



# Research at a glance

## Access to Victim Services by Registered Victims of Domestic Violence and Child Victims

**KEY WORDS:** *Victim Services, domestic violence victims, child victims*

### Why we did this study

In recent years, there has been an increased focus on the role of victims in the criminal justice system, with significant policy and legislative changes having occurred in recognition of their importance.

Victims of domestic violence and child victims require particular attention given that they are numerous, can suffer considerable impacts from their victimization, and may be important users of victim services such as those provided by the Correctional Service of Canada. That said, studying them poses challenges because they are difficult to identify from official records; as such, this study aimed to establish profiles of these two types of victims.

### What we did

At the time of the study, a total of 6,692 victim files were active. From these, Victim Services Officers identified a subset of cases of domestic violence (426) and where the victim was a child (475). These two groups were examined in terms of victim definition, demographic information, victimization-related information, and information disclosure.

Profiles of the registered victims of domestic violence and child victims were established and contrasted with the full population of registered victims. Importantly, these registered victims can be victim representatives rather than the victims themselves.

### What we found

In contrast with the full group of active registered victims, child victims were more likely to be French-speaking. Nearly two-thirds were related to their offender. On average, child victims were victims of a higher number of offences than were the full group, with nearly three-quarters having being sexually victimized at least once.

Domestic violence victims were slightly younger than the full group of victims, were more likely to be women, to be Aboriginal or of a visible minority, and

to have registered a victim representative to request and receive information on their behalf. Relative to the full group of victims, greater percentages of victims of domestic violence were victims of assault or threat of violence (including criminal harassment). Finally, domestic violence victims tended to receive a higher number of victim notifications and to be conveyed more information about whether an offender was or was not in custody.

Contrasts with the full population of victims allowed for the identification of certain areas where the distribution of the population of victims was inconsistent with expectations. Specifically, male victims, Aboriginal victims, victims from visible minorities, and those from Quebec were all represented in lower numbers than might be expected based on the Canadian population. As such, these may be groups on whom future outreach activities may fruitfully be focused.

### What it means

The profiles developed as part of this study underscore that registered victims are not a homogeneous group. This realization is important because considering specific subgroups of victims may facilitate outreach, communication, and the provision of client-matched victim services.

### For more information

Gobeil, R., Barnum, G., & Euch, H. (2012). *Access to victim services by registered victims of domestic violence and child victims*. Research Report R-278. Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada.

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