

NOVEMBER 2005

FROM THE CHAIRWOMAN:

Many government and international aid agencies recognise that women are disproportionately affected by violence. Each new report seems to bring bad news about women suffering, women homeless, women dying. The urge to seek easy answers is appealing, because the violence and pain in our world can be overwhelming. However, the comforting notion that problems can be fixed by the stroke of a pen offers nothing to the woman who lives in fear. If we honestly want to see positive change, we must first accept the responsibility of setting aside our reassuring opinions and putting accurate information first – no matter how uncomfortable the truth may be. Strategies generated on facts are preferable to actions based on hope alone, regardless of how soothing such actions may be to those who feel they must do something. Please remember this as you read the facts and figures in our newsletter, and use the information to lobby for evidence-based policies that may actually make a genuine difference to women's lives.

- Samara McPhedran, Chair, WiSH

WHAT'S NEW?

'Homicide in Canada, 2004', a part of the Homicide Survey project undertaken by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS), has been released.

The homicide rate in 2004 climbed by 12%, to 1.95 persons per 100 000.

Despite fluctuations, homicide has declined slowly but steadily since 1975.

In 2004, there were 622 homicide victims in total.

74 were spousal homicides, four less than 2003. There were 22 non-spousal intimate partner homicides (boyfriend/girlfriend), double the number recorded for 2003.

Spousal/intimate partner homicides accounted for 15% of all homicides.

Most domestic homicides also involved the accused and/or the victim consuming alcohol or drugs.

68% of homicide victims were male. 18-24 year old males were most likely to perpetrate or be the victim of homicide.

Over two thirds of adults accused of homicide had a criminal history - 70% of these individuals had a conviction for a violent offence.

Stabbings accounted for 33% of all homicides, followed by firearms (28%), beating (22%), strangulation/suffocation (10%), and fire (2%).

The proportion of homicides committed with a firearm has remained steady over the past 10 years.

Handguns accounted for 65% of the 172 firearm homicides.

There were 71 gang-related homicides in 2004. 70% involved a firearm, usually a handgun.

The majority of firearms used to commit homicide were not registered and the perpetrators not licensed.

The pattern of unregistered firearms and unlicensed perpetrators is consistent with Australia and England/Wales.

Between 1997 and 2004, in homicides where information could be obtained, on average, 84% of firearms were unregistered and 79% of offenders unlicensed.

References:

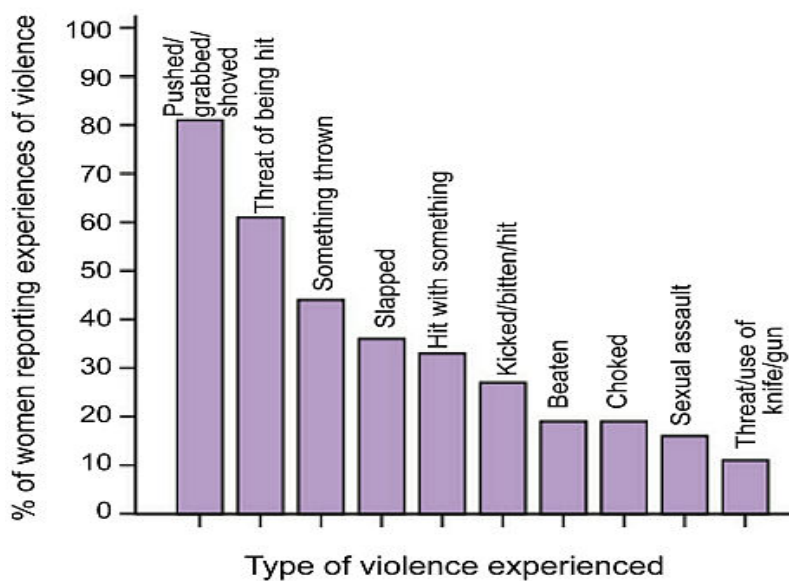
Dauvergne, M. (2005). Homicide in Canada, 2004. Statistics Canada, 25(6), Cat. No:85-002-XPE.

AuCoin, K (ed.). (2005). Family Violence in Canada: a statistical profile 2005. Statistics Canada, Cat. No: 85-224-XIE. p.29

IN OTHER NEWS...

Recent data showing the prevalence of various types of non-lethal intimate partner violence:

Type of violence directed against women, 2004.
 Based on data from 'Family Violence in Canada: a Statistical Profile, 2005'.



Note: percentages do not sum to 100%, due to overlap in responses