

Trends and patterns in domestic violence assaults: 2001 to 2010

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Aim: To describe current trends in domestic violence and factors associated with reporting offences to police in NSW.

Method: Descriptive analyses were conducted on all incidents of domestic assault recorded by NSW Police between 2001 and 2010. Factors associated with reporting of offences to police were examined using the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Crime Victimization Survey 2008-2009.

Results: Over the last 10 years the trend in domestic assault has been stable across NSW and has fallen slightly in regional areas. The majority of incidents of domestic assaults occurred on residential premises between 6pm and 9pm, Saturdays and Sundays. Alcohol remains an associated factor in many of these incidents. Victims were predominantly female and offenders predominantly male. The overrepresentation of Indigenous Australians as both victims and offenders of domestic assault has not changed over the last decade. Less than half of all respondents who had been the victim of a domestic assault in the previous 12 months reported the incident to the police. Older victims, those who were married and victims of assaults that did not involve weapons or serious injury were less likely to report to police.

Conclusions: While the incidence of domestic assault has been stable across the last 10 years, it continues to be problematic at certain times, in certain places and particularly in some Indigenous communities. Efforts to increase reporting of assault may be best targeted at the subgroups identified in this report who are currently less inclined to report assaults to police.

Keywords: Domestic violence, assault, domestic assault, crime victimisation

Introduction

Recent estimates suggest that close to 1.8 million Australians have been victims of domestic violence (Access Economics, 2004) and that nearly a quarter of all recent assaults are related to domestic violence (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006). Although we now have fairly accurate estimates of the prevalence of domestic violence, it is difficult to fashion effective prevention strategies without an understanding of when, where and in what circumstances domestic violence occurs. Six years ago the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research published a report examining trends and patterns in domestic violence in NSW (People's, 2005). The aim of this report is to update and extend People's (2005) analysis.

Section 1 of this report begins by describing trends and patterns of domestic assault in NSW between 2001 and

2010. A descriptive analysis of incidents of domestic assaults recorded by police in 2010 then follows. This includes information on the premises types on which incidents occur, temporal variation in incidents by time of day and day of week and the involvement of alcohol. Where relevant, details on non-domestic assault are included as a comparison. Section 1 also provides new information on regional variation in domestic assault. In Section 2, we explore characteristics of both victims and offenders involved in domestic assault. Key factors explored are the age, gender and Indigenous status of both the victim and the offender, as well as the victim-offender relationship. Section 3 then compares the general characteristics of victims who reported the most recent incident of domestic assault to the police with those who did not. For this last part of the analysis we used data from the regular crime victimisation survey collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Methods

Data used in Sections 1 and 2 of this report were derived from the NSW Police Force's Computerised Operational Policing System (COPS). As such, only those incidents that are reported to or detected by the police are included.

New South Wales police define domestic assault in line with the *Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007*. Under this legislation a person has a domestic relationship with another if they are a spouse/partner, ex spouse/ex partner, boy/girlfriend (including ex), parent/guardian (including step/foster), child (including step/foster), sibling or other member of family (including kin). Domestic violence can be considered as an associated factor for any criminal incident where the victim-offender relationship meets any of these criteria.

Trends and spatial data are presented as rates per 100,000 population. Rates are calculated using the number of incidents reported to the police and population data obtained from the *Regional Population Growth* report (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010a). Statistical testing of long-term and short-term trends was performed using Kendall's rank-order correlation test. This test was applied to the monthly rate per 100,000 population over the relevant period. Where a statistically significant trend was found ($p < .05$), the size of the trend is given by the average annual percentage change between the first 12-month period and the latest 12-month period. A non-significant test result ($p > .05$) is denoted by 'stable'.

Section 3 examines the under-reporting of both domestic and non-domestic assault using data obtained from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Crime Victimisation Survey 2008-2009* (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010b). Participants were able to describe their relationship to the offender as 'family member' (including previous partner, ex-boyfriend or ex-girlfriend) or 'non family member'. From here on, we refer to these 'family member' assaults as being related to domestic violence.

Section 1: Incidents of domestic assault

Number and per cent of incidents that are domestic violence related, 2009-2010

Although most of this report focuses specifically on domestic assault, perpetrators of domestic violence also come to the attention of police for a variety of other offences that are related to their domestic violence. For example, domestic violence often involves threatening or harassing behaviour such as sending malicious text messages, turning up to social functions uninvited, stalking and so forth. A proportion of property damage offences are also related to domestic violence (e.g. a perpetrator may damage property to try to gain entry to their partner's residence). We begin, therefore, by briefly considering recent trends in selected offences commonly associated with domestic violence.

Table 1 shows the number and percentage of selected offences flagged by police as domestic violence related, as well as the

Table 1. Number, per cent and trends in selected offences recorded by NSW police as being domestic violence related, 2009-2010

Offence	2009		2010		Trend in the number of incidents over the 2 year period (2009-2010)
	N	Per cent	N	Per cent	
Assault	26,217	39.2	26,006	39.7	stable
Harassment, threatening behaviour and private nuisance	8,906	31.4	9,386	32.5	stable
Sexual assault	508	11.6	492	11.0	stable
Malicious damage to property	7,807	7.7	7,668	8.4	stable
Indecent assault, act of indecency and other sexual offences	247	4.6	271	5.2	stable

Table 2. Trends in the rate of police-recorded assault, 2001-2010

Assault type	Location	Trend and average annual per cent change over		
		10 year period 2001-2010	5 year period 2006-2010	2 year period 2009-2010
Domestic	Sydney SD ^a	stable	stable	stable
	Regional NSW ^b	-0.6	-2.7	stable
	NSW	stable	-1.5	stable
Non-domestic	Sydney SD ^a	-1.6	-2.3	stable
	Regional NSW ^b	stable	stable	stable
	NSW	-1.6	-2.5	stable

^a Sydney Statistical Division (SD) consists of the following statistical subdivisions: Inner Sydney, Eastern Suburbs, St George-Sutherland, Canterbury-Bankstown, Fairfield-Liverpool, Outer South Western Sydney, Inner Western Sydney, Central Western Sydney, Outer Western Sydney, Blacktown, Lower Northern Sydney, Central Northern Sydney, Northern Beaches and Central Coast

^b Regional NSW Statistical Divisions are: Hunter, Illawarra, Richmond-Tweed, Mid-North Coast, Northern, North Western, Central West, South Eastern, Murrumbidgee, Murray and Far West

trend between the years 2009-2010. In 2010, nearly 40 per cent of all assaults were recorded as domestic violence related. Similarly, a third of all incidents of harassment, threatening behaviour and private nuisance were considered to be domestic. Only a small proportion (4-5%) of indecent assaults, acts of indecency and other sexual offences were recorded by police as being related to domestic violence during this period. Over this 24 month period, recorded incidents of each of these selected offence categories remained stable.

In light of the fact that assault is the most common category of domestic violence related offending recorded by the police, we now turn to a more in-depth analysis of police-recorded domestic assault.

Trends in domestic assault

Figure 1 shows the rate of both domestic and non-domestic assault per 100,000 NSW residents. Domestic assaults increased between 2001 and 2003 before stabilising. By comparison, non-domestic assaults have been gradually declining over this time period. These trends are supported by the results of statistical tests shown in Table 2. Across NSW, the long-term (10 year), medium-term (5 year) and the short-term (2 year) trends are stable or falling for both domestic and non-domestic assault.

While the rate of domestic assault has historically been lower than that of non-domestic assault, the proportion of assaults attributed to domestic violence has increased. In 2001, 36 per cent of all assaults were related to domestic violence. By 2010 this had increased to 39 per cent.

Figure 2 shows the rate of domestic assault in the Sydney Statistical Division (SD)^a, the Regional NSW SDs^b and NSW total. In the Sydney SD, the rate of domestic assault has remained stable at an average of 373 per 100,000 (Figure 2 and Table 2).

In Regional NSW SDs the rate of domestic assault is approximately 34 per cent higher than in the Sydney SD. For example, in 2010 the rate in the Regional NSW SDs was 428 per 100,000 population compared to 319 in Sydney. Considering 10 and 5-year trends, domestic assault has declined in the Regional NSW SDs (Figure 2 and Table 2) and remained stable over the last 2 years.

Figure 3 shows the rate of non-domestic assault between 2001 and 2010 and is included as a comparison. The rate of non-domestic assault has declined or remained stable across all areas over this time period (also see Table 2).

Both domestic and non-domestic assault show high levels of seasonal variation (Figure 4). Over the last 10 years both types of assault peaked during the summer months before declining in winter. The highest monthly rates of domestic assault occur in December and January, with the lowest monthly rates of domestic assault occurring in June.

Figure 1. Rate of assault, 2001 to 2010

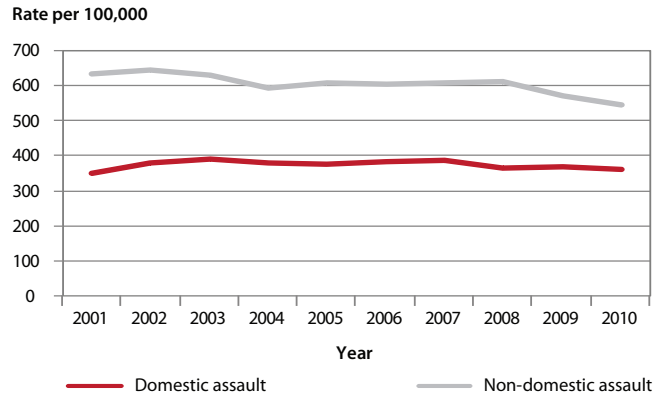


Figure 2. Rate of domestic assault by statistical region, 2001 to 2010

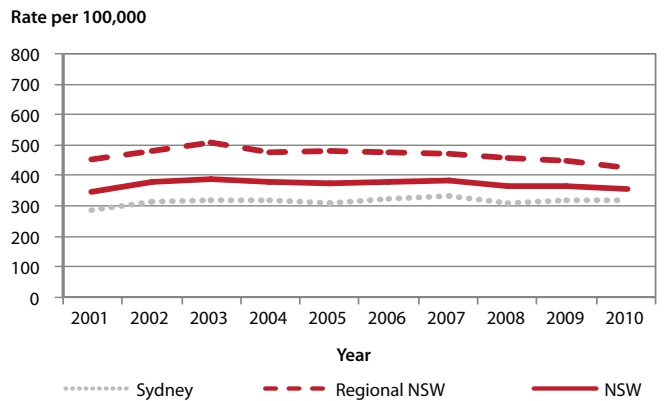


Figure 3. Rate of non-domestic assault, 2001 to 2010

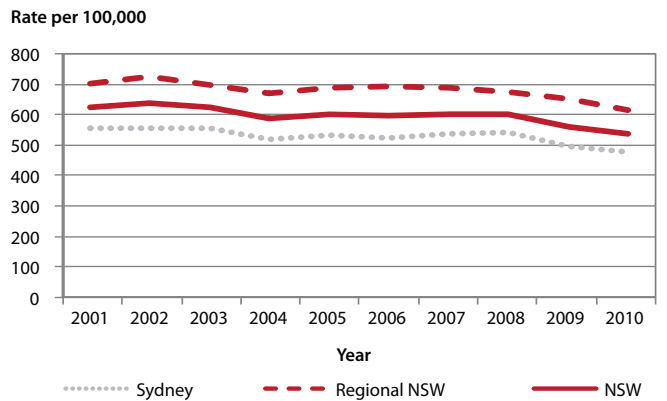
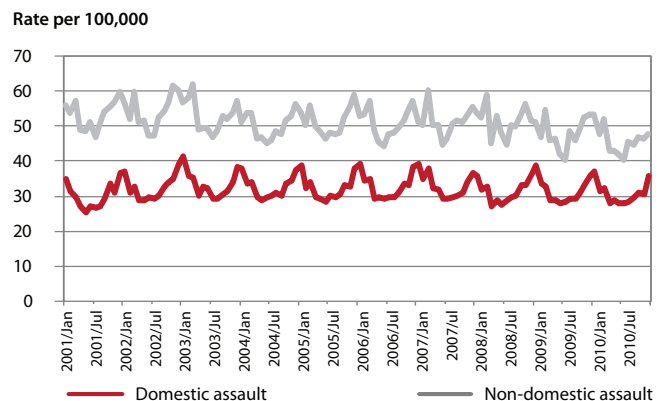


Figure 4. Rate of domestic assault, 2001 to 2010 by month



Types of premises

Figure 5 shows the percentages of domestic assaults that occurred on selected premises types, with non-domestic assaults included as a comparison. During 2010, the majority of domestic assaults were recorded as occurring on residential premises types (86.4%), followed by outdoor public places (7.9%). Relatively few domestic assaults occurred on commercial premises types (1.6%) or on licensed premises (1.4%). In contrast, the majority of non-domestic assaults occurred in outdoor public places (34.1%), followed by residential premises types (24.3%), licensed premises (13.1%) and other commercial premises (10.4%).

Time of incidents

Figure 6 shows the time of day that domestic and non-domestic assaults were reported as occurring during 2010. Incidents gradually increased throughout the day from 3am. The peak period during which domestic assaults are reported to occur is between 6pm and 9pm. The peak time period for non-domestic assault was later in the evening than domestic assaults, with the majority of non-domestic assaults occurring between 9pm and midnight (18.2%) and between midnight and 3am (17.2%). That said, the time period of between 6pm and 9pm still contained a large proportion of non-domestic assaults (15.1%). The smallest per cent of non-domestic assaults occurred between 6am and 9am (4.1%).

Figure 7 shows the per cent of domestic and non-domestic assault by day of the week for 2010. Domestic assaults tend to be more commonly reported to police on both Saturdays (17.2%) and Sundays (18.8%) than on other days of the week. A similar pattern can be seen for non-domestic assault, although these offences also tend to be higher on Thursdays and Fridays.

Alcohol

Alcohol is known to be a significant risk factor for domestic violence, with women whose partners frequently consume alcohol at excessive levels being more likely to experience abuse (Mouzos & Makkai, 2004). Figure 8 shows the percentage of domestic and non-domestic assaults in 2010 that police recorded as alcohol-related, by the region in which the assault occurred. Forty-one per cent of domestic assault incidents in NSW were flagged by police as alcohol-related. This percentage varied across NSW SDs, ranging from between 35 per cent in the Sydney SD to 62 per cent in the Far West SD.

Location

Table 3 lists the 20 Local Government Areas (LGAs) that had the highest per capita rates² of domestic assault in 2010. The five LGAs with the highest rates of domestic assault were Bourke, Walgett, Moree Plains, Coonamble and Wentworth. The state average rate for domestic assault in 2010 was 360 incidents per 100,000 population. The top five LGAs had a rate between three and ten times the state average. The other LGAs in the top 20 had domestic assault rates at least 1.5 times the state average.

Figure 5. Percentages of domestic and non-domestic assault by premises type, 2010

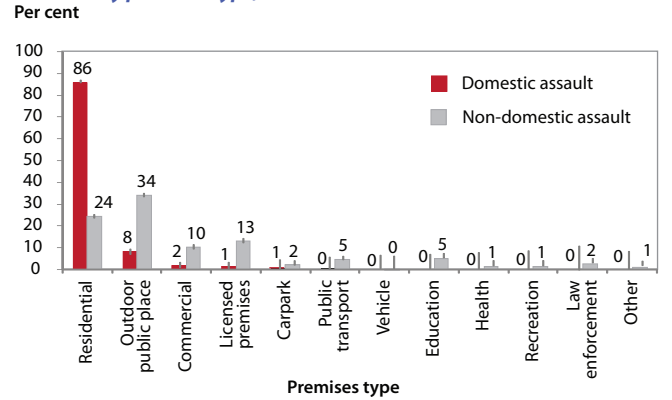


Figure 6. Domestic and non-domestic assaults by time of day, 2010

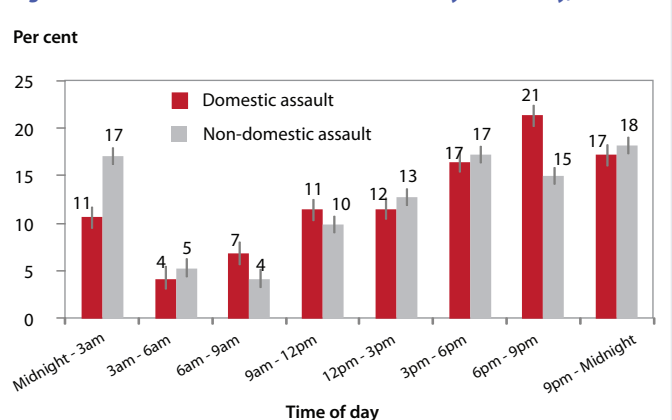


Figure 7. Domestic and non-domestic assaults by day of week, 2010

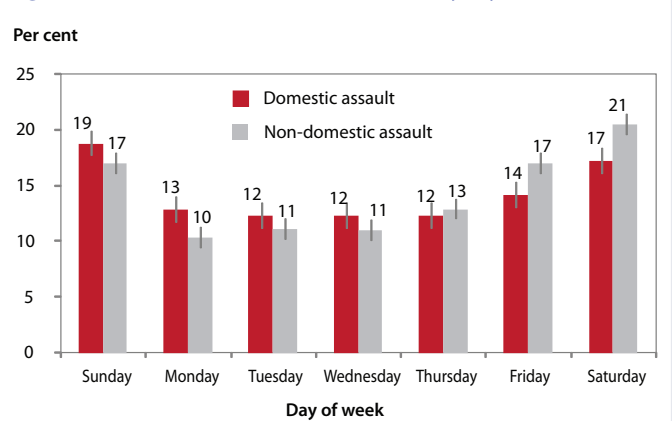
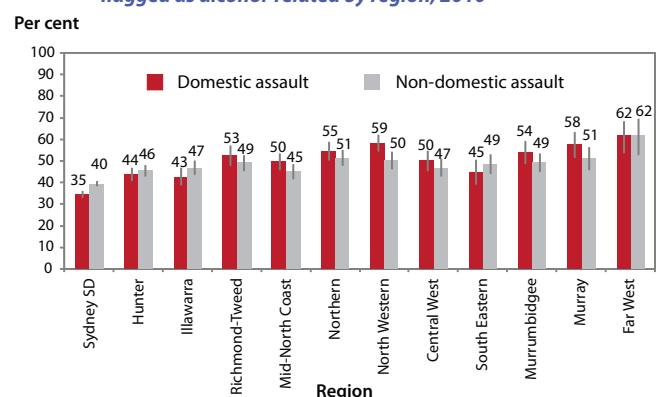


Figure 8. Per cent of domestic and non-domestic assaults flagged as alcohol-related by region, 2010



The number and rate of domestic assault incidents for each LGA in NSW are shown in the Appendix (Table A1).

Table 3 also indicates the degree of remoteness for the top 20 LGAs. Remoteness comprises five categories which represent accessibility and range from 'major city', 'inner regional', 'outer regional' and 'remote' to 'very remote'. The top five LGAs are classified as 'very remote' or 'remote' and all but one of the top 20 LGAs are regional (or remote). Campbelltown is the only metropolitan LGA placed in the top 20 LGAs for rate of domestic assault. Figure 9, which shows the spatial distribution of all

NSW LGAs by rate of domestic assault, further illustrates the high rates of domestic assault found in remote and regional parts of NSW.

Table 4 lists the 10 LGAs in the Sydney metropolitan region with the highest rates of domestic assault in 2010. The five Sydney metropolitan LGAs with the highest per capita rates of domestic assault were Campbelltown, Blacktown, Penrith, Wyong and Holroyd. The top 10 Sydney metropolitan LGAs have a rate of domestic assault above the state average of 360 incidents per 100,000 population.

Table 3. Top 20 LGAs in NSW ranked by rate of domestic assault incidents, 2010

Rank	LGA	No. of domestic assault incidents	Estimated population in 2010	Rate per 100,000 population	Degree of remoteness
1	Bourke	114	3,079	3702.5	Very remote
2	Walgett	212	7,235	2930.2	Remote
3	Moree Plains	179	14,425	1240.9	Remote
4	Coonamble	45	4,314	1043.2	Remote
5	Wentworth	74	7,120	1039.3	Remote
6	Forbes	83	9,748	851.5	Outer regional
7	Broken Hill	166	19,818	837.6	Outer regional
8	Bogan	25	3,003	832.5	Remote
9	Wellington	70	8,875	788.7	Outer regional
10	Dubbo	318	41,763	761.4	Inner regional
11	Inverell	127	16,841	754.1	Outer regional
12	Lachlan	51	6,844	745.2	Remote
13	Cowra	91	12,957	702.3	Inner regional
14	Kempsey	205	29,442	696.3	Outer regional
15	Deniliquin	53	7,633	694.4	Inner regional
16	Gilgandra	32	4,700	680.9	Outer regional
17	Campbelltown	1,042	153,222	680.1	Major city
18	Great Lakes	237	35,924	659.7	Inner regional
19	Narromine	44	6,841	643.2	Outer regional
20	Kyogle	61	9,877	617.6	Inner regional

Table 4. Top 10 LGAs in the Sydney metropolitan region ranked by rate of domestic assault incidents, 2010

Rank	LGA	No. of domestic assault incidents	Estimated population in 2010	Rate per 100,000 population	Degree of remoteness
1	Campbelltown	1,042	153,222	680.1	Major city
2	Blacktown	1737	307,816	564.3	Major city
3	Penrith	940	186,221	504.8	Major city
4	Wyong	700	151,527	462.0	Inner Regional
5	Holroyd	452	102,188	442.3	Major city
6	Liverpool	792	185,481	427.0	Major city
7	Auburn	302	78,597	384.2	Major city
8	Hawkesbury	241	64,030	376.4	Outer Regional
9	Fairfield	735	196,567	373.9	Major city
10	Parramatta	633	172,333	367.3	Major city

Figure 9. The spatial distribution of domestic assault rates² across NSW LGAs, 2010

Assault - Domestic Violence Related

Rate per 100,000 population for Local Government Areas in New South Wales, 2010

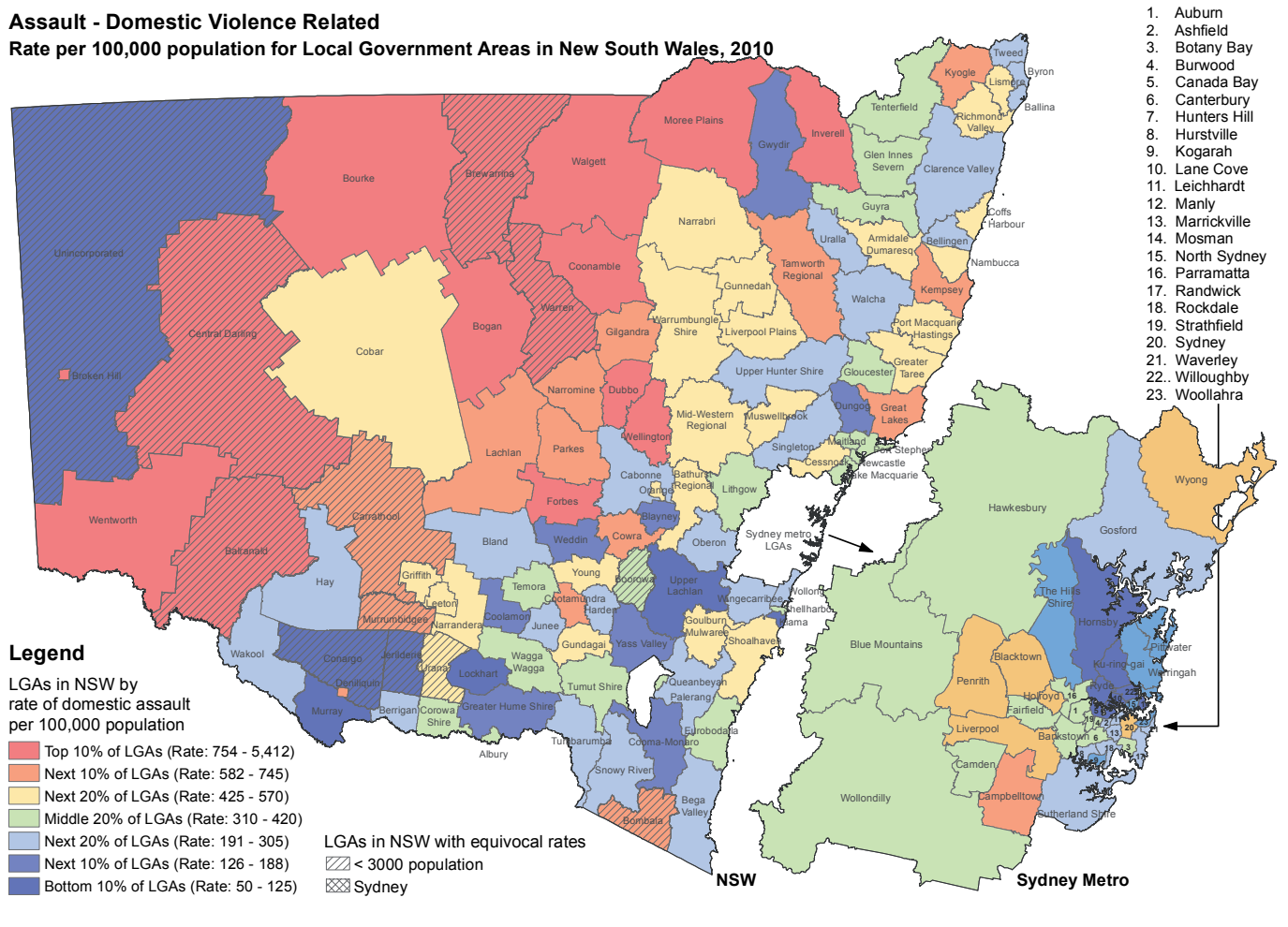


Table 5. Age and gender of victims of domestic and non-domestic assault, 2010

Gender	Domestic assault			Non-domestic assault		
	N	Per cent of grand total	95% confidence interval	N	Per cent of grand total	95% confidence interval
Female < 18	2,227	7.7	6.7, 8.9	3,477	7.8	7.0, 8.8
Female 18+	17,761	61.5	60.7, 62.2	9,405	21.2	20.4, 22.1
Female total	19,988	69.2	68.5, 69.8	12,882	29.1	28.3, 29.9
Male < 18	1,539	5.3	4.3, 6.6	5,556	12.5	11.7, 13.4
Male 18+	7,354	25.4	24.5, 26.5	25,861	58.3	57.7, 58.9
Male total	8,893	30.8	29.8, 31.7	31,417	70.9	70.4, 71.4
Total < 18	3,766	13.0	12.0, 14.2	9,036	20.4	19.6, 21.2
Total 18+	25,136	87.0	86.6, 87.4	35,295	79.6	79.2, 80.1
Grand total	28,902	100.0		44,331	100.0	

Section 2: Victims and offenders of domestic assault

Age and gender of victims

Table 5 shows the number, per cent and 95 per cent confidence intervals of adult and child victims of both domestic and non-domestic assault by gender. Females are more likely to be victims of a domestic assault than males (69.2% vs. 30.8%) and males are more likely to be victims of non-domestic assault (70.9% vs. 29.1%). Three quarters of domestic assault victims

were women or children, compared with 42 per cent of non-domestic assaults.

Figure 10 further breaks down the age distribution of victims of domestic assault. While females are more likely to be victims of domestic assault, the size of the disparity varies with age. The largest difference between males and females is found in the age category of 18-24. Males and females under the age of 15 and over the age of 50 are victims of domestic assault in similar proportions.

Table 6. Age and gender of offenders of domestic and non-domestic assault, 2010

Gender	Domestic assault			Non-domestic assault		
	N	Per cent of grand total	95% confidence interval	N	Per cent of grand total	95% confidence interval
Female 10-17	446	2.8	1.6, 4.8	1,071	8.6	7.1, 10.5
Female 18+	2,435	15.2	13.8, 16.6	1,965	15.8	14.2, 17.5
Female total	2,881	17.9	16.6, 19.4	3,036	24.4	22.9, 26.0
Male 10-17	780	4.9	3.5, 6.6	1,923	15.5	13.9, 17.1
Male 18+	12,403	77.2	76.5, 77.9	7,484	60.1	59.0, 61.2
Male total	13,183	82.1	81.4, 82.7	9,407	75.6	74.7, 76.5
Total 10-17	1,226	7.6	6.3, 9.3	2,994	24.1	22.6, 25.6
Total 18+	14,838	92.4	91.9, 92.8	9,449	75.9	75.1, 76.8
Grand total	16,064	100.0		12,443	100.0	

Table 7. Relationship between victim and offender, 2010

Victim's gender	Relationship	Female offender			Male offender		
		N	Per cent	95% confidence interval	N	Per cent	95% confidence interval
Female	Partner	310	1.3	0.4, 3.4	12,010	48.3	47.5, 49.2
	Non-partner	2,231	9.0	6.9, 10.2	3,188	12.8	11.7, 14.0
	Total	2,541	10.2	9.1, 11.5	15,198	61.2	60.4, 62.0
Male	Partner	2,154	8.7	7.6, 9.9	480	1.9	1.0, 3.7
	Non-partner	754	3.0	2.0, 4.6	3,665	14.8	13.6, 15.9
	Total	2,908	11.7	10.6, 12.3	4,145	16.8	15.6, 17.9
Grand total		5,449	21.9	20.9, 23.1	19,343	77.8	77.3, 78.4

Age and gender of offenders

Table 6 shows the number and per cent of male and female offenders of both domestic and non-domestic assault. Males are more likely than females to be the offenders in both domestic (82.1% vs. 17.9%) and non-domestic assault (75.6% vs. 24.4%)

Figure 11 shows the age distribution of both male and female offenders of domestic assault in 2010. Over 50 per cent of offenders were males between the ages of 18 and 39. Each five year age group of males within this range accounted for 13 to 15 per cent of all offenders.

Relationship between victim and offender

Table 7 shows the number and per cent of victims who were assaulted by a male or female offender and whether that offender was a partner or not. Not surprisingly, nearly half of all domestic assaults involved a female victim and a male offender who were in a partner relationship (48.3%). The next most common scenario consisted of male and female victims being assaulted by male non-partners (14.8 and 12.8% respectively). The most infrequent domestic assaults occurred where the victim and offender were female in a partner relationship (1.3%).

Figure 10. Age and gender of domestic assault victims

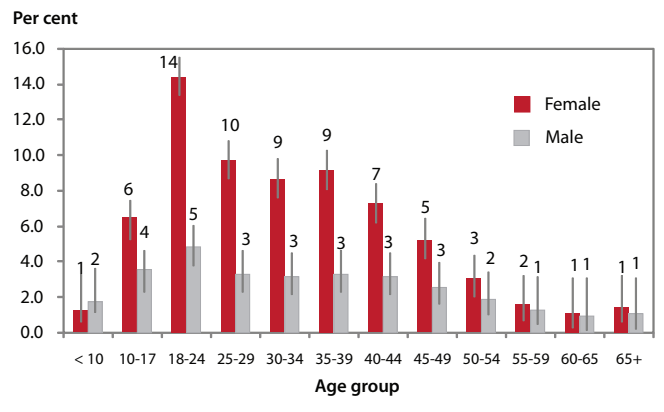


Figure 11. Age and gender of domestic assault offenders

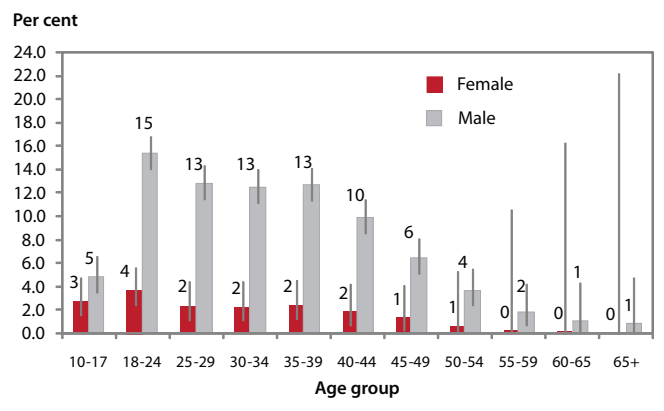


Table 8. Relationship between Indigenous offenders and Indigenous victims for domestic assault, by gender, 2010

		Relationship	Indigenous female offender			Indigenous male offender		
			N	Per cent	95% confidence interval	N	Per cent	95% confidence interval
Victim's gender	Indigenous female victim	Partner	32	1.5	-1.5,15.1	1,046	47.8	44.8, 50.8
		Non-partner	301	13.7	10.3,18.1	311	14.2	10.8, 18.6
		Total	333	15.2	11.7,19.5	1,357	62.0	59.4, 64.5
	Indigenous male victim	Partner	155	7.1	3.9,12.4	34	1.6	-1.3, 14.6
		Non-partner	62	2.8	0.1,11.3	246	11.2	7.9, 15.9
		Total	217	9.9	6.6,14.7	280	12.8	9.4, 17.3
Grand total			550	25.1	21.7,28.9	1,637	74.7	72.6, 76.8

Indigenous status

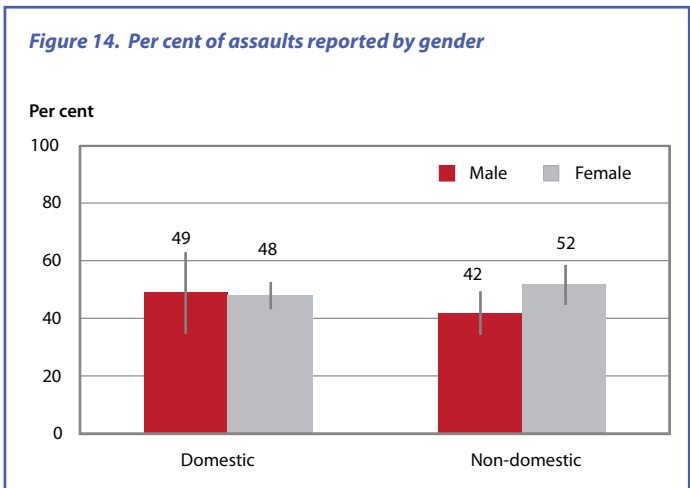
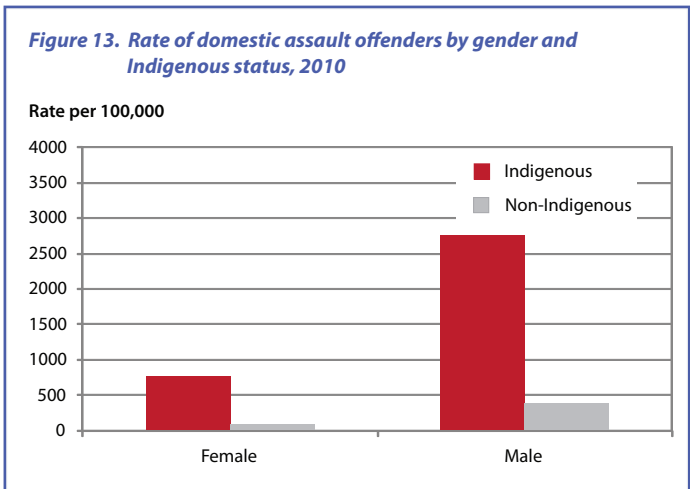
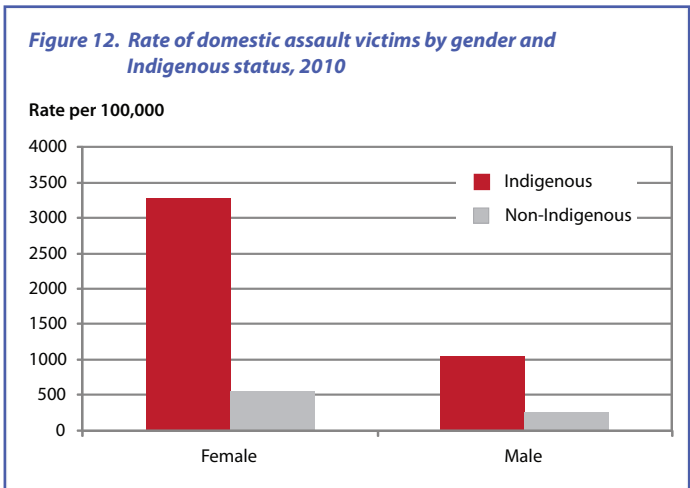
Figure 12 shows the rate of domestic assault for Indigenous and non-Indigenous victims by gender. Indigenous women are vastly over-represented as victims of domestic assault. The rate of domestic assault for Indigenous women (3,275 per 100,000) is more than six times higher than for non-Indigenous women (544 per 100,000). Indigenous males are also over-represented as victims when compared to non-Indigenous males, with a rate of 1,043 victims per 100,000 compared to a non-Indigenous male rate of 260 victims per 100,000.

When considering perpetrators of domestic assault, both Indigenous males and females have offending rates higher than non-Indigenous persons. Indigenous male offending is more than seven times higher than non-Indigenous male offending (2,760 per 100,000 population compared to 365 per 100,000). Indigenous females are recorded as perpetrators of domestic assault at 10 times the rate of non-Indigenous women (753 and 73 per 100,000 for Indigenous and non-Indigenous women, respectively; Figure 13).

Table 8 shows the relationships between Indigenous victims and offenders in domestic assaults, as well as whether they were in a partner relationship or not. In 62 per cent of all domestic assaults where the victim and offender were Indigenous, the victim was female and the offender male. The most common scenario involved a male offender and a female partner (47.8%), followed by a male offender and female non-partner (14.2%). Females were most likely to assault a female non-partner (13.7%), followed by a male partner (7.1%), male non-partner (2.8 %) and female partner (1.5%).

Section 3: Factors related to reporting of assault

Of the 859 survey respondents who were assaulted in the past 12 months, 24 per cent of the most recent assaults were related to domestic violence and less than half of these were reported to the police (48%). In the section below we explore this level of under reporting by examining the role of general demographic factors, socioeconomic factors and assault seriousness. As noted earlier, the data for this section are drawn from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Crime Victimization Survey 2008-2009* (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010a).



General demographic factors

Figure 14 shows the percentage of male and female victims of an assault who reported the most recent incident to the police. Around half of all respondents reported the incident to the police. There is no difference between men and women in their willingness to report a domestic assault to police ($\chi^2=0.0$, $df=1$, $p=.91$). In contrast, women were more likely to report a non-domestic assault than men ($\chi^2=5.7$, $df=1$, $p=.18$).

Figure 15 shows the relationship between the age of the victim and reporting of domestic and non-domestic assault. Victim's age was a factor in the reporting of both domestic and non-domestic assault ($\chi^2=9.5$, $df=4$, $p=.05$; $\chi^2=11.0$, $df=4$, $p=.03$, respectively). Reporting of domestic assault was highest in the youngest age category (15-19 year olds) at 62 per cent, followed by 20-29 year old survey respondents (57%). The age category with the lowest level of reporting was those aged 50 years and over, with only 28 per cent of these victims reporting the incident to the police. In comparison, the opposite pattern was seen in reporting non-domestic assault. Here, the youngest age group had the lowest level of reporting whereas those aged 40-49 and over had the highest level of reporting.

Figure 16 shows the relationship between marital status and reporting of assault. Considering the marital status of victims of domestic assault, more than half (52%) of unmarried victims reported the incident to the police compared to 34 per cent of married victims ($\chi^2=4.8$, $df=1$, $p=.03$). By comparison, a smaller proportion of unmarried victims reported non-domestic assault than married victims (42% and 52% respectively; $\chi^2=6.4$, $df=1$, $p=.01$). As the effect of marital status may be confounded with the effect of age (such that younger victims of a domestic assault are also less likely to be married) caution needs to be taken when interpreting these factors.

Socio economic factors

Table 9 shows the proportion of victims reporting domestic violence by level of socio economic index for areas (SEIFA). These SEIFA levels are calculated according to an index developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and are based on factors such as income, education and employment characteristics of the area (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008). Due to extremely small numbers within each of the 10 socio economic deciles, it is difficult to assess the relationship between disadvantage and levels of reporting. However, it is clear from Table 9 that victims in bracket 1 (i.e. the most disadvantaged areas) appear to have the highest level of reporting of domestic assault (69%). No statistical testing was performed on the SEIFA factor due to these small sample sizes.

Table 10, which shows the relationship between labour force status and reporting, suggests that the victims' participation in the labour force is not significantly related to willingness to report assaults to police. Approximately half of those employed, unemployed or not in the labour force reported the most recent domestic or non-domestic assault.

Figure 15. Per cent of assaults reported by age

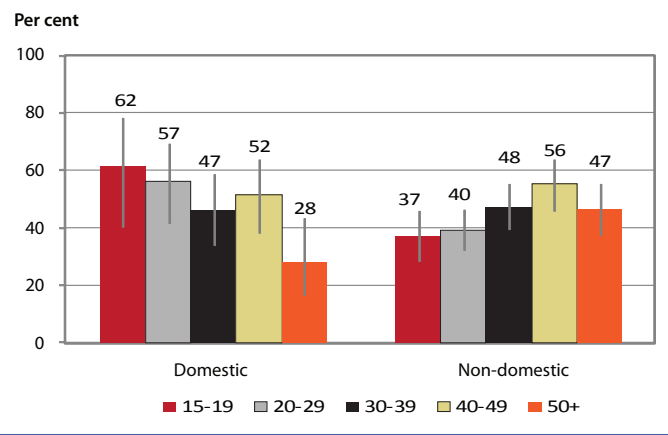


Figure 16. Per cent of assaults reported by marital status

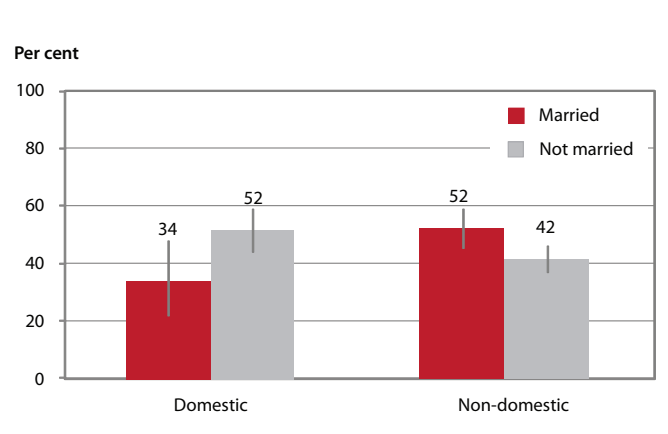


Table 9. Index of relative socio economic disadvantage status by reporting

Index decile	Domestic assault		Non-domestic assault	
	Number of victims	Per cent who reported	Number of victims	Per cent who reported
1	25	69.4	46	48.9
2	9	29.0	39	50.6
3	12	44.4	30	42.9
4	9	42.9	28	44.4
5	12	52.2	27	42.9
6	7	33.3	34	50.0
7	11	57.9	27	45.8
8	7	46.7	22	37.9
9	8	53.3	20	33.3
10	3	50.0	18	54.5
Total	103	48.1	291	45.1

Table 10. Labour force status by reporting

Labour force status	Per cent who reported the domestic assault (95% Confident Interval)	Per cent who reported the non-domestic assault (95% Confident Interval)
Employed	45.4 (33.5, 58.1)	43.2 (36.4, 50.2)
Unemployed	46.2 (16.7, 78.7)	52.2 (33.4, 70.4)
Not in labour force	53.5 (38.1, 68.3)	48.6 (37.5, 59.8)

Assault seriousness

In cases of domestic assault a majority of respondents (58%) described themselves as 'hurt' as a result of the last assault. This is higher than the 41 per cent who described themselves as 'hurt' in a non-domestic assault. Figure 17 shows that willingness to report domestic assault did not differ between those who described themselves as hurt or not hurt in the assault ($\chi^2=0.0$, $df=1$, $p=.93$). This differs from incidents of non-domestic assault, where 52 per cent of assaults were reported when the individual was hurt compared to only 40% when they were unhurt ($\chi^2=9.2$, $df=1$, $p=.00$).

Of those who were hurt in a domestic assault, 34 per cent were 'admitted to hospital/seen by a doctor or other medical practitioner'. When the assault was non-domestic, 48 per cent were 'admitted to hospital/seen by a doctor or other medical practitioner'. Figure 18 considers only those individuals who were hurt in the most recent assault. For both domestic and non-domestic assault, reporting of the assault was highest among the group that sought medical attention (Figure 18). For domestic assaults, 69 per cent of those who received medical treatment reported the incident compared to 38 per cent of those who did not seek medical treatment ($\chi^2=10.9$, $df=1$, $p=.00$). Similarly, 66 per cent of incidents of non-domestic assault were reported when medical treatment was sought compared to 40 per cent when it was not ($\chi^2=17.9$, $df=1$, $p<.00$).

As weapons may influence whether a victim is hurt, we also considered reporting of assault by weapon use. Approximately one in 10 (11%) domestic assaults described by survey participants were said to involve a weapon. Table 11 shows that victims were more likely to report an assault when a weapon was used. This trend was apparent for both domestic and non-domestic assaults ($\chi^2=3.7$, $df=1$, $p=.05$; $\chi^2=11.1$, $df=1$, $p<.00$, respectively).

Summary

This report explored domestic assaults in NSW between 2001-2010. The aim was to update and expand on an earlier report covering the period 1997-2004 (People, 2005). While the number of domestic assaults remained high at 26,006 in 2010, this figure has declined since 2006 and been stable since 2009. Other key patterns of domestic assault remain unchanged. The majority of domestic assaults occur on residential premises, with the highest number of incidents occurring between 6pm- 9pm on Saturdays and Sundays. Alcohol remains a factor in many domestic assaults, with the proportion of domestic assaults involving alcohol increasing from 36 per cent in 2004 to 41 per cent in 2010. While this might suggest that alcohol is increasingly involved in domestic violence incidents, this trend could equally reflect improvements in police willingness to record alcohol as a factor associated with the violent incidents.

LGAs with the highest per capita rates of domestic assault were predominantly located in remote and regional areas of NSW.

Table 11. Reporting of domestic and non-domestic assault, by weapon use

Weapon use	Per cent who reported the domestic assault	Per cent who reported the non-domestic assault
Weapon used	66.7	59.6
Weapon not used	45.8	42.2

Figure 17. Per cent of assaults reported by whether victim was injured in the assault

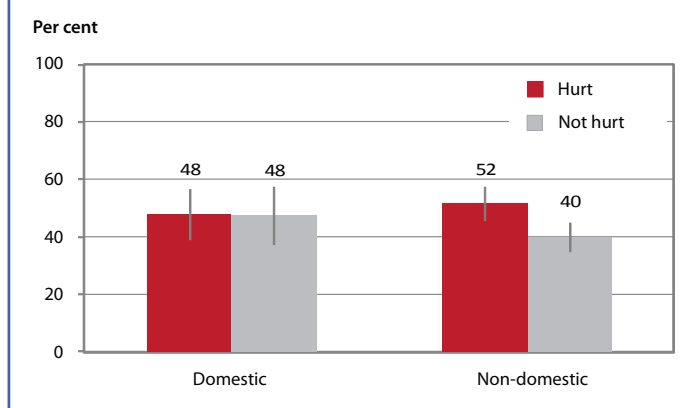
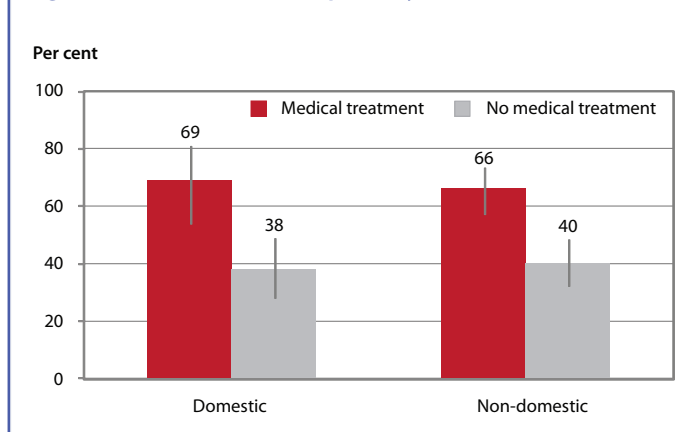


Figure 18. Per cent of assaults reported by medical treatment



The top five LGAs were all remote (Bourke, Walgett, Moree Plains, Coonamble and Wentworth). Sydney metropolitan LGAs with the highest rates of domestic assault were Campbelltown, Blacktown, Penrith, Wyong and Holroyd. Each of these LGAs also featured in the top 10 Sydney metropolitan LGAs for domestic assault in 2004 (People, 2005).

Victim and offender characteristics also remain unchanged. The majority of victims of domestic assault are female (69% in 2010) and offenders male (82% in 2010). These figures are only marginally different from the percentages reported for 2004, where victims were predominantly female (71%) and offenders male (80%). Of interest for crime prevention and social services is that 14 per cent of all domestic assaults reported to police were younger female victims aged 18-24 and that half of all of the offenders were males aged 18-39. Understanding these victim and offender characteristics may help target specialist services for victims and identify groups in the community

where a change in tolerance of, and attitudes toward, this type of crime is needed.

The over-representation of Indigenous Australians as both victims and offenders of domestic assault has not changed over the last decade. In line with previous research, the rate of domestic assault for Indigenous women is still more than six times the rate of non-Indigenous women (Al-Yaman, Van Doeland, & Wallis, 2006; Fitzgerald & Weatherburn, 2001).

Using data from the ABS Crime Victimization Survey 2008-2009 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010b) we found that less than half of respondents who had been assaulted in the previous 12 months reported the domestic assault to the police. In order to increase levels of reporting, we need a much greater understanding of factors that predict willingness to report. Though the sample size of this ABS survey limits our capacity to determine correlates of reporting, we did find that reporting of domestic assault was higher among victims who had sought medical attention than those who had not. This supports the view that assault seriousness is a driver of reporting and highlights the importance of contact with medical professionals as a pathway into services.

Notes

- 1 The ABS Crime Victimization Survey was conducted as part of the Multipurpose Household Survey (MPHS). During 2008-2009 information from 25,601 individuals was collected about selected crimes and the reporting of those crimes to police. Interviews were conducted either by telephone or at selected dwellings in both urban and rural areas, excluding those in very remote parts of Australia. Survey participants were asked whether or not they had been a victim of an assault in the last 12 months. Of the 25,601 participants, 859 identified that they had been assaulted, with a further 214 describing the relationship to the offender as a 'family member' (including previous partner, ex-boyfriend or ex-girlfriend). Using this sub-sample, we describe a range of factors including general demographics, socioeconomic indicators and assault seriousness that have been implicated as factors associated with reporting of assault. This analysis was limited to bivariate comparisons because the sample was not large enough to conduct multivariate analyses. Readers should therefore be cautious when interpreting these comparisons because we cannot say with certainty that a particular covariate is independently predictive of willingness to report assaults.
- 2 Rate calculations for areas with small populations are very sensitive to small changes in population sizes and the number of incidents recorded. With this in mind, LGAs with populations lower than 3000 are indicated by 'n/a' in Table A1 in the Appendix and are depicted with cross hatching in Figure 9. Likewise, rate calculations for areas that have high visitor numbers relative to their residential population

should also be treated with caution. This is because rate calculations are based on estimated residential population and no adjustment has been made for the number of people visiting the area. For this reason, Sydney LGA has also been highlighted by 'n/a' in Table A1 in the Appendix.

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Appendix

Table A1. LGAs in NSW ranked by rate and number of domestic assault incidents, 2010

Rank by rate of domestic assault incidents			Rank by number of domestic assault incidents		
Rank	LGA	Rate per 100,000 population	Rank	LGA	Number of domestic assault incidents
1	Bourke	3,702.5	1	Blacktown	1,737
2	Walgett	2,930.2	2	Campbelltown	1,042
3	Moree Plains	1,240.9	3	Penrith	940
4	Coonamble	1,043.1	4	Liverpool	792
5	Wentworth	1,039.3	5	Fairfield	735
6	Forbes	851.5	6	Wyong	700
7	Broken Hill	837.6	7	Bankstown	658
8	Bogan	832.5	8	Lake Macquarie	639
9	Wellington	788.7	9	Parramatta	633
10	Dubbo	761.4	10	Wollongong	621
11	Inverell	754.1	11	Newcastle	572
12	Lachlan	745.2	12	Gosford	513
13	Cowra	702.3	13	Shoalhaven	512
14	Kempsey	696.3	14	Sutherland Shire	501
15	Deniliquin	694.4	15	Canterbury	461
16	Gilgandra	680.9	16	Holroyd	452
17	Campbelltown	680.1	17	Tamworth Regional	362
18	Great Lakes	659.7	18	Coffs Harbour	332
19	Narromine	643.2	19	Port Macquarie-Hastings	325
20	Kyogle	617.6	20	Dubbo	318
21	Tamworth Regional	608.8	21	The Hills Shire	317
22	Parkes	599.0	22	Randwick	310
23	Cootamundra	582.2	23	Auburn	302
24	Gunnedah	570.7	24	Maitland	283
25	Blacktown	564.3	25	Rockdale	277
26	Cobar	560.1	26	Tweed	270
27	Griffith	556.4	27	Blue Mountains	259
28	Orange	554.3	28	Cessnock	257
29	Narrandera	541.4	29	Hawkesbury	241
30	Shoalhaven	528.0	30	Hurstville	239
31	Mid-Western Regional	516.2	30	Warringah	239
32	Young	512.3	32	Great Lakes	237
33	Nambucca	511.1	33	Marrickville	236
34	Narrabri	509.4	33	Wagga Wagga	236
35	Penrith	504.8	35	Port Stephens	229
36	Cessnock	497.0	36	Shellharbour	219
37	Gundagai	486.9	37	Orange	218
38	Bathurst Regional	486.0	38	Albury	215
39	Richmond Valley	484.5	39	Walgett	212
40	Warrumbungle Shire	484.0	40	Greater Taree	210
41	Armidale Dumaresq	475.7	41	Kempsey	205
42	Muswellbrook	467.7	41	Lismore	205
43	Wyong	462.0	43	Hornsby	195
44	Goulburn Mulwaree	459.9	44	Bathurst Regional	194
45	Coffs Harbour	455.9	45	Camden	180
46	Liverpool Plains	452.0	46	Moree Plains	179
47	Lismore	446.5	47	Broken Hill	166
48	Leeton	444.3	48	Clarence Valley	159
49	Holroyd	442.3	49	Wollondilly	154
50	Greater Taree	429.0	50	Griffith	144
51	Liverpool	427.0	51	Queanbeyan	134
52	Port Macquarie-Hastings	425.8	52	Ryde	133
53	Albury	420.6	52	Waverley	133
54	Guyra	417.6	54	Goulburn Mulwaree	132

Table A1. LGAs in NSW ranked by rate and number of domestic assault incidents, 2010 - continued

Rank by rate of domestic assault incidents			Rank by number of domestic assault incidents		
Rank	LGA	Rate per 100,000 population	Rank	LGA	Number of domestic assault incidents
55	Glen Innes Severn	408.1	55	Eurobodalla	131
56	Lithgow	407.7	56	Ballina	127
57	Maitland	402.6	56	Botany Bay	127
58	Auburn	384.2	56	Inverell	127
59	Hawkesbury	376.4	59	Armidale Dumaresq	123
60	Fairfield	373.9	60	Leichhardt	118
61	Wagga Wagga	371.7	60	Mid-Western Regional	118
62	Tenterfield	367.7	62	Strathfield	115
63	Parramatta	367.3	63	Bourke	114
64	Newcastle	366.4	64	Richmond Valley	112
65	Wollondilly	349.6	65	North Sydney	107
66	Bankstown	348.5	65	Wingecarribee	107
67	Gloucester	347.4	67	Burwood	105
68	Eurobodalla	347.4	67	Kogarah	105
69	Tumut Shire	339.7	69	Bega Valley	102
70	Port Stephens	337.6	70	Byron	99
71	Blue Mountains	332.3	70	Nambucca	99
72	Queanbeyan	323.4	72	Canada Bay	95
73	Shellharbour	323.0	73	Ashfield	92
74	Temora	321.8	73	Woollahra	92
75	Lake Macquarie	318.1	75	Cowra	91
76	Camden	316.9	75	Parkes	91
77	Canterbury	316.5	77	Lithgow	86
78	Corowa Shire	314.3	78	Forbes	83
79	Botany Bay	313.9	79	Pittwater	81
80	Strathfield	311.6	80	Muswellbrook	78
81	Burwood	310.6	81	Ku-ring-gai	77
82	Byron	305.8	82	Wentworth	74
83	Wollongong	305.2	83	Gunnedah	70
84	Gosford	305.0	83	Manly	70
85	Clarence Valley	302.3	83	Narrabri	70
86	Junee	301.7	83	Wellington	70
87	Bega Valley	300.7	87	Young	67
88	Harden	299.8	88	Kyogle	61
89	Tweed	299.7	89	Singleton	57
90	Hay	298.6	90	Willoughby	54
91	Marrickville	297.9	91	Deniliquin	53
92	Ballina	297.4	91	Leeton	53
93	Hurstville	295.7	93	Lachlan	51
94	Bland	280.8	94	Warrumbungle Shire	50
95	Cabonne	277.1	95	Coonamble	45
96	Rockdale	268.5	95	Cootamundra	45
97	Oberon	257.4	97	Narromine	44
98	Upper Hunter Shire	246.5	98	Tumut Shire	39
99	Singleton	235.7	99	Glen Innes Severn	38
100	Randwick	232.9	100	Cabonne	37
101	Bellingen	230.5	100	Corowa Shire	37
102	Wingecarribee	227.9	102	Liverpool Plains	36
103	Sutherland Shire	226.9	103	Mosman	35
104	Uralla	222.7	103	Upper Hunter Shire	35
105	Berrigan	219.8	105	Narrandera	34
106	Ashfield	215.0	106	Gilgandra	32
107	Tumbarumba	212.5	107	Bellingen	31
108	Leichhardt	212.2	108	Palerang	30
109	Walcha	212.2	109	Cobar	29
110	Snowy River	207.6	110	Tenterfield	26

Table A1. LGAs in NSW ranked by rate and number of domestic assault incidents, 2010 - continued

Rank by rate of domestic assault incidents			Rank by number of domestic assault incidents		
Rank	LGA	Rate per 100,000 population	Rank	LGA	Number of domestic assault incidents
111	Wakool	205.1	110	Yass Valley	26
112	Palerang	204.8	112	Bogan	25
113	Waverley	191.6	113	Kiama	22
114	Coolamon	189.0	114	Temora	20
115	Weddin	185.2	115	Berrigan	19
116	Cooma-Monaro	181.8	115	Cooma-Monaro	19
117	Blayney	179.1	115	Gundagai	19
118	Kogarah	177.4	115	Guyra	19
119	The Hills Shire	176.4	115	Junee	19
120	Yass Valley	171.2	120	Bland	18
121	Manly	167.0	120	Gloucester	18
122	Gwydir	165.9	122	Greater Hume Shire	17
123	North Sydney	165.1	122	Lane Cove	17
124	Woollahra	164.3	122	Snowy River	17
125	Warringah	163.9	125	Hunters Hill	15
126	Greater Hume Shire	162.7	126	Oberon	14
127	Pittwater	135.3	126	Uralla	14
128	Dungog	126.8	128	Blayney	13
129	Ryde	125.1	129	Dungog	11
130	Murray	123.0	129	Harden	11
131	Canada Bay	120.7	131	Hay	10
132	Mosman	119.7	132	Gwydir	9
133	Hornsby	118.9	132	Murray	9
134	Upper Lachlan Shire	105.8	132	Wakool	9
135	Kiama	105.2	135	Coolamon	8
136	Hunters Hill	102.8	135	Tumbarumba	8
137	Lockhart	90.4	135	Upper Lachlan Shire	8
138	Willoughby	77.1	138	Walcha	7
139	Ku-ring-gai	67.5	138	Weddin	7
140	Lane Cove	51.0	140	Lockhart	3
n/a	Sydney	n/a	n/a	Sydney	943
n/a	Central Darling	n/a	n/a	Central Darling	109
n/a	Brewarrina	n/a	n/a	Brewarrina	58
n/a	Warren	n/a	n/a	Warren	32
n/a	Carrathool	n/a	n/a	Carrathool	22
n/a	Balranald	n/a	n/a	Balranald	19
n/a	Bombala	n/a	n/a	Bombala	16
n/a	Murrumbidgee	n/a	n/a	Murrumbidgee	15
n/a	Boorowa	n/a	n/a	Boorowa	8
n/a	Urana	n/a	n/a	Urana	7
n/a	Jerilderie	n/a	n/a	Jerilderie	2
n/a	Unincorporated NSW	n/a	n/a	Unincorporated NSW	1
n/a	Conargo	n/a	n/a	Conargo	1
TOTAL NSW		359.5	TOTAL NSW		26,003