



ONE IN THREE VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE IS MALE



Fact Sheet No.1

Overview of recent family violence research findings

Contrary to common beliefs, up to **One in Three** victims of sexual assault and at least **One in Three** victims of family violence is male (perhaps as many as one in two). *When reading the following quantitative statistics it should be remembered that family violence is extremely complex and doesn't just boil down to 'who does what to whom and how badly'. The context of the violence and abuse is extremely important. Abuse can occur without the use or threat of physical violence. Please refer to oneinthree.com.au/faqs for a more detailed and nuanced analysis of family violence and abuse.*

The Australian Bureau of Statistics Personal Safety Survey (2006)¹ is the largest and most recent survey of violence in Australia. It found that:

- 29.8% (almost one in three) victims of current partner violence since the age of 15 were male
- 24.4% (almost one in four) victims of previous partner violence since the age of 15 were male

“She would kick me in the genital area, she'd bite me on the shoulders and scratch my face and neck. She'd threaten to kill herself if I didn't give her the gambling money. Then she'd threaten to kill our son. She would tell me and my son that I wasn't his father. She also threatened to have someone bash me up.”

Raymond⁹

- 29.4% (almost one in three) victims of sexual assault during the last 12 months were male
- 26.1% (more than one in four) victims of sexual abuse before the age of 15 were male

The SA Interpersonal Violence and Abuse Survey (1999)³ found that:

- 32.3% (almost one in three) victims of reported domestic violence by a current or ex-partner (including both physical and emotional violence and abuse) were male
- 19.3% (almost one in five) victims of attempted or actual forced sexual activity since they turned 18 years of age were male (excluding activity from partners or ex-partners).

Both this survey and the Personal Safety Survey excluded the male prison population where over one quarter of young inmates experience sexual assault⁷.

The Crime Prevention Survey (2001)¹⁰ surveyed young people aged 12 to 20 and found that:

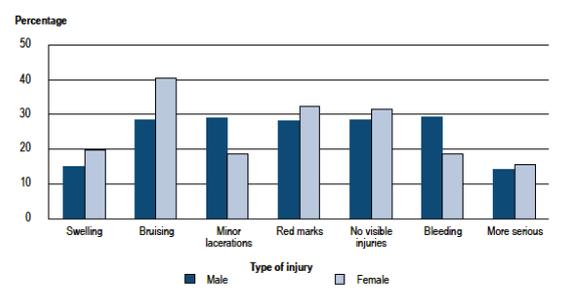
- while 23% of young people were aware of domestic violence against their mothers or step-mothers by their fathers or step-fathers, an almost identical proportion (22%) of young people were aware of domestic violence

against their fathers or step-fathers by their mothers or step-mothers

- an almost identical proportion of young females (16%) and young males (15%) answered “yes” to the statement “I've experienced domestic violence”
- an almost identical proportion of young females (6%) and young males (5%) answered “yes” to the statement “my boyfriend/girlfriend physically forced me to have sex”.

The NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (2005)¹¹ found that 28.9% (almost one in three) victims of domestic assault were male. Male and female victims received very similar numbers and types of injuries (see figures 1 and 2 below). The latest (2010)¹⁸ figures show that 30.8% (almost one in three) victims of assault - domestic violence related offences recorded by NSW Police were male.

Figure 1: Percentages of injured victims that sustained various types of injuries by gender: NSW, 2004



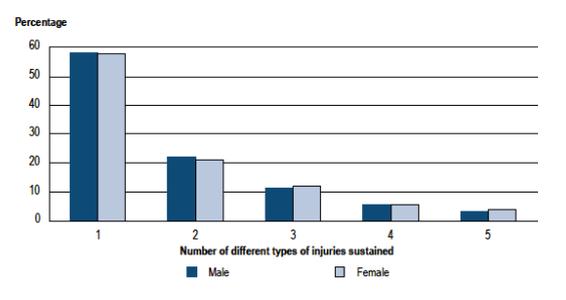
The Queensland Crime and Misconduct Commission (2005)² found that 32.6% (almost one in three) victims of family violence reported to police were male.

The Australian Institute of Criminology (2013)⁴ found that 39% (two in five) victims of domestic homicide and 27% (almost one in three) victims of intimate partner homicide between 2008-2010 were male.

The Victorian Victims Support Agency (2012)¹⁶ found that in 2009-10, 36% (more than one in three) persons admitted to Victorian Public Hospitals for family violence injuries were male.

The Australian Institute of Family Studies (1999)¹⁷ observed that, post-separation, fairly similar proportions of men (55 per cent) and women (62 per cent) reported experiencing physical violence including threats by their former spouse. Emotional abuse was reported by 84 per cent of women and 75 per cent of men.

Figure 2: The numbers of different types of injuries sustained by victims: NSW, 2004





ONE IN THREE VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE IS MALE



A University of Melbourne / La Trobe University study (1999)⁶ found that men were just as likely to report being physically assaulted by their partners as women. Further, women and men were about equally likely to admit being violent themselves. Men and women also reported experiencing about the same levels of pain and need for medical attention resulting from domestic violence.

An extensive study of dominance and symmetry in partner violence by male and female university students in 32 nations by Murray Straus (2008)¹⁴ found that, in Australia, 14 per cent of physical violence between dating partners during the previous 12 months was perpetrated by males only, 21 per cent by females only and 64.9 per cent was mutual violence (where both partners used violence against each other).

Fergusson & Mullen (1999)⁵, in *Childhood sexual abuse: an evidence based perspective*, found that one in three victims of childhood sexual abuse were male.

The Queensland Government Department of Communities (2009)¹² reported that 40% of domestic and family violence protection orders issued by the Magistrate Court were issued to protect males.

A study of risk factors for recent domestic physical assault in patients presenting to the emergency department of Adelaide hospitals (2004)¹⁵ found that 7% of male patients and 10% of female patients had experienced domestic physical assault. This finding shows that over one in three victims were male (39.7%).

The Australian Institute of Family Studies' evaluation of the 2006 family law reforms (2009)⁸ found that 39% (more than

one in three) victims of physical hurt before separation were male; and 48% (almost one in two) victims of emotional abuse before or during separation were male.

A study of relationship aggression, violence and self-regulation in Australian newlywed couples by researchers at the University of Queensland (2009)¹⁶ found that a substantial minority of couples reported violence, with 82 couples (22%) reporting at least one act of violence in the last year (i.e., the year leading up to and including their wedding). Female violence was more common than male violence, with 76 women (20%) and 34 men (9%) reported to have been violent. There was a significant association between female and male violence. In violent couples the most common pattern was for only the woman to be violent (n=48/82 or 59% of violent couples), next most common was violence by both partners (n=28, 34%), and least common was male-only violence (n=6, 7%).

These 14 authoritative sources agree that up to one in three victims of sexual assault and at least one in three victims of family violence is male (perhaps as many as one in two). Yet the current government appears unable to acknowledge or offer any services for these victims. This conscious neglect is in itself a form of social violence – the Australian Government's human rights obligations require it to cater equitably for the needs of all, regardless of gender. One in three is enough to reject the politics of ideology. It is time to care for all those in need, whether male or female.

To send a message to the Australian Government that *all* victims of violence deserve services and support, go to oneinthree.com.au/action.

REFERENCES

- 1 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006). Personal safety survey australia: 2005 reissue 4906.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics. (Original work published August 10, 2006) Retrieved September 21, 2009, from [http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4906.02005 \(Reissue\)?OpenDocument](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4906.02005%2005%20Reissue?OpenDocument). Significant problems with this survey include, (a) only female interviewers were used, (b) a much smaller sample of male informants was used compared to female informants, and (c) no data was published on types of violence or injuries or threats received by male victims.
- 2 Crime and Misconduct Commission (2005, March). Policing domestic violence in Queensland: Meeting the challenges. Brisbane: Crime and Misconduct Commission. Retrieved October 14, 2009, from <http://www.cmc.qld.gov.au/data/portal/00000005/content/73653001131400781353.pdf>
- 3 Dal Grande, E., Woollacott, T., Taylor, A., Starr, G., Anastassiadis, K., Ben-Tovim, D., et al. (2001). Interpersonal violence and abuse survey, september 1999. Adelaide: Epidemiology Branch, Dept. of Human Services. Retrieved September 21, 2009, from <http://www.health.sa.gov.au/pros/portals/0/interpersonal-violence-survey.pdf>
- 4 Chan, A., & Payne, J. (2013). Homicide in Australia: 2008-09 to 2009-10 National Homicide Monitoring Program annual report. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. Retrieved March 3, 2013, from http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/mr/21-40/mr21/04_homicide.html
- 5 Fergusson, D. M., & Mullen, P. E. (1999). *Childhood sexual abuse: An evidence based perspective*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.
- 6 Headey, B., Scott, D., & de Vaus, D. (1999). Domestic violence in Australia: Are women and men equally violent?. *Australian Monitor*, 2(3). Retrieved November 7, 2009, from <http://www.mensrights.com.au/page13y.htm>
- 7 Heilpern, D. (2005). Sexual assault of prisoners: Reflections. *University of New South Wales Law Journal*, 28(1), 286-292. Retrieved November 1, 2009, from <http://austlii.law.uts.edu.au/journals/UNSWLJ/2005/17.html>
- 8 Kaspiw, R., Gray, M., Weston, R., Moloney, L., Hand, K., & Qu, L. (2009, December). Evaluation of the 2006 family law reforms. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies. Retrieved July 5, 2010, from <http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/ife/evaluationreport.pdf>
- 9 Lewis, A. (2000). An enquiry into the adult male experience of heterosexual abuse. Unpublished M.A. thesis submitted to the University of Western Sydney, NSW.
- 10 National Crime Prevention (2001). Young people and domestic violence : National research on young people's attitudes to and experiences of domestic violence. Barton: Attorney-General's Dept. Retrieved September 21, 2009, from <http://www.crimeprevention.gov.au/agd/WWW/ncp/home.nsf/Page/Publications>
- 11 People, J. (2005). Trends and patterns in domestic violence assaults. *Crime and Justice Bulletin*, 89. Retrieved September 21, 2009, from http://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/bocsar/ll_bocsar.nsf/pages/bocsar_mr_cjb89
- 12 Queensland Government Department of Communities (2009, October 9). Domestic and family violence orders: Number and type of order by gender, Queensland, 2004-05 to 2008-09. [Letter]. Retrieved October 31, 2009, from http://www.menshealthaustralia.net/files/Magistrates_Court_data_on_QLD_DVOs.pdf
- 13 Sarantakos, S. (1998). Husband abuse as self-defence. [Paper]Montreal: International Congress of Sociology
- 14 Straus, M. A. (2008). Dominance and symmetry in partner violence by male and female university students in 32 nations. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 30, 252-275. Retrieved November 7, 2009, from <http://pubpages.unh.edu/~mas2/ID41-PR41-Dominance-symmetry-In-Press-07.pdf>
- 15 Stuart, P. (2004). Risk factors for recent domestic physical assault in patients presenting to the emergency department. *Emergency Medicine Australasia*, 16(3), 216-224.
- 16 Victims Support Agency (2012). Victorian Family Violence Database Volume 5: Eleven-year Trend Report. Melbourne: Victorian Government Department of Justice. Retrieved September 17, 2012, from <http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/crime/research+and+statistics/victorian+family+violence+database+volume+5+eleven-year+trend+analysis+1999-2010>
- 17 Wolcott, I., & Hughes, J. (1999). Towards understanding the reasons for divorce. Australian Institute of Family Studies, Working Paper, 20. Retrieved November 1, 2009, from <http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/wolcott6.html>
- 18 Halford, W.K., Farrugia, C., Lizzio, A. & Wilson, K. (2010) 'Relationship aggression, violence and self-regulation in Australian newlywed couples', *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 62: 2, 82 — 92, First published on: 19 May 2009. Retrieved March 18, 2011, from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00049530902804169>