

Study: Cases in adult criminal courts involving intimate partner violence, 2012

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Canadian courts took less time to process cases of intimate partner violence (IPV) completed between 2005/2006 to 2010/2011 than cases of non-intimate partner violence (non-IPV). A new study from the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics reports that the median processing time to complete IPV cases (124 days) was about one month shorter than the time needed to complete non-IPV cases (151 days). These results held true whether a case involved single or multiple charges or resulted in a finding of guilt or otherwise.

This study analysed data from the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey with their related court cases from the Integrated Criminal Court Survey for every province and territory over a six-year period (excluding Quebec, see note to readers) to shed light on the characteristics of IPV and non-IPV cases processed in adult criminal courts.

Over the six-year period examined in this study, about two-thirds of all completed adult criminal court cases that involved violence had a female victim (66%). This proportion was higher among IPV cases, where 85% of victims were female. In non-IPV cases, males were proportionally more likely to be the victim (57%).

Most completed cases involving violent offences (both IPV and non-IPV) resulted in a guilty verdict on at least one charge in the case. Among IPV cases, 60% resulted in a guilty finding, while this was the case for a slightly larger proportion of non-IPV cases (64%).

Probation was the most serious sentence imposed in just under half of intimate partner violence cases with a guilty decision. About one-third of IPV cases with a guilty decision resulted in a sentence of custody. Breach of probation, sexual assault, and major assault were the types of offences most likely to result in a custody sentence among guilty intimate partner violence cases.

The majority (85%) of cases involving intimate partner violence that resulted in a sentence of custody had a sentence of six months or less, while a small proportion (3%) had a sentence of more than one year.

Note to readers

This report examines those court cases from the Integrated Criminal Court Survey (completed between 2005/2006 to 2010/2011), which could be linked to police-reported violent incidents from the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey. It examines all completed criminal court cases where the linked police-reported incident involved at least one violent offence, and resulted in a charge for one or more offences. Due to the lack of an anonymous key to link files between policing and courts data in Quebec, this province was excluded from the analysis.

Intimate partner violence: *Includes violence committed by a current or former spouse, common-law or dating partner.*

Non-intimate partner violence: *Includes violence committed by a friend, an acquaintance, an associate, an authority figure, a neighbour, a stranger or family member (other than a spouse).*



Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [3302](#) and [3312](#).

The *Juristat* article "[Cases in adult criminal courts involving intimate partner violence](#)" ([85-002-X](#)), is now available. From the *Browse by key resource* module of our website under *Publications*, choose *All subjects*, then *Crime and justice* and *Juristat*.

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