

Violence Against Pregnant Women

From "Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile, 2010," Statistics Canada, May 22, 2012:
<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2012001/article/11643-eng.pdf>¹

It has been found that violence during pregnancy can have a myriad of adverse effects on not only maternal health but also on birth outcomes, such as low birth weight, fetal injury and fetal death (Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada 2005). For the first time, the 2009 GSS asked spousal victims if the violent episode took place at the time of pregnancy. According to these results, **11% of female spousal victims were pregnant during the violent incident. This amounts to about 63,300 pregnant women who were violently victimized by their spouse in the preceding five years.** (*emphasis added*)

Police-reported data from the Homicide Survey also show that pregnancy is not a protective factor in intimate partner homicide. **Since 2005, the year data first became available on whether the homicide victim was pregnant, 12 intimate partner victims were pregnant at the time of their death.** However, homicide during pregnancy is not limited to intimate partners, as **eight pregnant women were killed by someone other than their intimate partner.** (p. 38)

From "SOGC: Intimate Partner Violence Consensus Statement," April 2005:
<http://sogc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/157E-CPG-April2005.pdf>

- It is estimated that 1.5% to 17% of all pregnant women experience abuse.
- Health Canada reported that 21% of abused women surveyed reported violence during pregnancy, and of these women, 40% reported that the violence began during pregnancy.
- Up to 64% of women abused during pregnancy reported that abuse increased during pregnancy.
- When the pregnancy is unplanned or unwanted, women are 4 times as likely to suffer increased abuse than when the pregnancy is desired.
- Women abused during pregnancy are more likely to be depressed, suicidal, and experience pregnancy complications and poor outcomes, including maternal and fetal death.

¹ "As with previous editions of Family Violence in Canada, two main sources of information are used to measure and analyze family violence: police-reported information from the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey and the Homicide Survey, and self-reported victimization data from the General Social Survey on Victimization. These data sources yield complementary yet different types of information on violence within families." (p. 9)

"The Homicide Survey collects detailed information on all homicides that have come to the attention of, and have been substantiated by, Canadian police services. Information includes characteristics pertaining to incidents (weapon, location), victims (age, sex, accused-victim, relationship), and accused persons (age,sex). Coverage for the Homicide Survey has represented 100% of the population since recording began in 1961. The count for a particular year represents all homicides reported in that year, regardless of when the death actually occurred." (p. 106)

"The General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization complements police reported data in that it helps to explore the large amount of crime in Canada that goes unreported to police. It is also able to provide information on non-violent forms of abuse (e.g., emotional and financial abuse), consequences of victimization, levels of reporting to police, children's exposure to spousal violence, and social service utilization. Since the GSS is a voluntary household survey, it relies on the willingness of Canadians to participate." (p. 10)