# NATIONAL TRENDS IN INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDES, 1974-2000

*by Valerie Pottie Bunge[1]*

## Highlights

- Since 1974, nearly 2,600 spousal homicides have been recorded in Canada. More than three-quarters have been against women.

- Spousal homicide rates for both women and men have declined between 1974 and 2000. In this time period, the homicide rate for women decreased by 62%, from 16.5 to 6.3 women per million couples. The homicide rate for men dropped by more than half (55%) from 4.4 to 2.0 men per million couples. Homicide rates among other intimate partners also declined over this time period.

- Between 1974 and 2000, there were declines in the rates at which women and men were killed by spouses in most age groups.

- There is a combined effect of age and marital status on the risk of spousal homicide. Between 1991 and 2000, young (15-24 years) separated women were killed at a rate of 113.4 women per million separated couples compared to 9.5 women per million separated couples 55 years and older.

- As with rates of overall violent crime in Canada, rates of spousal homicide have been higher in the Prairie provinces. For women, average rates between 1974 and 2000 were highest in Manitoba (16.1 women per million couples), while for men rates were highest in Saskatchewan (7.1 men per million couples). The lowest rates of spousal homicide perpetrated against women were recorded in Newfoundland and Labrador (4.1 women per million couples) and in Prince Edward Island for men (1.0 men per million couples).

- Firearms were the most frequently used weapon in the commission of spousal homicides between 1974 and 2000, accounting for the death of more than one in three victims. In non-spousal homicides, physical force was more likely to be the cause of death (30%).

- Between 1991 and 2000, the percentage of spousal homicide cases citing a history of domestic violence between victims and perpetrators increased from 53% to 67%.

- Over half of all spousal homicides committed between 1991 and 2000, involved an accused who had a prior criminal conviction.

- In more than one in five spousal homicides, the incident culminated in the suicide of the accused. This was far more often the case when the accused was male. Between 1974 and 2000, more than a quarter of male perpetrators and 3% of female perpetrators took their lives following the incident, representing a total of 564 men and 15 women.

- Many recent societal changes may have contributed to the declines in spousal homicide rates including the changing nature of intimate relationships, increasing gender equality, legislative changes, policy and procedural changes such as specialized domestic violence courts, training of criminal justice personnel and increasing availability of resources for victims.

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# INTRODUCTION

Police-reported statistics indicate that the overall crime rate in Canada decreased for the ninth consecutive year in 2000 and is at its lowest point since 1978 (Logan, 2001). Homicide rates have also declined 42% since 1975 to a low of 1.76 per 100,000 population in 2000. In addition, the 1999 General Social Survey (GSS) results show that many Canadians perceive that crime has stabilized over the past five years and feel less fearful of being a victim of crime in their neighborhoods compared to 1993 (Besserer and Trainor, 2000).

Over the past two decades spousal homicide rates have been declining in both Canada (Locke, 2000) and the United States (Rosenfeld, 1997; Puzone, et al, 2000; Dugan, et al, 1999, Browne et al, 1993). There is also some indication that non-lethal violence among spouses has been declining. While results must be interpreted with caution due to somewhat different approaches,[2] comparisons between the 1993 Violence Against Women Survey (VAWS) and the 1999 General Social Survey (GSS) indicate that 5-year rates of physical and sexual violence against female spouses declined from 12% in 1993 to 8% in 1999, a statistically significant drop (Johnson, 2000). On the other hand, there has been an increase in the number of spousal violence cases coming to the attention of the police.[3] This may be due to a greater willingness on the part of victims to report these incidents to the police. According to the 1993 VAWS and 1999 GSS, the proportion of spousal violence incidents reported to the police increased from 29% to 37%.

Research exploring the declines in intimate partner homicides is relatively new. Only in the past decade has research begun to identify factors that may be contributing to these patterns. The emphasis of this body of research, most from the United States, has been on reduced exposure to violence. In an extensive literature review conducted on behalf of the Department of Justice Canada, Dawson (2001) identifies three important social changes offered as explanations for declining spousal homicide rates: (1) the changing nature of intimate relationships, (2) increasing gender equality and (3) the availability of resources to combat violence and provide assistance to victims.

The purpose of this Juristat is to address two information gaps identified by Dawson (2001): (1) documentation of trends in spousal homicides as well as subgroup variations (i.e. common-law, separated and divorced partners, age group variations, etc.), and (2) identification of factors that may be associated with the decline. Using data from the Homicide Survey and a combination of other statistical data sources this Juristat will examine spousal homicide trends over the period 1974-2000. In 1991 changes were made to the Homicide Survey providing more detailed breakdowns of the relationship between victims and offenders permitting comparisons of married, common-law, separated and divorced couples as well as boyfriends and girlfriends. This allows trends in other intimate partner homicides (e.g. boyfriends and girlfriends) to be examined from 1991-2000. These trends in spousal homicide will be assessed within the context of other factors, including improvements to women's economic and social well-being (e.g. average annual income, delayed marriage and child-rearing), growth in the availability of emergency services for battered women, trends in spousal victims' use of social services, trends in reporting spousal violence to the police, and the evolution of charging and prosecution policies.

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[2]  While the 1999 GSS and the 1993 VAWS used a similar module of questions to measure spousal violence, comparisons between the two must be made with caution due to the somewhat different approaches undertaken. For example, the VAWS contained a single focus on acts of male violence against women. By contrast, the 1999 GSS was a multi-faceted crime victimization survey and was much broader in focus. In the GSS only those who had contact with a previous spouse during the five years preceding the survey were questioned about violence in relationships. In the VAWS, all women with current or previous partners were asked these questions. Furthermore, results of the GSS are based on interviews with a sample of women and men 15 years of age and older while respondents to the VAWS were 18 years and older.

[3]  Based on data from 106 police agencies in 6 provinces that have consistently participated in the Revised Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey since 1995, the number of spousal violence cases reported to these agencies increased from a rate of 30.6 to 32.9 per 10,000 women and from 3.6 to 6.0 per 10,000 men. These data are not nationally representative.

# PATTERNS IN INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDE RATES

Since 1974, there has been a decline in both the overall rate of family homicides recorded in Canada and in family homicides as a percentage of total homicides. Looking at the initial three years of this period (1974 to 1976) compared to the final three (1998 to 2000), the number of family homicides as a percentage of total homicides in Canada decreased from 35% to 27% (Table 1).[4] Spousal homicides decreased from 18% to 13% of the total between these two time periods and other family homicides decreased from 17% to 14% of total homicides.

Since 1974, nearly 2,600 spousal homicides have been recorded in Canada; more than three-quarters have been against women (Table 2).

While spousal homicide rates[5] for both women and men have fluctuated over the past two decades, they have generally declined between 1974 and 2000[6] (Figure 1). In this time period, the homicide rate for women decreased by 62%, from 16.5 to 6.3 women per million couples and the homicide rate for men dropped by more than half from 4.4 to 2.0 men per million couples. Browne and Williams (1993) contend that this downward trend in marital homicide may be due, in part, to the increasing shift from marital to unmarried relationships.

***Declines in most forms of intimate partner homicides***

Between the first (1991-1995) and second (1996-2000) halves of the 1990s, there was a noticeable decline in the overall number and rate of most forms of intimate partner homicide (Table 3).

Figure 1
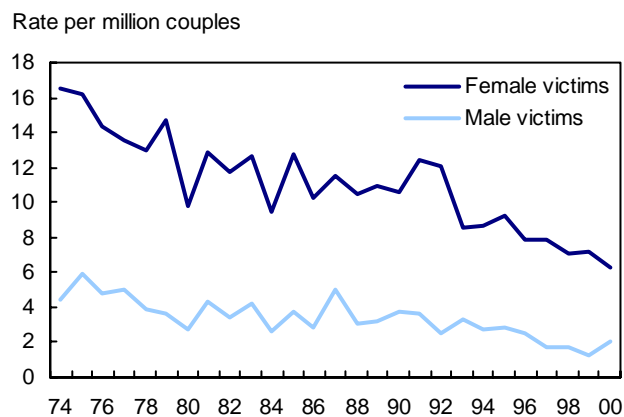
**Spousal homicide rates declining, 1974-2000[1,2]**

Rate per million couples



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[1] Rate per 1,000,000 legally married, separated, divorced, and common-law males and females.
Rates are based on population estimates, Demography Division, July 1, 2001.
Homicide numbers for 1999 are revised.

[2] Four same-sex partners were excluded from the analysis because Census data on same-sex couples are unavailable and therefore rates cannot be calculated.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

Over the ten-year period, homicide rates were highest among separated (37.4 wives per million separated couples) and common-law women (29.5 wives per million common-law couples). While rates of homicide decreased for separated women, one of the biggest declines was in the rate for women in common-law relationships, which decreased from 35.8 to 24.2 women per million common-law couples.[7] The rate at which divorced women were killed decreased from 2.3 to 1.2 women per million divorced couples,[8] however this involved a very small number of cases, 15 over the ten-year period.

For men, rates of spousal homicide were highest in common-law relationships and the largest decline occurred for this group. Homicide rates of men in common-law relationships decreased from 17.9 to 7.8 men per million common-law couples.[9] Over this time period there was a non-significant change in the rate at which separated husbands were killed.

Homicide rates among other intimate partners[10] also declined over this time period[11] with the exception of a recent increase in female homicide rates between 1998 and 2000 (Figure 2)[12]. Researchers in the United States (Browne and Williams, 1993; Dugan et al., 1999; Rosenfeld, 2000) found a decrease in lethal violence among married couples and an increase in such violence between women and men in unmarried relationships. The Canadian data do not support this finding. In fact, in Canada, rates of homicide have been declining among most intimate relationship types.

**Young separated women at highest risk**

In the past 27 years, women under the age of 25 were killed at a rate of 21.2 women per million couples compared to 6.6 for male victims in the same age category. Over this time period, there were declines in the rates at which women and men were killed in most age groups (Figure 3). Declines among women were shown in most age groups,[13] while for men, those

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[4] Because of the small number of spousal homicides recorded each year, and in order to create a more robust sample, three-year time periods were used.

[5] Presenting the data as a rate instead of raw numbers controls for changes in the number of people who are married, separated or living common-law.

[6] Both the male and female spousal homicide rates showed statistically significant decreases over the period 1974 to 2000 ($p \leq .01$). The difference between the female and the male spousal homicide rate is also statistically significant. This indicates that the rate of decline in the female spousal homicide rate is significantly higher than the rate of decline for the male spousal homicide rate.

[7] This is a significant year-to-year decline ($p \leq .01$).

[8] This is a significant year-to-year decline ($p \leq .05$).

[9] This is a significant year-to-year decline ($p \leq .01$).

[10] Other intimate partners include boyfriends, girlfriends, extra-marital lovers and estranged lovers.

[11] The homicide rate for other intimate partners showed significant decreases ($p \leq .10$) for women, and non-significant decreases for men.

[12] Since 1991, 200 homicides among other intimate partners have been recorded in Canada, the vast majority of which have been against women (89% or 177 victims). Due to the small number of male victims (N=23) over this 10-year time period, analysis of other intimates focuses mainly on women.

[13] The decline in homicide rates among 15-24 year old women was non-significant; however the declines among women in all other age categories were significant ($p \leq .01$).

Figure 2

**Rates of other intimate partner[1,2] homicides, 1991-2000**

Rate per million single population 15 years and over
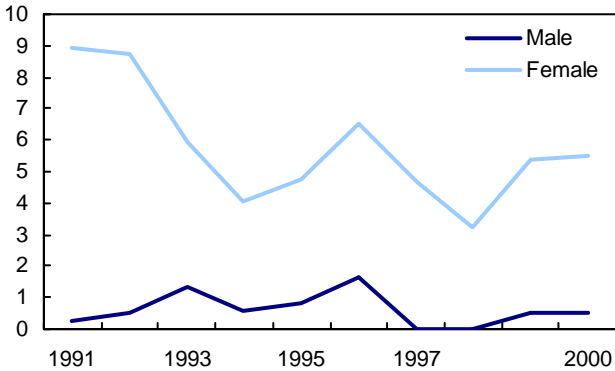


[1]  *Other intimate partners include boyfriends, girlfriends, extra-marital lovers and estranged lovers. Eleven same-sex partners were excluded from this analysis because Census data on same-sex couples is unavailable and therefore rates cannot be calculated.  Homicide numbers for 1999 are revised.*
[2]  *Rates are based on the number of single people aged 15 and over in the population so may underestimate the true rate as a proportion of single people are without intimate partners and some have multiple partners.*
   *Rates are based on population estimates, Demography Division, July 1, 2001.*
**Source:** *Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.*

15-24 experienced a slight increase[14] in spousal homicide rates and those 35 and older[15] showed a steady decline in rates.

There is a combined effect of age and marital status on the risk of spousal homicide. Between 1991 and 2000, young (15-24 years) separated women were killed at a rate of 113.4 women per million separated couples compared to 9.5 women per million separated couples 55 years and older (Table 4).  Homicide rates of young (15-24 years) separated men were also high (44.1 per million separated couples 15-24 years old. This figure should be used cautiously as it is based on very low counts).

Age patterns were different for other intimate partner homicides. Rates of homicide by other intimate partners were higher among older women and men.  Rates were highest among 35-54 year old women (12.0 per million single population 35-54 years of age), followed by 25-34 year old women (7.5 per million single population 25-34 years of age), whereas rates for women under 25 were 3.7 per million single population 15-24 years of age.

### Provincial spousal homicide rates declining

As with rates of overall violent crime in Canada, the Western provinces have the highest provincial rates of spousal homicide (Logan, 2001). From 1974 to 2000, rates of spousal homicide involving men and women have been higher in the Prairie provinces (Figure 4).  For women, rates were highest in Manitoba (16.1 women per million couples), while for men rates were highest in Saskatchewan (7.1).   The lowest rates of

Figure 3

**Rates of spousal homicide against women have declined in most age groups[1]**

**Female victims**

Rate per million couples
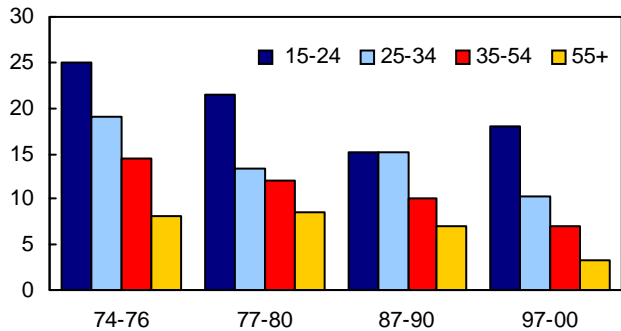


**Male victims**

Rate per million couples
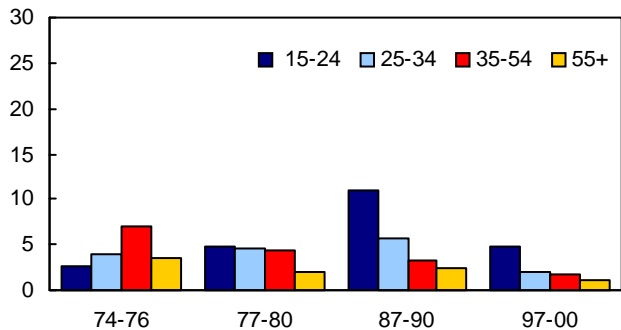


[1]  *Rate per 1,000,000 legally married, separated, divorced and common-law males and females by age group. Rates are based on population estimates, Demography Division, July 1, 2001.*
   *Homicide numbers for 1999 are revised.*
**Source**: *Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.*

spousal homicide involving women were recorded in Newfoundland and Labrador (4.1 women per million couples) and in Prince Edward Island for homicides involving men (1.0 men per million couples).  Over this time period, rates of spousal homicide decreased in some provinces, partly due to small counts in many.[16]

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[14]  *This is a significant increase ($p \leq .10$).*
[15]  *These were significant declines ($p \leq .01$).*
[16]  *Declines for women were significant in Quebec ($p \leq .01$), Ontario ($p \leq .01$), Manitoba ($p \leq .10$), Alberta ($p \leq .05$) and British Columbia ($p \leq .01$).  Declines for men were significant in Ontario ($p \leq .01$) and British Columbia ($p \leq .05$).  All others were non-significant.  Numbers are too small in many provinces to present annual rates in a table and too small to allow analysis of other intimate partners.*

Figure 4



**Prairie provinces have the highest rates
of spousal homicide, 1974-2000[1]**

Average rate per million couples
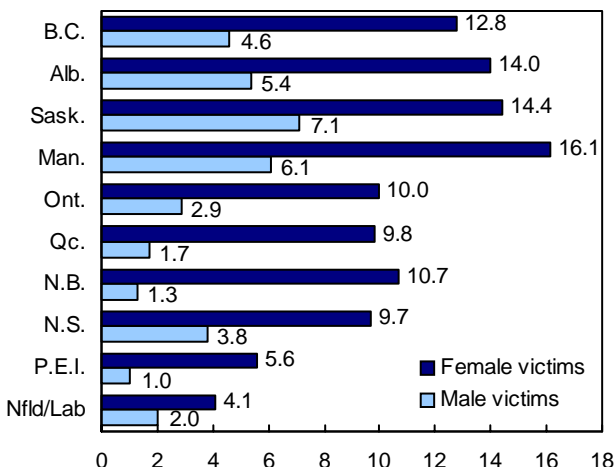
[Bar chart showing Female victims and Male victims rates per million couples by province]

| Province | Female victims | Male victims |
|---|---|---|
| B.C. | 12.8 | 4.6 |
| Alb. | 14.0 | 5.4 |
| Sask. | 14.4 | 7.1 |
| Man. | 16.1 | 6.1 |
| Ont. | 10.0 | 2.9 |
| Qc. | 9.8 | 1.7 |
| N.B. | 10.7 | 1.3 |
| N.S. | 9.7 | 3.8 |
| P.E.I. | 5.6 | 1.0 |
| Nfld/Lab | 4.1 | 2.0 |

■ Female victims
□ Male victims

[1]  Rate per 1,000,000 legally married, separated, divorced and common-law males and females.
Rates are based on population estimates, Demography Division, July 1, 2001.
Homicide numbers for 1999 are revised.
**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

### Rates highest in the territories

Although few spousal homicides were committed in the three territories, small populations elevate the rates to the highest in the country. Between 1974 and 2000 the homicide rate for women in the Northwest Territories was seven times the national average (77.8 women per million couples), and four times the national average in the Yukon (47.3 women per million couples). Similarly, male homicide rates were fourteen times higher in the Northwest Territories (48.0 men per million couples) and six times higher in the Yukon (21.5 men per million couples). There have been two spousal homicides in Nunavut since 1999.

### Shooting and stabbing the most common causes of death in spousal homicides

Firearms were the most frequently used weapon in the commission of spousal homicides between 1974 and 2000, accounting for the death of more than one in three victims (Table 5). By comparison, in non-spousal homicides, physical force was more likely to be the cause of death (30%).

Women were more likely than men to be killed with firearms (40% versus 26%). In contrast, men were more likely than women to be killed with knives or sharp objects (58% versus 23%). Women were also more likely than men to die as a result of physical force: beatings and strangulation were more frequently the cause of death for wives (32%) than husbands (10%).

### Stabbing the most common cause of death among other intimate partners

Knives were the most frequently used weapons by both men and women in the commission of homicides among other intimate partners between 1991 and 2000, accounting for the death of more than one in three victims (37%) (Table 6). Men[17] were more likely than women to die from knife wounds (48% versus 36%).

### Decline in the use of firearms

Significant decreases have occured in the use of firearms in spousal and other intimate partner homicides. While firearms are the most frequently used weapons in the commission of homicides of wives, the rate at which both wives and husbands have been killed by firearms declined between 1974 and 2000 (Figure 5). The proportion of homicides involving firearms also declined over this time period.

In 1974, 7.7 wives per million couples were murdered with a firearm compared to 1.8 in 2000, a decrease of 77%.[18] Similarly, the rate at which husbands were murdered with a firearm over this time period decreased from 2.0 husbands per million couples to 0.4, a decrease of 80%.[19]

The rate at which wives were murdered by physical force also declined by 68% (6.2 wives per million couples in 1974 to 2.0 in 2000).[20] The rate at which husbands were killed by knives decreased by 35% from 2.0 husbands per million couples in 1974 to 1.3 in 2000.[21]

Similar declines were evident in the rate at which women[22] have been killed by firearms and physical force in other intimate partner relationships (Figure 6). There was a non-significant increase in the rate at which women in other intimate relationships were killed by knives.

### Previous domestic violence a factor in spousal homicides

Between 1991 and 2000, there was a history of reported domestic violence between victims and perpetrators in 58% of spousal homicides.[23] A slightly higher proportion of cases in which husbands were victims had a reported history of domestic violence (63%) compared to cases in which wives were victims (56%). Furthermore, a history of domestic violence was more likely to be reported in separated unions (73%) than among those who were currently married (44%). This may be due to victims' increased willingness to report violence once a union has ended. According to the 1999 GSS, police were involved in 26% of spousal violence cases involving female victims in intact relationships and 55% of cases where violence occurred following separation. A similar pattern, but with lower reporting rates, was observed for men: 6% reported

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[17]  Based on a small number of male victims (N=23).
[18]  This is a significant decline (p ≤ .01).
[19]  This is a significant decline (p ≤ .01).
[20]  This is a significant decline (p ≤ .01).
[21]  This is a significant decline (p ≤ .01).
[22]  Numbers are too low for male victims to describe any discernable patterns.
[23]  History of domestic violence is only collected for family homicides from 1991 forward and is not available for other intimate relationships.

Figure 5

**Use of firearms in spousal homicide decreasing, 1974-2000[1]**
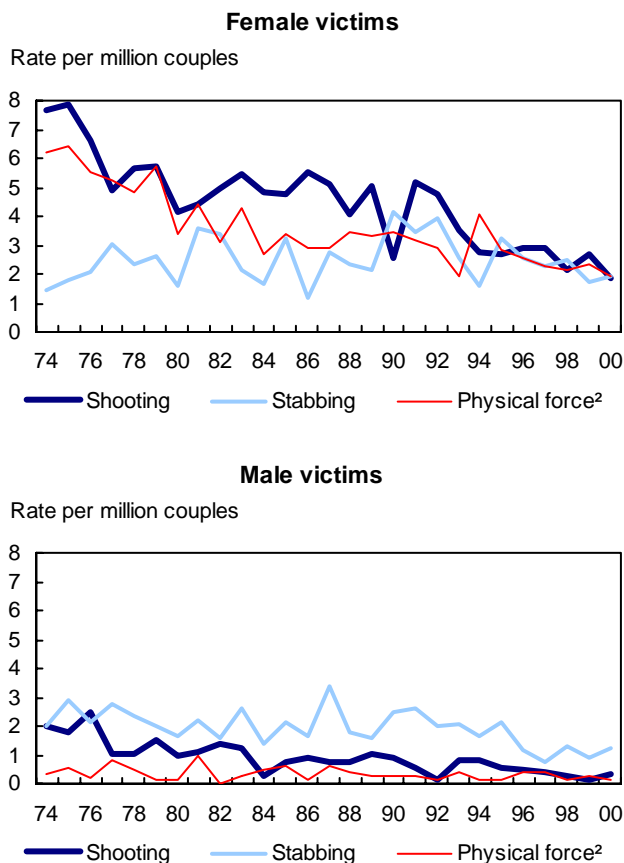
### Female victims

Rate per million couples



— Shooting — Stabbing — Physical force[2]

### Male victims

Rate per million couples



— Shooting — Stabbing — Physical force[2]

[1]  Rate per 1,000,000 legally married, separated, divorced and common-law males and females. Rates are based on population estimates, Demography Division, July 1, 2001.
Homicide numbers for 1999 are revised.
[2]  Physical force includes beating, strangulation, suffocation and compressing.
**Source**: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

violence in intact marriages compared to 30% in relationships where violence occurred after separation. The percentage of cases citing a history of domestic violence known to the police has increased over the past 10 years, from 53% to 67%. It is not known whether this is due to an actual increase, improved reporting and recording practices among police, or to a change in police awareness due to changes in charging policies.

### *Prior criminal convictions*

Over half (53%) of all spousal homicides committed between 1991 and 2000 involved accused persons who had a prior criminal conviction (Table 7). The largest percentage was for violent offences (33%). Women were more likely than men to be murdered by a spouse with a prior conviction for a violent offence (35% versus 25%). The percentage of accused with a criminal history varied between 42% and 62% over the ten-year period.

**Box 1**

**Firearm legislation**

Important changes have been made to Canadian firearm legislation in an effort to reduce the level of firearm-related injury and death, including amendments to the Criminal Code in 1969, 1977, 1991 and 1995. They can be summarized as follows:

1969    Parliament enacted Bill C-150 which, for the first time, made it illegal to provide firearms to persons of "unsound mind" or convicted criminals under prohibition orders. The definition of a "firearm" was also expanded to include non-restricted, restricted and prohibited weapons.

1977    Amendments were enacted (Bill C-51) requiring a Firearms Acquisition Certificate (FAC) prior to obtaining a firearm. The legislation also introduced a variety of provisions including regulations on safe storage and display of firearms for businesses and bona-fide gun collectors, and mandatory minimum sentences to deter the criminal use of firearms.

1991    Parliament strengthened the screening provisions for FAC applicants (Bill C-17) including the applicant's personal and criminal history, personal references, photograph and a mandatory 28-day waiting period.

1995    Parliament created strict new penalties for trafficking and smuggling firearms and tougher mandatory minimum sentences for serious offences involving firearms (Bill C-68). All firearm owners and users are now required to obtain a firearm license, and all firearms have to be registered by January 2003 (this includes non-restricted rifles and shotguns).

Over the course of this time period, there has been a noticeable drop in firearm-related violent crime, although a definitive cause-and-effect relationship between gun-control legislation and crime rates is difficult to corroborate.

Figure 6

**Use of firearms in other intimate partner homicides involving females declining, 1991-2000[1,2]**
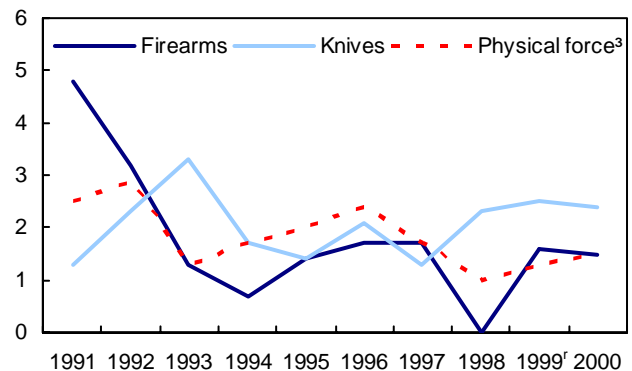


— Firearms — Knives --- Physical force[3]

[1]  Other intimate partners include boyfriends, girlfriends, extra-marital lovers and estranged lovers. Eleven same-sex partners were excluded from this analysis because Census data on same-sex couples is unavailable and rates therefore cannot be calculated.
[2]  Rates are based on the number of single people aged 15 and over in the population so may underestimate the true rate as a proportion of single people are without intimate partners and some have multiple partners. Rates are based on population estimates, Demography Division, July 1, 2001.
[3]  Physical force incudes beating, strangulation, suffocation and compressing.
[r]  Homicide numbers for 1999 are revised.
**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

Other intimate partner homicides involved a higher percentage of accused with prior criminal convictions (64%). Again, many were for violent offences (42%) and women were more likely than men to be murdered by someone with a history of violent offences (42% versus 35%).

### Male victims more likely to be the first to use force in spousal homicides

In many cases of spousal homicide, men were more likely than women to initiate violent incidents that resulted in their death. Although information was missing in 41% of cases overall, male victims (25%) were eight times more likely than female victims (3%) to be the first to use force in incidents resulting in homicide.

### Arguments and jealousy motivate the majority of intimate partner homicides

In cases of spousal homicide, the most frequently cited motive was an argument (47%) followed by jealousy (21%). Jealousy was more often the motivating factor in cases involving women (25% versus 8% of cases involving male victims).

### Men more likely to commit suicide following homicide

In more than one in five spousal homicides, the incident culminated in the suicide of the accused. But it is almost entirely a male phenomenon. Between 1974 and 2000, more than a quarter of male perpetrators (28%) and 3% of female perpetrators took their lives following the incident, a total of 564 men and 15 women.

Looking more specifically at relationship types, between 1991 and 2000, men who were separated from marital partners (51%) and men who were married (37%) were the most likely to commit suicide following the homicide. Fourteen percent of boyfriends took their lives following the incident. Between 1991 and 2000 only five women committed suicide following any type of intimate partner homicide.

## WHY THE DECLINE IN SPOUSAL HOMICIDES?

### Research in the United States

A number of reasons have been advanced to explain declining spousal homicide rates. The majority of this research, to date, has occurred in the United States (Dawson, 2001) and explanations point primarily to exposure reduction. For example, marriage rates among young adults, the age group at highest risk of homicide victimization, have been declining. As the proportion of young people getting married has declined, exposure to violence in the highest-risk age groups may be reduced. Furthermore, the increase in the age of first marriage may reflect greater selectivity among would-be spouses. Both lower rates of marriage and delayed entry into marriage may result in an overall reduction in both lethal and non-lethal violence in relationships (Rosenfeld, 1997; Dugan et al., 1999).

Increasing gender equality over the past several decades, including rising income levels and labor force participation rates among women, are linked to both delayed marriage and improvements to women's economic status. These factors may have helped expand women's alternatives to either entering into or remaining in a violent relationship (Rosenfeld, 1997; Dugan et al., 1999).

Finally, the rising availability of domestic violence services and policy responses to the issue of domestic violence have also been advanced as possible explanations for declining spousal homicide rates in the U.S (Browne & Williams, 1989; Dutton-Douglas & Dione, 1991).

### The Canadian context

In Canada, similar changes have occurred. There has been a change in living arrangements between women and men over the past 27 years. The rate of marriage, especially among young adults, has been declining. In 1980, 61% of 20-24 year olds had never been married; increasing to 81% by 2000 (Statistics Canada, Cansim Table, 051-0010). The age at first marriage has consequently increased: in 1974, the average age of first marriage for women was 22 years (24 years for men), and in 1997, it was 28 years (30 years for men) (Villeneuve and Geran, Statistics Canada, Cat No. 84-212). On the other hand, the percentage of women and men living with common-law partners has also increased from 3.8% of women in 1981 (4.0% of men) to 8.0% in 1996 (8.4% for men) (Statistics Canada, 2000), which theoretically would increase the risk of spousal violence and homicide given the higher rates among women and men living in common-law relationships.

Furthermore, average annual earnings among employed women and men increased between 1980 and 1999 (Statistics Canada, Cat. No. 13F0022); a higher percentage of both women and men have been pursuing post-secondary education; and, women's labour force participation rate has increased from 46% in 1974 to 60% in 2000 (Statistics Canada, Cat. No. 71F0004). Women are also waiting longer before entering into child-rearing, and are having, on average, fewer children which may result in greater financial independence. Birth rates among younger women (15 to 29) have decreased and the average age at the birth of first child has increased by three years, from 24 years in 1974 to 27 years in 1997 (Statistics Canada, Cat. No. 89-503). All of these social changes have provided both women and men with increased opportunities for economic independence which may help provide alternatives to remaining in abusive situations which, in turn, may help avoid escalation of violence to homicide.

### Correlations between changing living arrangements, increasing gender equality and declining spousal homicides

**Box 2**

**What is a correlation ?**

Bi-variate correlations measure the linear relationship between two continuous variables. Correlation coefficients range in value from -1 (a perfect negative relationship) to +1 (a perfect positive relationship). A value of 0 indicates no linear relationship. A negative relationship indicates that the variables are moving in opposite directions; for example, as one variable increases the other variable decreases. A positive relationship indicates that the variables are moving in the same direction; for example, as one variable increases so does the other.

Bi-variate correlations were calculated to determine the relationship between changing living arrangements, increasing gender equality and declining spousal homicide rates in Canada.[24] Other economic and demographic factors were also included in order to explore the relationship between declining spousal homicide rates and changing societal levels of economic inequality, alcohol consumption and population shifts. This analysis covers the period 1980 to 1997 due to the availability of all variables for that time period and examines female spousal homicide rates and male spousal homicide rates. Variables chosen for analysis are listed in Table 8.

Results of the correlation analysis show that many of the independent variables are strongly correlated with rates of spousal homicide[27] (Table 9). Negatively correlated[28] with female spousal homicide rates were: average age of women and men at first marriage; average age of women at birth of first child; average annual earnings of employed women; employment rate of women with children under three and the proportion of the female and male population 35-39 years of age who are married or divorced. Positively correlated[29] with female spousal homicide rates were: societal levels of alcohol consumption, percentage of families where husbands are sole earners; proportion of the population with high school or less, proportion of the population who are 15-24 years old and 25-34 years old, and the proportion of the female and male population 20-24, 25-29 and 30-34 years of age who are married or divorced. Male spousal homicide rates also correlated strongly with these variables with the exception of: proportion of employed women with youngest child under 3, percentage of families where the husband is the sole earner, proportion of the male population who are 20-24 and 35-39 years of age and married or divorced, as well as the proportion of the female population who are 20-24 years of age and married or divorced.

24  This section was developed with the assistance of Lori Stratychuk, Senior Methodologist, Household Survey Methods Division.
25  Includes persons who were separated or living common-law.
26  Education levels have been increasing for both men and women and produce similar correlations with male and female spousal homicide rates. As a result, a general education variable was used in this analysis.
27  Many of these variables could be used as a proxy indicator of women's changing economic status (average age at birth of first child, average age at first marriage, higher education, higher earnings, employment rates of women with children under 3, husband sole earner), however due to high levels of collinearity among the variables, only one variable could be selected for regression analysis. Because of it's far-reaching impacts on the other variables, as well as having the best correlation with the spousal homicide rates, the average age of women at first marriage was chosen as the proxy for changing economic status of women in this model. Additional variables which were used in the regression include: total unemployment rate (as a proxy for general economic conditions), as well as the proportion of the population 15-24 years of age (the highest risk age group for spousal homicide). These variables were available for the time period 1974-1998. In the forward regression model of spousal homicides rates, for both women and men, the only variable which was found to have a significant impact was the average age of women at first marriage. This suggests that factors related to reduced exposure to violence through delayed marriage (and subsequently delayed child rearing, increased education and increased earnings) and factors related to increased gender equality are associated with reduced rates of spousal homicide against both women and men.
28  A negative correlation means that as each variable increased (i.e. the average age of first marriage for women and men) spousal homicide rates decreased.
29  A positive correlation means that as each variable decreased (i.e. the percentage of families where only the husband was employed) spousal homicide rates also decreased.

Table 8

| CHANGING INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS: | GENDER EQUALITY: | ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS: |
|---|---|---|
| • Average age of first marriage for men and women | • Average annual earnings of employed women and men | • Proportion of families living in low income situations |
| • Birth rates for women:15-19, 20-24, 25-29 and 30-34 years of age | • Proportion of families where the husband is the sole earner | • Proportion of families receiving social assistance |
| • Average age of women at birth of first child | • Proportion of employed women with youngest child under 3 | • Proportion of families receiving Employment Insurance |
| • Proportion of the female population who are 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, and 35-39 years old and are married[25] or divorced. | | • Proportion of unemployed males and females 15-24 and 25-34 years of age |
| • Proportion of the male population who are 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, and 35-39 years old and are married or divorced | | • Proportion of the population 15 and over with high school or less[26] |
| | | • Per capita rates of alcohol consumption |
| | | • Proportion of the population 15-24 and 25-34 years of age |

These results suggest that changing intimate relationships and increasing gender equality may be important factors associated with the decline in spousal homicide. These are factors that may help reduce exposure to violence and provide couples with alternatives to staying in violent relationships or those that are at risk of violence. Perhaps by marrying later, men and women are more selective in whom they marry. There are also fewer couples in the higher-risk younger age group, which may also help reduce exposure to violence. Marrying later and delaying child rearing may also allow time to acquire higher education and establish careers. Delayed child rearing and increasing percentages of women entering or re-entering the labour market while their children are young may result in greater financial independence for women and greater financial security for families, which in turn may help reduce violence and facilitate leaving if a relationship turns violent. As increasing numbers of women have been entering the work force, the percentage of families where only the husband works has declined, which also points to growing access to financial resources for women and families.

A number of economic variables were found to be non-significant. The unemployment rate of men and women in various age groups, average annual earnings of men, the proportion of low income families, the proportion of families receiving social assistance and the proportion of families receiving employment insurance were not significantly correlated with spousal homicide rates of either women or men. The lack of a significant relationship between these variables suggests that general economic measures are less important than measures of gender equality as potential factors contributing to the drop in spousal homicide rates.

### Resource Availability

Over the past 27 years, governments and community groups have invested considerable effort and resources in addressing the problem of family violence. The resulting innovations in policy, legislation and services for victims may have made important contributions toward reducing spousal homicide. The literature suggests that these changes may have also had secondary effects so that both sanctioning agencies and the general public respond with greater negativity to such crimes than in the past (Dawson, 2001). The following section outlines some of the major initiatives undertaken over the past two decades.

### Expansion of emergency shelters and treatment programs

Official records have been kept on women's shelters since 1975, when only 18 shelters existed in Canada. Between 1975 and 1999, there was a relatively steady increase in the number of new shelters being established, particularly between 1979 and 1992 when over 200 new shelters were opened. By 1999, 508 shelters were in operation throughout Canada (Figure 7). Currently, no shelters exist in Canada that provide residential services exclusively to adult male victims of family violence. Results of the 1999-2000 Transition Home Survey indicate that the majority of facilities (90%) had a policy that did not allow adult males to be admitted to their facility (Locke and Code, 2000).

Figure 7



**Number of shelters for battered women has increased since 1975**
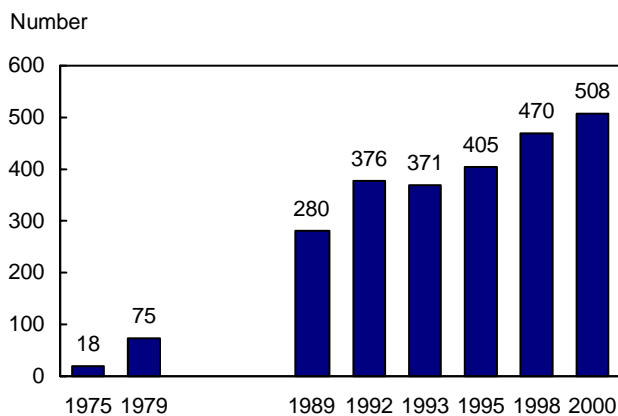
Number

No data are available on the number of shelters between 1980 and 1988.
**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey.

Investments by community groups, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, and provincial/territorial governments have contributed to this development of a substantial system of shelters for abused women in Canada. Currently, every province and territory provides residential services for abused women. These facilities offer not only a safe environment, but also a broad range of services for women and children living in shelters and in the larger community.

Along with the increase in the number of shelters across the country there has been a rise in the number of women using shelters in recent years from 45,777 in 1992/93 to 57,182 in 1999/2000.[30] The vast majority of these women (about 80%) were admitted for reasons of abuse. Other reasons included mental illness, addiction problems and homelessness.

Rates of use may more accurately reflect the availability of shelters than the actual need for emergency housing among abused women and their children. According to the 2000 *Transition Home Survey*, 2,826 women and 2,525 children were admitted to shelters on a single day (April 17, 2000). On the same day, 254 women (representing 9% of the total admitted) and 222 children (9%) were turned away. Most were turned away because the shelters were full (71%) and the remainder because of drug/alcohol, mental illness or other problems. [31]

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[30] An important factor affecting the number of women and children reporting using shelters includes changing availability over time as well as the changing number of shelters that respond to the Transition Home Survey *each year. For example, 89% of shelters responded to the survey in 1993, and 83% in 2000. Consequently, these figures represent an underestimate of the number of women and children admitted to shelters each year.*

[31] Some women and children may be turned away from more than one shelter on a single day, or may be counted as turned away at one shelter while being admitted to another on the same day. Women who are admitted to a shelter more than once during the year will also be counted more than once.

Although incomplete, records have been maintained on treatment programs for violent men since 1984, when only 28 programs operated in Canada. The number of programs has risen steadily to at least 204 in 1999[32] (Health Canada, Cat. H72-21/107).

The growing availability of emergency shelters, along with other services for spousal violence victims, may have contributed to recent declines in the rates of both lethal and non-lethal violence against women.

### Victims use of services

Victimization surveys have found that a minority of spousal violence victims report these crimes to the police, but that this percentage has grown in recent years for women victims[33] from 29% in 1993 to 37% in 1999 (percentages refer to the 5-year period preceding each of these surveys). The percentage of women who contacted a social service for help also increased from 37% in 1993 to 48% in 1999. Male victims were much less likely to report to the police (15%) or to use social services (17%) in 1999. This may be due to a lack of services for male victims or the less severe nature of the violence experienced by male victims. While the 1999 GSS found that 5-year rates of violence were similar for women and men, women were abused more severely . For example, women were more likely to be subjected to severe forms of violence (e.g. beaten, choked, sexually assaulted), were three times more likely to suffer injury, five times more likely to receive medical attention, and five times more likely to fear for their lives as a result of the violence (Pottie Bunge, 2000).

The decision to report to the police or to use social services will depend on a number of factors, including the availability and awareness of these services, the impact that accessing services may have on other aspects of the victim's life (e.g. custody over children), the response of police to previous calls for help, fear of reprisals by the offender and reluctance due to shame or embarrassment.

### Zero-tolerance and no-drop policies

Commencing in 1983, all jurisdictions in Canada adopted mandatory or "pro"-charging and prosecution policies for spousal violence. Generally, these policies require the police to charge in cases of spousal violence where there are reasonable and probable grounds to do so, and the Crown to prosecute where there is a reasonable likelihood of conviction. These policies were introduced as a response to concerns that victims of spousal violence were not receiving adequate protection from the criminal justice system. Transferring the onus of laying charges and of prosecuting to the police and Crown was intended to remove pressure to drop charges from victims and to ensure that spousal violence is treated as a criminal offence.

### Specialized Domestic Violence Courts

Some jurisdictions have specialized domestic violence courts. A specialized criminal justice system response was first developed in Winnipeg in 1990. Similar programs in Ontario, Calgary and Whitehorse were implemented more recently. The principal aim of these courts is to expedite domestic violence cases for the safety of the victim, introduce early intervention for first time offenders, allow for effective investigation and prosecution of these cases and ensure accountability of the offender. Most of these courts have specialized prosecutorial units; specially designated courtrooms and dockets for intake, screening and trials; and special units in the probation office to deliver court-mandated treatment programs.

### Legislative and policy changes

In 1993, the offence of criminal harassment, also known as "stalking," was introduced to the *Criminal Code*. Section 264 of the *Criminal Code* defines criminal harassment as behaviour that causes a person to fear for their safety such as repeatedly following them, communicating with them, and or watching them continually, against their wishes.

Although criminal harassment is not gender-specific, the legislation was mainly introduced as a response to violence against women, in particular domestic violence against women (Department of Justice, 1999). Several highly publicized cases of women being stalked and killed by estranged partners in the early 1990s provided the impetus for this legislation, with the idea that early intervention in response to stalking might prevent the escalation of violence.

In 2000, three-quarters of incidents of criminal harassment reported to the police were directed at female victims.[34] In half of these incidents, women were stalked by persons who were, for example, ex-spouses (including ex-common-law partners) and boyfriends. The number of male ex-spouses and boyfriends known to police for stalking has risen in recent years (Figure 8). It is difficult to know whether these trends are a reflection of increased police attention to these crimes or increased willingness on the part of victims to report to police, as can happen following implementation of a new law. Research in the U.S. suggests that in a majority of stalking cases involving estranged male partners there were previous assaults by those same partners (Tjaden and Thoennes, 1998).

The number of females accused of stalking their partners has also increased over this time period (1995-2000). However, females continue to represent a small percentage of those accused of criminal harassment.

Court decisions like *R.* v. *Lavallee* in 1990 that established the Battered Women's Defence recognized that some battered women kill abusive husbands following escalating violence in order to protect themselves from perceived imminent death. This was part of a societal change that recognized the difficulty in leaving some violent relationships.

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[32] This list is not comprehensive and excludes programs conducted within correctional institutions.

[33] Data are unavailable for male victims for 1993. See footnote 2 for further explanation.

[34] Based on data from 106 police agencies that reported to the Revised UCR Survey from 1995-2000. These 106 forces accounted for 41% of all Criminal Code Incidents reported to the police in 2000 and the data are not nationally representative.

Figure 8

**Criminal harassment by intimate partners, 1995-2000[1]**

Number of victims



Accused - victim relationship:

— Husband
— Ex-husband
— Boyfriend
- - - Female partner[2]
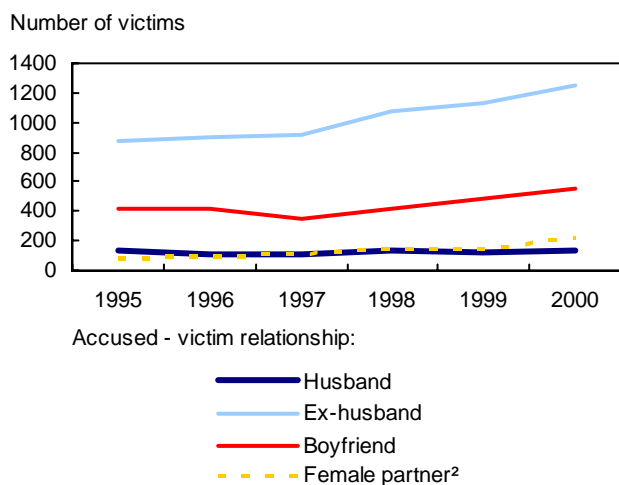
[1] Based on data available from 106 police agencies that reported to the Revised UCR Survey from 1995-2000. These 106 forces accounted for 41% of all Criminal Code Incidents reported to the police in 2000 and the data are not nationally representative.
[2] Due to small numbers, female partners cannot be further broken down and include current wives, ex-wives and girlfriends.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Revised Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

### Civil legislation

In addition to charging or prosecution policies, several jurisdictions have enacted, or are about to enact, domestic violence legislation. This legislation is intended to provide protection to victims of domestic violence. The component most common to all family violence acts is the emergency intervention/protection order, which is essentially a short-term order available immediately, with the victim's consent, where family violence has occurred and the situation is urgent or serious. Also available in most jurisdictions are victim assistance orders which are longer-term. These orders can address issues such as visitation and financial matters and may replace emergency intervention orders.

## Summary

In the past 27 years there has been a notable decline in spousal homicides against both men and women. Declines have been noted in most sub-groups, most age groups, most regions of the country, as well as among other types of intimate relationships. The changing nature of intimate relationships and increasing gender equality show a strong association with this decline. Legislative changes, specialized courts, training of criminal justice personnel and increasing resource availability may have also contributed to this decline, although direct causal relationships are difficult to establish.

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Table 1

## Total homicides by relationship of victim to accused, 1974-2000

| | 1974-2000 | | 1974-1976 | | 1998-2000 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total victims | | Total victims | | Total victims | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| **Total family homicides** | **5,296** | **31** | **687** | **35** | **445** | **27** |
| *Total spousal[1]* | *2,598* | *15* | *348* | *18* | *208* | *13* |
|    Husband | 594 | 3 | 84 | 4 | 39 | 2 |
|    Wife | 2,000 | 12 | 264 | 13 | 166 | 10 |
|    Same sex spouse[2] | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| *Total other family* | *2,698* | *16* | *339* | *17* | *237* | *14* |
|    Child | 1,172 | 7 | 131 | 7 | 114 | 7 |
|    Parent | 535 | 3 | 69 | 4 | 56 | 3 |
|    Sibling | 364 | 2 | 51 | 3 | 22 | 1 |
|    Other family | 627 | 4 | 88 | 4 | 45 | 3 |
| **Total acquaintance[3]** | **6,525** | **38** | **652** | **33** | **597** | **36** |
| **Stranger** | **2,168** | **13** | **277** | **14** | **198** | **12** |
| **Other** | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 1 |
| **Unsolved** | **3,147** | **18** | **353** | **18** | **380** | **23** |
| **Unknown relationship** | **46** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **7** | **0** |
| **Total Homicides[4]** | **17,194** | **100** | **1,969** | **100** | **1,638** | **100** |

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

[1]  Includes common-law, legally married, separated and divorced spouses.

[2]  The homicide survey began collecting data on same sex partners in 1997.

[3]  Includes boyfriends, girlfriends, extra-marital lovers, estranged lovers, same sex relationships, neighbours, legal and illegal business relationships, friends and others.
Prior to 1991 it was not possible to identify intimate partners separately from other acquaintances.

[4]  Homicide numbers for 1999 are revised.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

Table 2

## Rates of spousal homicides, 1974-2000[1,2]

| Year | No. | | Rate per million couples | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Female victims | Male victims | Female victims | Male victims |
| 1974 | 90 | 24 | 16.5 | 4.4 |
| 1975 | 91 | 33 | 16.2 | 5.9 |
| 1976 | 83 | 27 | 14.4 | 4.7 |
| 1977 | 80 | 29 | 13.6 | 5.0 |
| 1978 | 78 | 23 | 13.0 | 3.9 |
| 1979 | 90 | 22 | 14.7 | 3.7 |
| 1980 | 61 | 17 | 9.8 | 2.8 |
| 1981 | 82 | 27 | 12.9 | 4.3 |
| 1982 | 76 | 22 | 11.7 | 3.5 |
| 1983 | 83 | 27 | 12.6 | 4.2 |
| 1984 | 63 | 17 | 9.4 | 2.6 |
| 1985 | 86 | 25 | 12.7 | 3.8 |
| 1986 | 70 | 19 | 10.2 | 2.8 |
| 1987 | 79 | 34 | 11.5 | 5.0 |
| 1988 | 72 | 21 | 10.4 | 3.1 |
| 1989 | 76 | 22 | 10.9 | 3.2 |
| 1990 | 74 | 26 | 10.6 | 3.8 |
| 1991 | 87 | 25 | 12.4 | 3.6 |
| 1992 | 87 | 18 | 12.1 | 2.6 |
| 1993 | 63 | 24 | 8.5 | 3.3 |
| 1994 | 66 | 20 | 8.7 | 2.7 |
| 1995 | 71 | 21 | 9.2 | 2.8 |
| 1996 | 63 | 19 | 7.9 | 2.5 |
| 1997 | 63 | 13 | 7.9 | 1.7 |
| 1998 | 57 | 13 | 7.1 | 1.7 |
| 1999[r] | 58 | 10 | 7.2 | 1.3 |
| 2000 | 51 | 16 | 6.3 | 2.0 |
| **Total/Average rate** | **2,000** | **594** | **11.1** | **3.4** |

[1]  Rates per 1,000,000 legally married, separated, divorced and common-law men and women.
Rates are based on population estimates, Demography Division, July 1, 2001.
[2]  Four same-sex partners were excluded from the analysis because Census data on same-sex couples is unavailable and therefore rates cannot be calculated.
[r]  Homicide numbers for 1999 are revised.
Source:  Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

Table 3

## Intimate partner homicide rates by relationship of victim to accused, 1991-2000[1,2]

| | 1991-2000 | | 1991-1995 | | 1996-2000 | | Percentage change in rate between 1991-1995 and 1996-2000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | Rate per 1,000,000 | No. | Rate per 1,000,000 | No. | Rate per 1,000,000 | |
| **Total spousal homicides** | **845** | **5.7** | **482** | **6.6** | **363** | **4.8** | -27 |
| *Total wife victims* | *666* | *8.5* | *374* | *9.7* | *292* | *7.3* | -25 |
| Married | 255 | 4.4 | 150 | 5.2 | 105 | 3.7 | -29 |
| Common-law[3] | 258 | 29.5 | 142 | 35.8 | 116 | 24.2 | -32 |
| Separated | 138 | 37.4 | 73 | 42.1 | 65 | 33.2 | -21 |
| Divorced | 15 | 1.7 | 9 | 2.3 | 6 | 1.2 | -48 |
| *Total husband victims* | *179* | *2.6* | *108* | *3.1* | *71* | *2.0* | -35 |
| Married | 60 | 1.0 | 34 | 1.2 | 26 | 0.9 | -25 |
| Common-law[4] | 110 | 12.4 | 72 | 17.9 | 38 | 7.8 | -56 |
| Separated | 9 | 3.0 | 2 | 1.4 | 7 | 4.4 | 214 |
| Divorced | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 |
| **Total other intimate partners[5,6]** | 200 | 1.2 | 112 | 3.3 | 88 | 2.6 | -21 |
| Boyfriend | 15 | 0.4 | 9 | 0.5 | 6 | 0.3 | -40 |
| Girlfriend | 93 | 3.0 | 51 | 3.4 | 42 | 1.9 | -44 |
| Extra-marital lover | 9 | 0.1 | 6 | 0.2 | 3 | 0.1 | -50 |
| Estranged lover | 83 | 1.2 | 46 | 1.4 | 37 | 1.1 | -21 |

[1]  Rate per 1,000,000 legally married, separated, divorced and common-law males and females.
   Rates based on population estimates, Demography Division, July 1, 2001. Homicide numbers for 1999 are revised.
[2]  Eleven same-sex partners were excluded from the analysis because Census data on same-sex couples is unavailable and therefore rates cannot be calculated.
[3,4] For the purposes of this study a small number of separated common-law cases originally coded by police as separated have been recoded as common-law.  These were identified
   using the police narratives.
[5,6] Rate per 1,000,000 single males and females 15 years of age and over.  Rates based on population estimates, Demography Division, July 1, 2001 estimates.
**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

Table 4

## Rates of spousal homicide by marital status and age, 1991-2000

| | Age groups | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 15-24 | 25-34 | 35-54 | 55+ | Total |
| | Rate per million couples | | | | |
| **Total female victims** | **22.2** | **10.7** | **8.8** | **4.4** | **8.6** |
| Married | 7.6 | 4.6 | 4.5 | 4.1 | 4.4 |
| Common-law[1] | 28.7 | 23.5 | 37.1 | 21.4 | 29.5 |
| Separated | 113.4 | 51.5 | 37.1 | 9.5 | 37.4 |
| Divorced[2] | 18.3 | 3.1 | 2.3 | 0.5 | 2.0 |
| **Total male victims** | **8.9** | **3.5** | **2.8** | **1.1** | **2.6** |
| Married | 0 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 0.8 | 1.0 |
| Common-law[3] | 13.1 | 10.4 | 14.6 | 9.7 | 12.4 |
| Separated[4] | 44.1 | 1.8 | 3.6 | 0.0 | 3.0 |
| Divorced | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

[1,3] For the purposes of this study a small number of separated common-law cases originally coded by police as separated have been recoded as common-law.  These were identified
   using the police narratives.
[2]  Rates are based on a total of 15 cases.
[4]  Rates are based on a total of 9 cases.
   Homicide numbers for 1999 are revised.
**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.

Table 5

## Cause of death in spousal homicides, 1974-2000

| Cause of death | Total victims | | Female victims | | Male victims | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Shooting | 956 | 37 | 800 | 40 | 156 | 26 |
| Stabbing | 809 | 31 | 463 | 23 | 346 | 58 |
| Physical force[1] | 707 | 27 | 646 | 32 | 61 | 10 |
| Other[2] | 108 | 4 | 78 | 4 | 30 | 5 |
| Unknown | 14 | 1 | 13 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| **Total[3]** | **2,594** | **100** | **2,000** | **100** | **594** | **100** |

*Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.*
[1]   *Physical force includes beating, strangulation, suffocation and compressing.*
[2]   *Other includes smoke inhalation, burns, exposure, hypothermia, poisoning and lethal injection.*
[3]   *Excludes four same-sex couples.*
    *Homicide numbers for 1999 are revised.*
**Source:** *Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.*

Table 6

## Cause of death in other intimate partner homicides, 1991-2000[1]

| Cause of death | Total victims | | Female victims | | Male victims | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Shooting | 61 | 31 | 55 | 31 | 6 | 26 |
| Stabbing | 74 | 37 | 63 | 36 | 11 | 48 |
| Physical force[2] | 60 | 30 | 56 | 32 | 4 | 17 |
| Other[3] | 5 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 9 |
| **Total** | **200** | **100** | **177** | **100** | **23** | **100** |

*Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.*
[1]   *Other intimate partners include boyfriends, girlfriends, extra-marital and estranged lovers.*
    *Excludes 11 same-sex partners.*
[2]   *Physical force includes beating, strangulation, suffocation and compressing.*
[3]   *Other includes smoke inhalation, burns, exposure, hypothermia, poisoning and lethal injection.*
    *Homicide numbers for 1999 are revised.*
**Source:** *Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.*

Table 7

### Accused prior criminal conviction[1] in spousal homicides, 1991-2000

| | Total victims | | Female victims | | Male victims | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| **Total prior convictions** | **434** | **53** | **359** | **54** | **75** | **42** |
| Violent offences | 277 | 33 | 233 | 35 | 44 | 25 |
| Property offences | 72 | 9 | 60 | 9 | 12 | 7 |
| Drug offences | 13 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 2 |
| Other Criminal Code or Federal | | | | | | |
| Statute offences | 72 | 9 | 57 | 9 | 15 | 8 |
| **No previous conviction** | **400** | **47** | **297** | **45** | **103** | **58** |
| Unknown | 11 | 1 | 10 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| **Total[2]** | **845** | **100** | **666** | **100** | **179** | **100** |

*Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.*
[1]   *Based on most serious conviction.*
[2]   *Excludes 4 same-sex couples.*
     *Homicide numbers for 1999 are revised.*
**Source:** *Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Homicide Survey.*

Table 9

## Correlations between spousal homicide rates and other variables, 1980-1997

|  | Female spousal homicide rate | Male spousal homicide rate |
|---|---|---|
| Average age at first marriage for women | -0.609 *** | -0.511 ** |
| Average age at first marriage for men | -0.608 *** | -0.512 ** |
| Average age of women at birth of first child | -0.511 ** | -0.420 * |
| Average annual earnings of employed women | -0.568 ** | -0.490 ** |
| Employment rate of women with youngest child under 3 | -0.491 ** | -0.388 ns |
| Alcohol consumption | 0.601 *** | 0.562 ** |
| Percentage of families where husband is the sole earner | 0.445 * | 0.351 ns |
| Population with less than high school education | 0.605 *** | 0.512 ** |
| Population 15-24 | 0.516 ** | 0.418 * |
| Population 25-34 | 0.644 *** | 0.602 *** |
| Percentage of male population 20-24 years old married[1] or divorced | 0.407 * | 0.342 ns |
| Percentage of male population 25-29 years old married[1] or divorced | 0.538 ** | 0.477 ** |
| Percentage of male population 30-34 years old married[1] or divorced | 0.538 ** | 0.537 ** |
| Percentage of male population 35-39 years old married[1] or divorced | -0.464 * | -0.330 ns |
| Percentage of female population 20-24 years old married[1] or divorced | 0.432 * | 0.367 ns |
| Percentage of female population 25-29 years old married[1] or divorced | 0.569 ** | 0.499 ** |
| Percentage of female population 30-34 years old married[1] or divorced | 0.544 ** | 0.613 *** |
| Percentage of female population 35-39 years old married[1] or divorced | -0.529 ** | -0.418 * |
| Unemployment rate of 15-24 year old females | -0.105 ns | -0.225 ns |
| Unemployment rate of 25-34 year old females | 0.095 ns | 0.097 ns |
| Unemployment rate of 15-24 year old males | 0.092 ns | -0.092 ns |
| Unemployment rate of 25-34 year old males | -0.068 ns | -0.177 ns |
| Average annual earnings of employed men | -0.033 ns | -0.011 ns |
| Proportion of low income families | -0.155 ns | -0.109 ns |
| Proportion of families receiving social assistance | -0.375 ns | -0.162 ns |
| Proportion of families receiving employment insurance | 0.367 ns | 0.163 ns |

[1] According to Census, separated persons and those living common-law are included in the married category.
Based on 18 degrees of freedom. Because certain variables were available only for the period 1980-1997, the correlational analysis was limited to this time frame, which allowed 18 degrees of freedom.
\* $p \le .10$
\*\* $p \le .05$
\*\*\* $p \le .01$
ns = not significant

# Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics

For further information, please contact the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 19th floor, R.H. Coats Building, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0T6 at (613) 951-9023 or call toll-free 1 800 387-2231. To order a publication, you may telephone (613) 951-7277 or fax (613) 951-1584 or internet: order@statcan.ca. You may also call 1 800 267-6677 (Canada and United States) toll-free. If you order by telephone, written confirmation is not required.

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