



ONE IN THREE VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE IS MALE



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Male victims of domestic violence need campaigns and services: report

A groundbreaking report from Edith Cowan University (ECU) has found that male victims of domestic violence can suffer from a unique form of legal/administrative abuse previously unidentified in research, as well as experiencing most of the same impacts as female victims.

The [Intimate Partner Abuse of Men](#) report, to be launched this morning in Perth, found that “Male victims of intimate partner abuse and their children suffer a range of consequences, such as psychological distress (including disorders such as depression and anxiety disorders), suicidal ideation, impaired self-concept and loss of work.”

It found that male victims are often reluctant to disclose their experience of abuse or seek help because of their sometimes justified fears that they will not be believed, that they will not be assisted or will instead be blamed for the abuse.

The study recommends that government-funded public campaigns be conducted to raise awareness of domestic violence against men; that consideration should be given to providing publicly-funded services specifically for male victims; and that workers in health and welfare fields should be provided with training to assist them to recognise and respond effectively to male victims of domestic violence.

The study’s findings come after the [release of statistics](#) last year by the WA Department for Child Protection, showing that in 2007-08 women were responsible for more than three quarters of all substantiated child maltreatment.

Greg Andresen from the One in Three anti-violence campaign said “We know that [one in three](#) victims of family violence and abuse are male. This study confirms that these men have almost no services to help them, despite suffering from physical, emotional, verbal, sexual, financial and social abuse just like women victims.

“The study also discovered that some women abuse their male partners by manipulating legal and administrative resources such as taking out false restraining orders or not allowing the victim access to his children.”

In July 2009 the Federal Attorney-General asked the Australian Law Reform Commission to inquire into what improvements could be made to relevant family and domestic violence legal frameworks to protect the safety of *women and their children*. The One in Three campaign argues that [this exclusion](#) of male victims and their children is typical of government approaches to the issue of domestic violence which assume incorrectly that the vast majority of perpetrators are male and the vast majority of victims female.

Campaigners say that making a protection such as freedom from violence dependent on the victim’s sex violates some of the most fundamental principles of international human rights law.

Mr Andresen added, “Some will argue that domestic violence perpetrated by women is not a serious matter. However [research overwhelmingly shows](#) that coercion (control and domination) is a frequently cited reason by women for their own use of violence, and by male victims for their female partner’s use of violence.

“[Other research confirms](#) that women rarely use violence in self-defence. Self-defence is cited by women as the reason for their use of domestic violence including homicide in only a small minority of cases (between 5 and 20 per cent).

“[Men are physically injured by female perpetrators, and often seriously](#), because women can do just as much harm with a weapon as men can, despite any differences in size or strength. And children suffer equally regardless of whether it’s Mum, Dad or both being violent.”

The One in Three campaign is calling upon state and federal governments and non-government service providers to heed the recommendations of the ECU study and provide services to all victims regardless of their sex. These include counselling and support services, accommodation services, help-lines and crisis response, and community education and prevention programmes.

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