

ILLINOIS COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDE REPORT SUMMARY: June 2009 - May 2010

The Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV) began collecting domestic violence homicide data mid-way through May 2009; this report covers June 2009 to May 2010. The data relied upon include information contained in newspaper articles from papers with an on-line presence.

Domestic Violence Homicide Data

A domestic violence homicide database was created and used to compile information about numbers of incidents, victims, characteristics of both perpetrators and victims and their relationships, as well as how victims were murdered. For the period June 2009 – May 2010, a total of **59 incidents** took the lives of **76 victims**. Additionally, nine incidents account for more than one victim.

Four homicides were committed by women and represent 5.3% of the total, whereas **male perpetrators committed 94.7% of the homicides**. Women murdered mostly other females and one male. Females accounted for nearly 70% of the individuals murdered by men.

Intimate victims were wives, ex-wives, girl friends, and an ex- girl friend. Six victims were the sons of the perpetrators; two were their daughters. Other relatives of the murderers were also killed, including the mothers, fathers, stepmothers, brothers, cousins, sisters, and nieces. Victims also included the in-laws of the perpetrator, often associated with the attempted homicide of the wife or ex-wife, who was wounded at the same time the in-law was killed. There was one homicide incident in which five former in-laws (father, mother, two nephews, and one niece) were murdered.

Ten murdered people were with the perpetrators' intended victim, who was often injured, but not killed. The children of perpetrator's girl friends were also murdered, although the girl friends were not injured.

The most prevalent means of killing a victim in domestic violence homicides in the current database is by **shooting (44.7%)**, followed by beatings (22%). Almost 15% of people were stabbed to death, three strangled, and six died by fire and/or smoke inhalation. One toddler died from shaken baby syndrome, another was suffocated in a bag, and an elderly person died from an aneurysm after being pushed to the ground by the perpetrator.

The majority of wives and ex-wives were shot, whereas the majority of girl friends and ex-girl friends were not; they were beaten, stabbed, or strangled. Male children of offenders were all murdered by their fathers and tended to be shot (5-to-1); daughters tended to be beaten (3 of 4).

Blood, or step-, parents of offenders were murdered, being mostly mothers killed by adult sons. Brothers, cousins, sisters, and nieces were also victims, as were in-laws. A wide variety of methods were used by the offenders, including firearms and beatings. The majority of the friends of the perpetrators' partners, or former partners, were shot to death, and children killed by their mother's boyfriends were shaken or beaten to death.

Regarding previous threats, stalking, and attempts on the parts of victims to create safety for themselves, newspapers indicated that the victims in 13.5% of the incidents are known to have been verbally threatened. The victims reported in two incidents were known to have been stalked; one of these also had verbal threats and another had an order of protection. Finally, only four victims had had orders of protection at the time of their murder.

Discussion

What can be identified from the data is that domestic violence homicides are most often **committed by men (94.7%)** and that **women are the most likely to be their victims (69.4%)**. Women, over-all are more likely to be domestic violence victims, regardless of the perpetrator, as they represent almost 70% of the total individuals killed.

The relationships suffering the most homicides are **wives and ex-wives**. The next largest group includes **girl friends or ex-girl friends**. These two groups together account for **44.4%** of all people murdered by men. **The vast majority of wives and ex-wives were shot**; only one girl friend was shot, the remaining girl friends and ex-girl friends were dispatched in other ways.

The second largest group of victims killed by men was non-partner/non-former partners that included the perpetrators' siblings and parents. **Half of these individuals were shot.**

Male perpetrators of domestic violence homicide in Illinois also killed eight of their children, including six sons, five of whom were shot, and two daughters, both of whom were beaten to death. All sons were killed in incidents involving multiple homicides, usually along with their mothers; two sons were adult brothers gunned down by their father at his home.

A large group of victims includes friends or relatives of the partner or former partner. People lost their lives because they happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, or were related to the perpetrators' partner or ex-partner. These people were mostly shot to death and usually were present when the perpetrator was trying to harm his partner or former partner. Five former in-laws were brutally beaten to death, allegedly, by the ex-husband of one of their surviving daughters. The reasons for the killings may have been triggered by custody and visitation issues.

There is not enough information included in newspaper accounts to examine how many victims were stalked or threatened prior to their murders, nor is there confidence that the information concerning orders of protection was consistently collected for the news articles.

Next Steps

ICADV will continue to collect homicide data for at least one more year. In-depth analysis of the cases already in the database will occur. Of importance, is looking at the history of orders of protection, as well as information about the disposition of the perpetrators of domestic violence homicide.

You may download a copy of the full report from www.ilcadv.org/June2010ICADVdvHomicide-FullReport.pdf.