

GOVERNMENT STATISTICS ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
Estimated numbers of incidents of domestic violence
England and Wales 1995 – 2005/06

British Crime Survey estimates

Up until 2001, estimated numbers of incidents of domestic violence in England and Wales were given in a series of *British Crime Surveys* (BCSs) published by the Home Office generally every two years. Since 2001, estimated numbers have been given in the Home Office *Crime in England and Wales* annual publications. The estimates are based on people reporting actions against them perceived as crimes. Since not all people regard domestic abuse against them, even if serious, as a crime, particularly young men, and therefore may not report it (or wish to admit it) to crime surveys, these Home Office crime estimates are likely to significantly under-estimate the actual extent of domestic violence, particularly against young men.

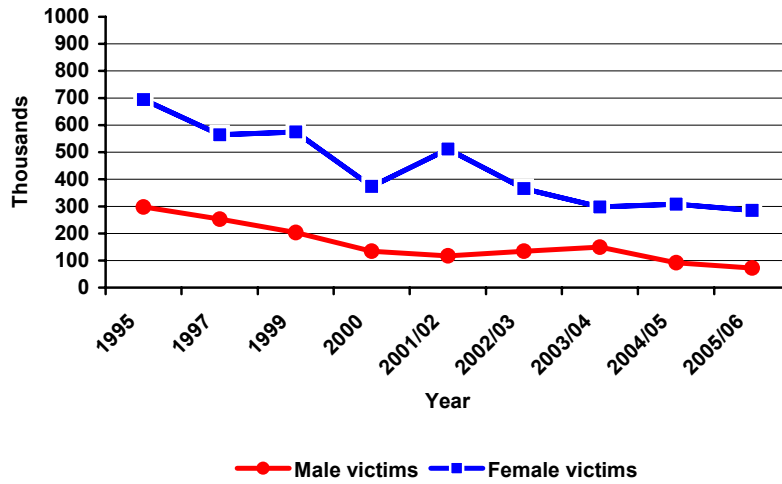
Estimated numbers of incidents of domestic violence in England and Wales during the ten-year period 1995 to 2004/05, based on these and other Home Office sources, are tabulated below. The trends over this period in estimated numbers of incidents and the proportions of male victims, based on these, are indicated on the accompanying two figures.

Thousands				
Year	Total ⁽³⁾	Male victims	Female victims	% male victims (based on numbers of incidents)
'95 (1996 BCS) ⁽¹⁾	987	298	694	30
'97 (1998 BCS) ⁽¹⁾	812	253	564	31
'99 (2000 BCS) ⁽¹⁾	771	203	575	26
'00 (2001 BCS) ⁽¹⁾	503	134	374	27
'01/02 (2001/02 BCS interviews) ⁽¹⁾	621	117	511	19
'02/03 (2002/03 BCS interviews) ⁽²⁾	501	135 ⁽⁴⁾	366	27
'03/04 (2003/04 BCS interviews) ⁽⁵⁾	446	150	298	34
'04/05 (2004/05 BCS interviews) ⁽⁶⁾	401	92	308	23
'05/06 (2005/06 BCS interviews) ⁽⁷⁾	357	72	285	20

- Sources:
- (1) Home Office private communication, January 2003
 - (2) Crime in England and Wales 2002/03, Table 5a
 - (3) Totals given are slightly less than sum of numbers of male and female victims
 - (4) Total for male victims derived from 27% of 501 thousand given as total for all victims
 - (5) Crime in England and Wales 2003/04, Table 5.01
 - (6) Crime in England and Wales 2004/05, Table 5.01
 - (7) Crime in England and Wales 2005/06, Table 5.01
- Interim revised ONS population estimates used to gross up BCS estimates.

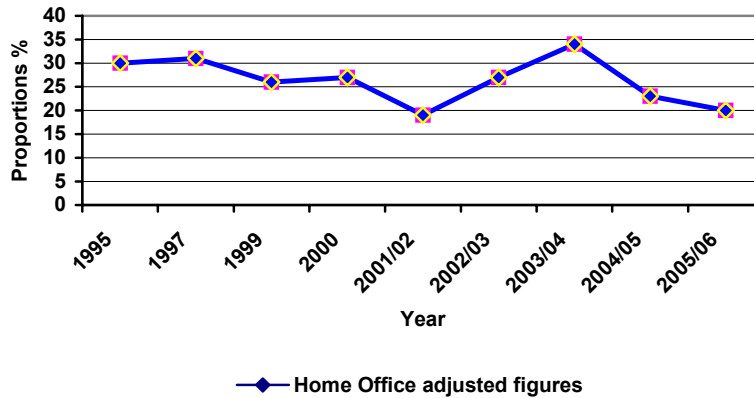
The results of this series of crime surveys suggest that during the eleven-year period 1995-2005/06, the estimated numbers of incidents against both male and female victims decreased significantly (by about 64% overall). The proportion of male victims has also decreased based on the number of incidents.

Estimated numbers of incidents of domestic violence



Over the period, the proportions of male victims, based on estimated numbers of incidents, has varied between 19% and 34%, with a mean of about 24%. Since male victims tend to suffer fewer repeat incidents against them than female victims, the proportions of actual male victims are higher than those based on numbers of incidents. The more detailed BCS supplemental surveys specifically aimed at interpersonal violence detect much higher proportions of male victims, in the range of 39% to 50% for a last-year period [see below].

Proportions of male victims
(based on numbers of incidents)



Supplementary British Crime Surveys

Supplement to 1996 BCS

A detailed survey specifically into the extent of domestic violence in couple relationships in England and Wales was carried out in 1995 as a supplement to the 1996 British Crime Survey, with 10,844 men and women between the ages of 16 and 59 completing a computerised self-completion questionnaire. The results were published under Home Office Research Study 191 in January 1999.

In contrast to the routine crime surveys, these revealed an almost equal culpability between men and women. For the 12-month period preceding the survey, equal proportions (4.2%) of men and women reported being physically assaulted by a partner. In the longer term (over a lifetime), 23% of women and 15% of men reported physical assault by a partner, a proportion of male victims of about 40%.

The Study estimated that there were about 6.6 million incidents of domestic physical assault in 1995 (3.29 million involving women victims and 3.25 million male victims), with 2.9 million incidents resulting in injury (1.86 million women and 1.0 million men). Although women tended to be more harmed or frightened by domestic violence, one third of those injured were men and one quarter of chronic (repeated) victims were men.

The 6.6 million incidents of domestic physical assault in 1995 estimated by Study 191 compares with the total of 987 thousand estimated by the 1996 BCS for the same period, the difference giving some measure of the extent of under-reporting to the routine crime survey in 1995.

The results of Study 191 are discussed by Dr Malcolm George in his *An Analysis of Male Victimisation* which can also be viewed on the Dewar Research website.

Supplement to 2001 BCS

A similar detailed survey specifically into the extent of interpersonal violence, including domestic violence, in England and Wales was carried out in 2000/01 as a supplement to the 2001 British Crime Survey, with 22,463 men and women between the ages of 16 and 59 interviewed also using a computerised self-completion questionnaire. The results were published under Home Office Research Study 276 in March 2004.

Although the pattern of results for domestic violence was generally similar to those of the earlier 1995 study, the estimated number of total incidents of physical assault were much higher (10.52 million compared to 6.6 million), but the numbers of victims of both sexes and also the proportions of male victims were slightly lower.

For the 12-month period preceding the survey, 3.4% of women and 2.2% of men reported being physically assaulted by a partner, a proportion of male victims of just over 39%. This compares with 4.2% of each sex, and thus a proportion of about 50% male victims, found by the 1995 survey. In the longer term, since the age of 16, 18.6% of women and 9.6% of men reported physical assault by a partner, a proportion of male victims of about 34%. This compares with 23% of women and 15% of men found by the 1995 survey for a 'lifetime' experience, and a proportion of male victims of about 40%.

The Study estimated that there were about 867,000 victims of actual domestic physical assault in 2000 (529,000 women and 338,000 men, a proportion of 39% male victims). For about half (49%) of victims, the assaults were classified as severe (242,000 women and 186,000 men - a proportion of male victims of 43.5%).

Generally, about half of male victims and about one quarter of female victims suffered no injury, and three times as many female victims as male suffered mental or emotional problems. Slightly more female victims than male suffered minor injury, and about twice as many female victims as male suffered moderate and severe injury.

Supplement to 2004/05 BCS

A similar detailed survey, using a self-completion module, of the extent of interpersonal violence, was also included in the 2004/05 British Crime Survey for England and Wales, based on interviews with a nationally representative sample of 24,498 men and women between the ages of 16 and 59. This also included a category of family abuse for the first time, as well as partner abuse, but did not cover repeat victimisation or estimates of the numbers of incidents. The results were published in Home Office Online Report 12/06, and were given in percentage terms rather than total estimated numbers. The survey covered any partner abuse (non-sexual abuse, sexual assault, and stalking), any family abuse similarly, sexual assault, and stalking.

For the year preceding the study, and excluding stalking, 5.6% of women and 4.1% of men reported having suffered non-sexual partner abuse (any abuse, threat, or force from a partner or ex-partner), a proportion of male victims of about 42%. Of these, 2.7% of women and 2.0% of men reported suffering actual force [assault or violence], a proportion of male victims of about 43%, which was designated as 'severe' in the case of 1.8% of women and 1.6% of men, a proportion of male victims of about 47%. These proportions are slightly more than those found by Study 276 some four years earlier.

Such proportions of male victims are almost double those found by the BCS of 2004/05 (23% based on numbers of incidents) and that of 2005/06 (20%). This suggests either a significant level of under-reporting especially by male victims of domestic abuse to these routine annual surveys or that basing the proportion on the numbers of incidents distorts the actual prevalence of male victims.

Curiously, the survey found that equal proportions (8.9%) of women and of men reported having experienced stalking in this one-year period. Stalking was thus more likely to have been experienced by both women and men than any other form of interpersonal abuse.

In the longer term since the age of 16, and again excluding stalking, the survey found that 27.9% of women and 17.8% of men reported having suffered non-sexual partner abuse, a proportion of male victims of about 39%. Of these, 18.9% of women and 10.6% of men reported having suffered actual force [assault or violence], a proportion of male victims of about 36%, which was 'severe' in the case of 13.9% women and 8.8% men, a proportion of male victims of about 39%.

Some 50% of women and 35% of men who had experienced intimate violence since the age of 16 also reported that they had experienced more than one type of intimate violence in that time.

Marital status, especially being unmarried, being young, and having a limiting disability or illness, were found to be independently associated with intimate violence for both men and women.

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