

## ABS Personal Safety Survey 2012

The Australian Bureau of Statistics Personal Safety Survey (2012) provides important data on the nature and prevalence of women's and men's experiences of violence. Since that last release of the survey in 2005 there has been no significant change in the prevalence of physical and sexual violence, stalking or intimate partner violence. The measure for emotional abuse included in the 2012 Personal Safety Survey is an important addition, as accurate data is critical to the recognition of non-physical forms of violence and control that compromise the health and wellbeing of victim/survivors of violence. This includes economic, psychological, social, cultural and verbal abuse, which are not yet captured in any ABS data.

### Prevalence of violence – since the age of 15

- 1 in 3 Australian women (34 per cent) have experienced physical violence
- 1 in 5 Australian women (19 per cent) have experienced sexual violence<sup>1</sup>
- 1 in 4 Australian women (25 per cent) have experienced emotional abuse from a partner
- 1 in 5 Australian women (19 per cent) have experienced stalking

The table below outlines some of the key differences between women and men's experiences of physical and sexual violence.

|                                                   | Women's experience      | Men's experience                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Sex of perpetrator</b>                         |                         |                                                             |
| More likely to have experienced violence:         | From a male             | From a male                                                 |
| <b>Relationship to perpetrator</b>                |                         |                                                             |
| More likely to have experienced violence:         | From a known person     | From a stranger                                             |
| <b>Location of where violence occurred</b>        |                         |                                                             |
| More likely to have experienced physical assault: | In their home           | At a place of recreation, entertainment or outside location |
| <b>If the perpetrator is known</b>                |                         |                                                             |
| More likely to have experienced violence:         | From a known male       | From a known male                                           |
| More likely to have experienced violence:         | From a previous partner | From an acquaintance or neighbour                           |
| <b>If the perpetrator is a stranger</b>           |                         |                                                             |
| More likely to have experienced violence:         | From a male stranger    | From a male stranger                                        |

Source: Women's Health West (2013) **Men's and women's reported experience of violence since the age of 15 based on data from the ABS Personal Safety Survey, 2012**

### Types of violence

- Both men and women were more likely to have experienced physical violence than sexual violence.
- Sexual violence was four times more common for women than men, with 19 per cent of women experiencing sexual violence since the age of 15 compared to 4 per cent of men.
- Since the age of 15, women were more likely than men to have experienced emotional abuse by a partner, with 25 per cent of women reporting this experience compared to 14 per cent of men.

<sup>1</sup> These statistics have not changed since 2005

- Women were significantly more likely to have been stalked by a man than by a woman, with 94 per cent of women reporting that they had been stalked by a male perpetrator.

### Sex of perpetrator

- Most violence experienced by women and men is perpetrated by men. For 95 per cent of women and 95 per cent of men who have experience violence since the age of 15 their perpetrator was male

### Location of violence

- In looking at the most recent incident of physical violence perpetrated by a male, women were five times more likely than men to have been assaulted in their own home. Women are also three times more likely to experience physical violence by a man in their home, compared to men who experience physical violence by a woman in their home.
- Men were nine times more likely than women to have experienced physical assault by a male at a place of entertainment, recreation or at an outside location

### Experience of partner violence<sup>2</sup>

- In 2012, an estimated 17 per cent of all women aged 18 years and over and 5 per cent of all men aged 18 years and over had experienced violence by a partner since the age of 15
- Women who had experienced violence by a previous partner were more likely than men to have experienced more than one incident. Seventy-three per cent of women and 51 per cent of men who had experienced previous partner violence had experienced more than one incident of violence.

### Seeking help and support

- An estimated 67 per cent of women (1,153,700 of the 1,716,300 women who had been physically assaulted by a male partner) had **not** been in contact with the police after their most recent incident of physical assault by a male partner.

### Considerations for the data

It is important to note the inherent limitations of data relating to experiences of violence in intimate relationships. Partner violence experienced by women and men is underpinned by multiple factors that affect the patterns of power and control within relationships, including gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability and life experience. However, research shows that gender inequity is both the root cause and consequence of violence against women, leading to a higher prevalence of partner violence experienced by women. While data that captures the prevalence of specific types of violence is valuable, it does not usually reveal the context of the violence, the power relations within a relationship or the impact of violence for the victim/survivor. It is extremely difficult to make direct comparisons between violence experienced by women and men as the causes and impacts are different (Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, 2005). Further, as intimate partner violence is considerably under reported, any data is likely to be an underestimate of its true prevalence and therefore should be interpreted within this context.

### References:

Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012, *The Personal Safety Survey, 2012*, Cat. No. 4906.0, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.

Mulroney, J. and Chan, C., 2005, *Men as victims of domestic violence*, Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, Sydney

<sup>2</sup> Partner violence does not include violence by a "boyfriend/girlfriend or date". For the PSS a boyfriend/girlfriend or date refers to a person the respondent dated, or was intimately involved with but did not live with. This relationship may have different levels of commitment and involvement. For example, one date only, regular dating with no sexual involvement, or a serious sexual or emotional relationship. Refer to the ABS Glossary