

Systematic Review of Domestic Violence and Intimate Partner Violence Post-2000 CE Statistics for Helpmate

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Abstract

Helpmate, a domestic violence and intimate partner violence (DV/IPV) agency in Asheville, NC, requested their DV/IPV statistics be updated to post-2000 Common Era information. Helpmate uses DV/IPV statistics as part of their mission “to eliminate abuse and fear” in the community through educational outreach and professional development for law enforcement and medical personnel. Additionally, Helpmate uses statistical data to secure funding from federal and state agencies as well as donations from the community. A comprehensive systematic review of available DV/IPV statistics was undertaken to assist Helpmate in updating their statistical data. The resulting report was created from 17 primary sources and 121 secondary sources; each applicable statistic was then categorized and cross-referenced. The final dossier included an electronic copy of all sources, an executive summary, and usage notes.

Key Words: domestic violence, intimate partner violence, statistics

Origins of the Project

Through a campus event and a subsequent service project through Amnesty International, I became an intern at Helpmate, a domestic violence and intimate partner violence (DV/IPV) agency in Asheville, NC. During conversations with Christy Price, the Outreach & Administrative Coordinator at Helpmate, about a possible service project, the need for updated statistics on DV/IPV became apparent. Price said, “updated information on research related to DV is long overdue.” Helpmate utilizes statistics on their website HelpmateOnline.org and during community outreach events to illustrate the extent of DV/IPV. Additionally, Helpmate uses statistics for training purposes when providing professional development. Price said:

The stats [*sic*] ... help with our professional “first responder” trainings to healthcare providers, law enforcement, social workers, and educators because it helps them see a clear picture of the prevalence as well as particular correlations between DV and other factors within their field (substance abuse, pregnancy, cultural aspects, the effects on kids, etc [*sic*]).

Helpmate, similar to many other non-profit organizations, relies on grants from the federal and state government to continue operating. Additionally, donations from the community are just as vital. Price indicated that updated statistics were a key part of procuring financial resources when she said,

Current statistics are essential to seeking continued funding...our funders need to know what the current problems are and why we need more money to continue combating the issue. These current statistics also help with our community donors and supporters...it gives them a better sense of what our agency is dealing with and encourages them to get behind our mission of working w/ [*sic*] the community to eliminate abuse and fear.

During the initial stages of this project, I was engaged in several undergraduate research projects concerning DV/IPV, namely an ethnography of the professional and volunteer staff at Helpmate and the role of males in DV/IPV advocacy. As a sociology major and with knowledge gained from my current research projects, I felt that I could successfully complete the project for Helpmate and wanted to broaden my own understanding of DV/IPV. The project’s focus became reviewing and updating statistics that Helpmate already had in place, using only post-2000 Common Era sources, focusing primarily on the United States and North Carolina.

Methods and Work Undertaken

I began by reviewing the statistics that Helpmate already had listed on their website: HelpmateOnline.org under the “advocacy” section. The site listed statistics related to the murder rate of DV/IPV victims (Helpmate does an annual vigil with the community based on this information). Included in these statistics was the average rate of physical/sexual assault for women in the United States, and statistics related to physical/sexual assault of teenagers (Price). Price had intimated a desire for local and statewide DV/IPV statistics, defined as Buncombe

County and North Carolina. The North Carolina Council for Women provided in-depth statistics for all counties in North Carolina revealing that during the fiscal year of 2010-2011 Buncombe County ranked 7th out of 100 counties in domestic violence cases (1,670) and 13th in sexual assault cases (345) (North Carolina Council for Women). The North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence provided information related to homicides and reported there were “73 known domestic violence homicides in North Carolina in 2011” (North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence).

Using these three regional resources of DV/IPV statistics as starting points, for several days links were followed to numerous governmental, non-profit, and academic sources on the Internet. As the range of available information became apparent, all obtainable documents were downloaded for evaluation. Over 200 documents and numerous sites were part of the initial source material. The process to focus the research involved several steps.

1. Culled any sources that appeared unreliable due to lack of references that did not contain reliable research modalities, had outdated information or from sites and organizations that had a specific agenda.
 - a. Lack of References: there is a surprising amount of non-profits that just listed statistics but did not cite sources and this included downloadable “factsheets” that were also uncited.
 - b. Unreliable Research Modalities: the primary reason for removal of sources was a small sample size or the lack of methodological data.
 - c. Outdated Data: during the course of the systematic review, it became apparent that Helpmate was far from the only organization that had outdated statistical data. A vast majority of organizations had statistics that were several decades old. This is not a judgment of these agencies, if Helpmate is an indication of a broader trend, the outdated information is a sign of priority management.
 - d. Specific Agendas: the democratization of knowledge availed by the Internet is incredible, but organizations and websites can cherry pick their sources and entities that appeared to do this were eliminated. These eliminations were value judgments on my part and were applied consistently.
2. Removed all documents that were secondary sources and focused on finding the primary documents from which their information was based. This was a consistent issue, most agencies and websites list the same information from a few select sources. Not only the same sources, also the same sets of statistics were apparently copied and pasted throughout multiple sites.
3. Created a final list of documents in which the statistics were based on primary research and reviewable methodologies. From these documents, sources that repeated similar data were removed.

While over 200 sources were consulted for the project and 138 made the final cut. The ultimate source material was 17 separate studies, all from federal and state governmental organizations or completed under the auspices of the federal government. Of the 17 remaining, 3 studies in particular provided the “bulk” of the final report.

1. The *National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS)*, completed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is an “ongoing, nationally-representative telephone survey that collects detailed information on sexual violence, stalking, and

intimate partner violence victimization from adult women and men in the United States” (CDC).

2. The *Female Victims of Violence* report by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, under the auspices of the Office of Justice, as part of the U.S. Department of Justice, “provides the current findings on nonfatal and fatal violent crimes committed against females. It includes estimates of the extent of crimes against females and the characteristics of crimes and victims, ... along with comparative estimates of crimes against males. (Bureau of Justice Statistics).
3. *Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence: Findings From the National Violence Against Women Survey* created by the National Institute of Justice, under the auspices of the Office of Justice, as part of the U.S. Department of Justice, “presents findings from a survey of 8,000 U.S. women and 8,000 U.S. men about their experiences as victims of intimate partner violence (rape, physical assault, and stalking) (Tjaden et al.).

These sources are the most frequently cited sources of information by DV/IPV organizations whose information I reviewed and are the basis for most secondary sources that I located. These sources were consistent with their methodologies, outlining the definitions used in their reports, fully explicating their data sources, and using similar naming conventions.

Ties to Academia

I am a sociology and anthropology major, and my intention is to work towards my Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology while earning a *Juris Doctor*. My primary interests are deviant behavior, law, and issues relating to violence against women. My hope is that my academic and professional training will lead to continued DV/IPV advocacy. Specifically, assisting women facing the challenge of navigating the legal system and broadening the academic narrative of DV/IPV research to focus on solutions-oriented methodological research. Because of my interests and educational intentions, this project was a perfect fit.

As previously mentioned, I had never completed a systematic review or a project of this magnitude. The whole process was on the job training, and I enjoyed every complicated bit of it. I reviewed several guides to statistical reviews and meta-statistical analyses to improve my methodology and would revisit them during the process. I learned copious amounts of statistical data collection methodologies, about federal and state resources for not only DV/IPV statistics but also a variety of topics, and gained invaluable research skills.

In addition to this service project, as previously mentioned, an ethnographic study of Helpmate’s volunteer and professional staff was conducted as part UNC Asheville’s Undergraduate Research program. The results were presented at the Southern Anthropological Society’s annual meeting and the Big South Undergraduate Research Symposium. During the course of the ethnography, a compelling question arose: where are all the male counterparts to the predominately female volunteer and professional staff at Helpmate? I was currently engaged in a literature review of DV/IPV from the sociological perspective and noticed a lack of male advocacy research as well.

By combining my two research interests, a survey was added to the original ethnographic methodology to determine the role of males at Helpmate and in the broader DV/IPV movement. The resulting data was used as a pilot study that has since been expanded into a nationwide study

in the role of males in the DV/IPV advocacy movement. The results of the pilot study were presented at Council on Public Liberal Arts Colleges, Regional Undergraduate Research Conference and will be presented at the American Sociological Association's annual meeting as part of their Honors Program. The study is viewable at DV-IPV-Advocacy.org and at the conclusion of the research project, the site will become a repository of DV/IPV information for academics and advocates, including the results of this systematic review.

Challenges Faced and Responses to those Challenges

The unique challenge of this project as previously mentioned was not the lack of information but the abundance of information. However, while copious amounts of information are available, several recurring themes became apparent.

1. Most other DV/IPV related organizations had outdated information in their reports and listed on their websites.
2. As with all academic undertakings, the validity of the research methodology and data collected must be constantly considered.
3. DV/IPV statistics are exceptionally broad and winnowing the available data down to what would be appropriate to Helpmate was difficult.

First, the information on other DV/IPV websites were not used in the final report but served as an indicator of where to look for information. Specifically their statistics when cited were traced back to their sources and independently corroborated. Second, statistics from governmental agencies became the primary source for updated statistics. These statistics were chosen because of the availability of the primary documents for further investigation by Helpmate if needed, the consistent naming conventions, and critiques of the study by independent sources. Finally, the broad variety of DV/IPV statistics were managed by separating them into categories and verifying with Price that she would prefer many statistics so that she could choose what she needed.

Due to the large sample size for the systematic review, the statistics were altered to homogenize the language and the numerical formatting. For example, all written numbers were converted to numerals (e.g. "one" changed to "1"), all percentages were modified to use the "%" sign, and verbiage when possible was simplified.

Results

The final report given to Christy Price, after review by Dr. Bramlett the faculty adviser for the project, consisted of 120-page document with statistics broken down into the following categories and representative statistics from the review are included. Note: all statistics and text are pulled directly from the cited source and should be viewed as a "quote" except for the homogenization of language previously mentioned and subheadings are from the same statistical source cited in the original heading.

- General

- Nearly 1 in 5 women and 1 in 71 men in the U.S. have been raped at some time in their lives (Basile et al.).
- Nearly 1 in 10 women in the U.S. has been raped by an intimate partner in her lifetime (Basile et al.).
- 1 in 5 women and nearly 1 in 7 men who ever experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner, first experienced some form of intimate partner violence between 11 and 17 years of age (Basile et al.).
- Children
 - Nearly one-half of children and adolescents (46.3%) were assaulted at least once in the past year (Finkelhor et al.).
 - More than 1 in 10 (10.2%) were injured in an assault.
 - 1 in 4 (24.6%) were victims of robbery, vandalism, or theft.
 - 1 in 10 (10.2%) suffered from child maltreatment (including physical and emotional abuse, neglect, or a family abduction).
 - 1 in 16 (6.1%) were victimized sexually.
 - More than 1 in 4 (25.3%) witnessed a violent act.
 - 1 in 10 (9.8%) saw one family member assault another family member.
 - Nearly 7 in 8 children (86.6%) who reported being exposed to violence during their lifetimes also reported being exposed to violence within the past year, which indicated that these children were at ongoing risk of violent victimization (Finkelhor et al.).
- Economic Impact
 - According to estimates, U.S. women lose nearly 8.0 million days of paid work each year because of violence perpetrated against them by current or former husbands, cohabitants, dates, and boyfriends. This is the equivalent of 32,114 full-time jobs each year. An additional 5.6 million days are lost from household chores (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control).
- Elder abuse
 - 11% of elders reported experiencing at least one form of mistreatment (emotional, physical, sexual or potential neglect) in the past year (Acierno).
 - Financial exploitation by a family member in the past year was reported by 5.2% of elders (Acierno).
- Ethnicity
 - Black females were four times more likely than white females to be murdered by a boyfriend or girlfriend (1.44 and 0.34 per 100,000, respectively) (Catalano).
 - Approximately 1 in 5 Black (22.0%) and White (18.8%) non-Hispanic women, and 1 in 7 Hispanic women (14.6%) in the United States have experienced rape at some point in their lives. More than one-quarter of women (26.9%) who identified as American Indian or as Alaska Native and 1 in 3 women (33.5%) who identified as multiracial non-Hispanic reported rape victimization in their lifetime (Basile et al.).
- Homicide
 - Females made up 70% of victims killed by an intimate partner in 2007, a proportion that has changed very little since 1993 (Catalano).
 - Between 1993 and 2007 the total number of homicide victims in the U.S. fell 31%, with a somewhat greater decline for females (-34%) than males (-30%).

Homicide victims killed by intimate partners fell 29%, with a greater decline for males (-36%) than females (-26%) (Catalano).

- Law
 - Battered women who defend themselves and harm abusers resemble battered women who kill batterers, but may look as if they are not “good victims” for using too much force, or using alcohol or drugs, or having an arrest record. They are unlikely to be treated as victims when they try to use law enforcement and the courts for protection. Another controversial trend in social policy is prosecution of battered women as child abusers or for “failure to protect” their children even in situations where the batterer prevents them from protecting their children (Gilfus).
- Medical and Mental Health
 - Men and women who experienced rape or stalking by any perpetrator or physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime were more likely to report frequent headaches, chronic pain, difficulty with sleeping, activity limitations, poor physical health and poor mental health than men and women who did not experience these forms of violence. Women who had experienced these forms of violence were also more likely to report having asthma, irritable bowel syndrome, and diabetes than women who did not experience these forms of violence (Basile et al.).
 - Nearly 5.3 million intimate partner victimizations occur among U.S. women ages 18 and older each year. This violence results in nearly 2.0 million injuries and nearly 1,300 deaths. Of the IPV injuries, more than 555,000 require medical attention, and more than 145,000 are serious enough to warrant hospitalization for one or more nights. IPV also results in more than 18.5 million mental health care visits each year. Add to that the 13.6 million days of lost productivity from paid work and household chores among IPV survivors and the value of IPV murder victims’ expected lifetime earnings, and it is clear to see that intimate partner violence against women places a significant burden on society (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control).
- Men
 - 834,732 men are raped and/or physically assaulted by an intimate partner annually in the United States (Tjaden et al.).
 - Because many victims are victimized more than once, approximately 2.9 million intimate partner physical assaults are committed against U.S. men annually, of these 581,391 will result in an injury to the victim, and 124,999 will result in some type of medical treatment to the victim.
 - Men are significantly less likely than women to report being victims of intimate partner violence whether it is rape, physical assault, or stalking and whether the timeframe is the person’s lifetime or the previous 12 months (Tjaden et al.).
- Sexual Violence
 - Approximately 1 in 10 men in the United States (9.9% or an estimated 11.2 million) has experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner and reported at least one measured impact related to these or other forms of violent behavior in that relationship. One in 20 men (5.2%) was fearful as a result of the violence experienced. Approximately 1 in 25 men (4.0%) experienced injury, and nearly 1 in 25 men (3.9%) missed at least one day of

work or school as a result of these or other forms of intimate partner violence (Basile et al.).

- Approximately 9% of high school students report being hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend in the 12 months before surveyed (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control).
- The majority of women (70.8%) who ever experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner reported being victimized by one partner, 20.9% were victimized by two partners and 8.3% were victimized by three or more partners. Similarly, the majority of men (73.1%) reported being victimized by one partner, 18.6% were victimized by two partners and 8.3% were victimized by three or more partners (Basile et al.).
- Shelters
 - On September 15, 2011, 1,726 out of 1,944, or 89%, of identified local domestic violence programs in the United States and territories participated in the 2011 National Census of Domestic Violence Services. The following figures represent the information reported by the 1,726 participating programs about services provided during the 24-hour survey period (National Network to End Domestic Violence).
 - 67,399 Victims Served in One Day
 - 36,332 domestic violence victims found refuge in emergency shelters or transitional housing provided by local domestic violence programs.
 - 31,007 adults and children received non-residential assistance and services, including counseling, legal advocacy, and children's support groups.
 - 22,508 Hotline Calls Answered
 - Local and State hotlines answered 21,748 calls and the National Domestic Violence Hotline answered 760 calls, averaging more than 16 hotline calls every minute.
 - 26,339 Educated in Prevention and Education Trainings
 - 26,339 individuals in communities across the United States and territories attended 1,396 training sessions provided by local domestic violence programs, gaining much needed information on domestic violence prevention and early intervention.
 - 10,581 Unmet Requests for Services in One Day
 - Victims made more than 10,000 requests for services, including emergency shelter, housing, transportation, childcare, and legal representation that could not be provided because programs did not have the resources to offer these services. 64% of Unmet Requests Were for Housing Emergency shelter and transitional housing continue to be the most urgent unmet needs with 6,714 requests unmet. Other frequently requested unmet needs include legal representation, counseling, and legal advocacy.
- Stalking

- Repeatedly receiving unwanted telephone calls, voice, or text messages was the most commonly experienced stalking tactic for both female and male victims of stalking (78.8% for women and 75.9% for men) (Basile et al.).
- More than half of female victims and more than one-third of male victims of stalking indicated that they were stalked before the age of 25; about 1 in 5 female victims and 1 in 14 male victims experienced stalking between the ages of 11 and 17 (Basile et al.).
- State and Local Facts - April 2010-March 2011 (North Carolina Council for Women).
 - North Carolina
 - State Population – 9,586,227
 - Number of Calls – 95,877
 - Number of Clients – 61,283
 - Volunteer Hours Worked in Agency for DV – 405,671
 - Educational and Professional Presentations – 8,152
 - Buncombe County
 - County Population – 239,179
 - Number of Calls – 722
 - Number of Clients – 1,670
 - Volunteer Hours Worked in Agency for DV – 4,975
 - Educational and Professional Presentations – 89

Statistics, when appropriate, are placed in multiple categories for the ease of use by Helpmate, an example:

Nearly 5.3 million intimate partner victimizations occur among U.S. women ages 18 and older each year. This violence results in nearly 2.0 million injuries and nearly 1,300 deaths. Of the IPV injuries, more than 555,000 require medical attention, and more than 145,000 are serious enough to warrant hospitalization for one or more nights. IPV also results in more than 18.5 million mental health care visits each year. Add to that the 13.6 million days of lost productivity from paid work and household chores among IPV survivors and the value of IPV murder victims' expected lifetime earnings and it is clear to see that intimate partner violence against women places a significant burden on society (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control).

This statistic was placed in the Economic Impact, Homicide, and Medical and Mental Health subheadings.

Included in the final dossier is an executive summary outlining the key statistics that were similar to the original statistics that were being replaced. Each of the cited sources was fully explicated including an abstract, links to the originating source, and when available, links to WorldCat (an online global library catalog). The cited sources were included in PDF and Excel form for further review and for training purposes at Helpmate. The 121 studies removed from the final report were left out because of the duplication, outdatedness, or the specificity of the data. However, they were included in the final dossier.

The sources that were too specific (*e.g.* DV laws by state, male advocacy, DV movement history) were categorized by subject so that the professional and volunteer staff at Helpmate could review the information if they chose. Helpmate has a diverse staff that brings different perspectives and talents to the organization, therefore the additional sources are available for

individual interests. Some sources were too broad but were filled with narratives about DV/IPV that contained quotes and narratives that may be used for outreach literature.

I felt that I completed the work to the best of my abilities, and I was proud of the results. However, I made a mistake. I lost focus on the intent of the project, which was to support a community organization with a service project and to understand their needs on their own terms. Helpmate did not want a 120-page report, cross-referenced and categorized with 138 supporting documents, in the end I had done too much. My intentions were noble; I simply wanted to do a good job for an organization that means a great deal to me and I followed my intellectual curiosity. Instead of taking a burden away from Helpmate, I had given them a new one. I had completed the task as a sociology student who aims for a career in academia and not as a volunteer at a DV/IPV shelter. I used academic jargon that would easily confuse the uninitiated and created a non-user friendly systematic review. Price, in her indomitable way, was tactful in expressing both her thanks and concern about the project. In the end, I revisited the project with fresh eyes and created a simpler but still complete version of the systematic review. I have since updated the project with information gained during the interim and will always be available to Helpmate in the future.

Sustainability

The sustainability of this project can be defined by the exponential exposure of the information. Helpmate facilitates learning workshops in local schools for teenagers, at risk population groups, faith communities, fairs, parades and civic groups, in addition to, the professional development previously mentioned. Price indicated the importance of updated statistics when she said,

The new stats help with community presentations to at-risk groups because it validates that DV is a common problem, something that happens to a lot of people in our society (victims often feel it is something they are dealing w/ [*sic*] alone and feel no one would understand what they are going through). For example, teenagers hearing stats about their specific age group might make them feel less isolated and more encouraged to seek help.

During each of these events, informational packets are given out about DV/IPV including statistics.

I came to volunteer at Helpmate because of their outreach. I received one of those informational packets myself and eventually would attend events in Helpmate's stead and distribute those same packets. I have often seen people reading the informational sheets and shake their head when the scope of DV/IPV is presented to them, and many discover they are not alone. Helpmate uses statistics for several reasons; one of the primary is to prepare advocates that work at the shelter. Helpmate has several training sessions each year; every trainee receives a training manual and access to an online version of the manual. This manual contains considerable information about DV/IPV and ample amounts of statistics. The new trainees confront DV/IPV through role-playing and training sessions conducted by other agencies in Asheville, such as Pisgah Legal Services, a free legal aid agency. The advocates in training use what they learn to advocate for Helpmate and against DV/IPV in the community, and many deal with instances of DV/IPV in

their own lives. The manual was recently overhauled, complete with updated statistics from this project. Price said,

I am already using the updated research and statistics in our volunteer training manual and have replaced about 85% of the outdated stats [sic] with these new ones. People don't [sic] take outdated information seriously and it leaves more questions than answers in their minds if they see old stats [sic] in our training manual.

The statistical dossier has been made available to other advocates at Helpmate and will as previously mentioned, be disbursed through DV-IPV-Advocacy.org. From the perspective of the advocates that receive training and the eventual publication on the Internet this project has sustainability. The final dossier is prepared in a manner making it easy for future volunteers at Helpmate or another student from UNCA to update the statistics in the future. Finally, I will use the data from the project to further my own DV/IPV advocacy and to inform my future academic pursuits.

Conclusion

The implications of the systematic review of DV/IPV statistics post-2000 CE for Helpmate are simple: this project was needed for quite some time, but the advocates at Helpmate were busy helping the victims of DV/IPV become survivors. By completing this project as part of the Community Engaged Scholar Program, the advocates of Helpmate could focus their energy where it is needed most, healing the community both proactively and reactively. The use of this systematic review is far reaching, from educating the advocates at Helpmate, to providing current information to the professionals in the law enforcement and medical community, and through distribution through community outreach, the true extent of DV/IPV can be understood.

My future ambitions and intentions are focused on DV/IPV advocacy and an academic career in Sociology and the law. I gained knowledge and experience from this project that will help guide and inform my future pursuits. My greatest accomplishment is knowing, that according to Price, that my efforts and resulting systematic review was "long overdue and extremely helpful" to Helpmate. I would like to thank Helpmate for the opportunity to serve and Christy Price specifically for her support. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Bramlett for his support and guidance; and UNC Asheville and the Key Center for the Community Engaged Scholar program that facilitated this learning and service opportunity.

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