Are the major outcomes of family violence changing: getting more or less severe?

These indicators answer the question of how many people are dying or being seriously injured as a result of family violence and whether family violence is increasing or decreasing over time.

How many people are dying as a result of family violence?

*Homicide offences only include murder, manslaughter and infanticide.*

Between 2005 and 2009 there was no trend in terms of family violence-related murders.

Family violence-related homicides, as a proportion of all homicides, has ranged from 30–48 per cent over the last five years.

Fifty per cent of family violence-related homicide (murder and manslaughter offences) victims in 2010 were female. In 2010 65 per cent of female victims of family violence-related homicide were killed by their current or ex-partner, whereas the majority of male victims were killed by other family members.

Source: New Zealand Police

The graph shows the number of recorded homicide offences broken down into those recorded as family violence-related and those that were not.

The number of homicides in New Zealand each year is thankfully small; as a result small fluctuations in a single period can distort an entire year’s figures.

Between 2004 and 2009 substantiations of child abuse doubled, increasing from around 8,500 to over 20,000. The doubling of cases of substantiated abuse can be attributed to the high numbers of family violence referrals from Police where children have been present during family violence and as a result of this are found to have suffered emotional abuse.

Levels of physical and sexual abuse have remained relatively consistent since 2004. Substantiated cases of sexual abuse are on average 1200 cases per annum and physical abuse cases have been around 2300 since 2004, with an increase to 2800 in the last two years.

Reports of concern (notifications) have also increased significantly over the last six years, increasing from 40,000 to over 125,000 reports. The increase in reports of concern may reflect an increased awareness amongst family, friends, and other agencies of child abuse.

The increase in reports of concern also reflects a significant increase in Police family violence referrals from 2006 onwards.

How many women end up in hospital as a result of family violence?

Between 2005 and 2009 there was no trend in terms of family violence-related murders.

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Source: Ministry of Health (MOH)

The graph shows hospital admissions for women aged between 15 and 50 years who were victims of assault.

In the majority of cases, where a woman is admitted to hospital due to assault, the perpetrator is a family member. The number of assaults on women by family members has fluctuated over the five-year period from 2005 to 2009, but there is no discernable trend.

It should be noted that for a large number of assaults against women, the identity of the perpetrator is unknown to the health system. Steps are being taken to improve data quality.

How many children reported to Child, Youth and Family are abused?

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The increase in reports of concern also reflects a significant increase in Police family violence referrals from 2006 onwards.
Are incidents of family violence increasing or decreasing year by year?

These indicators address whether there are more or less new cases of family violence each year.

How many family violence offences are recorded?

Source: New Zealand Police

The graph shows the total number of family violence offences and the number of family violence assault offences.

Police family violence statistics include incidents other than violence that are detected as part of an occurrence involving family violence. For example, if drugs are found by police attending a family violence assault, a drug possession offence would be recorded as being family violence-related.

Source: Ministry of Justice

The graph shows the number of prosecuted charges of male assaults on females by outcome between 2004 and 2009.

The latest Police data indicates the rate of family violence offences has plateaued and this is a distinct and sustained change.

EXPECTED TRENDS

Soon after the launch of the “It's not OK campaign,” Police predicted we would see an increase in reporting as a result of the campaign. We also predicted that there would be an increase in reported incidents of family violence. However, this change has not been seen in the data. Instead, we are now seeing recorded offences start to decrease. We are now seeing recorded offences start to decrease.

How many people are prosecuted and convicted for family violence?

The number of convictions should increase as prosecutions increase, but the proportion of convictions that result in a conviction should be relatively stable once the current increase levels out.

Is the level of seriousness of family violence charges changing?

The proportion of serious assaults resulting in prosecution compared to other family violence charges is decreasing. This may reflect a decrease in the seriousness of family violence, or it may reflect a change in Police practice.

Breakdown of family violence apprehensions for assault and threatening behaviour offences resulting in prosecution.
The number of applicants applying for, and being granted, temporary protection orders has remained stable between 2004 and 2009. The graph shows that more than three quarters of without-notice applications are granted a temporary protection order. For the past six years 90 per cent of respondents of protection orders have been male, and over 90 per cent of applicants were female.

**EXPECTED TRENDS**

We would expect to see a slight increase in the total number of applications as more victims seek help.
3 Is there specific evidence of reduced tolerance of violence and behaviour change in families?

Are people more often referring themselves for help, without being sent?

EXPECTED TRENDS
With increased government and community focus on increasing awareness of family violence, we would expect to continue to see an increase over the next couple of years in people seeking help. This is because we would expect more people to self-refer if knowledge and tolerance were changing.

How much violence are young people witnessing in their own homes?

Increased self referrals is one measure demonstrating that people are aware that abuse or neglect is unacceptable and that it is OK to seek help.

Source: Relationship Services New Zealand
The graph shows the number of self-referred clients, it does not include clients mandated by Ministry of Justice and Probation referrals.
Self referred clients include both victims and perpetrators.

Source: Age Concern New Zealand
This graph shows the number of self referred clients. In interpreting this graph, the very small numbers concerned needs to be taken into account.
Self referred clients only include victims.

A large proportion of young people witnessing violence in their homes report it as severe.
Witnessing violence in the home was more common among young people from neighbourhoods with high levels of deprivation.
Twelve per cent of young people also reported that they had been physically hurt at home in the last 12 months. There was no difference between ethnic groups in the proportion of students who reported being physically hurt at home.

The graph shows the various forms of violence students reported witnessing in their homes over the past 12 months.
Family violence indicators

Is there specific evidence of reduced tolerance of violence and behaviour change in families?

Why do victims not report a partner offence to the Police?

These two graphs show the reasons that victims gave for not reporting a partner offence to Police. Seventy-nine per cent of victims reported they did not contact the Police in 2006. In 2009 this was 75 per cent. The graph relates to a small number of people who indicated they had been victims of partner offences. Victims could choose more than one response.

The New Zealand Crime and Safety Survey (NZCASS)

These graphs provide contextual information about who victims talk to about partner offences and the reasons victims do not report to Police.

Sixty one per cent of victims of partner offences mentioned to someone what happened. Only 61 per cent of victims said they told someone about their experience. The graph relates to a small number of people who indicated they had been victims of a partner offence. Victims could choose more than one response.

The 2006 NZCASS showed that only 21 per cent of partner offences were reported to the Police, which rose to 25 per cent in 2009. This change between the 2006 and 2009 NZCASS was not statistically significant. The reasons why victims did not report partner offences varied, but most commonly female victims did not report to Police because they considered the matter to be private. There were also a number of female victims who did not report to Police because they feared reprisals from their partner or they were too embarrassed. The most common reason why male victims did not report to Police was that they considered the matter too trivial.

NZCASS 2009 also provided data about victims’ experiences of partner offences. Findings show that female victims are more likely than male victims to be fearful after the incident and to be ‘highly affected’ by it. Female victims were much more likely than male victims to consider what happened to be a crime.
### Additional notes on specific indicators

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