

Family Violence Prevention Fund

The Facts on Domestic Violence

Prevalence of Domestic Violence:

- Estimates range from 960,000 incidents of violence against a current or former spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend per year¹ to three million women who are physically abused by their husband or boyfriend per year.²
- Around the world, at least one in every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused during her lifetime.³
- Nearly one-third of American women (31 percent) report being physically or sexually abused by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives, according to a 1998 Commonwealth Fund survey.⁴
- Nearly 25 percent of American women report being raped and/or physically assaulted by a current or former spouse, cohabiting partner, or date at some time in their lifetime, according to the National Violence Against Women Survey, conducted from November 1995 to May 1996.⁵
- Thirty percent of Americans say they know a woman who has been physically abused by her husband or boyfriend in the past year.⁶
- In the year 2001, more than half a million American women (588,490 women) were victims of nonfatal violence committed by an intimate partner.⁷
- Intimate partner violence is primarily a crime against women. In 2001, women accounted for 85 percent of the victims of intimate partner violence (588,490 total) and men accounted for approximately 15 percent of the victims (103,220 total).⁸
- While women are less likely than men to be victims of violent crimes overall, women are five to eight times more likely than men to be victimized by an intimate partner.⁹
- In 2001, intimate partner violence made up 20 percent of violent crime against women. The same year, intimate partners committed three percent of all violent crime against men.¹⁰
- Women of all races are about equally vulnerable to violence by an intimate.¹¹
- Male violence against women does much more damage than female violence against men; women are much more likely to be injured than men.¹²
- The most rapid growth in domestic relations caseloads is occurring in domestic violence filings. Between 1993 and 1995, 18 of 32 states with three year filing figures reported an increase of 20 percent or more.¹³
- Women are seven to 14 times more likely than men to report suffering severe physical assaults from an intimate partner.¹⁴

- The health-related costs of rape, physical assault, stalking, and homicide by intimate partners exceed five point eight billion dollars each year (CDC study).

Domestic Homicides:

- On average, more than three women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends in this country every day. In 2000, 1,247 women were killed by an intimate partner. The same year, 440 men were killed by an intimate partner.¹⁵
- Women are much more likely than men to be killed by an intimate partner. In 2000, intimate partner homicides accounted for 33.5 percent of the murders of women and less than four percent of the murders of men.¹⁶

Health Issues:

- About half of all female victims of intimate violence report an injury of some type, and about 20 percent of them seek medical assistance.¹⁷
- Thirty-seven percent of women who sought treatment in emergency rooms for violence-related injuries in 1994 were injured by a current or former spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend.¹⁸

Domestic Violence and Youth:

- Approximately one in five female high school students reports being physically and/or sexually abused by a dating partner.¹⁹
- Eight percent of high school age girls said "yes" when asked if "a boyfriend or date has ever forced sex against your will."²⁰
- Forty percent of girls age 14 to 17 report knowing someone their age who has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend.²¹
- During the 1996-1997 school year, there were an estimated 4,000 incidents of rape or other types of sexual assault in public schools across the country.²²

Domestic Violence and Children:

- In a national survey of more than 6,000 American families, 50 percent of the men who frequently assaulted their wives also frequently abused their children.²³
- Slightly more than half of female victims of intimate violence live in households with children under age twelve.²⁴
- Studies suggest that between three point three and ten million children witness some form of domestic violence annually.²⁵

Rape:

- Three in four women (76 percent) who reported they had been raped and/or physically assaulted since age 18 said that a current or former husband, cohabiting partner, or date committed the assault.²⁶
- One in five (21 percent) women reported she had been raped or physically or sexually assaulted in her lifetime.²⁷

- Nearly one-fifth of women (18 percent) reported experiencing a completed or attempted rape at some time in their lives; one in 33 men (three percent) reported experiencing a completed or attempted rape at some time in their lives.²⁸
- In 2000, 48 percent of the rapes/sexual assaults committed against people age twelve and over were reported to the police.²⁹
- In 2001, 41,740 women were victims of rape/sexual assault committed by an intimate partner.³⁰
- Rapes/sexual assaults committed by strangers are more likely to be reported to the police than rapes/sexual assaults committed by "non-strangers," including intimate partners, other relatives and friends or acquaintances. Between 1992 and 2000, 41 percent of the rapes/sexual assaults committed by strangers were reported to the police. During the same time period, 24 percent of the rapes/sexual assaults committed by an intimate were reported.³¹

Stalking:

- Seventy-eight percent of stalking victims are women. Women are significantly more likely than men (60 percent and 30 percent, respectively) to be stalked by intimate partners.³²
- Eighty percent of women who are stalked by former husbands are physically assaulted by that partner and 30 percent are sexually assaulted by that partner.³³

¹U.S. Department of Justice, Violence by Intimates: Analysis of Data on Crimes by Current or Former Spouses, Boyfriends, and Girlfriends, March 1998.

²The Commonwealth Fund, Health Concerns Across a Woman's Lifespan: 1998 Survey of Women's Health, May 1999.

³Heise, L., Ellsberg, M. and Gottemoeller, M. Ending Violence Against Women. Population Reports, Series L, No. 11., December 1999.

⁴The Commonwealth Fund, Health Concerns Across a Woman's Lifespan: 1998 Survey of Women's Health, May 1999.

⁵The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and The National Institute of Justice, Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence, July 2000.

⁶Lieberman Research Inc., Tracking Survey conducted for The Advertising Council and the Family Violence Prevention Fund, July – October 1996.

⁷Bureau of Justice Statistics Crime Data Brief, Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2001, February 2003.

⁸Bureau of Justice Statistics Crime Data Brief, Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2001, February 2003.

⁹U.S. Department of Justice, Violence by Intimates: Analysis of Data on Crimes by Current or Former Spouses, Boyfriends, and Girlfriends, March 1998.

¹⁰Bureau of Justice Statistics Crime Data Brief, Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2001, February 2003.

¹¹Bureau of Justice Statistics, Violence Against Women: Estimates from the Redesigned Survey, August 1995.

¹²Murray A. Straus and Richard J. Gelles, Physical Violence in American Families, 1990.

¹³Examining the Work of State Courts, 1995: A National Perspective from the Court Statistics Project. National Center for the State Courts, 1996.

¹⁴National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey, November 1998.

¹⁵Bureau of Justice Statistics Crime Data Brief, Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2001, February 2003.

¹⁶Bureau of Justice Statistics Crime Data Brief, Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2001, February 2003.

¹⁷National Crime Victimization Survey, 1992-96; Study of Injured Victims of Violence, 1994.

¹⁸U.S. Department of Justice, Violence?Related Injuries Treated in Hospital Emergency Departments, August 1997.

¹⁹Jay G. Silverman, PhD; Anita Raj, PhD; Lorelei A. Mucci, MPH; and Jeanne E. Hathaway, MD, MPH, "Dating Violence Against Adolescent Girls and Associated Substance Use, Unhealthy Weight Control, Sexual Risk Behavior, Pregnancy, and Suicidality," Journal of the American Medical Association, Vol. 286, No. 5, 2001.

²⁰The Commonwealth Fund Survey of the Health of Adolescent Girls, November 1997.

- ²¹Children Now/Kaiser Permanente poll, December 1995.
- ²²U.S. Department of Education, Violence and Discipline Problems in U.S. Public Schools: 1996-1997.
- ²³Strauss, Murray A, Gelles, Richard J., and Smith, Christine. 1990. Physical Violence in American Families; Risk Factors and Adaptations to Violence in 8,145 Families. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.
- ²⁴U.S. Department of Justice, Violence by Intimates: Analysis of Data on Crimes by Current or Former Spouses, Boyfriends, and Girlfriends, March 1998.
- ²⁵Carlson, Bonnie E. (1984). Children's observations of interpersonal violence. Pp. 147-167 in A.R. Roberts (Ed.) Battered women and their families (pp. 147-167). NY: Springer. Straus, M.A. (1992). Children as witnesses to marital violence: A risk factor for lifelong problems among a nationally representative sample of American men and women. Report of the Twenty-Third Ross Roundtable. Columbus, OH: Ross Laboratories.
- ²⁶U.S. Department of Justice, Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey, November 1998.
- ²⁷The Commonwealth Fund, Health Concerns Across a Woman's Lifespan: 1998 Survey of Women's Health, May 1999.
- ²⁸National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,, Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey, November 1998.
- ²⁹Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, Reporting Crime to the Police, 1992-2000, March 2003.
- ³⁰Bureau of Justice Statistics Crime Data Brief, Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2001, February 2003.
- ³¹Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, Reporting Crime to the Police, 1992-2000, March 2003.
- ³²Center for Policy Research, Stalking in America, July 1997.
- ³³Center for Policy Research, Stalking in America, July 1997.

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