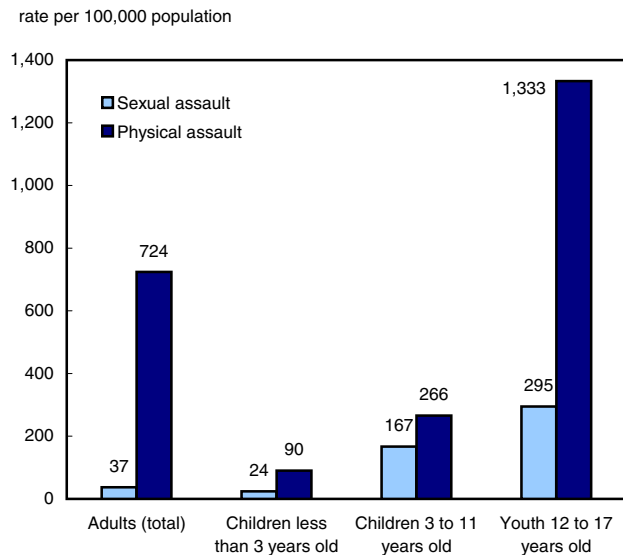
Nearly 53,400 children and youth were the victims of a police-reported assault in 2007, with about 13,200 of these incidents perpetrated by a family member.

In 2007, the rate of police-reported physical and sexual assault<sup>4</sup> against children and youth was higher than the rate for adults. In 2007, for every 100,000 young persons under 18 years of age, there were 833 victims of police-reported physical and sexual assault compared to 761 among adults (Table 3.1). The highest rate of physical and sexual violence (1,628 per 100,000 population) was for adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17—a rate more than 4 times that for children under the age of 12.

The difference in the assault rates between adults and children was largely due to rates of sexual assault. In 2007, the sexual assault rate for children and youth (193 per 100,000 population) was over 5 times higher than it was for adults (37 per 100,000 population). Sexual assault level 1—the category of least physical injury to the victim—accounted for the majority (83%) of reported sexual assaults committed against children and youth.

In comparison, rates of reported physical assault against children and youth were generally, slightly lower than the rates for adults—with one exception. Adolescents aged 12 to 17 reported a rate of physical assault (1,333 per 100,000 population) that was nearly double that of adults (724 per 100,000 population) (Table 3.1, Chart 3.1).

**Chart 3.1**  
Rates of sexual and physical assault highest among youth aged 12 to 17



**Note(s):** Includes children and youth under the age of 18. Excludes incidents where the sex and/or age of the victim was unknown. Excludes incidents where the relationship between the victim and the accused was unknown. Data are not nationally representative. The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey collected data from 153 police services representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada in 2007. Hamilton Police Service is excluded from the analysis due to data quality of the relationship variable. Rate per 100,000 population for the geographic areas policed by the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey respondents, based on population estimates provided by Demography Division, Statistics Canada.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

### 3.2 Child and youth victims usually assaulted by someone they know

Children and youth were most likely to be physically or sexually assaulted by someone they know. In 2007, among cases where the relationship of the accused to the victim was known,<sup>5</sup> more than 8 in 10 incidents of reported assaults against children and youth were

5. In about 17% of police-reported assaults against children in youth in 2007, the relationship of the accused to the victim was unknown.

6. Based on data from the UCR2 Trend Database. The UCR2 Trend Database is a non-representative sample based on 63 police services that have reported to the survey consistently since 1998, representing 53% of the population of Canada in 2007.

perpetrated by someone other than a stranger, most often by a friend or acquaintance (55%), followed by a family member (30%). A smaller proportion were committed by strangers (15%) (Table 3.2).

In 2007, the rate of family violence against children and youth was 206 per 100,000 population, almost half the rate of violence against children committed by friends and acquaintances (377 per 100,000) (Table 3.2). Rates of family violence against children and youth have increased over the past decade. According to police-reported trend data for the 10-year period from 1998 to 2007,<sup>6</sup> the rate of family violence against children and youth was up 23% in 2007 compared to a decade earlier.

When children and youth were assaulted by a relative, it was usually a parent that was identified as the abuser (57% of incidents). In 2007, according to police-reported data, for every 100,000 children and youth in Canada, 117 were physically or sexually assaulted by a parent. This rate was nearly 3 times higher than both the rate of assaults committed by siblings (41 per 100,000) and the rate for extended family<sup>7</sup> members (42 per 100,000) (Table 3.3).

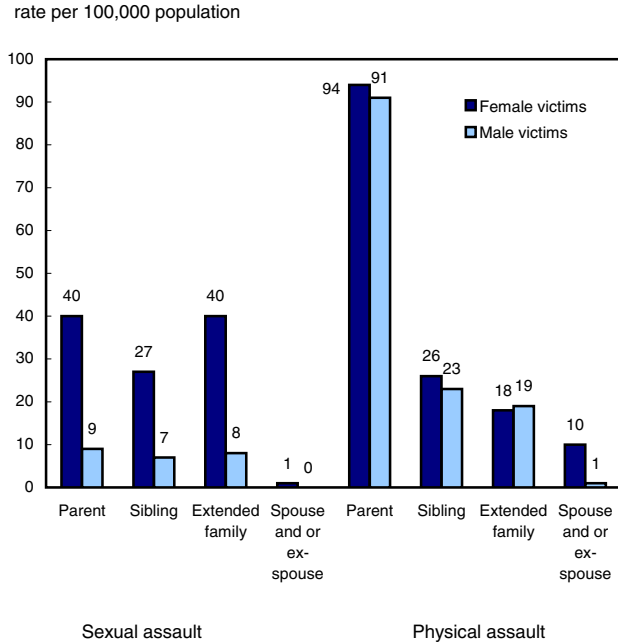
As in previous years, children and youth were more likely to have been physically assaulted than sexually assaulted by a parent. The rate of physical assault by a parent (92 victims per 100,000 population) was nearly 4 times higher than the rate of sexual assault (24 victims per 100,000 population) (Table 3.3).

### 3.3 Police-reported rates of physical assault by a family member highest for teenage girls

Overall, in 2007, police-reported rates of physical assault by family members were somewhat higher for girls (149 per 100,000 population) than for boys (133 per 100,000 population) (Table 3.3, Chart 3.2). In addition, rates of family-related physical assault were higher among older youth, particularly for 12 to 17 year-olds (Chart 3.3).

7. Extended family includes persons related by blood, marriage, adoption or foster care (i.e., aunts, uncles, cousins, sisters/brothers-in-law, etc.).

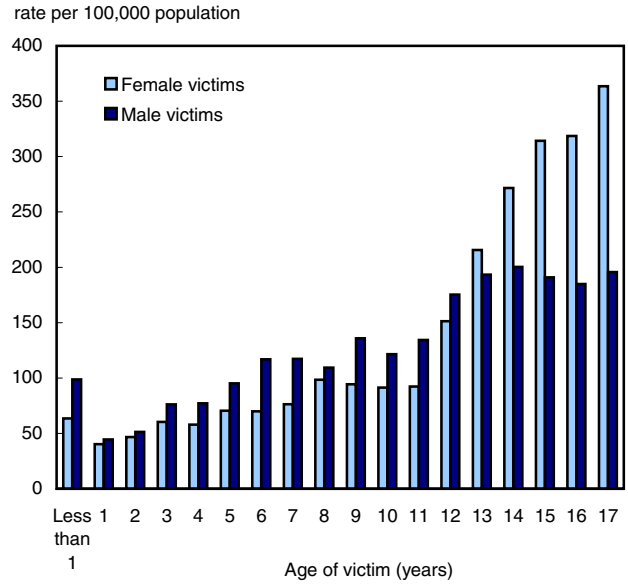
**Chart 3.2**  
Rates of family violence, especially sexual assault, higher for girls than for boys



**Note(s):** Includes children and youth under the age of 18. Excludes incidents where the sex and or age of the victim was unknown. Excludes incidents where the relationship between the victim and the accused was unknown. Data are not nationally representative. The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey collected data from 153 police services representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada in 2007. Hamilton Police Service is excluded from the analysis due to data quality of the relationship variable. Rate per 100,000 population for the geographic areas policed by the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey respondents, based on population estimates provided by Demography Division, Statistics Canada.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

**Chart 3.3**  
Rates of family-related physical assaults peak at age 14 for boys and 17 for girls, 2007



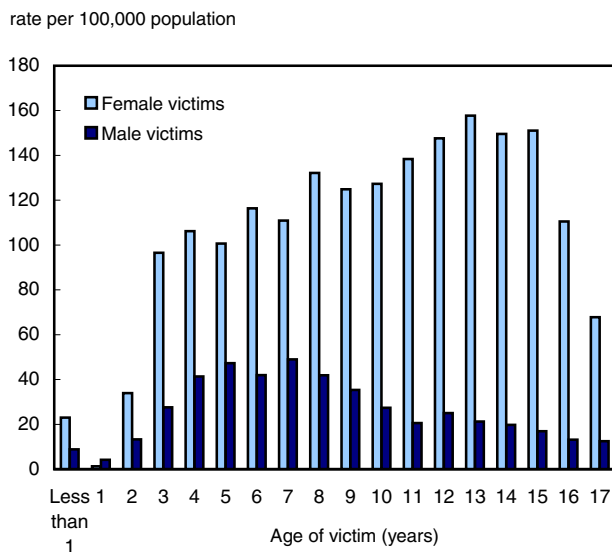
**Note(s):** Includes children and youth under the age of 18. Excludes incidents where the sex and or age of the victim was unknown. Excludes incidents where the relationship between the victim and the accused was unknown. Data are not nationally representative. The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey collected data from 153 police services representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada in 2007. Hamilton Police Service is excluded from the analysis due to data quality of the relationship variable. Rate per 100,000 population for the geographic areas policed by the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey respondents, based on population estimates provided by Demography Division, Statistics Canada.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Among boys, the rate of physical assault by a family member peaked around the age of 14 (200 incidents per 100,000 population). In comparison, the rate for girls was highest among 17 year-olds (364 per 100,000)—the highest rate of family-related physical assault for all children and youth, regardless of sex (Chart 3.3).

The rate of family-related sexual assault against children and youth was more than 4 times higher for girls (107 per 100,000 population) than for boys (25 per 100,000 population) (Table 3.3, Chart 3.2). Young adolescent girls, particularly those between the ages of 12 and 15, were at greatest risk of sexual assault by a relative (Chart 3.4). Similar to previous years, the family-perpetrated sexual assault rate for boys was considerably lower than the rate for girls, regardless of age.

**Chart 3.4**  
**Family-related sexual assault rates highest among girls 13 to 15, 2007**



**Note(s):** Includes children and youth under the age of 18. Excludes incidents where the sex and/or age of the victim was unknown. Excludes incidents where the relationship between the victim and the accused was unknown. Data are not nationally representative. The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey collected data from 153 police services representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada in 2007. Hamilton Police Service is excluded from the analysis due to data quality of the relationship variable. Rate per 100,000 population for the geographic areas policed by the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey respondents, based on population estimates provided by Demography Division, Statistics Canada.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

8. For 6% of child victims of violence by a non-family member and 12% of child victims of family violence the level of injury was unknown.

9. The UCR2 Survey combines biological, step and adopted fathers into one category.

### 3.4 4 in 10 child victims of family violence suffered physical injuries

Children and youth who reported being victimized by a non-family member were more likely than those victimized by a family member to have been physically injured. According to police-reported data for 2007, nearly half (48%) of children and youth violently victimized by someone other than a relative sustained physical injuries, compared to 40% of those victimized by a family member (Table 3.4).<sup>8</sup>

The vast majority (97%) of physical injuries sustained by child victims of family-related violence were considered minor, requiring no professional medical treatment or only some first aid.

Boys (46%) were more likely than girls (36%) to be injured as a consequence of family-perpetrated violence.

### 3.5 Perpetrators of family-related violence were predominately male

Male family members were identified as the accused in the majority of family-related sexual (96%) and physical assaults (71%) against children and youth under 18 in 2007, as in previous years (Table 3.5).

Among incidents of family-related sexual assaults, 36% of children were victimized by a male extended family member, 32% by a father and 27% by a brother.

Fathers<sup>9</sup> were involved in 44% of family-related physical assaults against children and youth, followed by brothers (13%) and male extended family members (10%).

Female family members were identified as perpetrators of violence against children and youth less frequently—4% of family-perpetrated sexual assaults and 29% of physical assaults. When children under the age of 18 were physically assaulted by a female family member, it was the mother who was usually identified as the accused (20%).

Mothers were named as perpetrators in incidents of family-related violence against children and youth more frequently than sisters or female members of the victim's extended family, in general, but especially among victims in the youngest age categories (i.e., 6 years and under).

Overall, mothers (15%) were identified as perpetrators about 4 times as often as sisters (4%) or other female family members (4%).<sup>10</sup> However, among victims

of family violence aged 6 and under, mothers were identified as the accused (19%) about 10 times as often as siblings (2%) and more than 6 times as often as other female family members (3%). In comparison, for victims over the age of 6, mothers were the named perpetrator (14%) about 4 times more frequently than both sisters (4%) and other female extended family members (4%).

10. Overall, fathers (40%) were the named perpetrator in family-related violence against children and youth about 2 times as often as brothers (17%) or other male members of the victim's extended family (17%).

**Table 3.1**  
**Victims of physical and sexual assault by age group, reported to a subset of police services, 2007**

Type of assault	Total victims		Adult victims		Children and youth victims		Children and youth victims by age group					
							Less than 3		3 to 11		12 to 17	
	number	rate	number	rate	number	rate	number	rate	number	rate	number	rate
<b>Assault - total</b>	<b>235,946</b>	<b>182,555</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>53,391</b>	<b>833</b>	<b>1,113</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>13,119</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>39,159</b>	<b>1,628</b>	
<b>Sexual assault - total</b>	<b>21,304</b>	<b>8,917</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>12,387</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>5,056</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>7,100</b>	<b>295</b>	
Aggravated sexual assault (level 3)	127	100	0	27	0	2	0	9	0	16	1	
Sexual assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (level 2)	366	259	1	107	2	1	0	18	1	88	4	
Sexual assault (level 1)	18,576	8,275	34	10,301	161	186	19	3,967	131	6,148	256	
Other sexual crimes <sup>1</sup>	2,235	283	1	1,952	30	42	4	1,062	35	848	35	
<b>Physical assault - total</b>	<b>214,642</b>	<b>173,638</b>	<b>724</b>	<b>41,004</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>8,063</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>32,059</b>	<b>1,333</b>	
Aggravated assault (level 3)	3,394	2,981	12	413	6	66	7	25	1	322	13	
Assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (level 2)	50,241	40,635	169	9,606	150	216	22	1,873	62	7,517	313	
Common assault (level 1)	151,489	120,897	504	30,592	477	573	59	6,104	202	23,915	994	
Unlawfully causing bodily harm	507	416	2	91	1	6	1	8	0	77	3	
Discharge firearm with intent	154	111	0	43	1	1	0	9	0	33	1	
Assault against peace/public officer	6,722	6,705	28	17	0	2	0	1	0	14	1	
Criminal negligence causing bodily harm	220	158	1	62	1	11	1	9	0	42	2	
Other assaults	1,915	1,735	7	180	3	7	1	34	1	139	6	

1. Include such offences as sexual interference, sexual exploitation, invitation to sexual touching, incest, anal intercourse and bestiality.

**Note(s):** Children and youth include all those under the age of 18. Excludes incidents where the sex and/or age of the victim was unknown. Data are not nationally representative. The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey collected data from 153 police services representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada in 2007. Hamilton Police Service is excluded from the analysis due to data quality of the relationship variable. Rate per 100,000 population for the geographic areas policed by the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey respondents, based on populations provided by Demography Division, Statistics Canada.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

**Table 3.2**  
**Child and youth victims of physical and sexual assault by sex of victim and relationship to accused, reported to a subset of police services, 2007**

	Relationship of accused to victim									
	Total		Family <sup>3</sup>		Friend/acquaintance <sup>4</sup>		Stranger		Unknown <sup>5</sup>	
	number	rate	number	rate	number	rate	number	rate	number	rate
<b>Total assault</b>										
Total	53,391	833	13,203	206	24,195	377	6,839	107	9,154	143
Female	26,704	855	7,991	256	12,216	391	2,399	77	4,098	131
Male	26,687	812	5,212	159	11,979	364	4,440	135	5,056	154
<b>Sexual assault <sup>1</sup></b>										
Total	12,387	193	4,184	65	5,242	82	1,129	18	1,832	29
Female	9,963	319	3,350	107	4,165	133	956	31	1,492	48
Male	2,424	74	834	25	1,077	33	173	5	340	10
<b>Physical assault <sup>2</sup></b>										
Total	41,004	640	9,019	141	18,953	296	5,710	89	7,322	114
Female	16,741	536	4,641	149	8,051	258	1,443	46	2,606	83
Male	24,263	738	4,378	133	10,902	332	4,267	130	4,716	143

1. Includes sexual assault (level 1), sexual assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (level 2), aggravated sexual assault (level 3) and the 'other sexual crimes' category which includes sexual interference, sexual touching, sexual exploitation, incest, etc.

2. Includes common assault (level 1), assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (level 2), aggravated assault (level 3), unlawfully causing bodily harm, discharge firearm with intent, criminal negligence causing bodily harm and other assaults.

3. Includes spouse, ex-spouse, parent, step-parent, sibling and extended family.

4. Includes any relationship in which the accused and the victim are familiar with each other, but are not related, or in a legal guardianship relationship.

5. Includes cases where the relationship between the victim and the accused is unknown.

**Note(s):** Children and youth include all those under the age of 18. Excludes incidents where the sex and/or age of the victim was unknown. Data are not nationally representative. The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey collected data from 153 police services representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada in 2007. Hamilton Police Service is excluded from the analysis due to data quality of the relationship variable. Rate per 100,000 population for the geographic areas policed by the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey respondents, based on populations provided by Demography Division, Statistics Canada.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.



**Table 3.3**  
**Child and youth victims by sex of victim and type of assault by family members, reported to a subset of police services, 2007**

	Relationship of accused to victim									
	Total family		Parent <sup>3</sup>		Sibling <sup>4</sup>		Extended family <sup>5</sup>		Spouse/ex-spouse <sup>6</sup>	
	number	rate	number	rate	number	rate	number	rate	number	rate
<b>Total assault</b>										
Total	13,203	206	7,472	117	2,644	41	2,716	42	371	6
Female	7,991	256	4,181	134	1,646	53	1,818	58	346	11
Male	5,212	159	3,291	100	998	30	898	27	25	1
<b>Sexual assault <sup>1</sup></b>										
Total	4,184	65	1,546	24	1,092	17	1,519	24	27	0
Female	3,350	107	1,239	40	846	27	1,241	40	24	1
Male	834	25	307	9	246	7	278	8	3	0
<b>Physical assault <sup>2</sup></b>										
Total	9,019	141	5,926	92	1,552	24	1,197	19	344	5
Female	4,641	149	2,942	94	800	26	577	18	322	10
Male	4,378	133	2,984	91	752	23	620	19	22	1

1. Includes sexual assault (level 1), sexual assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (level 2), aggravated sexual assault (level 3) and the 'other sexual crimes' category which includes sexual interference, sexual touching, sexual exploitation, incest, etc.

2. Includes common assault (level 1), assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (level 2), aggravated assault (level 3), unlawfully causing bodily harm, discharge firearm with intent, criminal negligence causing bodily harm and other assaults.

3. Includes a small number of cases where age or the relationship between the accused and the victim may have been miscoded.

4. Includes natural, step, half, foster or adopted siblings.

5. Includes others related by blood, marriage, adoption or foster care.

6. Includes legally married and common-law partners and ex-spouses. Rates are calculated per 100,000 population for the geographic areas policed by the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey respondents. Population counts by marital status are not available by the geographic areas policed by the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey respondents.

**Note(s):** Children and youth include all those under the age of 18. Excludes incidents where the sex and/or age of the victim was unknown. Data are not nationally representative. The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey collected data from 153 police services representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada in 2007. Hamilton Police Service is excluded from the analysis due to data quality of the relationship variable. Rate per 100,000 population for the geographic areas policed by the UCR2 respondents, based on populations provided by Demography Division, Statistics Canada.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

**Table 3.4**  
**Child and youth victims of physical and sexual assault committed by family or non-family members by level of injury, reported to a subset of police services, 2007**

	Level of injury											
	Total		Unknown		No injuries <sup>4</sup>		Minor physical injury <sup>5</sup>		Major physical injury <sup>6</sup>		Death	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
<b>Offences committed by family members</b>												
Total assault												
Female	7,991	100	954	12	4,189	52	2,782	35	66	1	0	0
Male	5,212	100	586	11	2,206	42	2,343	45	77	1	0	0
Sexual assault <sup>1</sup>												
Female	3,350	100	589	18	2,342	70	417	12	2	0	0	0
Male	834	100	183	22	554	66	96	12	1	0	0	0
Physical assault <sup>2</sup>												
Female	4,641	100	365	8	1,847	40	2,365	51	64	1	0	0
Male	4,378	100	403	9	1,652	38	2,247	51	76	2	0	0
<b>Total offences committed by family members</b>	<b>13,203</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,540</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6,395</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>5,125</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Offences committed by non-family members <sup>3</sup></b>												
Total assault												
Female	14,615	100	1,137	8	7,462	51	5,903	40	113	1	0	0
Male	16,419	100	730	4	6,744	41	8,489	52	456	3	0	0
Sexual assault <sup>1</sup>												
Female	5,121	100	652	13	3,758	73	708	14	3	0	0	0
Male	1,250	100	150	12	989	79	111	9	0	0	0	0
Physical assault <sup>2</sup>												
Female	9,494	100	485	5	3,704	39	5,195	55	110	1	0	0
Male	15,169	100	580	4	5,755	38	8,378	55	456	3	0	0
<b>Total offences committed by non-family members <sup>3</sup></b>	<b>31,034</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,867</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14,206</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>14,392</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

1. Includes sexual assault (level 1), sexual assault with a weapon (level 2), aggravated sexual assault (level 3) and the 'other sexual crimes' category which includes sexual interference, sexual touching, sexual exploitation, incest, etc.

2. Includes common assault (level 1), assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (level 2), aggravated assault (level 3), unlawfully causing bodily harm, discharge firearm with intent, criminal negligence causing bodily harm and other assaults.

3. Excludes incidents where the relationship between the accused and victim is unknown.

4. No 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.

5. Injuries that required no professional medical treatment or only some first injury aid (e.g., band aid, ice, etc.).

6. Injuries that required professional medical attention at the scene or transportation to a medical facility.

**Note(s):** Children and youth include all those under the age of 18. Excludes incidents where the sex and/or age of the victim was unknown. Data are not nationally representative. The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey collected data from 153 police services representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada in 2007. Hamilton Police Service is excluded from the analysis due to data quality of the relationship variable. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

**Table 3.5**  
**Accused perpetrators of family violence against children and youth by relationship to the victim, sex of the accused and type of assault, reported to a subset of police services, 2007**

Accused by relationship to victim and sex	Total assault		Sexual assault <sup>1</sup>		Physical assault <sup>2</sup>	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
<b>Total family</b>	<b>11,621</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3,217</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>8,404</b>	<b>100</b>
Female	2,604	22	130	4	2,474	29
Male	9,017	78	3,087	96	5,930	71
Parent <sup>3</sup>	6,454	56	1,094	34	5,360	64
Female	1,748	15	50	2	1,698	20
Male	4,706	40	1,044	32	3,662	44
Sibling <sup>4</sup>	2,380	20	887	28	1,493	18
Female	420	4	32	1	388	5
Male	1,960	17	855	27	1,105	13
Extended family <sup>5</sup>	2,440	21	1,218	38	1,222	15
Female	416	4	46	1	370	4
Male	2,024	17	1,172	36	852	10
Spouse/ex-spouse <sup>6</sup>	347	3	18	1	329	4
Female	20	0	2	0	18	0
Male	327	3	16	0	311	4

1. Includes sexual assault (level 1), sexual assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (level 2), aggravated sexual assault (level 3) and the 'other sexual crimes' category which includes sexual interference, sexual touching, sexual exploitation, incest, etc.
2. Physical assault includes common assault (level 1), assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (level 2), aggravated assault (level 3), unlawfully causing bodily harm, discharge firearm with intent, criminal negligence causing bodily harm and other assaults.
3. Includes a small number of cases where age or the relationship between the accused and the victim may have been miscoded.
4. Includes natural, step, half, foster or adopted siblings.
5. Includes others related by blood, marriage, adoption or foster care.
6. Includes legally married and common-law partners and ex-spouses. Rates are calculated per 100,000 population for the geographic areas policed by the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey respondents. Population counts by marital status are not available for this geographic level.

**Note(s):** Children and youth include all those under the age of 18. Excludes incidents where the sex and/or age of the victim was unknown. Data are not nationally representative. The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey collected data from 153 police services representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada in 2007. Hamilton Police Service is excluded from the analysis due to quality of the relationship variable. Rate per 100,000 population for the geographic areas policed by the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey respondents, based on populations provided by Demography Division, Statistics Canada.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

## Section 4

### Fact sheet — Police-reported family violence against older adults

by Roxan Vaillancourt

This section examines the prevalence and nature of police-reported violent crimes committed against seniors (65 years and older) by members of their family in 2007.

Incidents of violent crime against seniors are measured through data reported to the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey by a subset of police services. In 2007, a subset of 153 police forces reported to the UCR2, representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada.<sup>1</sup> The UCR2 Survey captures data on violence that constitutes a criminal offence according to the Canadian *Criminal Code*. Violent crimes against seniors include such *Criminal Code* offences as physical assault, sexual assault, robbery, criminal harassment, uttering threats, and other violent violations.<sup>2</sup>

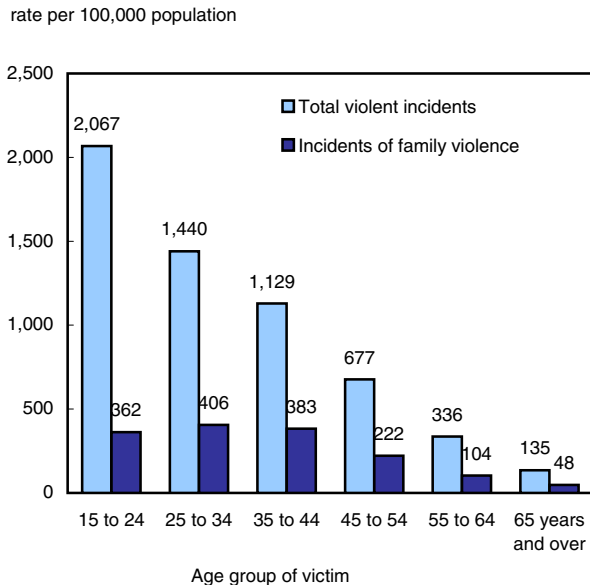
1. In 2007, Incident-based UCR2 coverage was at least 97% in all provinces and territories, with the exception of British Columbia which had 59% coverage.
2. Includes arson, other assaults, assault against a peace/public officer, criminal negligence causing bodily harm, discharge firearm with intent, extortion, kidnapping, unlawfully causing bodily harm, and other violent offences.
3. There is no statistically significant difference in reporting rates between seniors and non-seniors overall. However, police-reporting rates among 15 to 24 year-olds (the group with the higher risk of violent victimization), were considerably lower (24%) compared to seniors (51%).

Police-reported data on violence committed against seniors in Canada underestimates the prevalence of such crimes. Like other victims of crime, seniors may not report their victimization to police. Results from the 2004 General Social Survey on victimization revealed that about half of all violent crimes committed against seniors were reported to police, compared to about 44% for non-seniors (Ogrodnik, 2007; Gannon, 2006).<sup>3</sup> Thus, police-reported surveys are limited to providing information on violence against seniors that comes to the attention of law enforcement. In addition, other forms of abuse such as neglect, financial abuse and emotional or psychological abuse often are not captured by police-reported data and therefore, are not included in the present report.

#### 4.1 Seniors were usually victimized by someone they knew, often a relative

In 2007, there were 5,499 police-reported incidents of violent crime committed against seniors. Seniors represented 2% of all victims of police-reported violent crime and were less likely than younger people to be the victim of a violent offence in 2007. Similar to previous years, the rate of violent victimization for seniors (135 per 100,000) was 15 times lower than the rate for 15 to 24 year-olds (2,067 per 100,000), the age group at highest risk of victimization (Chart 4.1).

**Chart 4.1**  
**Seniors have lowest rates of police-reported violence, 2007**



**Note(s):** Data are not nationally representative. The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey collected data from 153 police services representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada in 2007. Hamilton Police Service is excluded from the analysis due to data quality of the relationship variable. Excludes unknown sex; includes all relationships.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Police-reported data show that seniors, like victims from all other age groups, were more likely to report being victimized by someone they knew (94 per 100,000) than by a stranger (41 per 100,000) (Table 4.1). About half of these violent crimes by a known perpetrator involved a friend or acquaintance of the senior (1,904 incidents), while the other half involved a family member (1,938 incidents). Violent offences against seniors by a family member represented more than one-third of all violent incidents committed against older adults.

In 2007, for every 100,000 seniors, 48 were the victims of a police-reported violent crime at the hands

of a relative. In 2007, as in the past, senior men suffered higher overall rates of violent victimization compared to senior women (Table 4.1). However, senior women had higher rates of violence involving a family member (52 per 100,000), in comparison to their male counterparts (43 per 100,000).

In the decade from 1998 to 2007, the rate of police-reported family violence against seniors was generally stable, according to trend data from a subset of police services. Following a 20% increase between 1998 and 2000, the rate of family violence for seniors remained relatively similar and in 2007, was 3% higher than it had been in 2000.<sup>4</sup>

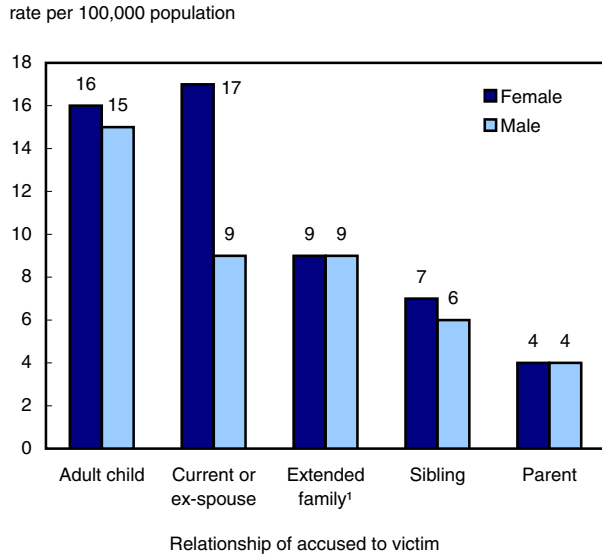
## 4.2 Victims' adult children and spouses or ex-spouses were the most common perpetrators of family violence against seniors

Adult children (83% of whom were adult sons) were the relatives most frequently implicated in family violence against seniors, followed by current and former spouses. However, male and female victims differed somewhat in terms of which family member had been their abuser (Table 4.1).

For senior women, the rate of victimization by a current or former spouse (17 per 100,000) was similar to the rate of victimization by an adult child (16 per 100,000) (Chart 4.2). In addition, female seniors (17 per 100,000) were nearly 2 times more likely than senior men (9 per 100,000) to be victimized by a spouse or an ex-spouse. Male seniors who had been the victims of family violence were more likely to be victimized by their adult children (15 per 100,000) than by any other relative.

4. Based on data from the UCR2 Trend Database. The UCR2 Trend Database is a non-representative sample based on 63 police services that have reported to the survey consistently since 1998, representing 53% of the population of Canada in 2007.

**Chart 4.2**  
**Most family violence against seniors is committed by the seniors' children or spouses, 2007**

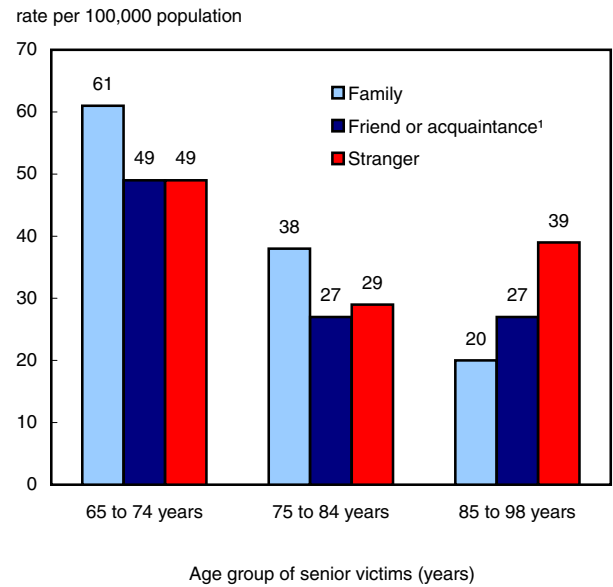


1. Extended family includes aunts, uncles, cousins, sisters or brothers-in-law, etc.  
**Note(s):** Data are not nationally representative. The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey collected data from 153 police services representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada in 2007. Hamilton Police Service is excluded from the analysis due to data quality of the relationship variable. Excludes incidents where the victim's sex, age and/or relationship of the accused to the victim was unknown.  
**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

### 4.3 Older seniors had lower family violence rates

Police-reported data show that rates of family violence were highest among younger seniors and lowest among older seniors. In fact, the family violence rate among seniors aged 65 to 74 was nearly 2 times higher than the rate for those aged 75 to 84, and 3 times greater than the rate of family violence among seniors in the oldest age category (85 to 98) (Chart 4.3).

**Chart 4.3**  
**Older seniors report lower rates of family violence, 2007**



1. Includes friends, boy/girlfriends, ex-boy/girlfriends, authority figures and casual acquaintances.  
**Note(s):** Data are not nationally representative. The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey collected data from 153 police services representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada in 2007. Hamilton Police Service is excluded from the analysis due to data quality of the relationship variable. Excludes incidents where the sex and/or the age of the victim was unknown.  
**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Lower rates of family violence among older seniors compared to their younger counterparts may be linked to differences in their living situations. Seniors 75 and older are less likely than younger seniors to live with family members, including spouses, and more likely than seniors under 75 to live alone or in an institutional setting (Turcotte and Schellenberg, 2007). Therefore, if a senior is at risk of being abused by a family member such as a spouse or an adult child, living alone or in an institutional setting (rather than with those family members) may mitigate the abusive situation.

Other explanations for lower rates of police-reported family violence among older seniors may be related to an inability to report abuse due to health-related reasons or social isolation. Research has identified conditions that can compromise functioning, such as chronic illness or dementia, as being more common among older seniors, increasing in each decade after age 75 (Welfel, Danzinger and Santoro, 2000). Such conditions may increase older seniors' vulnerability and restrict their ability to report violence to authorities (Gannon, 2006).

Further, older seniors may have smaller social networks to rely on for assistance and fewer people to confide in outside their immediate family. Immediate family members (i.e., spouses, siblings, adult children and in-laws) represented a larger share of the social networks of seniors 75 and older, than for younger seniors. In addition, seniors aged 75 and over were more likely to report that they had no close friends compared to seniors under the age of 75 (Turcotte and Schellenberg, 2007).

#### 4.4 Common assault the most frequent type of family-related violence committed against seniors

In general, common assault continues to be the most frequently reported violent offence against seniors, followed by uttering threats and robbery. When a violent offence was committed against a senior by a relative, in more than half (52%) of cases, the *Criminal Code* violation involved was common assault

(Table 4.2). The least serious form of assault, common assault or level 1 assault involves pushing, slapping and punching, and does not involve weapons or serious injury.<sup>5</sup>

Threats (19%) and major assault (16%) were the next most frequently reported offences perpetrated against seniors by a family member, but were each reported about a third as often as common assault.

The police-reported rate of common assault was higher for female seniors (28 per 100,000) compared to male seniors (21 per 100,000), while for other types of family-perpetrated violent crimes, rates for male and female seniors were more comparable (Table 4.2).

#### 4.5 Over half of senior victims of family violence sustained no physical injury

As in previous years, police-reported data for 2007 show that over half of family violence (55%) incidents committed against seniors did not result in physical injury to the victim. However, minor physical injuries—those requiring first aid or no professional medical treatment—were sustained in more than one-third of incidents of family violence against seniors; this was the case for both senior men (37%) and women (35%). When family violence against older adults did result in physical injuries, the injuries were minor in 91% of cases (Table 4.3).<sup>6</sup>

Among incidents of family violence against seniors that did result in physical harm, the injury was usually caused by the aggressor's use of physical force (77%) rather than the use of a weapon (23%).<sup>7</sup> More than one-third (36%) of female senior victims of family violence and 32% of senior men sustained injuries due to physical force. Weapons used to cause injury were more common in violent offences committed against male seniors (12%) than in incidents involving female seniors (6%) (Table 4.4).

5. Assault is classified into either one of three levels according to the seriousness of the incident. Level 1 or common assault is the least serious form of assault and includes pushing, slapping, punching, and face-to-face verbal threats. Major assault includes assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (level 2) and aggravated assault, defined as assault that wounds, maims, disfigures or endangers the life of the victim (level 3).

6. For 6% of senior victims of family violence, the level of injury was unknown.

7. These figures include the 6% of senior victims of family violence for whom the level of injury was unknown.

**Table 4.1**  
**Senior (65 years and over) victims of violent crime by sex and relationship to accused, reported to a subset of police services, 2007**

Relationship of accused to victim	Total		Sex of victim			
			Female		Male	
	number	rate	number	rate	number	rate
Strangers	1,657	41	674	29	983	55
Known to the victim	3,842	94	1,933	84	1,909	108
<b>Total family</b>	<b>1,938</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>1,182</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>756</b>	<b>43</b>
Spouse/ex-spouse	545	13	384	17	161	9
Parent	151	4	83	4	68	4
Child	624	15	357	16	267	15
Sibling	254	6	154	7	100	6
Extended family <sup>1</sup>	364	9	204	9	160	9
Friends, acquaintances, others	1,904	47	751	33	1,153	65
Friend or acquaintance <sup>2</sup>	1,578	39	638	28	940	53
Business relationship	309	8	109	5	200	11
Criminal relationship	17	0	4	0	13	1
<b>Total violence against older adults</b>	<b>5,499</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>2,607</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>2,892</b>	<b>163</b>

1. Includes aunts, uncles, cousins, sisters/brothers-in-law, etc.

2. Includes friends, boy/girlfriends, ex-boy/girlfriends, authority figures and casual acquaintances.

**Note(s):** Excludes incidents where the victim's sex and/or victim's age and/or relationship of the accused to the victim was unknown. Data are not nationally representative. The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey collected data from 153 police services representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada in 2007. Hamilton Police Service is excluded from the analysis due to data quality of the relationship variable. Includes family violence and non-family violence against victims aged 65 years and over. Rate per 100,000 population for the geographic areas policed by the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey respondents, based on populations provided by Demography Division, Statistics Canada.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

**Table 4.2**  
**Senior (65 years and over) victims of family violence by offence type, reported to a subset of police services, 2007**

Offence type	Total		Sex of victim			
			Female		Male	
	number	rate	number	rate	number	rate
Homicide/attempts	27	1	16	1	11	1
Sexual assault (levels 1, 2, 3)	19	0	16	1	3	0
Major assault (levels 2 and 3)	305	7	157	7	148	8
Common assault (level 1)	1,013	25	638	28	375	21
Kidnapping/forcible confinement	30	1	21	1	9	1
Robbery	25	1	10	0	15	1
Extortion	24	1	18	1	6	0
Criminal harassment	99	2	66	3	33	2
Uttering threats	370	9	225	10	145	8
Other violent offences <sup>1</sup>	26	1	15	1	11	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,938</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>1,182</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>756</b>	<b>43</b>

1. Includes arson, other assaults, assault against a peace/public officer, criminal negligence causing bodily harm, discharge firearm with intent, unlawfully causing bodily harm, and other violent offences.

**Note(s):** Excludes incidents where the victim's sex, age and/or relationship was unknown. Includes family violence against victims aged 65 years and over. Rate per 100,000 population for the geographic areas policed by the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey respondents, based on populations provided by Demography Division, Statistics Canada. Data are not nationally representative. The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey collected data from 153 police services representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada in 2007. Hamilton Police Service is excluded from the analysis due to data quality of the relationship variable.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.



**Table 4.3**  
**Level of injury by sex of senior (65 years and over) victims of family violence, reported to a subset of police services, 2007**

Level of injury	Total		Sex of victim			
			Female		Male	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
Unknown	109	6	70	6	39	5
No injury or weapon <sup>1</sup>	1,071	55	658	56	413	55
Minor physical injuries <sup>2</sup>	691	36	413	35	278	37
Major physical injuries <sup>3</sup>	50	3	30	3	20	3
Death	17	1	11	1	6	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,938</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,182</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>756</b>	<b>100</b>

1. 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.

2. Minor physical injuries require no professional medical treatment or only some first aid (e.g., band aid, ice, etc.).

3. Major physical injuries require professional medical attention at the scene or transportation to a medical facility.

**Note(s):** Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding. Excludes incidents where the victim's sex, age and/or relationship between the accused and the victim was unknown. Includes family violence against victims aged 65 years and over. Data are not nationally representative. The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey collected data from 153 police services representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada in 2007. Hamilton Police Service is excluded from the analysis due to data quality of the relationship variable.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

**Table 4.4**  
**Method of violence causing most serious injury to victims in family violence against seniors (aged 65 years and over), reported to a subset of police services, 2007**

	Total			Sex of victim					
				Female			Male		
	number	percent	rate	number	percent	rate	number	percent	rate
No injury or weapon <sup>1</sup>	1,071	55	26	658	56	29	413	55	23
Physical force	667	34	16	427	36	19	240	32	14
Weapons	155	8	4	67	6	3	88	12	5
Knife/other piercing, cutting instrument	41	2	1	17	1	1	24	3	1
Club/blunt instrument	40	2	1	19	2	1	21	3	1
Other weapon <sup>2</sup>	74	4	2	31	3	1	43	6	2
Type of weapon unknown <sup>3</sup>	45	2	1	30	3	1	15	2	1
<b>Total victims</b>	<b>1,938</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>1,182</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>756</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>43</b>

1. The weapon involved did not cause physical injury or no weapon was involved in the incident.

2. Includes explosives, fire, motor vehicle or any device used to poison.

3. There was no indication of what type of weapon caused an injury to the victim.

**Note(s):** Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding. Excludes incidents where the sex and/or age of the victim was unknown. These figures include the 6% of senior victims of family violence for whom the level of injury was unknown. Data are not nationally representative. The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey collected data from 153 police services representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada in 2007. Hamilton Police Service is excluded from the analysis due to data quality of the relationship variable. Rate per 100,000 population for the geographic areas policed by the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey respondents, based on populations provided by Demography Division, Statistics Canada.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

# Section 5

## Fact sheet — Family homicides

by Lucie Ogradnik

The following fact sheet examines spousal homicides, homicides committed by family members against children and youth and against older adults (aged 65 years and over).

The primary data source used throughout this section was the annual Homicide Survey administered by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS). The Homicide Survey collects detailed police-reported information on all homicides that occur in Canada. The term 'homicide' refers to the *Criminal Code* offences of first degree murder, second degree murder, manslaughter and infanticide.

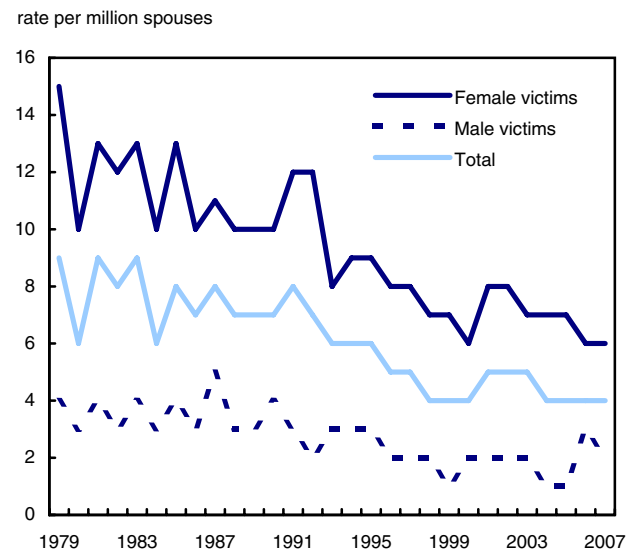
### 5.1 Spousal homicides

#### 5.1.1 Spousal homicide rate at its lowest in over 30 years

Rates of spousal homicide<sup>1</sup> for both male and female victims have been declining over the past three decades. This trend continued in 2007, with a rate of 4 spousal homicides per million spouses—this rate was the lowest over the 30-year period from 1978 to 2007 (Chart 5.1).

1. Spousal homicides involve persons in legal marriages, those who are separated or divorced from such unions, and those in common-law relationships (including same-sex spouses).
2. Solved homicides refer to those where at least one accused has been identified by police.

Chart 5.1  
Spousal homicide rate generally declining between 1978 and 2007



**Note(s):** Include legally married, common-law, separated, and divorced persons age 15 years or older. Excludes same-sex spouses due to the unavailability of Census data on same-sex couples.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

Homicides are relatively rare in Canada, and in 2007, made up less than 1% of all violent crime. Spousal homicides accounted for 16% of all solved<sup>2</sup> homicides in Canada in 2007, and as in previous years, represented nearly half (47%) of all the homicides committed by family members that year.

Women continued to be more likely than men to be victims of spousal homicide (Table 5.1). Of the 65 spousal homicides reported in 2007, almost 4 times as many women (51) were killed by a current or former spouse as men (14) (Table 5.2).

### 5.1.2 Spousal homicide involved common-law partners more often than married spouses

In the most recent decade, between 1998 and 2007, 41% of spousal homicides involved victims living in common-law relationships (including same-sex couples), about one-third (35%) involved legally married persons, followed by partners who were separated (22%) or divorced (2%) (Table 5.3).

However, differences were found when examining the marital relationship of female victims of spousal homicide compared to male victims. Female victims were almost equally likely to be killed by a husband to whom they were legally married (38%) as by a common-law partner (35%). In contrast, most male victims (66%) were killed by their common-law partner.

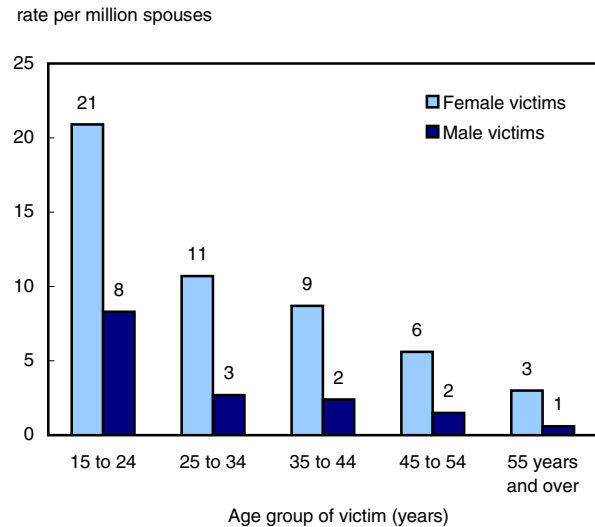
In addition, the proportion of victims killed by a partner they were separated from was more than 2 times greater for female victims (25%) compared to male victims (11%). Research has suggested that marital separation, either actual or pending, is a factor that may increase the risk of spousal homicide, particularly for women (Ontario Domestic Violence Death Review Committee, 2005; Hotton, 2001).

### 5.1.3 Young adults at greatest risk of spousal homicide

Rates of spousal homicide were highest among youth and young adults in the 15 to 24 year-old age group, particularly female spouses.<sup>3</sup> Between 1998 and 2007, the rate of female spouses aged 15 to 24 killed by their partner (21 per million female spouses) was 3 times higher than the rate for all female victims of spousal homicide (7 per million female spouses). Similarly, the rate of male spouses aged 15 to 24 killed by their partner (8 per million male spouses) was more than 4 times that of all male spouses (2 per million male spouses) (Chart 5.2).

3. The vast majority (97%) of spousal violence victims within the 15 to 24 year-old age group were over the age of 17.

**Chart 5.2**  
Spousal homicide rates highest among young female spouses, 1998 to 2007



**Note(s):** Rate per 1,000,000 legally married, common-law, separated and divorced spouses, 15 years of age and over, based on estimates provided by Demography Division, Statistics Canada. Spousal homicides reported by police include a small number of victims who were separated from a common-law relationship. As population estimates are unavailable for this sub-population, the overall rates of spousal homicide may be slightly overestimated. Same-sex partners were excluded from the analysis due to the unavailability of population estimates. Homicides of same-sex partners represented 1% of spousal homicides.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

### 5.1.4 Male victims of spousal homicide most often killed by stabbing, female victims by physical force

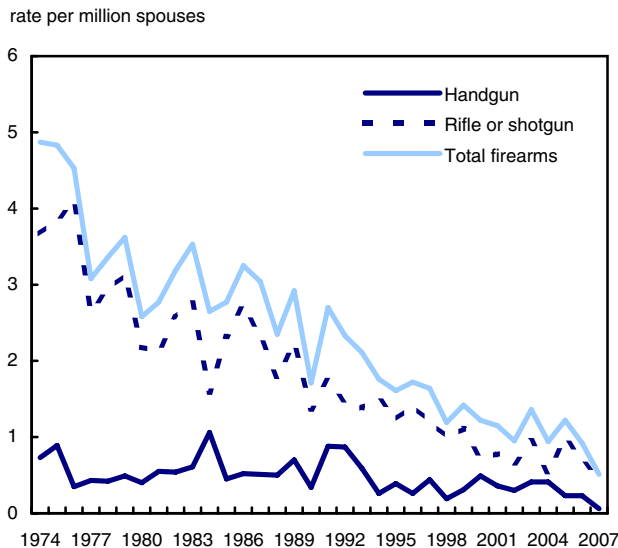
Methods used to kill spouses differed for male and female victims. Between 1998 and 2007, the most common method used to kill male spouses was stabbing (71%). In comparison, less than one-third of female victims were stabbed (30%), and were nearly equally as likely to be shot (28%) (Table 5.4).

However, compared to males (12%), a substantially larger proportion of female victims of spousal homicide (38%) were killed as a result of physical force such as beating, strangulation, suffocation or drowning.

Over the past decade, the rate of firearm-related spousal homicide decreased three-fold, declining from 1.7 per million spouses in 1996 to 0.5 per million

spouses in 2007. In 1996, there were 27 firearm-related spousal homicides compared to 9 in 2007 (Chart 5.3).

**Chart 5.3**  
**Spousal homicides involving firearms dropped notably between 1974 and 2007<sup>r</sup>**



<sup>r</sup> Rates for 1974 to 2006 revised from those published in the report *Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile, 2008*.

**Note(s):** Rate per 1,000,000 legally married, common-law, separated and divorced spouses, 15 years of age and over, based on estimates provided by Demography Division, Statistics Canada. Six same-sex partners were excluded from the analysis, due to the unavailability of population estimates.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

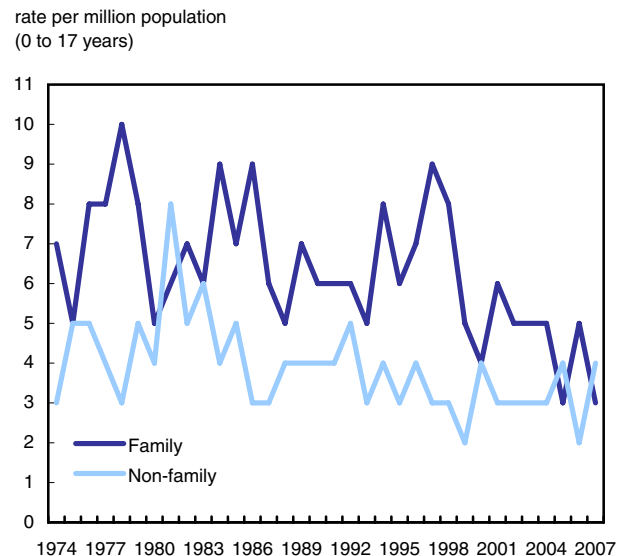
## 5.2 Family homicides against children and youth

In 2007, there were 56 homicides committed against children and youth<sup>4</sup> under the age of 18 across Canada, representing 9% of all homicides. The largest proportion of child and youth homicides were committed by family members (41%), another 27% were committed by non-family (including acquaintances and friends) and 20% by strangers. The remaining 13% of child and youth homicides were unsolved.

4. Throughout this section, the terms 'children' and 'child' are used interchangeably and refer to all children (biological or adopted) of the victim and includes children and youth under the age of 18. Child and youth homicides may be under-reported since some deaths caused by intentional injury may be misclassified as resulting from natural or undetermined causes.

With few exceptions, the rate of child and youth homicides perpetrated by family members has been consistently higher than the rate committed by non-family members (Chart 5.4). However, in 2005 and again in 2007, the family rate dropped below that of the non-family rate to just over 3 homicides per million children, the lowest rates in over 30 years.

**Chart 5.4**  
**Rates of family homicide against children and youth generally higher than non-family homicide, 1974 to 2007**



**Note(s):** Excludes homicides for which police reported the accused-victim relationship as unknown. Rates are calculated per million children and youth (0 to 17 year olds) using population estimates provided by Statistics Canada, Census and Demographic Statistics, Demography Division.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

### 5.2.1 Parents responsible for most family-related homicides against children and youth

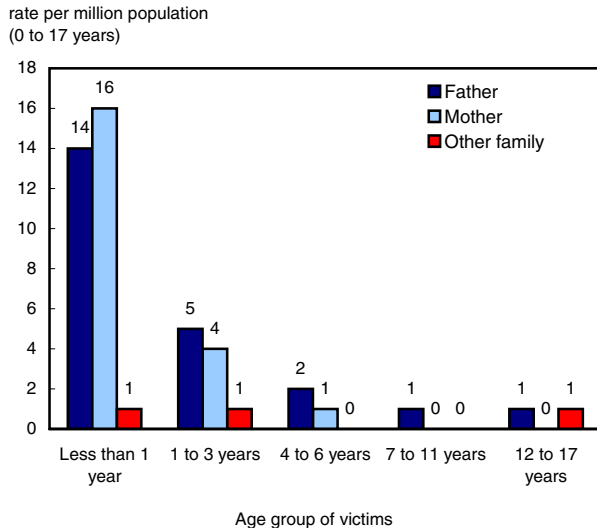
The majority of family-perpetrated homicides against children under 18 years of age were committed by parents. Over the past three decades, from 1978 to 2007, 86% of family-related homicide victims under the age of 18 were killed by a parent.<sup>5</sup>

Looking at the most recent 10-year period, fathers were generally more likely than mothers to be the perpetrators (Chart 5.5). Between 1998 and 2007, 54% of children killed by a family member were killed by their

5. Includes step and adopted parents.

father, 34% by their mother, and the remaining 12% by other family members including siblings, grandparents, cousins or other extended family.<sup>6</sup>

**Chart 5.5**  
**Fathers most often accused in family homicides against children and youth aged 1 to 17, mothers more often the accused in family homicides of children under the age of 1 year, 1998 to 2007**



**Note(s):** Rates are calculated per million children and youth (0 to 17 year olds) according to the applicable age group and sex category using population estimates provided by Statistics Canada, Census and Demographic Statistics, Demography Division.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

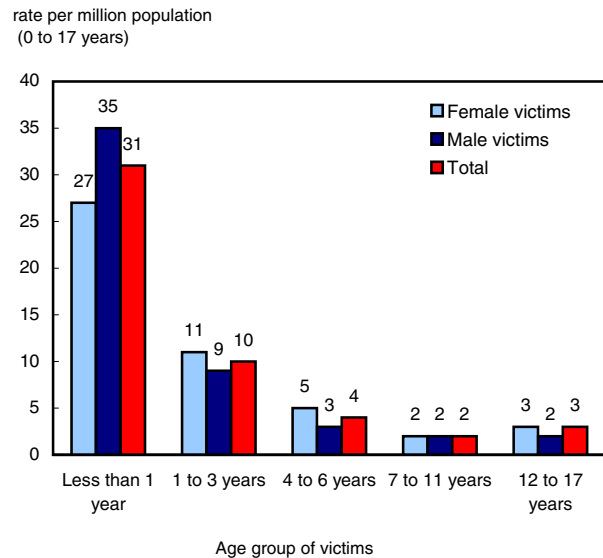
### 5.2.2 Infants had the highest rates of homicide by a family member

Between 1998 and 2007, nearly one-third (30%) of children and youth killed by a family member were infants under the age of 1 year—this age group had the highest rate of family-perpetrated homicide among children and youth (Chart 5.5). Unlike in family homicides of older children where fathers were the most likely perpetrators, in family homicides of infants, half of victims (51%) were killed by their mother and 47% by their father.

The homicide rate for infants was 3 times higher than rates for children aged 1 to 3—the age group with the second highest homicide rate among children and youth (Chart 5.6). Infant boys under the age of 1 year

tended to be at somewhat greater risk than infant girls. Over the 10-year period from 1998 to 2007, the rate of baby boys killed by a family member averaged 35 per million male infants, compared to 27 per million female infants.

**Chart 5.6**  
**Infants had the highest rates of family-related homicide, 1998 to 2007**



**Note(s):** Rates are calculated per million children and youth (0 to 17 year olds) according to the applicable age group and sex category using population estimates provided by Statistics Canada, Census and Demographic Statistics, Demography Division.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

The methods used in family-related homicides against children and youth varied depending on the age of the victim (Table 5.5). Family members who killed young children 6 and under most often used physical force (e.g. strangulation, beating or Shaken Baby Syndrome). Older children and youth 7 to 17 years of age were most often killed by a weapon (e.g., knife or firearm).

### 5.3 Family homicides against older adults

Police data have consistently shown that older Canadians, aged 65 years and over, are the least likely age group to be victimized. Similarly, the homicide rate is lower among seniors compared to those under the age of 65. In 2007, the homicide rate for seniors

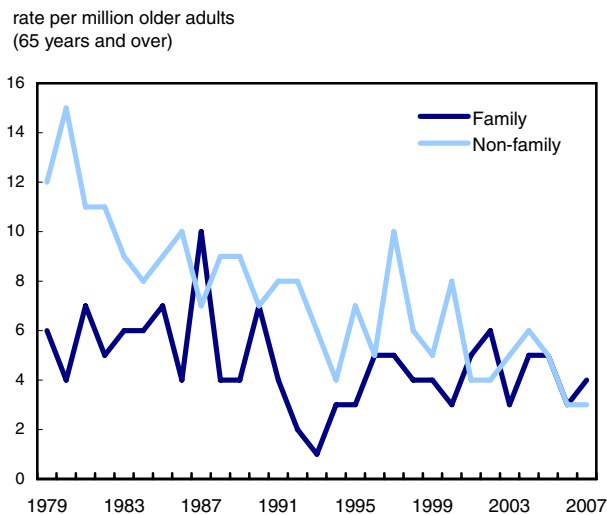
6. Related to the victim by blood, marriage or adoption.

was 9 per million population compared to 23 per million population for persons under 65 years of age. However, rates of family-perpetrated homicide for seniors (3.8 per million population) and non-seniors (4.5 per million population) were comparable.

A total of 38 homicides were committed against seniors in 2007 (22 males and 16 females). About half of the homicides against seniors were committed by a family member, 21% by an acquaintance, and 11% by a stranger. The remaining senior homicides were unsolved.

Over the past three decades, with few exceptions, rates of family-related homicide against seniors have been lower than rates of homicide perpetrated by non-family members. However in 2007, the rate of family-related homicide rose above that of the non-family rate (Chart 5.7).

**Chart 5.7**  
Gap narrows between rates of family and non-family homicides against seniors, 1978 to 2007



**Note(s):** Rates are calculated per million older adults (65 years and over) using population estimates provided by Statistics Canada, Census and Demographic Statistics, Demography Division.

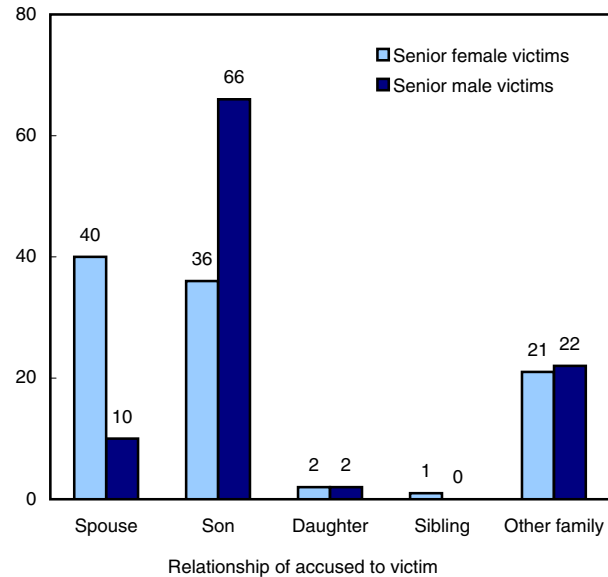
**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

### 5.3.1 Family-related homicides against seniors most often committed by a spouse or an adult son

Family-related homicides against senior women were most commonly committed by the victim's spouse (40%) or adult son (36%). In comparison, for two-thirds (66%) of family homicides perpetrated against senior men, the victim was killed by his adult son (Chart 5.8).

**Chart 5.8**  
Senior victims of family homicide most likely to be killed by spouses and adult sons, 1998 to 2007

percent of family homicides against older adults (65 years and over)



**Note(s):** Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Spouse includes legal, common-law, separated, divorced and same sex spouses. Son and daughter includes biological, adoptive, foster and step-children. Sibling includes biological, adoptive, foster and step-siblings. Other family includes grandchildren, aunts, uncles, nieces, cousins and any other family member related by blood, marriage or adoption.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

While the apparent reason for homicides against seniors by non-family members was most commonly financial gain (34%), for those committed by family members it was primarily frustration, anger or despair (35%); an argument was the apparent motivation in about one-quarter of family-perpetrated homicides of seniors. In comparison, the apparent reason for killing non-senior adults (aged 18-64) was most often the escalation of an argument (43% by family members and 41% by non-family members) (Table 5.6).

**Table 5.1**  
**Family homicides by accused-victim relationship and sex of the victim, 1998 to 2007**

Victim killed by	Total		Sex of victim			
			Female		Male	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
Spouse	753	47	604	63	149	24
Married	262	17	230	24	32	5
Common-law <sup>1</sup>	308	19	209	22	99	16
Separated <sup>2</sup>	169	11	152	16	17	3
Divorced	14	1	13	1	1	0
Parent <sup>3</sup>	336	21	167	17	169	27
Father	217	14	104	11	113	18
Mother	119	8	63	7	56	9
Child <sup>4</sup>	202	13	94	10	108	17
Daughter/step	25	2	12	1	13	2
Son/step	177	11	82	9	95	15
Sibling	87	5	23	2	64	10
Brother	80	5	21	2	59	9
Sister	7	0	2	0	5	1
Other family <sup>5</sup>	208	13	72	8	136	22
<b>Total family homicides</b>	<b>1,586</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>626</b>	<b>100</b>

1. Includes seven same-sex spouses.

2. Includes those who are separated from a common-law relationship.

3. Includes biological, step, foster and adoptive parents.

4. Includes biological, step, foster and adoptive children.

5. Includes all others related to the victim through blood, marriage, foster care or adoption.

**Note(s):** Excludes incidents where the sex of the victim was unknown. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

**Table 5.2**  
**Number and rates of spousal homicide, 1978 to 2007**

	Total	Sex of victim		Total	Sex of victim	
		Female	Male		Female	Male
	number			rate per million spouses		
1978	101	78	23	8.5	13.0	3.9
1979	112	90	22	9.2	14.7	3.7
1980	78	61	17	6.3	9.8	2.8
1981	109	82	27	8.6	12.9	4.3
1982	98	76	22	7.6	11.7	3.5
1983	112	84	28	8.6	12.8	4.3
1984	83	64	19	6.3	9.6	2.9
1985	113	88	25	8.4	13.0	3.8
1986	89	70	19	6.6	10.2	2.8
1987	116	80	36	8.4	11.5	5.3
1988	93	72	21	6.6	10.1	3.0
1989	99	76	23	6.9	10.5	3.2
1990	101	74	27	6.9	10.0	3.7
1991	112	87	25	7.5	11.6	3.4
1992	106	88	18	7.1	11.6	2.4
1993	88	64	24	5.8	8.3	3.2
1994	86	66	20	5.6	8.5	2.6
1995	93	71	22	6.0	9.0	2.9
1996	82	63	19	5.2	7.9	2.5
1997	78	63	15	4.9	7.8	1.9
1998	70	57	13	4.4	7.0	1.6
1999	71	60	11	4.4	7.3	1.4
2000	69	52	17	4.2	6.3	2.1
2001	89	71	18	5.4	8.5	2.2
2002	84	68	16	5.0	8.0	1.9
2003	78	64	14	4.6	7.5	1.7
2004	75	63	12	4.4	7.3	1.4
2005	74	62	12	4.3	7.1	1.4
2006	78	56	22	4.5	6.3	2.6
2007	65	51	14	3.7	5.7	1.6

**Note(s):** Rate per 1,000,000 legally married, common-law, separated and divorced spouses, 15 years of age and over, based on estimates provided by Demography Division, Statistics Canada.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

**Table 5.3**  
**Spousal homicides by accused-victim relationship and sex of the victim, 1998 to 2007**

	Total	Sex of victim				
		Female		Male		
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
<b>Total spouses</b>	<b>753</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>100</b>
Married	262	35	230	38	32	21
Common-law <sup>1</sup>	308	41	209	35	99	66
Separated <sup>2</sup>	169	22	152	25	17	11
Divorced	14	2	13	2	1	1

1. Includes seven same-sex spouses.

2. Includes those who are separated from a common-law relationship.

**Note(s):** Excludes incidents where the sex of the victim was unknown. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.



**Table 5.4**  
**Known causes of death among spousal relationships by sex, 1998 to 2007**

Method used to cause death	Total		Sex of victim			
			Female victims		Male victims	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
<b>Total</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>100</b>
Shooting	182	24	165	28	17	11
Stabbing	286	38	180	30	106	71
Strangulation <sup>1</sup>	140	19	131	22	9	6
Beating	106	14	97	16	9	6
Other <sup>2</sup>	30	4	22	4	8	5

1. Includes suffocation and drowning.

2. Includes poisoning or lethal injection, smoke inhalation, burns, exposure/hypothermia, or other.

**Note(s):** Spousal relationships include legally married, common-law, separated and divorced partners. Excludes incidents where the accused-victim relationship was unknown. Excludes those homicides where the cause of death was unknown. Excludes those homicides where the sex of victim was unknown. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

**Table 5.5**  
**Family-related homicides against children and youth by known method, 1998 to 2007**

Method used to cause death	Total		Victim's age group									
			Less than 1 year		1 to 3 years		4 to 6 years		7 to 11 years		12 to 17 years	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>343</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100</b>
Strangulation, suffocation or drowning	84	24	28	28	24	24	12	28	9	26	11	17
Beating	67	20	22	22	33	33	6	14	3	9	3	5
Shooting	47	14	1	1	7	7	9	21	12	34	18	28
Stabbing	54	16	5	5	12	12	6	14	9	26	22	34
Shaken Baby Syndrome <sup>2</sup>	48	14	34	34	14	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
Poisoning or lethal injection	13	4	1	1	1	1	7	16	0	0	4	6
Fire (smoke inhalation, burns)	10	3	1	1	4	4	1	2	0	0	4	6
Other <sup>3</sup>	20	6	7	7	6	6	2	5	2	6	3	5

1. Excludes 7 homicides for which method used to cause death was unknown.

2. Shaken Baby Syndrome was added to the survey as a method used to cause death in 1997.

3. Includes exposure/hypothermia, deaths caused by motor vehicles, starvation, heat, etc.

**Note(s):** Family homicides are homicides committed by a spouse, parent, child, sibling or other members related by blood, marriage or adoption. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

**Table 5.6**  
**Family and non-family homicides against older adults (65 years and over) and adults aged 18 to 64 years by apparent motive and sex of victim, 1998 to 2007**

Apparent motive	Homicides committed by family members				Homicides committed by unrelated accused			
	Sex of victim		Total	Percent of total	Sex of victim		Total	Percent of total
	Males	Females			Males	Females		
	number		percent	number		percent		
<b>Older adults, 65 years and over</b>								
Revenge	3	2	5	3	3	2	5	3
Jealousy	3	1	4	3	3	1	4	2
Argument	18	21	39	25	30	8	38	21
Frustration, anger or despair	10	45	55	35	22	6	28	15
Financial gain <sup>1</sup>	4	6	10	6	47	14	61	34
Fear of apprehension	0	2	2	1	3	3	6	3
No apparent motive <sup>2</sup>	14	14	28	18	19	15	34	19
Other <sup>3</sup>	2	12	14	9	4	2	6	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Adults aged 18 to 64</b>								
Revenge	19	12	31	3	173	17	190	8
Jealousy	23	147	170	17	105	45	150	6
Argument	219	219	438	43	852	104	956	41
Frustration, anger or despair	60	184	244	24	168	71	239	10
Financial gain <sup>1</sup>	17	18	35	3	213	27	240	10
Fear of apprehension	1	2	3	0	23	14	37	2
No apparent motive <sup>2</sup>	21	41	62	6	96	28	124	5
Other <sup>3</sup>	28	13	41	4	328	52	380	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>636</b>	<b>1,024</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,958</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>2,316</b>	<b>100</b>

1. Includes robberies, homicides committed to obtain insurance monies or inheritances, etc.

2. Includes mental illness, dementia, etc.

3. Includes hate crimes, random killings, mercy killings/assisted suicide, etc.

**Note(s):** Excludes 20 homicides of seniors and 197 homicides of non-senior adults for which an apparent motive was unknown.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

# Data Sources

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

The Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey collects detailed information on individual criminal incidents reported to police, including characteristics of victims, accused persons and incidents. In 2007, detailed data were collected from 153 police services representing approximately 94% of the population of Canada. However, Hamilton Police Service is excluded from the analysis due to data quality of the relationship variable. Other than Ontario and Quebec, the data are primarily from urban police departments. The reader is cautioned that these data are not geographically representative at the national or provincial level. Incident-based UCR2 coverage was at least 97% in all provinces and territories, with the exception of British Columbia which had 59% coverage.

The UCR2 Trend Database contains historical data that permits the analysis of trends in the characteristics of incidents, accused and victims, such as victim-accused relationship. This database currently includes 63 police services that have reported to the UCR2 Survey consistently since 1998. These respondents accounted for 53% of the population of Canada in 2007.

## Weighted rates

A number of police services reported a substantial proportion of violent incidents where the relationship between the accused and the victim was 'unknown' which if ignored would result in the underestimation of the rate of spousal violence. For example, Hamilton Police Service coded 83% of violent incidents as relationship 'unknown', RCMP in Alberta reported 52% and the OPP 50%. A UCR data quality measure that evaluates this relationship variable indicated that Hamilton Police Service should be removed from all analyses. To handle the remaining respondents with significant 'unknowns', a methodology was created which accounts for the incidents with an unknown relationship by assigning an increased weight to incidents where the relationship is known.

The following table shows the percentage of violent incidents reported by police where the relationship between the accused and the victim was coded as 'unknown' by province and territory.

<b>Canada</b>	<b>16.9</b>
Newfoundland and Labrador	8.9
Prince Edward Island	20.4
Nova Scotia	22.0
New Brunswick	37.1
Quebec	4.9
Ontario	18.4
Manitoba	17.7
Saskatchewan	17.6
Alberta	30.6
British Columbia	9.3
Yukon Territory	27.5
Northwest Territories	36.7
Nunavut	20.1

To compensate for the unknown relationships and enhance the comparability of the provincial/territorial statistics, it was necessary to calculate weighted rates of spousal violence for each province and territory. Rather than simply ignore the unknown relationships, a relationship non-reporting adjustment factor was calculated for each police service. The weight that each police service carries in the overall provincial number is equal to the total number of

violent offences for that police service. The underlying assumption here is that the violent incidents with unknown relationships are similar to those with known relationships. Again, the same UCR data quality measure used to determine that Hamilton should be excluded supported this assumption.

## Homicide Survey

The Homicide Survey began collecting police-reported data on homicide incidents, victims and accused persons in Canada in 1961, and began collecting data on family-related homicides in 1974. When a homicide becomes known to the police, the investigating police department completes a survey questionnaire, which is then forwarded to the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. The count for a particular year represents all homicides reported in that year, regardless of when the death actually occurred. In 1991 and 1997, the survey was revised and expanded to include additional variables, such as previous conviction histories of the accused and victim, employment of the accused and victim, victim's use of force at the time of the incident, and Shaken Baby Syndrome as a cause of death.

The Homicide Survey also contains a narrative section, where investigating officers insert additional details on the homicide that are not included in the questionnaire portion of the survey. These additional details include such information as the presence/absence of a restraining order and the attempted suicide of the accused. However, generalizations cannot be made to all homicides, since the availability of this supplementary information varies between homicide reports.

## Transition Home Survey

The Transition Home Survey (THS) was developed under the federal government's Family Violence Initiative in consultation with provincial/territorial governments and transition home associations. The objectives of the survey are to collect information on the characteristics of residential services for abused women and their children during the previous 12 months of operation. In addition, the THS collects information on selected characteristics for the women and children residing in these shelters on a specified 'snapshot' day. In 1991-1992, Statistics Canada began collecting basic information on transition home services and clientele. A more comprehensive survey was developed and administered in subsequent years.

The THS is a biennial mail-out/mail-back census survey of all residential facilities providing services to abused women and their children. Shelters that serve a broader population, in addition to women escaping domestic violence, such as those providing residential services to male victims of spousal abuse and men and women seeking refuge for reasons other than abuse are also included on the THS. Facilities that exclusively serve male victims of spousal abuse fall outside the scope of this survey. At the time of this survey, one such facility was known to be in operation.

The THS does not include shelters that do not provide residential services. For additional results from the THS, refer to the Juristat entitled: Residents of Canada's shelters for abused women, 2008.

# Definitions

**Assault** refers to three levels of physical assaults which include the following categories:

- **Common assault**, (section 265). This includes the *Criminal Code* category assault (level 1). This is the least serious form of assault and includes pushing, slapping, punching, and face-to-face verbal threats.
- **Major assault levels 2 and 3**, (sections 267, 268). This includes more serious forms of assault, i.e. assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (level 2) and aggravated assault (level 3). Assault level 2 involves carrying, using or threatening to use a weapon against someone or causing someone bodily harm. Assault level 3 involves wounding, maiming, disfiguring or endangering the life of someone.

**Criminal harassment**, (section 264.1) is defined as repeatedly following another person from place to place or repeatedly attempting to contact the person against their wishes causing that person to reasonably fear for their personal safety or the safety of anyone known to them.

**Family and non-family** - The nature of the relationship between the victim and the accused is determined by establishing the identity of the accused relative to the victim. Family members include spouses, children, siblings, parents or other persons related to the victim by blood, marriage or another legal relationship (e.g. adoption). All other relationships are considered to be non-family.

**Homicide** includes first and second degree murder, manslaughter and infanticide. Deaths caused by criminal negligence, suicide, accidental or justifiable homicides are not included in this classification.

**Major injuries** are those that require professional medical treatment or immediate transportation to a medical facility.

**Minor injuries** are defined as those that do not require professional medical treatment or only some first aid.

**Older adults and seniors** are used interchangeably in this report and refer to Canadians aged 65 years or older.

**Sexual assault** encompasses a wide range of criminal acts in the *Criminal Code* of Canada. Such conduct ranges from unwanted sexual touching to sexual violence resulting in serious physical injury or disfigurement to the victim. It also includes special categories of offences designed to protect children from sexual abuse.

- **Sexual assault level 1**, (section 271). This involves minor physical injuries or no injuries to the victim.
- **Sexual assault level 2**, (section 272). This includes sexual assault with a weapon, threats or causing bodily harm.
- **Aggravated sexual assault level 3**, (section 273). This results in wounding, maiming, disfiguring or endangering the life of the victim.
- **Other sexual offences** include a group of offences that are primarily meant to address incidents of sexual abuse directed at children. The *Criminal Code* offences that are included in this category are:
  - **Sexual interference** (section 151) – is the direct or indirect touching (for a sexual purpose) of a person under the age of 14 years using a part of the body or an object.
  - **Invitation to sexual touching** (section 152) – is the inviting, counselling, or inciting of a person under the age of 14 years to touch (for a sexual purpose) the body of any person directly or indirectly with a part of the body or with an object.

- **Sexual exploitation** (section 153) – occurs when a person in a position of trust or authority towards a young person or a person with whom the young person is in a relationship of dependency, commits sexual interference or invitation to sexual touching. In this section “young person” refers to a person between 14 and 18 years of age.
- **Incest** (section 155) – occurs when an individual has sexual intercourse with a person that has a known defined blood relationship with them.
- **Anal intercourse** (section 159) and **Bestiality** (Section 160) are also included in this category of offences. These offences may be directed at children, but not always.

**Spouse** – The UCR2 Survey defines spouse as the husband or wife through marriage or common-law and includes same-sex partners. Where indicated, separated and/or divorced spouses are also included in this category. The separated or divorced category includes the former husband or wife (by marriage or by common law relationship) who is separated or divorced at the time of the criminal incident. Includes same-sex ex-partners.

# References

- AuCoin, K. 2005. "Children and youth as victims of violent crime." *Juristat*. Vol. 25, no. 1. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-X. Ottawa.
- Domestic Violence Death Review Committee. 2005. *Annual Report to the Chief Coroner*. [www.mcscs.jus.gov.ca/stellent/groups/public/mcscs/ww/com/documents/transcript/fc069364.pdf](http://www.mcscs.jus.gov.ca/stellent/groups/public/mcscs/ww/com/documents/transcript/fc069364.pdf) (Accessed May 27, 2009).
- Gannon, M. 2006. "Family violence against older adults." In Ogradnik, L. (ed.). *Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile, 2006*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-224-X. Ottawa.
- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. *Homelessness Partnering Strategy*. <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/homelessness/index/shtml> (Accessed on July 16, 2009).
- Hotton, T. 2001. "Spousal violence after marital separation." *Juristat*. Vol. 21, no. 7. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-X. Ottawa.
- Jiwani, Y., P. Kachuk and S. Moore. 1998. *Rural Women and Violence: A Study of Two Communities in British Columbia*. The FREDA Centre for Research on Violence against Women and Children. <http://www.harbour.sfu.ca/freda/articles/rural00.htm> (Accessed June 23, 2009).
- Loughlin, J. and A. Taylor-Butts. 2009. "Child luring through the Internet." *Juristat*. Vol. 29, no. 1. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-X. Ottawa.
- Lunn, D. 2001. *Rural and Farm Women*. [http://www.womanabuseprevention.com/html/rural\\_and\\_farm\\_women.html](http://www.womanabuseprevention.com/html/rural_and_farm_women.html) (Accessed June 23, 2009).
- Mihorean, K. 2005. "Trends in self-reported spousal violence." In AuCoin, K. (ed.). *Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile, 2005*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-224-X. Ottawa.
- Ogradnik, L. (ed.). 2008. *Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile, 2008*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-224-X. Ottawa.
- Ogradnik, L. 2007. "Seniors as victims of crime, 2004 and 2005." *Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics Profile Series*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85F0033M. No. 14. Ottawa.
- Perreault, S. 2009. "Criminal victimization and health: A profile of victimization among persons with activity limitations or other health problems." *Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics Profile Series*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85F0033M. No. 21. Ottawa.
- Purdon, C. 2004. *Women Abuse and Welfare in a Rural Community: Rural Women Speak About Their Experiences of Ontario Works*. <http://www.crvawc.ca> (Accessed June 23, 2009).
- Sauvé, J. and M. Burns. 2009. "Residents of Canada's shelters for abused women, 2008." *Juristat*. Vol. 29, no. 2. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-X. Ottawa.
- Taylor-Butts, A. 2007. "Canada's shelters for abused women, 2005/2006." *Juristat*. Vol. 27, no. 4. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-X. Ottawa.
- Trocmé, N., B. Fallon, B. MacLaurin, J. Daciuk, C. Felstiner, T. Black, L. Tonmyr, C. Blackstock, K. Barter, D. Turcotte and R. Cloutier. 2005. *Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect – 2003: Major Findings*. Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada. [http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cm-vee/cscac-ecve/pdf/childabuse\\_final\\_e.pdf](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cm-vee/cscac-ecve/pdf/childabuse_final_e.pdf) (Accessed May 27, 2009).

Turcotte M. and G. Schellenberg. 2007. *A Portrait of Seniors in Canada, 2006*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 89-519-X. Ottawa.

Wallace, M. 2009. "Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2008." *Juristat*. Vol. 29, no. 3. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-X. Ottawa.

Welfel, E.R., P. R. Danzinger and S. Santoro. 2000. "Mandated reporting of abuse/maltreatment of older adults: A primer for counsellors." *Journal of Counselling and Development*. Vol. 78, no. 3. p. 284-292.