



ONE IN THREE VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE IS MALE

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Anti-violence campaign hails attitude shift on violence against males

More than twice as many people now think women are just as likely to commit domestic violence as men.

Over the past fourteen years, the number has risen from 9 to 22 percent of the population and a further 46 percent now accept women also commit acts of domestic violence, although this group still believes men commit the majority of abuse.

The findings come from a [survey](#) of more than 10,000 Australians commissioned by the Federal Government and released last week by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to mark White Ribbon Day.

The survey also found that 38 per cent of males and 46 per cent of females thought the level of fear experienced by domestic violence victims was the same for males and females.

One in Three Campaign spokesperson Greg Andresen said he was very pleased to see that Australian community beliefs about violence were falling into line with the research statistics on the issue.

“All the major recent community surveys, as well as crime, homicide, hospital and violence-order statistics reflect the fact that [up to one in three victims of sexual assault and at least one in three victims of family violence and abuse are male](#). It’s very pleasing to see that attitudes held by Australians are finally acknowledging that family violence is a two-way street,” Mr Andresen said.

Male victims of family violence are much less likely than women to report their abuse. One of the [barriers](#) to disclosing often faced by men is the fact that they are frequently disbelieved, ridiculed or blamed when they finally summon up the courage to talk to the police, health professionals, friends or family members.

“With two out of three Australians now acknowledging that males can be victims of family violence, men are more likely to find a sympathetic, believing ear when they talk about their experiences of being abused by a woman in their life,” said Mr Andresen.

“This of course is incredibly supporting and validating for the men themselves and will hopefully mean that more men in the future will report their abuse. Ideally this would lead to the establishment of more services for male victims of family violence which are [practically non-existent at present](#).”

The limited qualitative Australian [research](#) available on male victims shows that “perpetual fear and being ‘on guard’ were experienced by most [battered men surveyed]”. A large recent Canadian [study](#) found that victimisation by repeated, severe, fear-inducing, instrumental violence was reported by 2.6% of men and 4.2% of women in the last five years.

International [research](#) shows that the overall physical and psychological effects of domestic violence are similar for men and women. Women and men who use violence hurt their partners in similar ways (kicking, biting, punching, choking, stabbing, burning), however men are as likely or significantly more likely than women to experience assaults using a weapon. Perhaps because of this, male victims are more likely to suffer serious injuries, while female victims are more likely to suffer minor injuries.

The [One in Three Campaign](#) aims to raise public awareness of the existence and needs of male victims of family violence and abuse; to work with government and non-government services alike to provide assistance to male victims; and to reduce the incidence and impacts of family violence on Australian men, women and children.

MEDIA CONTACTS

Greg Andresen, One in Three spokesperson and senior researcher, 0403 813 925, info@oneinthree.com.au