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CANADA'S SHELTERS FOR ABUSED WOMEN

By Cathy Trainor*

Highlights

- In 1997-1998, 90,792 women and dependent children were admitted to 413 shelters for battered women across Canada.
- In a snapshot taken on April 20, 1998, there were 6,115 residents in 422 shelters: 48% were women and 52% were dependent children. Almost three-quarters of these children were under 10 years old.
- 77% (2,260) of women in shelters on April 20, 1998 were victims of abuse and the remainder were admitted for reasons other than abuse such as housing problems.
- The majority of shelters offered the following in-house services to women residents: individual short term counselling (91%), advocacy (87%), parenting skills (82%), and housing referral (82%).
- Services offered to resident children include indoor and outdoor recreational spaces (80%), individual counselling (75%), group counselling (53%) and programs for children who have witnessed or experienced violence (53%).
- On April 20, 1998, 407 shelters reported that they had received 3,590 requests for various services from non-residents and ex-residents.¹
- Facilities reported providing an average of 41 outreach hours per week. Outreach work included supplying information, accompanying victims to court, meeting with clients to discuss possibilities/options, and participating in drop-in centres.
- The operating costs reported by 411 shelters in 1997-1998 were \$170 million.

¹ A non-resident was someone who had never resided in a shelter but was receiving services, while an ex-resident was someone who had resided in a shelter in the past and was receiving follow-up services.

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Introduction

During the last thirty years, the issue of family violence, particularly against women and children, has been the subject of increased public awareness and concern. Along with this concern has been an increased effort by communities and governments to provide assistance to victims. Investments by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), provincial/territorial governments and communities have resulted in the development of a substantial system of shelters for battered women in Canada (SPR Associates Inc., 1997).² Currently, residential services, or shelters, for abused women and their children seeking refuge from violence are available in every province and territory. These facilities provide not only a secure and safe environment but also various services for residents and for abused women in the larger community.

Types of shelters

The term shelter is used broadly to refer to all residential facilities for abused women and their dependent children. The types of shelters are defined for the Transition Home Survey as:

Transition Home – Short or moderate term (1 day to 11 weeks) first stage emergency housing.

Second Stage Housing – Long-term (3-12 months) secure housing with support and referral services designed to assist women while they search for permanent housing.

Safe Home Network – A network of private homes in rural or remote areas where there is no full-fledged operating shelter. It offers subsidiary very short-term (1-3 days) emergency housing.

Women's Emergency Centre/Shelter – Short-term (1-21 days) respite (temporary relief) for women and their dependent children.

Emergency Shelter – Short-term (1-3 days) respite for a wide population range, not exclusively abused women. Some facilities may provide accommodation for men as well as women. This type of facility may accommodate residents who are not associated with family violence but are without a home due to an emergency situation (e.g., eviction for non-payment of rent). Other than residential (room and board) services, these shelters offer few additional client services.

Family Resource Centre – An Ontario government initiative that serves a wide range of clients and provides clients with an extensive array of information and referrals as well as residential services.

Other – All other facilities/shelters not otherwise classified. This category may include Rural Family Violence Prevention Centres in Alberta, Interim Housing in Manitoba, and other types of emergency shelters. These services may not be exclusive to abused women.

The number of shelters in Canada has been steadily increasing since the 1970's with capital funding assistance for shelters provided by CMHC under the non-profit housing programs of the National Housing Act, and operating funding from provincial and territorial programs (SPR Associates Inc., 1997). CMHC's capital financing role continued with Project Haven, a program that was delivered in close collaboration and partnership with provincial/territorial governments, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) and community agencies. This program spent \$22 million between 1988 and 1992 to establish or add transition homes with special priority in communities that had no transition homes (such as rural or remote areas and on reserves), and in shelters for immigrant women and women with disabilities (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 1994).

² There are currently no shelters in Canada that provide residential services exclusively to adult male victims of family violence.

Between 1992 and 1995, CMHC's Next Step Program funded the creation of 34 second stage housing projects and 23 first stage shelters across Canada. Second stage housing financing was targeted at communities where first stage shelters existed but women needed secure housing for a longer period as they searched for permanent housing in the community. Since 1996, CMHC's Shelter Enhancement Program has funded repairs and improvements to existing shelters as well as provided capital funds for 17 additional first and second stage shelters, including 10 new shelters in First Nations communities in partnership with First Nations and DIAND. Some provinces have delivered the Shelter Enhancement Program and have contributed additional capital funding to enhance the financing available to shelters in their jurisdictions.

In addition to the efforts of federal agencies, there are many provincial and territorial programs that provide services and alternatives for women who have experienced family violence. These programs include expenditures for the on-going operation and maintenance of shelters, counselling and prevention programs, legal services and public awareness programs.

This *Juristat* presents the results of the 1997-1998 Transition Home Survey through an examination of the characteristics of shelters and their residents. The Transition Home Survey was conducted through a questionnaire mailed to all known shelters identified as providing residential services to abused women and their children. Out of the 470 shelters contacted, 430 or 91% responded to the survey (Table 1). Information was collected on the characteristics of the facilities and the services dispensed during the previous twelve months. The survey also provides a one-day snapshot of the characteristics of women and children residing in the shelters on April 20, 1998.

Table 1

Shelters for abused women: Number operating and responding to the Transition Home Survey, 1997-1998

	Number operating	Number that responded	%
Canada	470	430	91
Newfoundland	11	11	100
Prince Edward Island	4	4	100
Nova Scotia	20	19	95
New Brunswick	16	16	100
Quebec	105	97	92
Ontario	129	116	90
Manitoba	25	24	96
Saskatchewan	21	20	95
Alberta	32	25	78
British Columbia	93	86	92
Yukon	5	5	100
Northwest Territories	9	7	78

Source: Transition Home Survey, 1997-1998, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada.

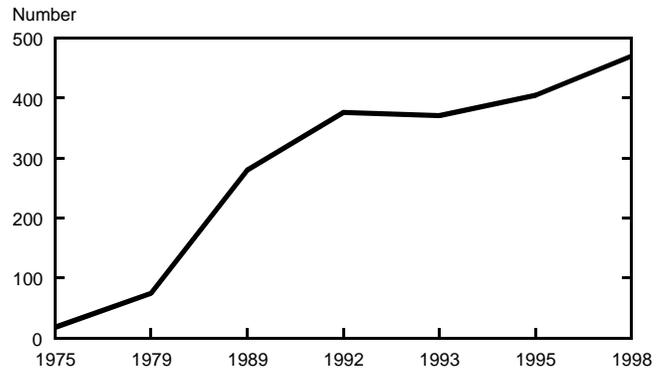
A Profile of Facilities

Number of shelters for women growing

On April 20, 1998, there were 470 shelters for abused women across Canada. Of these, only 18 existed prior to 1975 and 57 began operations between 1975 and 1979 (Figure 1).

Figure 1

 **Growth in Canadian shelters**



Source: Transition Home Survey, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada.

The largest period of growth came in the 1980's as the issues of violence against women and family violence gained attention at all levels of government (Rodgers and MacDonald, 1994; Pottie Bunge and Levett, 1998). Much of the growth between 1989 and 1998 was due to the development of shelters in Aboriginal communities and in rural areas. In 1998, 46% of shelters served rural areas (and may also have served urban/suburban areas) and 29% provided services to reserves.

Almost two-thirds (270) of reporting shelters in 1998 were transition homes. The remaining 160 shelters included 63 second stage housing facilities, 26 emergency shelters, 25 women's emergency centres, 21 safe home networks, 12 family resource centres (Ontario only) and 13 other types of facilities. Transition homes were the predominant type of emergency housing offered in all provinces and territories, except Prince Edward Island where three out of the four shelters were second stage housing, and Alberta where women's emergency centres accounted for almost one-third of all facilities followed closely by transition homes (28%).³

Extensive variety of services offered

In addition to providing refuge, the majority of shelters offer a variety of services. The services provided depend to a large extent on available funding and can vary with the availability of services in the larger community. More than nine in ten

³ This may be influenced by the fact that, in Alberta, a relatively large proportion (22%) of facilities did not respond to the survey and for these, the type of facility was unknown.

facilities (91%) provided in-house, individual, short-term counselling to women residents. Other in-house services included advocacy (87%), parenting skills (82%) and housing referral (82%) (Table 2). More than six in ten facilities (61%) provided services for women with disabilities, while nearly six in ten shelters had culturally sensitive services for Aboriginal women⁴ (59%) and ethno-cultural and visible minority residents⁵ (57%).

Many shelters were accessible to women with disabilities, as they had complete or partial access for wheelchairs (64%), services for the hearing impaired (33%) which include telephone devices such as TDD/TTY or sign language services, and services for the visually impaired (13%) such as braille and large print material.

Table 2

In-house services* provided by shelters to women residents, ex-residents and non-residents, 1997-1998

	In-house services provided by shelters to:		
	Residents	Non-residents	Ex-residents
	%		
Individual short-term counselling	91	70	77
Individual long-term counselling	34	35	41
Group counselling	71	49	55
Family counselling programs	13	8	10
Crisis telephone line	60	74	71
Medical services	55	34	38
Legal services	75	57	62
Financial assistance/welfare	72	49	54
Life skills	75	35	46
Job training/employment search	25	12	17
Parenting skills	82	40	56
Housing referral	82	49	55
Culturally sensitive services for Aboriginal women	59	43	45
Culturally sensitive services for ethno-cultural and visible minority women	57	40	43
Services for women with disabilities	61	38	39
Recreation services	48	15	23
Advocacy	87	66	73
Other	23	18	18

* Service reported as a percentage of 430 responding facilities.
Source: Transition Home Survey, 1997-1998, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada.

In-house services for children most often included indoor and outdoor recreation spaces (80%), individual counselling (75%), group counselling (53%) and programs for children who have witnessed or experienced abuse (53%).

Shelters also provided outreach assistance to women in the community who are in need of advice or assistance through a 24-hour crisis telephone line (74%), individual short-term counselling (70%), advocacy (66%), and legal services (57%). The majority of facilities also provided ex-resident women with services such as individual short-term counselling (77%), advocacy (73%), a 24-hour crisis telephone line (71%), legal services (62%) and parenting skills (56%) (Table 2).

Services to ex-residents and non-residents are made through telephone, letter, fax or walk-in contact. On April 20, 1998, 407 shelters had a total of 3,590 requests for assistance including 659 contacts for assistance with residential services, 2,621 contacts for non-residential services, and 310 contacts for other reasons. Shelters spent an average of 41 hours per week providing outreach activities in the community. Outreach work included supplying information, accompanying victims to court, meeting with clients to discuss possibilities/options, and participating in drop-in centres.

Shelters also rely on other agencies within the community, often working together in multi-agency co-ordinating committees, to provide services to their residents. The majority of facilities were able to obtain services in the community for their residents in the areas of job training or employment search (65%), legal services (63%), financial assistance or welfare (61%), medical services (58%), and individual long-term counselling (57%).

Number of admissions

An admission is the official acceptance of a woman or child into a shelter with the allocation of a bed. From April 1, 1997 to March 31, 1998,⁶ there were 90,792 admissions to the 413 facilities that responded to the survey question: 47,962 women and 42,830 children (Table 3). A person may be accepted

Table 3

Admissions to shelters by province and territory, 1997-1998

	Admissions*		
	Total	Women	Children
Canada	90,792	47,962	42,830
Newfoundland	1,095	669	426
Prince Edward Island	220	93	127
Nova Scotia	4,178	3,009	1,169
New Brunswick	2,500	1,292	1,208
Quebec	16,494	9,232	7,262
Ontario	28,712	15,257	13,455
Manitoba	5,660	2,336	3,324
Saskatchewan	4,092	1,662	2,430
Alberta	8,773	4,128	4,645
British Columbia	16,704	9,158	7,546
Yukon	602	330	272
Northwest Territories	1,762	796	966

* A person may be accepted more than once during the reporting period.
Source: Transition Home Survey, 1997-1998, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada.

⁴ Culturally sensitive services for Aboriginal women were such services as recognition of traditional healing methods, use of spiritual elders and teachers, accessibility to language interpreters and Aboriginal language materials, and recognition and understanding of Aboriginal cultural norms and beliefs.

⁵ Culturally sensitive services for ethno-cultural and visible minority women include accessibility to language interpreters, resource materials in various languages, and counsellors who are familiar with immigration issues and parenting styles in different cultures.

⁶ The precise reporting period may vary. Shelters were asked to provide information for the twelve month period ending March 31, 1998 or their own twelve month fiscal period.

How to get help

Most communities have services for individuals who have been abused. These organizations will provide abused persons with information and support. Recommended steps for taking action and getting help include the following:

- 1) **Keep yourself and your children safe.** This may mean leaving the situation, moving out, or setting limits on what you will put up with. Have an escape plan ready if the violence starts again.
- 2) **Refuse to take blame for the abuse.** The abuser made the choice to act violently. You are not responsible for this behaviour.
- 3) **Call a friend or family member you trust.** Call someone who is supportive and understands that violence is never okay or justifiable.
- 4) **Call a shelter or crisis line.** Their telephone numbers are at the beginning of the telephone book. A shelter can provide safety, support and help with your future plans. Moving to a shelter is not the only option. You can also obtain advice from a counsellor over the phone.
- 5) **Call the police.** Telephone numbers for the police are at the beginning of the telephone book.
- 6) **Join a support group.** Sharing experiences with others often helps victims to realize that they are not alone. These groups can be extremely useful in helping abused people find ways to protect themselves and to deal with the situation.
- 7) **See a counsellor.** Counselling can provide an opportunity to learn about the impact that the abuse has had on you and to discuss options.

Several of these steps for taking action and getting help are also appropriate for male victims of family violence. Many large urban centres across Canada have private practitioners that offer support groups for abused men or have men's organizations that can direct individuals to available services.

Sources: Health Canada (1995), Canadian Association of Broadcasters (1996), The Denise House/Sedna Women's Shelter (1997), Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women (1997), Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (1998).

more than once during the year. CMHC found that approximately 18% of women who had stayed in first stage shelters established by Project Haven had stayed more than once during a twelve month period (CMHC, 1994). In addition, women move from first to second stage shelters. The Next Step Program evaluation found that over 70% of second stage housing facilities gave priority to women coming from an emergency or first stage shelter. Also, more than 90% of the women in second stage housing have stayed at a first stage shelter at some point before they go into second stage housing, although not necessarily in the same twelve month period because of waiting lists (SPR Associates Inc., 1997).

The majority of admissions (73%) were to transition homes followed by emergency shelters (10%) and women's emergency centres (10%). Second stage housing, safe home networks, family resource centres and other types of facilities accounted for the remaining 7% of admissions. There are two main reasons for the higher number of admissions to transition homes. First, there are a greater number of transition homes than any other facility type, and second, the length of stay in transition homes is shorter, ranging from 1 day to 11 weeks compared with 3 to 12 months in second stage housing.

A Profile of Residents on April 20, 1998

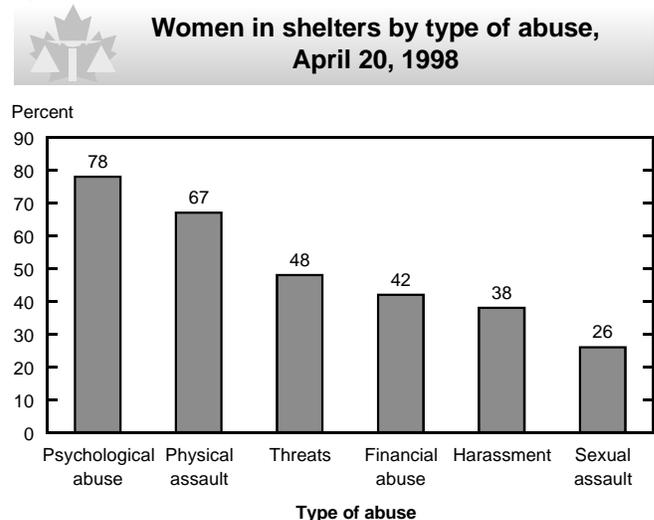
Women coming to shelters to flee abusive situations

In a snapshot taken on April 20, 1998, the 422 shelters that provided data had 6,115 residents: 2,918 women and 3,197 accompanying children. Nearly eighty percent of the women and children living in shelters that day were there to escape abuse. These women were escaping from psychological

abuse (78%), physical assault (67%), threats (48%), and sexual assault (26%) (Figure 2). Non-abuse admissions for both women and children generally resulted from housing problems (almost three-quarters of those women admitted for reasons unrelated to abuse).

The majority of abused women who are admitted to shelters bring children. Data from a one-day snapshot of shelters across Canada show that the numbers of both battered women and children accompanying them to shelters increased from 1993

Figure 2



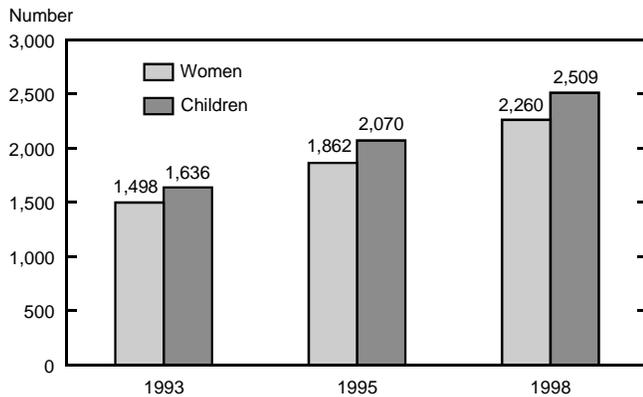
*Note: Figures do not add to 100% due to multiple responses.
Source: Transition Home Survey, 1997-1998, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada.*

to 1998 (Figure 3). This increase may be explained by the increased availability of shelters over the same time period.

Overall, the rate of abused women in shelters on April 20, 1998 was 18.2 per 100,000 women (aged 15 and over) in the population (Table 4). Rates in the provinces ranged from a low of 12.2 in Alberta to a high of 25.4 in Prince Edward Island. Rates in the territories were much higher with Yukon at 42.9

Figure 3

Number of abused women and their children residing in shelters* increasing



* Figure represents residents on snapshot day. Residents for reasons of non-abuse are not included in this figure. The primary reason for a non-abuse admission is a housing problem.

Source: Transition Home Survey, 1992-1993, 1994-1995, 1997-1998, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada.

Table 4

Rate of women admitted for reasons of abuse per 100,000 adult women in the population,¹ April 20, 1998

	Resident women	Number of women in the population 15+	Rate per 100,000 women
Canada	2,260	12,385,623	18.2
Newfoundland	34	224,633	15.1
Prince Edward Island	14	55,190	25.4
Nova Scotia	92	390,707	23.5
New Brunswick	70	311,169	22.5
Quebec	471	3,053,342	15.4
Ontario	915	4,671,122	19.6
Manitoba	97	456,011	21.3
Saskatchewan	102	404,010	25.2
Alberta	139	1,137,578	12.2
British Columbia	289	1,648,249	17.5
Yukon	5	11,656	42.9
Northwest Territories	32	21,956	145.7

¹ Rates are calculated based on 100,000 population. The population estimates are provided by Statistics Canada, Census and Demographic Statistics, Demography Division. Populations as of July 1; updated postcensal estimates for 1998.

Source: Transition Home Survey, 1997-1998, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada.

and Northwest Territories at 145.7 per 100,000 women. The difference in rates is not necessarily a reflection of differences in the incidence of abuse, but is affected by the number of responding shelters, population density and the availability of shelters in each province and territory.

The vast majority of abused women in shelters on April 20, 1998 were seeking shelter from someone with whom they had an intimate relationship (85%). Thirty-six percent of abused women indicated that their spouse was the abuser, 32% of women were abused by a common-law partner, 12% of women were abused by a former spouse or partner, and 5% were abused by a current or ex-boyfriend. A further 8% were abused by others (relative, friend, caregiver, authority figure and other) while for 8% of women, the shelter could not specify the relationship.

Few young women in shelters

According to Statistics Canada's 1993 Violence Against Women Survey, the highest rate of spousal assault was reported by women 18-24 years of age (12% of women in this age group) and rates declined by age to only 1% of women 45 years of age and over. According to the Transition Home Survey, the largest proportion of abused women residing in shelters on April 20, 1998 were aged 25-34 (36%) with only 19% aged 15-24. Women aged 35-44 (26%) were the second largest group. Women aged 45 and over were the least likely to use shelters as they accounted for only 12%, not surprising given their low reported rates of spousal assault (age was unknown for 7% of women). Calculated as a rate per 100,000 women (aged 15 and over) in the population, women in the age group 25-34 were the most likely to use shelters with a rate of 36.5, compared to 22.4 for those 35-44, and 21.8 for women aged 15-24. Women who were 45 years of age and over had the lowest rate at 4.9 per 100,000 women.

Majority of women take their children to shelters

On April 20, 1998, 56% of all women escaping abusive situations were admitted with children, 18% came to a shelter without any of their children, and 20% had no children. For 5% of women, it was not known whether they had children. There are a variety of reasons that women may not bring their children to shelters. For example, some may be old enough to live on their own, older children may stay in the family home because of schooling issues, and older children (especially males) may not be eligible to stay in some shelters. However, of those abused women who reported having children, 76% brought children to the shelter.

The total number of dependent children accompanying their mothers to shelters was almost evenly split between boys (47%) and girls (50%) (sex was not specified for 3%). Almost half (43%) of all children admitted because of abuse were under 5 years of age and an additional 30% were aged 5-9. Those aged 10-15 made up 18%, while the smallest group (3%) was aged 16 and over. For 7% of children, the age was not known.

Almost 30% of all women living in shelters for reasons of abuse on April 20, 1998 were also protecting their children from abuse: 28% from psychological abuse, 14% from physical

Children Witnessing Violence

Witnessing violence can encompass a wide range of experiences including visually observing violence between parents, hearing violence from another part of the house, or seeing the physical or emotional consequences of the battering of a parent (Jaffe, Wolfe & Wilson, 1990). In addition, there is evidence that if children witness physical violence toward their mother, they will also witness a considerable amount of psychological abuse, including verbal abuse, belittling and threats toward her (Health Canada, 1996).

The prevalence of children who witness violence in the family can be estimated from Statistics Canada's Violence Against Women Survey (VAWS). In 1993, the VAWS indicated that children witnessed violence between their parents in 39% of violent marriages, which amounts to the children from over 1 million families, although some of these children are now adults. Additionally, much of this violence is serious. In 52% of violent relationships in which children witnessed violence, the battered mother feared for her life and in 61% the woman was physically injured by her partner.

According to the Violence Against Women Survey, the presence of children who witness the violence is an important factor in the decision women make to leave and seek the services of a shelter. A total of 78% of women who stayed in shelters indicated that their children had witnessed the violence against them at some point, compared with 39% of all abused women.

Empirical research indicates that the effects on children of witnessing violence between their parents can be serious and long lasting. The children who witness violence between their parents are at increased risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of violence themselves (Health Canada, 1996). The VAWS suggests, for example, that violent men are three times as likely as non-violent men to have witnessed spousal violence in childhood, and women who were raised in similar circumstances were twice as likely to be victims of spousal violence. In addition, these children are at a greater risk of numerous behavioural, emotional and developmental problems (O'Keefe, 1995; Allan, 1991; Jaffe, Wolfe & Wilson, 1990; Egeland, Jacobvitz & Sroufe, 1988). The negative consequences in their emotional and behavioural development can include experiencing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, including fear, anxiety, irritability, difficulty concentrating, intrusive memories of the abuse, anger outbursts and hyperarousal (Lehmann, 1997; Graham-Berman & Levendosky, 1998). They may also experience greatly elevated rates of depression, withdrawal, low self-esteem and other emotional problems. These children also have a much greater risk of behaviour problems, such as aggression and non-compliance with peers and adults, destructive behaviour, and conflict with the law.

Additionally, the education and social skills of children witnessing domestic abuse can be negatively affected, especially for those whose lives are disrupted by moving to a shelter. These children tend to have lowered social skills and school achievement, and to have increased school absences compared to those who come from non-abusive homes (Health Canada, 1996).

assault, 13% from threats, 9% from neglect and 4% from sexual assault.

Shelter users are a small proportion of abused women

According to Statistics Canada's 1993 telephone survey on Violence Against Women, 29% (2.8 million) of Canadian women who had ever been married or lived with a man in a common-law relationship had been a victim of physical or sexual violence by a partner. A total of 217,000 (8%) had contacted a shelter and 156,000 (6%) had stayed at least once in a shelter for abused women. Thus, 72% of these women who had contacted a shelter had stayed at least once and 28% had contacted shelters for advice or information. Combining this information with Transition Home Survey data that almost 48,000 women used shelters in 1997-1998, this suggests that women's stays in shelters are quite short and that shelter users generally are admitted more than once.

Almost nine out of ten women that had contact with a shelter reported that it had been very or somewhat helpful. When asked by the survey why they did not contact a shelter or social service agency for help, most women said they did not want or need help (40%), the incident was considered too minor (25%), they were unaware of services (16%), or there were no services available (14%). Women for whom counselling or housing services were unavailable numbered almost 295,000.

The Violence Against Women Survey also found that 13% of abused women who left their spouses because of the violence

stayed in a shelter, and that women's use of shelters was strongly associated with the severity of the violence. Over 80% of women who used shelters had suffered an injury at some point during the abusive relationship, compared with 45% of all abused women. In addition, 63% of women who stayed in a shelter had at some point been injured severely enough to seek medical attention, compared to 19% of all abused women. Shelter users were more than twice as likely to have feared for their lives (85%) as all abused women (39%), and were more likely to have taken time off from their everyday activities because of the violence (57% versus 31%).

Also linked to the severity of the violence is the fact that women who used shelters were more likely to turn to the police for assistance or protection. According to the Violence Against Women Survey, 26% of all abused women reported a violent incident to the police at some time during the relationship. The percentage of women who reported to the police was even higher among those women who had ever left their spouses (45%), and higher still among women who had stayed in shelters (82%). In addition, shelter users were more likely than non-shelter users to say their spouses had received counselling (37% versus 20%), to say they had spoken about the incident with a doctor (57% versus 30%), or to say they had contacted another counsellor (43% versus 20%).

According to the Transition Home Survey, 29% of women in shelters for reasons of abuse on April 20, 1998 had reported the most recent incident of abuse to the police. In almost two-thirds of these cases, charges were laid by the police or the crown. Restraining orders were obtained in over half (54%) of the cases reported to the police and in 86% of cases in which charges were laid.

Spousal violence reported to the police

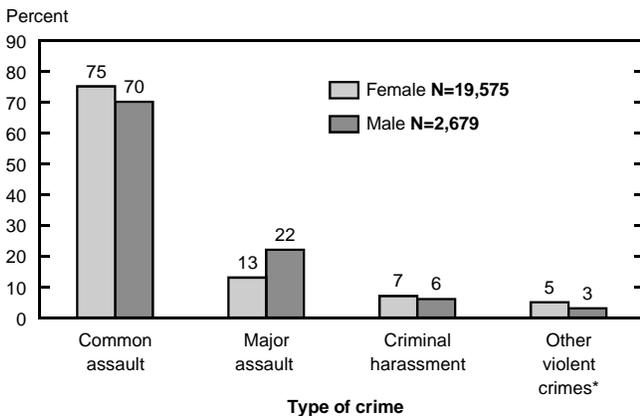
Information on spousal violence reported to the police in Canada is available from a sample of 179 police forces, representing 48% of the national volume of crime. There were 22,254 incidents of spousal violence reported to the Revised Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR II) in 1997; 88% involved female victims while 12% involved male victims. The majority of all spousal violence victims were victims of common assault. While women made up a higher percentage of victims in almost every spousal violence offence category (Figure 4), men were more likely than women to be victims of major

assault (22% versus 13%), primarily because of the high proportionate use of weapons by female offenders (5% versus 14%). However, firearms were seldom used by either men or women. Seventy percent of women were victimized by a current spouse as compared to 66% of men. Men (34%) were slightly more likely than women (30%) to be victimized by an ex-spouse.

Historically, wives have outnumbered husbands as victims of spousal homicides by a ratio of 3:1. Between 1974 and 1997, 1,829 women were killed by their husbands compared to 556 men who were killed by their wives (Figure 5). In 1997, there were 61 women and 14 men killed by a spouse.

Figure 4

Victims of spousal violence by type of charge laid by the police, Canada, 1997

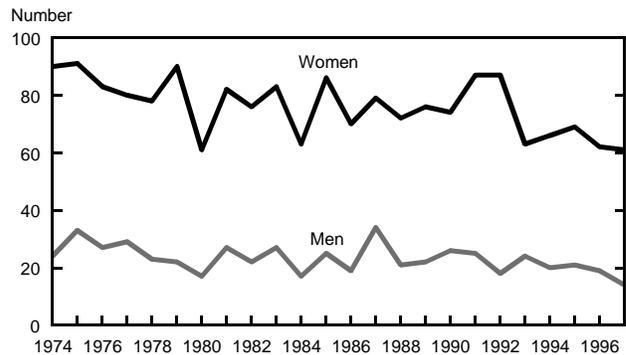


* Other violent crimes include crimes such as assault with a weapon, uttering threats, all sexual assault offences, kidnapping, abduction, robbery, homicide and attempts, criminal negligence, and other violations causing death.

Source: Revised Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR II), Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada.

Figure 5

Number of women and men killed by spouses, 1974-1997



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

For further information, please consult Fitzgerald, R. (1999). Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile, 1999. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada.

Revenues and Expenditures

Majority of shelters funded by various levels of government

The cost of operating a shelter depends on a multitude of factors including the size of the shelter, the number of admissions, the length of stay, the location (urban/suburban, rural, or reserve), the number of staff required and the services provided. There were 411 shelters that reported their total annual revenues and expenditures. The total combined income of these shelters was \$171 million while the total amount of operating expenditures was \$170 million. The discrepancy between revenues and expenditures may be explained by the fact that 58% of these shelters intended to make physical repairs or improvements in the following fiscal year. Revenues may have been received for these projects late in the 1997-1998 fiscal year with the work and payment for these repairs and improvements set to begin early in the next fiscal year.

Of the 409 shelters that provided detailed revenue breakdowns, 82% of revenues came from government sources. These shelters reported that they had received a total of \$140 million from federal, provincial/territorial, regional, municipal governments and Aboriginal bands. In addition, they received a total of \$30 million from non-governmental sources such as donations, fund raising, provincial/territorial lotteries, resident fees, loans and grants (for major repairs and improvements) and the United Way. Family resource centres and transition homes received the bulk of their funding from government sources (96% and 86%, respectively).

In terms of receiving funding from non-governmental sources, second stage shelters reported the highest percentage of reliance on this source. Thirty-seven percent of revenues reported by second stage shelters were received from non-government sources. Provincial and territorial distributions show that 97% of funding in the Northwest Territories is received from government sources, while shelters in Alberta and Nova Scotia were the most likely to rely on non-government sources (37% and 21% of revenues, respectively).

Data Sources

Transition Home Survey

The Transition Home Survey was developed under the federal government's Family Violence Initiative in consultation with provincial/territorial governments and transition home associations. The objectives of the survey are to collect information on residential services for abused women and their children during the previous twelve months of operation as well as to provide a one-day snapshot of the clients being served on a specific day. In 1991-1992, Statistics Canada began collecting basic information on transition home services and clientele. The survey was repeated with some changes in 1992-1993, 1994-1995 and 1997-1998.

The Transition Home Survey is a mail-out/mail-back census survey of all residential facilities providing services to abused women and their children. Of the 470 residential facilities providing services to abused women and their children, 430 returned their questionnaires for a response rate of 91%. Separate questionnaires were completed for facilities that had two or more residences under the same name or address.

Revised Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR II)

Introduced in 1988, the UCR II captures detailed information on individual criminal incidents reported to police, including characteristics of victims, accused persons and incidents. In 1997, 179 police departments in six provinces reported to the UCR II. The data represent 48% of the national volume of crime, and the reader is cautioned that these data are not nationally representative. The incidents contained in the 1997 Research File are distributed as follows: 41% from Quebec, 33% from Ontario, 11% from Alberta, 8% from British Columbia, 6% from Saskatchewan, and 1% from New Brunswick. Other than Quebec, the data are primarily from urban police departments. Coverage of the survey will continue to grow as more police agencies convert to the UCR II.

Homicide Survey

The Homicide Survey provides police-reported data on the characteristics of homicide victims, accused persons, as well as incidents. The survey has collected detailed information from the police on all homicides across Canada since 1961. It was revised in 1991 and in 1997, adding new data elements as well as improving existing ones.

Violence Against Women Survey (VAWS)

In 1993, Statistics Canada conducted the VAWS on behalf of Health Canada. It was conducted by telephone using random digit dialing techniques. A total of 12,300 women aged 18 years and older were interviewed about their experiences of physical and sexual violence since the age of 16, their responses to these experiences, and their perceptions of their personal safety. Responses were weighted to represent the 10.5 million women in the Canadian population. Estimates were made of both twelve-month and adult lifetime rates of violence.

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