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HOMICIDE IN CANADA - 1999

Orest Fedorowycz

HIGHLIGHTS

- The national homicide rate decreased by 4% in 1999, resulting in the lowest rate (1.76 per 100,000 population) since 1967. The rate has generally been decreasing since the mid-1970s. The 536 homicides in 1999 were 22 fewer than in 1998 and 16% lower than the average number for the previous ten years.
- In general, homicide rates were higher in the west than in the east. British Columbia had the highest provincial rate in 1999, followed by Manitoba. Manitoba's rate, however, was its lowest since 1967. The lowest rates were in Newfoundland, and Prince Edward Island.
- Only British Columbia, Ontario and New Brunswick reported increases in the number of homicides in 1999, although they all were lower than their previous ten-year averages. Saskatchewan dropped from 33 homicides in 1998 to 13 in 1999, resulting in the lowest homicide rate (1.26) since 1963.
- Among the nine largest metropolitan areas, Vancouver reported the highest homicide rate, followed by Hamilton. Toronto had the lowest rate, followed by Calgary. Toronto's rate was its lowest since CMA data were first tabulated in 1981.
- Since 1976, firearms have accounted for about one-third of all homicides each year. This trend continued in 1999, with firearms being used in 31% of all homicides. The 165 shooting homicides in 1999 were up slightly from the 151 recorded in 1998, but much lower than the previous ten-year average of 205. Handguns were used in slightly over half (55%) of all firearm homicides.
- Homicides continue to be committed primarily by someone known to the victim. In 1999, 35% of victims were killed by family members, and 49% by acquaintances. The proportion of homicides committed by strangers (15%) has remained relatively stable over the past ten years. For the remaining 1% of homicides, the relationship was unknown.
- Despite a very slight increase in 1999, spousal homicides have been decreasing since 1991. The 71 victims killed by a spouse in 1999 were one more than in 1998 but 20 fewer than the average number over the past ten years.
- Half (51%) of all female victims and 6% of male victims in 1999 were killed by a person with whom they had an intimate relationship at one point in time, either through marriage or dating.
- Over the last ten years, the rate of youths accused of homicide has remained relatively stable while the rate for adults has generally been decreasing. From 1989 to 1998, 52 youths, on average, were accused of homicide each year, representing 9.1% of all persons accused of homicide. In 1999, 45 youths were accused, accounting for 9.5% of accused persons.
- According to police data, three in five (62%) persons accused of homicide in 1999 had a criminal record. Almost 60% of these persons had been previously convicted of violent crimes including 7 for homicide and 44 for robbery. Of the seven accused with a previous homicide conviction, six committed a homicide in a correctional facility, and the remaining one had completed the sentence and was living in the community.



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Introduction

The most recent police-reported statistics indicate that the crime rate in Canada has decreased for the eighth consecutive year and is at its lowest point since 1979.¹ Statistics from the United States and from many other countries show similar trends.² However, data from studies such as the 1993 General Social Survey (GSS),³ the 1996 International Criminal Victimization Survey (ICVS),⁴ and national polls suggest that many Canadians perceive crime as increasing and fear being a victim of crime in their neighbourhoods. The most feared crimes are those of a violent nature, especially homicide – the killing of one human being by another – which tends to receive more media attention than any other criminal act. Despite this concern among Canadians about violence, the homicide rate has been declining since the mid-1970s.

This *Juristat* examines long-term and short-term trends and the circumstances surrounding homicide incidents. In addition, this report compares rates among major metropolitan areas, provinces and territories, and selected countries.

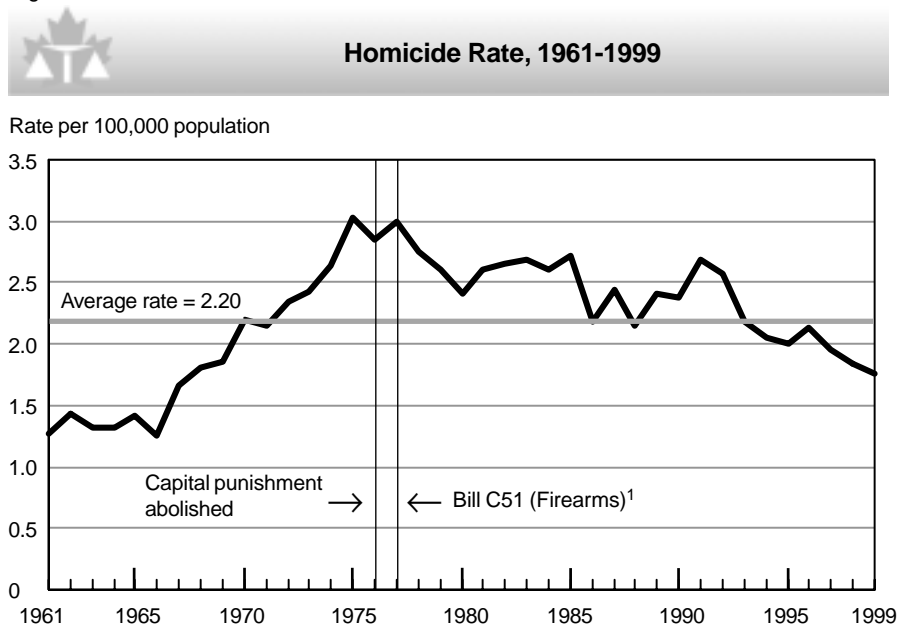
In Canada, criminal homicide is classified as first degree murder, second degree murder, manslaughter or infanticide (see Methodology section for definitions). Deaths caused by criminal negligence, suicide, accidental or justifiable homicide are not included in this classification.

GENERAL TRENDS

Lowest homicide rate since 1967

Homicide is a relatively rare occurrence in Canada, accounting for 0.02% of the 2.5 million *Criminal Code* incidents reported to police in 1999. By comparison, there were nearly one and one-half times more attempted murders, almost seven

Figure 1



¹ Firearm Acquisition Certificate required.
Source: Homicide Survey, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, October 2000.

¹ Tremblay, S. 2000. *Canadian Crime Statistics - 1999*, Juristat, Catalogue 85-002-XPE, Vol. 20 No.5. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.
² Information provided by the National Central Bureau, Interpol Ottawa.
³ The General Social Survey is conducted by Statistics Canada. Results of the 1999 Survey will be available in November 2000. For more information, see – Gartner, R. and A. Doob 1994. *Trends in Criminal Victimization, 1988-1993*, Juristat, Catalogue 85-002, Vol. 14, No. 13. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.
⁴ For more information, see – Besserer, S. 1997. *Criminal Victimization: An International Perspective*, Juristat, Catalogue 85-002XPE/F, Vol. 18, No. 6. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

times more suicides⁵, and over 400 times as many assaults as homicides. The general decline in homicides, evident since the mid-1970s, continued in 1999. There were 536 homicide offences reported, 22 fewer than the previous year, and well below the average of 639 for the previous decade. The 1999 homicide rate of 1.76 per 100,000 population represented a decrease of 4% from 1998, and was the lowest recorded since 1967.

Since 1961, when national homicide statistics were first collected, there have been two distinct trends. After several years of stability, the homicide rate increased steadily from 1.25 per 100,000 population in 1966 to a peak of 3.03 in 1975, an increase of 142%. From 1975 to 1999, despite yearly fluctuations, the homicide rate has gradually declined, reaching a rate of 1.76 in 1999, a decrease of 42% compared to 1975 (Figure 1).

Homicide rate also decreasing in United States and many other countries

According to preliminary figures, the Federal Bureau of Investigation reported an 8% decrease in the number of homicides in the United States in 1999.⁶ There were about 16,000 homicides reported for that year, representing a rate of about 5.80 per 100,000 population. Although Canada's rate is generally three to four times lower than the USA rate, it is still higher than many European countries. For example, England and Wales reported a homicide rate of 1.25 per 100,000 population in 1999, 29% lower than Canada's rate. Although homicide rates increased in Germany and Switzerland, their rates were lower than Canada's (Table 1).⁷

The rate of attempted murders has been declining since 1991, almost parallel to the trend in the homicide rate. In 1999, the rate of attempted murders (2.2 per 100,000 population) fell by 12% from the previous year. Although advanced medical procedures may have prevented some serious assaults from becoming homicides, it appears that the decline in the homicide rate must be a result of other factors.

⁵ Statistics Canada. *Causes of Death, Catalogue 84-208, Health Statistics Division, 1999.*

⁶ *United States Bureau of Justice Statistics.*

⁷ *Information provided by the National Central Bureau - Interpol Ottawa.*

GEOGRAPHICAL PATTERNS IN HOMICIDE

Homicide rate increases in only three provinces

The decline in the national homicide rate since the mid-1970s is also reflected in the rates for most provinces. The exception has been in the Atlantic Provinces where homicide rates are low to begin with and have remained relatively constant over the last 20 years.

Historically, rates in the Western provinces and the Territories have generally been higher than the national rate. This is still the case in 1999 (Figure 2). Among the provinces, British Columbia recorded the highest rate (2.73 per 100,000), followed by Manitoba (2.27). Manitoba's rate, however, is its lowest since 1967. The lowest rates were in Newfoundland (0.37), followed by Prince Edward Island (0.72).

Only three provinces reported increases in the number of homicides in 1999 (Table 2): British Columbia (+20), Ontario (+5), and New Brunswick (+4). All three, however, were still lower than their previous ten-year averages. It should be noted that despite an increase in 1999, the number of homicides in New Brunswick for 1998 was its lowest since 1969. The largest decline was seen in Saskatchewan, where the number of homicides dropped from 33 in 1998 to 13 in 1999. This resulted in the lowest rate in Saskatchewan since 1963.

Figure 2




Source: *Homicide Survey, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, October 2000.*

Table 1

Country	Homicide rate per 100,000 population	% Change 1998-1999	Country	Homicide rate per 100,000 population	% Change 1998-1999
Germany	1.24	+5 %	Canada	1.76	-4 %
England & Wales	1.25	-5 %	Hungary	2.48	-12 %
Switzerland	1.26	+19%	United States	5.80	-8 %
France	1.62	-1 %			

Table 2



Homicides by Province/Territory, 1998 and 1999

Province/Territory	1999 ¹		1998 ^{2r}		Average 1989-1998	
	Number	Rate ³	Number	Rate ³	Number	Rate ³
Newfoundland	2	0.37	7	1.28	5	0.95
Prince Edward Island	1	0.72	1	0.73	1	0.75
Nova Scotia	13	1.38	24	2.56	19	2.04
New Brunswick	9	1.19	5	0.66	12	1.60
Québec	136	1.85	137	1.87	159	2.22
Ontario	161	1.40	156	1.37	193	1.79
Manitoba	26	2.27	33	2.90	35	3.11
Saskatchewan	13	1.26	33	3.22	28	2.72
Alberta	61	2.06	64	2.20	67	2.49
British Columbia	110	2.73	90	2.25	113	3.12
Yukon	1	3.26	3	9.50	2	5.31
Northwest Territories ⁴	1	2.40	5	7.41	6	9.57
Nunavut	2	7.40	...	...	...	...
CANADA	536	1.76	558	1.84	639	2.22

¹ The following number of homicides were reported and included in 1999 but occurred in previous years: Ont. - 3; B.C. - 1; TOTAL - 4.
² The following number of homicides were reported and included in 1998 but occurred in previous years: Nfld. - 1; Qc. - 2; Ont. - 6; Man. - 2; B.C. - 3; TOTAL - 14.
³ Rates are calculated per 100,000 population. Population estimates at July 1st, provided by Statistics Canada, Census and Demographic Statistics, Demography Division.
⁴ Prior to 1999 - includes Nunavut
 ... Figures not appropriate or not applicable.
^r Revised.

Source: Homicide Survey, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, October 2000.

Territories: a homicide profile

Homicide rates in the Territories are usually higher than those in the provinces (Table 9). Although the actual number of homicides each year is very low, the corresponding rate is high due to the relatively small population of these areas. Small changes in the actual number of homicides can result in dramatic fluctuations in the rate. On April 1st, 1999, Nunavut officially became a Canadian territory. The table below shows homicide statistics for the period 1991 to 1999 according to the current boundaries. Although populations in the three territories are lower than 100,000, rates are based on this number for comparability purposes with provincial figures.

Homicide Numbers and Rates¹ in Territories, 1991-1999

Territory	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
	number								
Nunavut	1	2	3	3	1	2	1	4	2
NWT (excludes Nunavut)	2	11	4	1	2	2	2	1	1
Yukon	-	2	-	3	4	-	1	3	1
	rate								
Nunavut	4.50	8.71	12.68	12.25	3.99	7.77	3.85	15.12	7.40
NWT (excludes Nunavut)	5.17	27.89	10.03	2.46	4.82	4.78	4.78	2.44	2.40
Yukon	0.00	6.61	0.00	9.98	12.95	0.00	3.10	9.50	3.26

¹ Rate per 100,000 population.
 - Nil or zero.

Homicide rate in metropolitan areas same as national rate

Crime, particularly homicide, is often considered to be an urban phenomenon. However, the data show that in 1999, the homicide rate for all 26 census metropolitan areas (CMAs) was 1.76, the same as the national rate. The average CMA rate for the previous ten years was 2.23, slightly higher than the national average (2.22) during that period.

Table 3 divides the CMAs into three population categories: nine CMAs with populations of 500,000 and over, eight CMAs

Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) - a large urban core (population of 100,000 and over) together with adjacent urban and rural areas which have a high degree of economic and social integration. The areas that police forces serve may differ in their mix of urban/suburban populations, making the comparability of crime rates among these forces difficult. This lack of comparability is addressed by analyzing crime rates by CMA. Usually, more than one police force is responsible for enforcing the law within the boundaries of a CMA. It is important to note that, due to the relatively small number of homicides within some of the smaller CMAs, homicide rates for these areas can change dramatically from year to year.

Table 3



Homicides by Census Metropolitan Area, 1998 and 1999

Census Metropolitan Area	1999 ¹			1998 ^{2r}			Average 1989-1998		
	Population	Number	Rate ³	Population	Number	Rate ³	Population	Number	Rate ³
500,000+ population									
Toronto	4,680,250	60	1.28	4,585,978	76	1.66	4,237,998	81	1.90
Montréal	3,438,532	70	2.04	3,423,536	65	1.90	3,298,582	91	2.76
Vancouver	2,016,643	57	2.83	1,999,168	45	2.25	1,775,252	55	3.10
Calgary	933,748	13	1.39	903,351	19	2.10	810,095	17	2.04
Edmonton	929,145	20	2.15	914,233	22	2.41	873,549	26	2.95
Ottawa ⁴	809,034	12	1.48	801,372	4	0.50	751,735	13	1.68
Québec	688,085	10	1.45	686,634	15	2.18	675,281	11	1.69
Winnipeg	677,625	15	2.21	678,141	18	2.65	670,388	19	2.79
Hamilton	665,169	16	2.41	657,603	6	0.91	633,728	11	1.77
Total⁵	14,838,231	273	1.84	14,650,016	270	1.84	13,726,607	323	2.35
250,000 - 499,999 population									
Kitchener	439,107	2	0.46	432,028	7	1.62	405,425	5	1.33
St. Catharines-Niagara	422,607	7	1.66	420,136	2	0.48	412,292	7	1.63
London	418,660	5	1.19	415,891	6	1.44	403,256	5	1.26
Halifax	352,594	7	1.99	348,844	12	3.44	335,073	8	2.30
Victoria	316,195	9	2.85	316,890	10	3.16	304,839	6	1.97
Windsor	299,966	7	2.33	295,747	8	2.71	280,510	7	2.39
Oshawa	292,948	2	0.68	287,558	3	1.04	264,502	4	1.51
Hull ⁶	255,987	5	1.95	254,512	3	1.18	241,974	4	1.61
Total⁵	2,748,064	44	1.57	2,771,606	51	1.84	2,647,871	46	1.72
100,000 - 249,999 population									
Saskatoon	231,403	4	1.73	229,575	7	3.05	219,298	6	2.87
Regina	199,163	2	1.00	199,284	10	5.02	197,200	5	2.59
St. John's	174,509	-	0.00	175,353	2	1.14	176,080	2	1.25
Sudbury	160,357	4	2.49	152,119	3	1.97	163,761	4	2.38
Sherbrooke	153,140	2	1.31	152,119	1	0.66	146,182	2	1.30
Chicoutimi-Jonquière	147,021	2	1.36	147,203	1	0.68	163,075	1	0.86
Saint John	146,267	1	0.68	127,483	-	0.00	128,527	3	2.10
Trois-Rivières	141,751	-	0.00	141,912	-	0.00	140,936	2	1.35
Thunder Bay	126,649	4	3.16	127,457	3	2.35	129,228	3	2.63
Total⁵	1,480,260	19	1.28	1,452,505	27	1.86	1,464,286	29	1.97
CMA TOTALS⁵	19,116,555	336	1.76	18,874,126	348	1.84	17,838,764	396	2.23
< 100,000 population	11,374,739	200	1.76	11,372,765	210	1.85	11,000,584	242	2.20
CANADA⁵	30,491,294	536	1.76	30,246,891	558	1.84	28,839,348	639	2.22

¹ The following number of homicides were reported and included in 1999 but occurred in previous years: Hamilton - 1; Areas < 100,000 population - 3; TOTAL - 4.

² The following number of homicides were reported and included in 1998 but occurred in previous years: Toronto - 1; Ottawa-Hull - 1; Winnipeg - 2; Kitchener - 1; Victoria - 1; Areas < 100,000 population - 8; TOTAL - 14.

³ Rates are calculated per 100,000 population. Population estimates at July 1st, provided by Statistics Canada, Census and Demographic Statistics, Demography Division.

⁴ Ottawa refers to the Ontario part of the Ottawa-Hull CMA.

⁵ Numbers may not add to totals because of rounding.

⁶ Hull refers to the Quebec part of the Ottawa-Hull CMA

- Nil or zero.

^r Revised.

Source: Homicide Survey, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, October 2000.

with populations of 250,000 – 499,999, and nine CMAs with populations of 100,000 – 249,999. Historically, the largest CMAs have generally shown the highest rates. The year 1999 was no exception as the nine largest metropolitan areas as a group had a rate of 1.84, compared to 1.57 for the eight mid-sized CMAs, and 1.28 for the nine smaller CMAs.

Among the nine largest CMAs, Vancouver, despite a rate lower than its previous ten-year average, reported the highest rate (2.83), followed by Hamilton (2.41), and Winnipeg (2.21). Hamilton's rate was much higher than its ten-year average, while Winnipeg's was much lower. The lowest rates were reported for Toronto (1.28) and Calgary (1.39). Toronto, Canada's largest metropolitan area (accounting for 15% of

Canada's population) recorded a rate 27% lower than the national rate, and its lowest rate since CMA data were first tabulated in 1981.

Among the CMAs with populations of 250,000 - 499,999, Victoria reported the highest homicide rate (2.85), followed by Windsor (2.33), while Kitchener (0.40) and Oshawa (0.68) reported the lowest. Compared to their average rates for the previous ten years, Victoria's rate was 45% higher and Windsor's rate was 3% lower.

For CMAs with populations less than 250,000, Thunder Bay (3.16) reported the highest rate, followed by Sudbury (2.49), while Trois Rivières and St. John's recorded no homicides.

CHARACTERISTICS OF HOMICIDE INCIDENTS

No infanticides recorded in 1999

With the abolition of capital punishment in 1976 (Bill C-105), murder was categorized into first and second-degree. In 1999, half (51%) of all homicides were classified by police as first degree murder, 39% as second degree murder, and 11% as manslaughter. Although there are usually only a few infanticides each year, 1999 marked the first year since these data were collected in 1974 that no infanticides were reported.⁸

The classification of homicide offences in this report is based upon initial police investigation. In the transition period from initial police charging of the accused to final court disposition, the legal classification of an incident may change.

Six percent of homicide incidents involved multiple victims, of which half were family-related

Multiple victim homicides tend to receive the most attention from the media and public. In 1999, the majority (94%) of the

503 separate homicide incidents involved a single victim, while 6% were multiple-victim incidents. The 29 multiple-victim incidents (up from 24 in 1998) were distributed as follows: 26 incidents involved two victims, two incidents had three victims, and one incident had four victims. Almost half (49%) of the victims in solved multiple victim incidents were family members of the accused (i.e., immediate or extended family members related through blood, marriage or adoption), down from 68% in 1998.

Nine in ten murder-suicides are family-related

In 1999, 8% (40) of all homicide incidents were murder-suicides (with 52 homicide victims) where the accused, predominantly male (93%), committed suicide. Almost 90% of these murder-suicides were family-related, a figure which has been relatively constant over the past 20 years. Between 1979 and 1988, there were, on average, 38 incidents of murder-suicide each year, representing 6.4% of all homicide incidents. From 1989 to 1998, the average number of such incidents was 44 annually, comprising 7.5% of all homicide incidents. During this period, the number of murder-suicide incidents reached a high of 59 in 1992 and as a proportion of all homicide incidents, peaked in 1997 at 9.3% (Table 4).

In 1999, one in four murder-suicide incidents had more than one victim and the accused in each of these multiple victim

⁸ See *Glossary of Terms for definitions of types of criminal homicide*.

Table 4

Year	Number of Incidents	Number of Victims	Murder-suicide incidents as a % of all homicide incidents	Actual Number of Accused in Murder-Suicides			
				Male killing family	Female killing family	Male killing Non-family	Female killing Non-family
1974	38	44	6.9	31	1	6	-
1975	35	41	5.5	21	2	12	-
1976	41	52	6.7	31	1	8	1
1977	36	43	5.6	20	4	12	-
1978	41	55	6.6	29	3	9	-
1979	35	46	6.0	27	4	4	-
1980	31	39	6.1	22	2	7	-
1981	36	46	5.8	18	3	15	-
1982	34	45	5.6	22	2	9	1
1983	38	45	6.0	29	-	9	-
1984	44	64	7.2	33	3	8	-
1985	34	42	5.2	27	2	5	-
1986	44	60	8.3	32	5	7	-
1987	37	46	6.2	26	1	10	-
1988	45	52	8.3	32	2	11	-
1989	46	78	8.0	33	6	7	-
1990	38	41	6.2	25	1	11	1
1991	55	69	7.8	31	5	19	-
1992	59	65	8.8	39	6	14	-
1993	35	39	5.9	23	3	9	-
1994	39	45	7.0	26	5	8	-
1995	42	51	7.5	31	-	11	-
1996	37	55	6.4	27	2	8	-
1997	50	63	9.3	31	5	14	-
1998 ¹	38	45	7.2	24	5	8	1
1999	40	52	8.0	32	3	5	-
Average 1979-88	38	49	6.4	27	2	9	-
Average 1989-98	44	55	7.5	29	4	9	-

¹ Population estimates at July 1st - Statistics Canada, Census and Demographic Statistics, Demography Division.

- Nil or zero.

[†] Revised.

Source: Homicide Survey, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, October 2000.

murder-suicides was male. In half (48%) of all murder-suicide incidents, men killed their spouses, and in 15% of cases, they killed their children. They killed both their spouse and children in 13% of cases. In no cases of murder-suicide did women kill their spouse in 1999, but in 2 incidents they killed their child. In the remaining incidents, 8% of the victims were other family and 13% were non-family members.

Six in ten homicides motivated by anger and despair

As determined by police, the most common motive for committing homicide in 1999 was an argument, quarrel or incident inciting a vengeful or jealous reaction or an act of despair (57% of all homicides). Another 20% were motivated by financial gain or settling of accounts. Six percent of homicides had no apparent motive, and in 13% of cases the motive was unknown. There were three “random” killings in 1999 and no homicides motivated by hate. Between 1991 and 1998 there were 13 homicides that were motivated by hate or bigotry, an average of less than two per year.

Three in four homicide incidents solved by police

During 1999, the police solved 75% of all reported homicide incidents through the identification of at least one accused. Over the past ten years, this proportion has fluctuated between 75% and 85%. Since the process of solving a homicide can be time-consuming, an incident may not be solved until after the year in which it was initially recorded. These data, therefore, underestimate final police clearance rates.

Of those incidents cleared by police in 1999, 89% were cleared by a charge being laid or recommended and 10% by the accused having committed suicide immediately following the offence. The remaining 1% were cleared for other reasons: Crown chose not to proceed (1), incident under Crown Review (1), and the accused was less than 12 years old (1).

Homicides in correctional facilities double in 1999

Of the 498 homicide incidents with a known location (5 were unknown) in 1999, six in ten took place in a private residence, the majority of which were in a residence occupied by the victim (either solely or jointly with the accused). The majority of spousal homicides (89%) and other homicides within the family (86%) occurred in private residences.

The remaining locations were distributed as follows: 24% in an open area (e.g., a parking lot, street or field), 10% in a commercial area (e.g., bar, bank, restaurant), 5% in a private vehicle and the remaining 3% in a public institution (correctional facility (10), psychiatric facility (2), bus garage (1), shelter for abused persons (1), police detention cell (1) and school (1)). The ten homicide incidents in correctional institutions are more than double the numbers reported in each of the previous two years.

FIREARMS

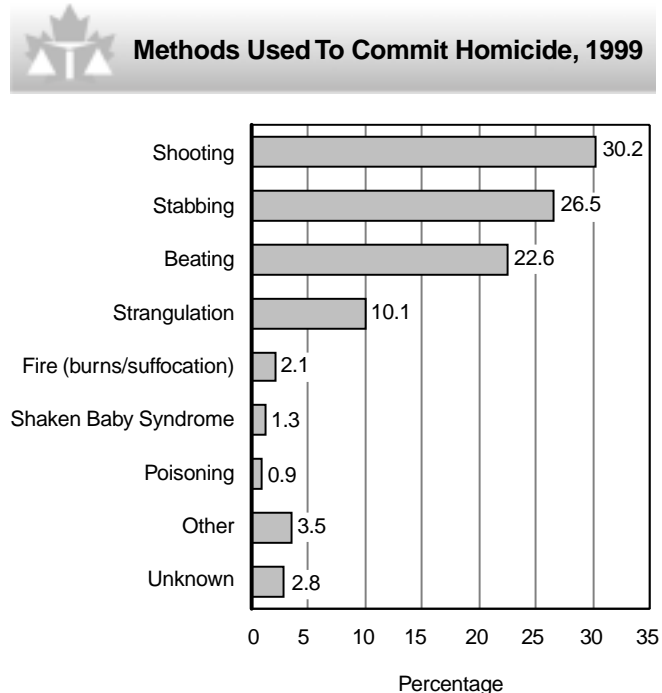
Three in ten homicides involve firearms

In 1999, there were 165 homicides involving firearms. Homicides, however, account for a relatively small portion of

all firearm-related deaths. Of the 1,043 deaths in Canada involving firearms in 1997 (the latest year for which figures are available), the largest proportion of these deaths were due to suicide (78.4%), followed by homicide (15.2%), accidents (4.3%), and other types of incidents (2.1%).⁹

Since 1976, firearms have been used in about one-third of all homicides each year. In 1999 this proportion was 31% (Figure 3). The 165 shootings in 1999 represented a 9% increase over the total in 1998, but was 20% fewer than the average (205) for the previous ten years.

Figure 3



Source: Homicide Survey, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, October 2000.

Although there was a slight increase in the number of firearm homicides from 151 in 1998 to 165 in 1999, it should be noted that the 1998 figure was the lowest since data were first collected nationally in 1961. These 165 shootings were distributed as follows: 89 (54%) with a handgun, 58 (35%) with a rifle/shotgun, 6 (4%) with a sawed-off rifle/shotgun, 6 (4%) with a fully-automatic firearm, and 6 (4%) with other types of firearms. Homicides using handguns showed the largest increase, going from 70 in 1998 to 89 in 1999.

The use of handguns in homicides remained constant until 1990, accounting for almost three in ten homicides involving firearms. Over the next two years, homicides using handguns increased significantly, representing half of the homicides with firearms. Since 1993, this proportion has remained relatively constant. Over the last decade, there has been a decrease in the use of rifles/shotguns. The proportion of rifles/shotguns (including sawed-off firearms) used in firearm homicides has

⁹ Statistics Canada. *Causes of Death, Catalogue 84F-0208-XPB, Health Statistics Division, 1999.*

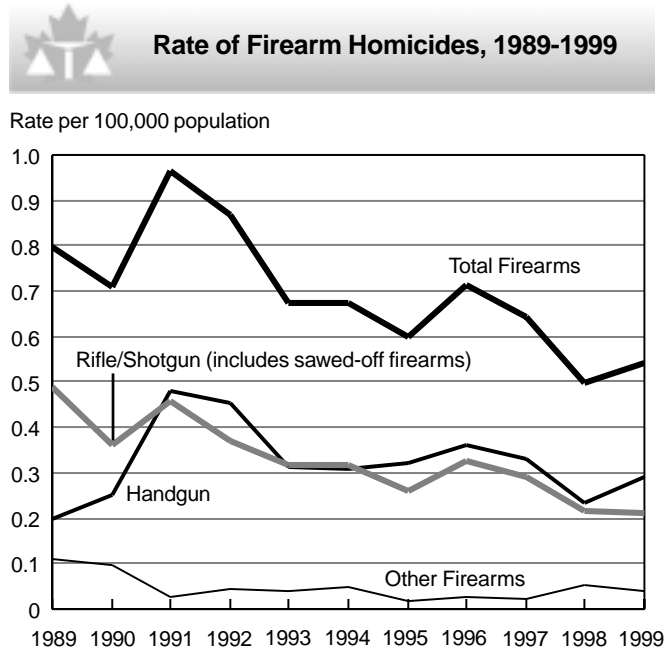
Canada has adopted a number of legislative measures which are aimed at reducing firearm deaths and injuries. In 1977, Parliament passed legislation which amended the *Criminal Code* (Bill C-51), requiring individuals to obtain a Firearms Acquisition Certificate (FAC) before acquiring firearms. The legislation also introduced a variety of provisions including regulations on safe storage and display of firearms for businesses and bona fide gun collectors, and mandatory minimum sentences to deter the criminal use of firearms.

In 1991, Parliament strengthened the screening provisions for FAC applicants by introducing new legislation (Bill C-17). A multi-page form with a variety of questions concerning the applicant's personal and criminal history, personal references, picture, and a mandatory 28-day waiting period for approved FAC applicants were incorporated. Under this legislation all firearm owners have to comply with safe storage, handling, display, and transportation of firearms.

In December 1995, Parliament passed Canada's newest firearms legislation (Bill C-68) which created a new *Firearms Act* and amended the *Criminal Code*. The legislation created strict new penalties for firearms trafficking and smuggling, and tougher mandatory minimum sentences for 10 serious offences involving firearms. All firearm owners and users are required to obtain a firearm licence by January 2001 and all firearms will have to be registered by January 2003 (this includes non-restricted rifles and shotguns). The new legislation is intended to reduce firearm deaths and injuries by further encouraging the safe use and storage of firearms, assisting police investigations, and deterring the misuse of firearms.

generally been decreasing, from 62% in 1989 to 39% in 1999. The more lethal fully-automatic weapons were used in less than 4% of such incidents (Figure 4)(Table 5).

Figure 4



Source: Homicide Survey, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, October 2000.

Table 5

Year	Homicides involving Firearms, 1974-1999										Total homicides involving firearms	
	Handgun		Rifle/Shotgun		Fully automatic firearm ¹		Sawed-off rifle/shotgun ¹		Other firearms ¹		Number	% of Total Homicides
	Number	% of Firearm Homicides	Number	% of Firearm Homicides	Number	% of Firearm Homicides	Number	% of Firearm Homicides	Number	% of Firearm Homicides		
1974	76	26.9	180	63.6	...	...	12	4.2	15	5.3	283	47.2
1975	88	30.1	183	62.7	...	...	10	3.4	11	3.8	292	41.7
1976	68	26.4	165	64.0	...	...	5	1.9	20	7.8	258	38.6
1977	61	23.5	161	61.9	...	...	14	5.4	24	9.2	260	36.6
1978	63	25.2	177	70.8	...	...	2	0.8	8	3.2	250	37.8
1979	54	26.1	135	65.2	...	...	4	1.9	14	6.8	207	32.8
1980	62	31.8	120	61.5	...	...	4	2.1	9	4.6	195	32.9
1981	59	29.6	123	61.8	...	...	2	1.0	15	7.5	199	30.7
1982	88	35.5	146	58.9	...	...	9	3.6	5	2.0	248	37.2
1983	78	34.8	127	56.7	...	...	4	1.8	15	6.7	224	32.8
1984	66	28.9	142	62.3	...	...	2	0.9	18	7.9	228	34.2
1985	73	32.9	131	59.0	...	...	9	4.1	9	4.1	222	31.5
1986	38	21.7	114	65.1	...	...	1	0.6	22	12.6	175	30.8
1987	58	28.7	108	53.5	...	...	7	3.5	29	14.4	202	31.4
1988	47	27.8	94	55.6	...	...	7	4.1	21	12.4	169	29.3
1989	54	24.8	131	60.1	...	...	3	1.4	30	13.8	218	33.2
1990	69	35.2	99	50.5	...	...	1	0.5	27	13.8	196	29.7
1991	135	49.8	103	38.0	6	2.2	25	9.2	2	0.7	271	35.9
1992	129	52.4	90	36.6	12	4.9	15	6.1	-	0.0	246	33.6
1993	90	46.6	76	39.4	11	5.7	15	7.8	1	0.5	193	30.8
1994	90	45.9	66	33.7	14	7.1	26	13.3	-	0.0	196	32.9
1995	95	54.0	61	34.7	5	2.8	15	8.5	-	0.0	176	29.9
1996	107	50.5	81	38.2	8	3.8	16	7.5	-	0.0	212	33.4
1997	99	51.3	77	39.9	2	1.0	10	5.2	5	2.6	193	32.9
1998 ^r	70	46.4	51	33.8	12	7.9	14	9.3	4	2.6	151	27.1
1999	89	54.0	58	35.2	6	3.6	6	3.6	6	3.6	165	30.8
Average 1989-98	94	45.7	84	40.7	...	...	14	6.8	7	3.4	205	32.1

¹ The addition of this new firearm category in 1991 and the improved identification of firearms and classification of sawed-off rifles/shotguns may account for some of the decrease in the numbers for the "other firearms" category.

- Nil or zero.

... Figures not applicable or not appropriate.

^r Revised.

Source: Homicide Survey, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, October 2000.

Table 6



Homicides by Cause of Death, 1998 and 1999

Cause of Death	1999		1998 ^r		Average 1989-1998	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Shooting	165	30.8	151	27.1	222	32.0
Stabbing	143	26.7	186	33.3	204	29.4
Beating	123	22.9	125	22.4	139	20.1
Strangulation	55	10.3	61	10.9	77	11.1
Fire (burns / suffocation)	11	2.1	12	2.2	22	3.2
Shaken Baby Syndrome	7	1.3	6	1.1	...	...
Poisoning	5	0.9	6	1.1	6	0.9
Other ¹	19	3.5	5	0.9	15	2.2
Unknown	8	1.5	6	1.1	8	1.2
Total	536	100.0	558	100.0	693	100.0

¹ Includes motor vehicles, heart attacks, exposure, etc. In 1999, thirteen victims were killed using vehicles.

... Figures not applicable or not appropriate.

^r Revised.

Source: Homicide Survey, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, October 2000.

With the exception of three years (1990, 1995, 1998) shooting has been the most common method used in homicides since 1961. In 1999, shooting accounted for 31% of all homicides, stabbing 27%, beating 23%, strangulation/suffocation 10%, fire (burns / suffocation) 2%, poisoning 1%, and shaking (Shaken Baby Syndrome) for 1% (Table 6). Homicides resulting from stabbing dropped from 186 in 1998 to 143 in 1999.

ACCUSED-VICTIM RELATIONSHIP

The Homicide Survey collects data on the relationships between persons accused of homicide and their victims. These and other related distributions exclude unsolved homicide incidents where there was no chargeable suspect (25% of all incidents in 1999).

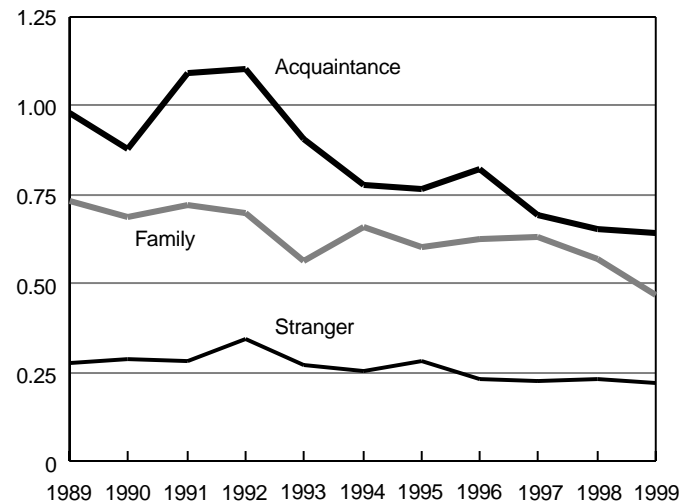
The data collected through the Homicide Survey indicate that homicides are far more likely to be committed by someone known to the victim than by a stranger. As is the case historically, almost half (49%) of all solved homicides in 1999 were committed by an acquaintance (non-family) of the victim and over one-third by a family member. Of the 198 victims in acquaintance homicides, 91 were killed by a “casual” acquaintance (not a particularly intense or close relationship established prior to the homicide), a further 29 were killed by a “close” acquaintance, 28 by someone known to them through a criminal relationship, and 20 by a (ex) boyfriend / girlfriend. In the remaining solved homicides, 143 (35%) victims were killed by family members and 60 (15%) victims were killed by a stranger. The proportion and rate of stranger homicides has remained relatively stable over the past ten years, ranging from 12% to 16% (Figure 5). A little more than half (56%) of incidents where victims were killed by strangers occurred during the commission of another criminal offence, usually a robbery. Male victims were two-and-a-half times more likely to be killed by strangers (19%) than female victims (7%), as well as being at greater risk of being killed by a non-intimate acquaintance (57% versus 21%).¹⁰

Figure 5



Homicides by Accused-Victim Relationship, 1999

Rate per 100,000 population



Source: Homicide Survey, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, October 2000.

In 1999 there were 29 fewer family homicides from the previous year, that is, homicides involving spouses, parents, children, siblings or other members related either by blood, marriage or adoption. Most of this 17% decline resulted from a large drop in the number of parents killing their children (down from 52 in 1998 to 31 in 1999). Other family homicides included: 71 victims killed by a spouse, 18 by a son or

¹⁰ For more information on stranger homicides, see - Janhevich, D. 1998. Violence committed by strangers. Juristat, Catalogue 85-002-XIE, Vol. 18, No. 9. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

Table 7



Solved Homicides by Accused-Victim Relationship¹, 1998 and 1999

Relationship Type (Victims killed by:)	1999		1998 ¹		Average 1989-1998	
	Number of victims	Percent	Number of victims	Percent	Number of victims	Percent
<i>Family Relationship</i>						
Husband (legal and common-law)	38	9.4	46	10.5	56	10.8
Husband (separated/divorced)	20	5.0	11	2.5	15	2.9
Same sex spouse	3	0.7	0	0.0	...	...
Wife (legal and common-law)	8	2.0	12	2.7	19	3.6
Wife (separated/divorced)	2	0.5	1	0.2	1	0.3
Total Spousal	71	17.6	70	16.0	91	17.6
Father	22	5.4	34	7.8	27	5.2
Mother	9	2.2	18	4.1	18	3.4
Child	18	4.5	20	4.6	19	3.6
Sibling	7	1.7	9	2.1	11	2.1
Other family relation	16	4.0	21	4.8	22	4.2
Total Family³	143	35.4	172	39.3	187	36.1
<i>Acquaintance</i>						
(ex) Boyfriend/girlfriend	20	5.0	12	2.7	21	4.1
Close Acquaintance	29	7.2	26	5.9	42	8.0
Authority figure	4	1.0	3	0.7	...	...
Business associate (legal)	14	3.5	12	2.7	14	2.7
Criminal relationships ²	28	6.9	27	6.2	29	5.6
Neighbour	12	3.0	16	3.7	24	4.6
Casual acquaintance	91	22.5	101	23.1	124	23.9
Total Acquaintance³	198	49.0	197	45.0	253	49.0
<i>Stranger</i>	60	14.9	66	15.1	73	14.1
<i>Unknown relationship</i>	3	0.7	3	0.7	4	0.8
TOTAL SOLVED HOMICIDES³	404	100.0	438	100.0	517	100.0

¹ Includes only homicide incidents in which there are known suspects. If there was more than one suspect, only the closest relationship to the victim was recorded.

² Includes prostitutes, drug dealers and their clients.

³ Numbers may not add to totals because of rounding.

... Figures not applicable or not appropriate.

¹ Revised.

Source: Homicide Survey, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, October 2000.

daughter, 7 by a sibling and 16 by another relative¹¹. (Table 7).

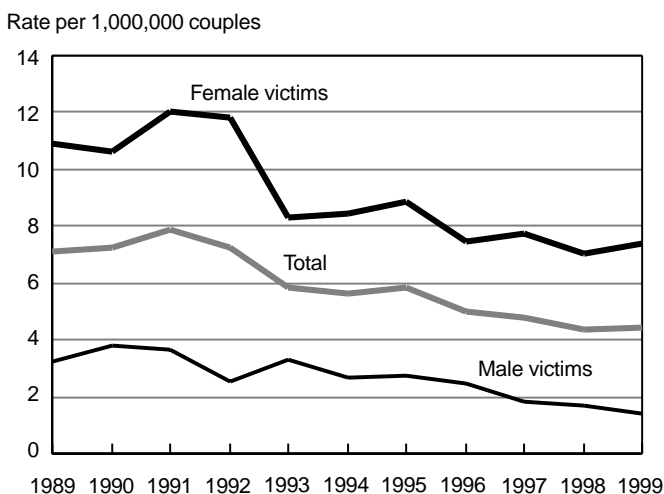
Spousal homicides remain stable

Despite a very slight increase in 1999, spousal homicides have been decreasing since 1991, accounting for one out of every six solved homicides. They include persons in registered marriages, in common-law relationships and persons separated or divorced from such unions. These types of homicides have remained relatively stable over the last three years, after having declined since the early 1990s (Figure 6). In 1999, 71 persons were killed by a spouse, down from an average of 91 victims over the previous ten years and an average of 99 for the period from 1979 to 1988. Four in five spousal homicide victims were women. The decline in the number of spousal homicides in recent years may be the result of various factors including reduced exposure to abusive or violent relationships as a consequence of improvements in the economic status of women, and increases in the

¹¹ For more information on family violence, see – Pottie-Bunge, V. and Locke, D. 2000. Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile, Catalogue 85-224-XPE, Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

Figure 6

Spousal Homicide Rate, 1989-1999



Source: Homicide Survey, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, October 2000.

availability of domestic violence services (e.g., safe houses or shelters, and counselling).^{12 13}

In 1999, 38 women were killed by a current male spouse (legal or common-law) and 20 were killed by a separated or divorced male spouse. Another 2 women were killed by same sex spouses. Of the 10 men killed by a female spouse in 1999, 8 were killed by a current spouse and 2 by a separated spouse. One man was killed by his same sex spouse. Regardless of gender, six in 10 incidents of spousal homicides involved a history of domestic violence between the victim and the accused that was known to police.

Historically in homicide incidents, men were more likely to be killed by their spouse with a knife or other sharp instrument, while women were most commonly killed with a firearm. In 1999, 37% of female spouses killed were shot, 32% were beaten or strangled, and 25% were stabbed. In contrast, 64% of male spouses were stabbed, 27% were beaten or strangled, and 9% were shot.

In addition to those killed by a spouse, 17 females were killed by a boyfriend or ex-boyfriend, and 3 males were killed by a girlfriend or ex-girlfriend. In all, 51% of all female victims and 6% of male victims in 1999 were killed by a person with whom they had an intimate relationship at one point in time, either through marriage or dating.

Table 8



Children (<12 years) killed by parents, Canada, 1974-1999

Year	Number of Incidents	Number of Victims	Parent-child homicides as a % of all homicide incidents	Actual Number of Accused in Parent-Child Homicides				Ratio of all accused fathers to mothers
				Father	Step-Father	Mother	Step-Mother	
1974	34	42	6.2	18	1	15	-	1.3:1
1975	26	27	4.1	13	-	13	-	1.0:1
1976	32	44	5.2	15	-	17	-	0.9:1
1977	38	43	6.0	14	3	21	-	0.8:1
1978	45	56	7.3	12	4	29	-	0.6:1
1979	36	47	6.2	16	2	18	-	1.0:1
1980	25	27	4.9	14	1	10	-	1.5:1
1981	24	27	3.9	8	2	14	-	0.7:1
1982	28	31	4.6	13	1	14	-	1.0:1
1983	31	32	4.9	16	1	14	-	1.2:1
1984	40	50	6.6	26	1	13	-	2.1:1
1985	29	31	4.4	14	1	14	-	1.1:1
1986	41	50	7.7	23	-	18	-	1.3:1
1987	27	30	4.5	17	-	10	-	1.7:1
1988	23	28	4.2	11	-	12	-	0.9:1
1989	28	37	4.8	11	2	15	-	0.9:1
1990	26	31	4.2	16	-	10	-	1.6:1
1991	24	28	3.4	8	1	13	2	0.6:1
1992	28	32	4.2	10	1	17	-	0.6:1
1993	32	32	5.4	13	4	15	-	1.1:1
1994	40	43	7.2	20	4	16	-	1.5:1
1995	32	36	5.7	18	2	11	1	1.7:1
1996	37	41	6.4	19	6	12	-	2.1:1
1997	45	54	8.4	18	3	23	1	0.9:1
1998 ^f	41	47	7.7	22	3	15	1	1.6:1
1999	23	26	4.6	13	3	7	-	2.3:1
Average 1974-83	32	38	5.3	14	2	17	-	0.9:1
Average 1984-93	30	35	4.9	15	1	14	-	1.1:1
Average 1994-98	39	44	7.1	19	4	15	1	1.4:1

¹ Population estimates at July 1st - Statistics Canada, Census and Demographic Statistics, Demography Division.

- Nil or zero.

^f Revised.

Source: Homicide Survey, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, October 2000.

Almost four in five murdered children killed by a parent

There were 36 children (under the age of 12) killed in 1999, 32% fewer than the average of 53 killed each year since 1989. In solved cases, almost four in five of these children were killed by parents, and the remainder, by acquaintances. In 1999, there were 23 parent-child homicide incidents involving 26 victims, which represented 4.6% of all homicide incidents that year (Table 8).

Taking into account multiple-accused and multiple-victim incidents, the actual number of accused parents in 1999 were 16 fathers (13 biological fathers and 3 stepfathers) and 7 biological mothers (the lowest number since 1980), a ratio of 2.3 fathers for every one mother. From 1974 to 1983 slightly more mothers than fathers, on average, were likely to be accused of killing their children. This trend changed from 1984 to 1993, when slightly more fathers, on average, were accused in such incidents. Since 1994, however, the ratio of accused fathers to mothers has been increasing.

The number of infants under one year of age who were killed, decreased from 24 in 1998 to 11 in 1999. Eight of these infants

¹² For more information on services available to abused spouses, see - Trainor, C. 1999. *Canada's Shelters for Abused Women*. Juristat, Catalogue 85-002-XPE, Vol. 19, No. 6. Ottawa; Statistics Canada.

¹³ Dugan, L., Nagin, D. and Rosenfeld, R. *Homicide Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, August 1999: 188.

were killed by parents. Since 1991 (earliest year for which the number of infants less than one year old can be identified), there has been an annual average of 18 infant victims, accounting for between 2.4% and 6.8% of all homicide victims.¹⁴

The number of infants killed by their parents decreased in 1999, from 19 to 8. Five biological fathers and four biological mothers were accused (in one incident both the mother and father were accused). Three of the fathers were living in a common-law relationship (one with a mother that was a co-accused), and two were legally married, whereas three of the mothers were living common-law (one with a husband that was a co-accused) and one was legally married. Historically, fathers and mothers were equally likely to be accused in parent-infant homicides.

In the remaining three incidents involving infants less than one year old, one was killed by a caregiver, one by a casual acquaintance of the family, and in one case, no chargeable suspect was identified.

The figure for infant homicides may still be under-reported since some claims of accidental childhood deaths such as falls or “sudden infant deaths” could actually be due to child abuse. Since 1995, most provinces have legislated mandatory coroner inquests into deaths of children less than two years of age, which not only may have resulted in the increased reporting and classification of these cases as homicides in some years, but also may have deterred such incidents in subsequent years.

AGE AND SEX OF VICTIMS AND ACCUSED

Males account for two-thirds of victims and ninety percent of accused

Historically, about two-thirds of homicide victims have been male. This pattern also held true in 1999. The median¹⁵ ages for male and female victims of homicide were 35 and 36 years of age, respectively.

Males accounted for 90% of all those accused of homicide in 1999, consistent with the average for the previous ten years. Females accused of homicide tended to kill family members (53% of the time) more often than male accused (31%).

Average age of accused rising

The median age as well as the average age of those accused of homicide has increased slightly over the past 25 years. From 1974 to 1986, the median age of the accused was either 26 or 27 years. Since 1986, the median age has ranged from 27 to 29 years. The most common single age for someone accused of homicide in 1999 was 24 years (Figure 7).

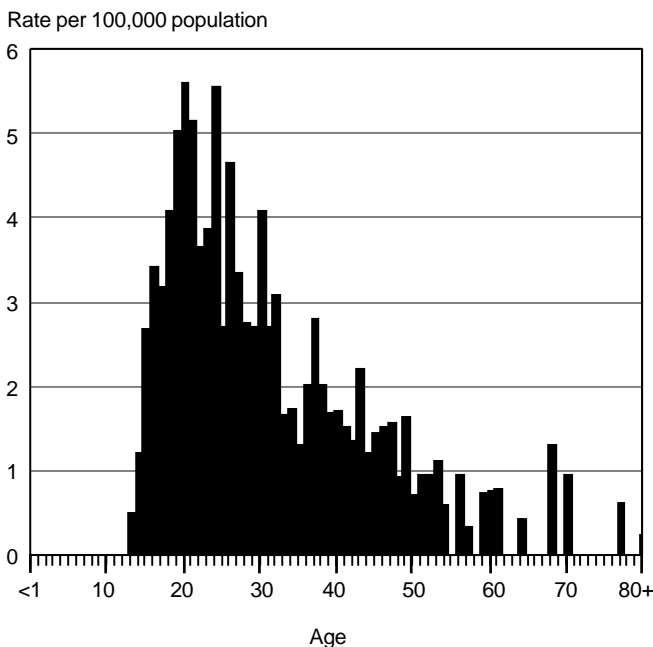
The 15-32 age group continues to be the highest risk group for committing homicide, accounting for three in five persons accused of homicide in a given year, while comprising approximately 25% of the total population. The population in this age group has been shrinking both in number and as a

¹⁴ Prior to 1991, the Homicide Survey categorized “infants” as persons less than two years old.

¹⁵ Median refers to the middle value in a set of values ordered from lowest to highest.

Figure 7

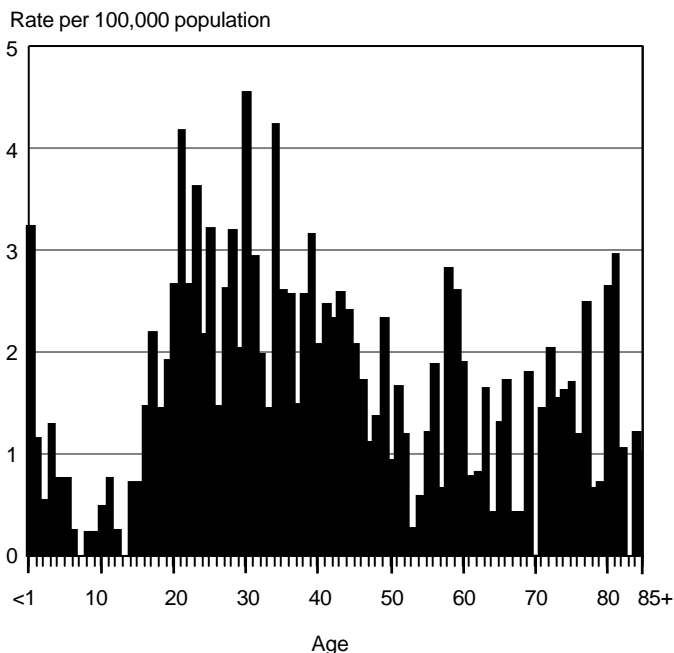
Homicide Accused Age-Specific Rates, 1999



Source: Homicide Survey, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, October 2000.

Figure 8

Homicide Age-Specific Victim Rates, 1999



Source: Homicide Survey, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, October 2000.

proportion of the total population since 1990, and is expected to reach its smallest size around the year 2000, at which point it is projected to increase again.¹⁶ This changing proportion may have an impact on future homicide rates.

Figure 8 shows that, in 1999 the single age of greatest risk of being a homicide victim was 30, followed by ages 34, 21 and less than 1. While this pattern changes from year to year, the age range for the majority of victims remains around ages 17 to 34 years. However, it has not been uncommon in recent years for infants to be at greatest risk.

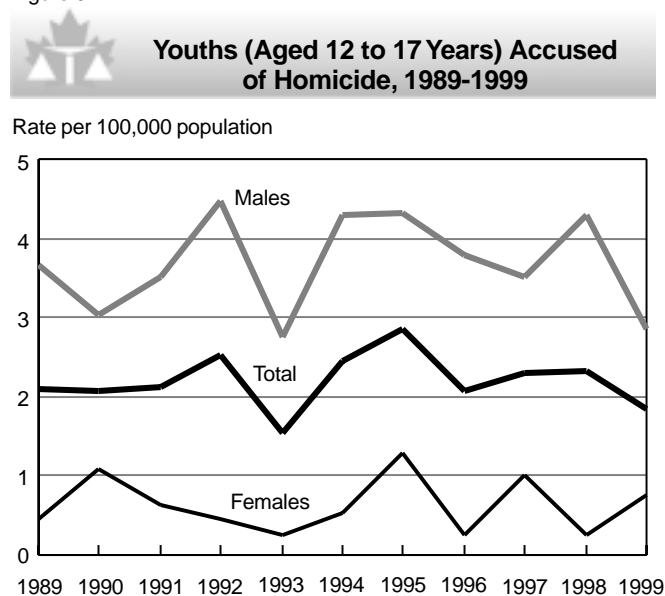
YOUTH HOMICIDE

Since the introduction of the *Young Offenders Act* (YOA) in 1984, much publicity has focussed on youths accused of homicide and their subsequent treatment by the courts. To address the concerns of many Canadians about youth crime, the federal government has proposed new legislation, the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*. In this report, "youths" represent persons 12 to 17 years of age.

Youth homicides decline in 1999

In 1999, 45 youths were accused of homicide, 12 fewer than in 1998, and representing 9.5% of all persons accused of homicide (Figure 9). Over the past decade, the youth homicide rate has remained relatively stable, while the homicide rate for adults has generally been decreasing. During this period,

Figure 9



Source: Homicide Survey, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, October 2000.

¹⁶ Cansim (on-line), Statistics Canada, Ottawa. Population Projections by Sex and Age Group for Canada. Matrix 6900. Internet address: <http://www.statcan.ca>.

Table 9

Year	Youth Population ¹ (Aged 12-17 Years) (000s)			Youths Accused of Homicide						
				Number			Rate per 100,000 Youth Population			Total Youth as % of Total Accused
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
1974	1,443.7	1,384.3	2,828.0	53	3	56	3.67	0.22	1.98	10.2
1975	1,459.2	1,397.9	2,857.1	55	13	68	3.77	0.93	2.38	10.8
1976	1,466.7	1,403.0	2,869.6	41	8	49	2.80	0.57	1.71	7.9
1977	1,461.1	1,397.7	2,858.8	55	8	63	3.76	0.57	2.20	9.4
1978	1,433.7	1,371.0	2,804.7	48	10	58	3.35	0.73	2.07	8.4
1979	1,391.6	1,329.3	2,720.9	44	11	55	3.16	0.83	2.02	8.9
1980	1,351.2	1,288.0	2,639.2	39	7	46	2.89	0.54	1.74	8.7
1981	1,304.0	1,240.5	2,544.5	47	13	60	3.60	1.05	2.36	9.5
1982	1,260.9	1,197.3	2,458.2	42	9	51	3.33	0.75	2.07	8.0
1983	1,224.6	1,161.7	2,386.4	31	10	41	2.53	0.86	1.72	6.7
1984	1,196.8	1,133.8	2,330.6	25	11	36	2.09	0.97	1.54	6.5
1985	1,177.9	1,116.2	2,294.1	52	5	57	4.41	0.45	2.48	8.9
1986	1,162.6	1,105.2	2,267.8	31	11	42	2.67	1.00	1.85	7.6
1987	1,156.4	1,101.4	2,257.8	28	8	36	2.42	0.73	1.59	6.1
1988	1,151.7	1,096.2	2,247.9	44	3	47	3.82	0.27	2.09	8.9
1989	1,150.9	1,093.1	2,244.0	42	5	47	3.65	0.46	2.09	8.4
1990	1,158.6	1,097.5	2,256.1	35	12	47	3.02	1.09	2.08	8.5
1991	1,167.8	1,106.2	2,273.9	41	7	48	3.51	0.63	2.11	7.5
1992	1,185.0	1,120.1	2,305.1	53	5	58	4.47	0.45	2.52	8.8
1993	1,198.0	1,132.9	2,330.9	33	3	36	2.75	0.26	1.54	6.5
1994	1,212.3	1,146.8	2,359.1	52	6	58	4.29	0.52	2.46	10.1
1995	1,226.1	1,160.2	2,386.3	53	15	68	4.32	1.29	2.85	11.8
1996	1,241.5	1,176.1	2,417.6	47	3	50	3.79	0.26	2.07	9.1
1997	1,253.0	1,186.6	2,439.6	44	12	56	3.51	1.01	2.30	10.9
1998	1,258.2	1,191.0	2,449.2	54	3	57	4.29	0.25	2.33	10.9
1999	1,258.7	1,190.9	2,449.6	36	9	45	2.86	0.76	1.84	9.5
Average 1989-98	1,205.1	1,141.0	2,346.2	45	7	52	3.76	0.62	2.23	9.2

¹ Population estimates at July 1st - Statistics Canada, Census and Demographic Statistics, Demography Division.
^r Revised.

Source: Homicide Survey, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, October 2000.

an average of 52 youths were accused each year, accounting for 9% of all persons accused of homicide annually (Table 9). In 1999, female youths accounted for 20% of homicides committed by youths compared to an average of 13% over the previous ten years. However, due to small numbers, this type of year-to-year fluctuation is not uncommon.

As is the case historically, youths are more likely than adults to kill other youths and young adults. In incidents that were solved in 1999, 12-17 year olds represented 11% of all victims killed by youths compared to 2% of all victims killed by adults. A further 23% of victims killed by youths were 18 to 24 years of age, compared to 16% of all victims killed by adults.

Looking at accused-victim relationships, the data for 1999 show that youths accused of homicide were equally likely to kill family members as adult accused (30% and 33%, respectively). However, the percentage of acquaintances killed by youths (34%) was less than the proportion killed by adult accused (50%), while youths were more than twice as likely to kill strangers than adult accused (34% vs. 15%).

One in five accused and one in six victims are Aboriginal persons

It has been widely documented that Aboriginal Peoples are over-represented in the justice system. This also holds true for involvement in homicide. While Aboriginal Peoples account for 3% of the Canadian population, they comprised at least 19% of all persons accused of committing homicide in 1999 as well as 14% of all homicide victims. In 10% of the cases, police services did not collect or report this information. Therefore, the proportion of Aboriginals may actually be higher than cited above.

One factor which may contribute to some of this over-representation is that the Aboriginal population is quite younger than the rest of the Canadian population. The high-risk age group for committing homicide and other violent crimes is between 15 and 34 years of age. This age group accounted for 36% of the Aboriginal population in 1999, compared to 28% for the rest of the population.

PREVIOUS CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS

Three in five accused and two in five victims have a previous criminal record.

In 1999, three in five (64%) persons accused of homicide had a criminal record, the majority (57%) of whom had been previously convicted of violent crimes: 7 for homicide, 44 for robbery and 121 for other violent offences. Six of the seven accused persons with a previous homicide conviction committed a homicide in a correctional facility. The remaining accused had completed the sentence and was living in the community when the homicide charge was laid.

Similarly, 41% of homicide victims in 1999 had a criminal record, half of whom had been previously convicted of violent crimes: 3 for homicide, 24 for robbery, and 88 for other violent offences.

ALCOHOL/DRUG INVOLVEMENT

Alcohol / drug consumption a factor

Alcohol, drugs and other intoxicants are known to play a role in the commission of many crimes including homicide.¹⁷ In 1999, police reported that 38% of homicide victims and 50% of accused persons had consumed alcohol and/or drugs at the time of the offence, consistent with patterns since 1991 when this information was first collected in the Homicide Survey. Male victims were almost twice as likely as female victims to have consumed alcohol and/or drugs, even though, for the accused, the proportions were almost the same for males and females.

One in eight homicide incidents are drug-related

Drugs and drug dealing are believed to be linked directly to many types of crimes, including homicide. In 1999, one in eight (60) homicide incidents were reported by the police to be drug-related, similar to the average since 1991 when this question was added to the Homicide Survey. Of the 64 victims of drug-related homicides, 47 were reported by the police to be drug dealers.¹⁸

Gang-related homicides increasing

For the past few years, the police and the justice community have been investigating the involvement of organized criminal groups in crime, such as homicides perpetrated by bikers fighting over control of the lucrative drug market or other gangs. Between 1991 and 1995, there was an average of 19 gang-related homicide incidents each year. Beginning in 1996, the number of such incidents has more than doubled, with 44 reported in 1999. On average, over half of gang-related homicides involve drug trafficking and the settling of accounts.

Homicides committed during commission of another offence

Almost one-third of all homicide incidents reported in 1999 occurred during the commission of another criminal offence. Of these 152 incidents, 104 were committed at the same time as another violent offence: 58 during an assault, 28 during a robbery, 9 during a sexual assault, 3 during a kidnapping/abduction, 3 as a result of a stalking¹⁹ and 3 during other violent offences. Nine other homicides occurred as a result of arson, 16 were committed during other property offences, and 23, in combination with other types of criminal offences.

OCCUPATIONS AT RISK

One police officer murdered in the line of duty

Despite the obvious dangers inherent in police work, the murder of police officers in Canada in the line of duty is a relatively rare occurrence. Since 1961, an average of three

¹⁷ Sacco, V., and L. Kennedy. 1994. *The Criminal Event*. Scarborough, Ontario. Nelson Canada: p.47.

¹⁸ For more information, see - Tremblay, S. 1999. *Illicit Drugs and Crime in Canada*, Juristat, Catalogue 85-002-XPE, Vol. 19, No. 1. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

¹⁹ For more information on this topic, see - Kong, R. 1996. *Criminal Harassment*, Juristat, Catalogue 85-002-XPE, Vol. 16, No. 12. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

police officers each year have been murdered as a result of performing their duties; all but five were shot. In 1999, one police officer was a victim of homicide. By comparison, the United States, with a population ten times greater than Canada's, reported 61 police officers murdered on the job in 1998 (latest year for which figures are available); all but three were killed with a firearm. In 1999, no correctional officers were killed in Canada in the line of duty.

There were 20 other persons who were victims of homicide "on the job" in 1999 in Canada: 4 bus mechanics, 3 taxi drivers, 3 janitors/superintendents, 2 retail managers, 2 protective services personnel, 1 bank teller, 1 service station attendant, and 4 in other occupations.

There were three known prostitutes killed in the course of their work, down from seven in 1998. It should be noted that the number of prostitutes reported killed most likely under-represents the actual figure: only those incidents where the police are certain that the victim was killed in the course of engaging in prostitution-related activities are counted.²⁰


METHODOLOGY

The Homicide Survey has collected police-reported data on homicide incidents since 1961, including the characteristics of victims and accused. Whenever a homicide becomes known to the police, the investigating police department completes a survey questionnaire. This questionnaire remained virtually unchanged from 1961 to 1990. In 1991 and later in 1997, in an effort to respond to changing information needs, the survey was revised and expanded.

Note that the homicide *count* for each year reflects the number of homicides *reported* to police in that year, regardless of the date that the homicide actually occurred. Also, socio-demographic and other information (e.g., history of domestic violence, alcohol / drug consumption) on persons accused of homicide are only available for solved incidents (i.e., where

²⁰ For more information on prostitution, see - Duchesne, D. 1997. *Street Prostitution in Canada*, Juristat, Catalogue 85-002-XPE, Vol. 17 No. 2. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

Table 10



Number of Homicides, 1961-1999

Year	Nfld.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Yukon	N.W.T. ¹	Nvt.	Canada
1961	1	1	6	2	52	89	15	14	18	34	1	-	...	233
1962	-	1	10	8	62	76	19	13	18	55	3	-	...	265
1963	3	-	6	5	69	76	16	8	27	35	3	1	...	249
1964	5	-	13	5	52	81	16	20	25	32	1	3	...	253
1965	6	4	10	5	63	77	15	15	20	57	3	2	...	277
1966	3	1	9	6	56	71	17	12	27	48	-	0	...	250
1967	1	-	10	5	75	114	15	25	38	47	6	2	...	338
1968	5	-	9	5	102	104	28	23	25	73	1	-	...	375
1969	5	1	12	1	126	111	28	33	23	50	-	1	...	391
1970	1	1	15	8	141	115	29	24	42	78	6	7	...	467
1971	2	-	16	10	124	151	33	29	45	61	-	2	...	473
1972	2	2	14	11	157	141	36	28	37	88	3	2	...	521
1973	3	-	19	17	155	160	38	23	36	87	4	4	...	546
1974	3	2	8	21	169	160	42	31	44	107	5	8	...	600
1975	4	-	14	12	226	206	37	36	57	98	6	5	...	701
1976	6	2	25	14	205	183	31	34	68	88	4	8	...	668
1977	8	1	14	38	197	192	44	46	70	91	6	4	...	711
1978	9	4	13	27	180	182	39	32	84	85	2	4	...	661
1979	5	-	17	11	186	175	44	36	56	90	4	7	...	631
1980	3	1	12	9	181	158	31	31	55	105	2	4	...	592
1981	4	1	11	17	186	170	41	29	73	110	1	5	...	648
1982	6	-	12	13	190	184	35	39	70	109	2	7	...	667
1983	6	-	13	11	190	202	40	33	75	108	1	3	...	682
1984	6	-	15	14	198	190	43	30	54	110	2	5	...	667
1985	5	1	26	14	219	193	26	28	63	113	6	10	...	704
1986	4	-	15	12	156	139	47	26	64	89	3	14	...	569
1987	5	-	14	20	174	204	44	30	73	78	-	2	...	644
1988	7	1	11	8	154	186	31	23	66	80	1	8	...	576
1989	5	1	16	18	215	175	43	22	67	86	2	7	...	657
1990	-	1	9	12	184	182	39	36	74	110	1	12	...	660
1991	10	2	21	17	181	245	42	21	84	128	-	3	...	754
1992	2	-	21	11	166	242	29	32	92	122	2	13	...	732
1993	7	2	19	11	159	192	31	30	49	120	-	7	...	627
1994	4	1	19	15	126	192	29	24	66	113	3	4	...	596
1995	5	1	17	14	135	181	27	21	60	120	4	3	...	588
1996	7	1	18	9	154	187	45	32	53	125	-	4	...	635
1997	7	-	24	8	132	178	31	25	61	116	1	3	...	586
1998 ^f	7	1	24	5	137	156	33	33	64	90	3	5	...	558
1999	2	1	13	9	136	161	26	13	61	110	1	1	2	536
Total	174	35	570	458	5,770	6,181	1,255	1,040	2,084	3,446	93	180	2	21,288

¹ Includes Nunavut until 1999.

- Nil or zero.

... Figures not applicable or not appropriate.

^f Revised.

Source: Homicide Survey, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, October 2000.

at least one accused has been identified). In incidents where there are multiple accused and one victim, only the *closest* relationship between the victim and any of the accused is recorded.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

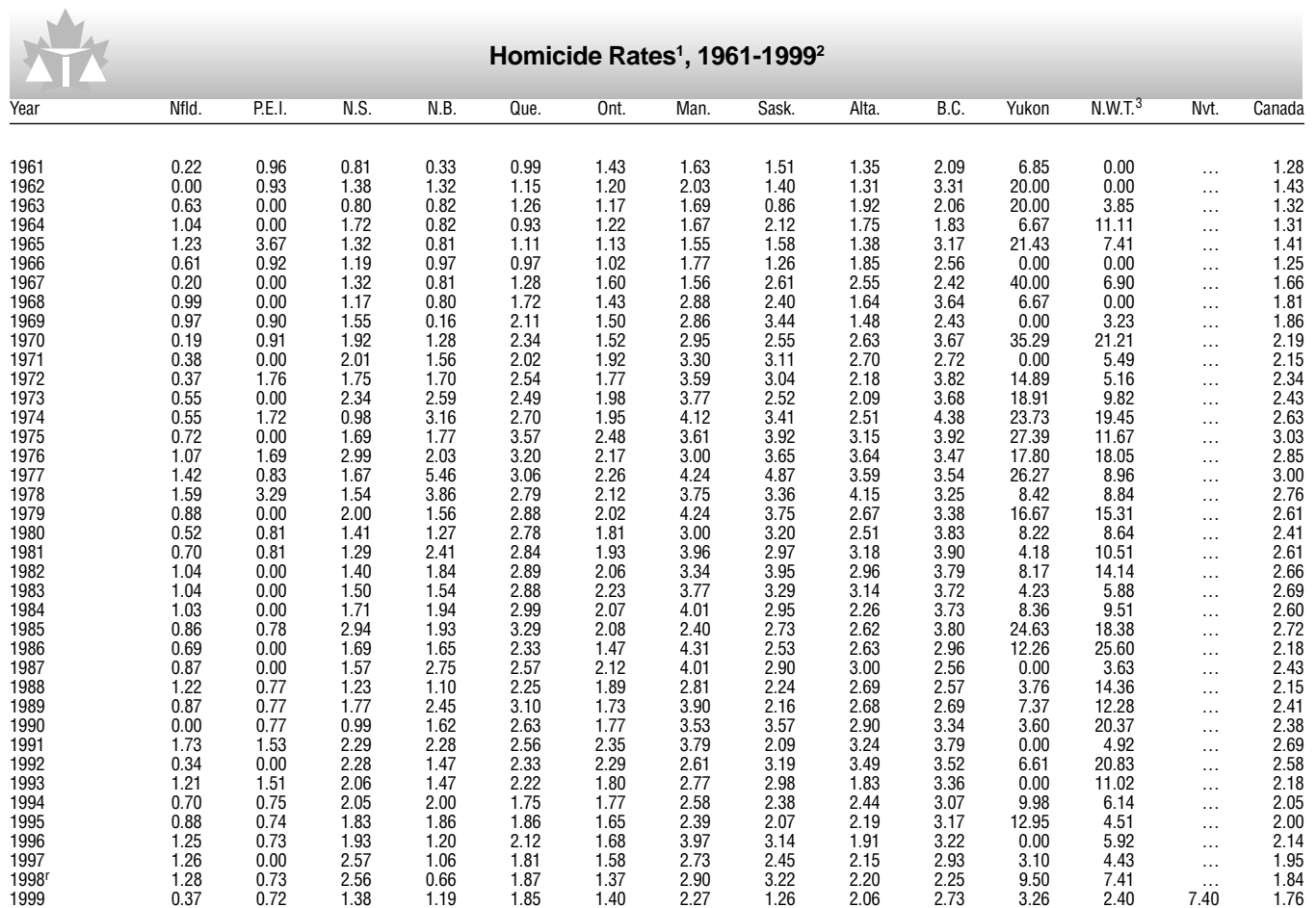
Homicide occurs when a person directly or indirectly, by any means, causes the death of a human being. Homicide is either culpable (murder, manslaughter or infanticide) or not culpable (not an offence) (*Criminal Code of Canada*, sections 222 – 240).

Murder occurs when a person intentionally causes the death of another human being, or means to cause bodily harm that the person knows is likely to cause death.

First degree murder occurs when:

- it is planned and deliberate; or
- the victim is a person employed and acting in the course of his/her work for the preservation and maintenance of the public peace (e.g., police officer, correctional worker); or
- the death is caused by a person committing or attempting to commit certain serious offences (e.g., sexual assault, kidnapping, hijacking).

Table 11



Year	Nfld.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Yukon	N.W.T. ³	Nvt.	Canada
1961	0.22	0.96	0.81	0.33	0.99	1.43	1.63	1.51	1.35	2.09	6.85	0.00	...	1.28
1962	0.00	0.93	1.38	1.32	1.15	1.20	2.03	1.40	1.31	3.31	20.00	0.00	...	1.43
1963	0.63	0.00	0.80	0.82	1.26	1.17	1.69	0.86	1.92	2.06	20.00	3.85	...	1.32
1964	1.04	0.00	1.72	0.82	0.93	1.22	1.67	2.12	1.75	1.83	6.67	11.11	...	1.31
1965	1.23	3.67	1.32	0.81	1.11	1.13	1.55	1.58	1.38	3.17	21.43	7.41	...	1.41
1966	0.61	0.92	1.19	0.97	0.97	1.02	1.77	1.26	1.85	2.56	0.00	0.00	...	1.25
1967	0.20	0.00	1.32	0.81	1.28	1.60	1.56	2.61	2.55	2.42	40.00	6.90	...	1.66
1968	0.99	0.00	1.17	0.80	1.72	1.43	2.88	2.40	1.64	3.64	6.67	0.00	...	1.81
1969	0.97	0.90	1.55	0.16	2.11	1.50	2.86	3.44	1.48	2.43	0.00	3.23	...	1.86
1970	0.19	0.91	1.92	1.28	2.34	1.52	2.95	2.55	2.63	3.67	35.29	21.21	...	2.19
1971	0.38	0.00	2.01	1.56	2.02	1.92	3.30	3.11	2.70	2.72	0.00	5.49	...	2.15
1972	0.37	1.76	1.75	1.70	2.54	1.77	3.59	3.04	2.18	3.82	14.89	5.16	...	2.34
1973	0.55	0.00	2.34	2.59	2.49	1.98	3.77	2.52	2.09	3.68	18.91	9.82	...	2.43
1974	0.55	1.72	0.98	3.16	2.70	1.95	4.12	3.41	2.51	4.38	23.73	19.45	...	2.63
1975	0.72	0.00	1.69	1.77	3.57	2.48	3.61	3.92	3.15	3.92	27.39	11.67	...	3.03
1976	1.07	1.69	2.99	2.03	3.20	2.17	3.00	3.65	3.64	3.47	17.80	18.05	...	2.85
1977	1.42	0.83	1.67	5.46	3.06	2.26	4.24	4.87	3.59	3.54	26.27	8.96	...	3.00
1978	1.59	3.29	1.54	3.86	2.79	2.12	3.75	3.36	4.15	3.25	8.42	8.84	...	2.76
1979	0.88	0.00	2.00	1.56	2.88	2.02	4.24	3.75	2.67	3.38	16.67	15.31	...	2.61
1980	0.52	0.81	1.41	1.27	2.78	1.81	3.00	3.20	2.51	3.83	8.22	8.64	...	2.41
1981	0.70	0.81	1.29	2.41	2.84	1.93	3.96	2.97	3.18	3.90	4.18	10.51	...	2.61
1982	1.04	0.00	1.40	1.84	2.89	2.06	3.34	3.95	2.96	3.79	8.17	14.14	...	2.66
1983	1.04	0.00	1.50	1.54	2.88	2.23	3.77	3.29	3.14	3.72	4.23	5.88	...	2.69
1984	1.03	0.00	1.71	1.94	2.99	2.07	4.01	2.95	2.26	3.73	8.36	9.51	...	2.60
1985	0.86	0.78	2.94	1.93	3.29	2.08	2.40	2.73	2.62	3.80	24.63	18.38	...	2.72
1986	0.69	0.00	1.69	1.65	2.33	1.47	4.31	2.53	2.63	2.96	12.26	25.60	...	2.18
1987	0.87	0.00	1.57	2.75	2.57	2.12	4.01	2.90	3.00	2.56	0.00	3.63	...	2.43
1988	1.22	0.77	1.23	1.10	2.25	1.89	2.81	2.24	2.69	2.57	3.76	14.36	...	2.15
1989	0.87	0.77	1.77	2.45	3.10	1.73	3.90	2.16	2.68	2.69	7.37	12.28	...	2.41
1990	0.00	0.77	0.99	1.62	2.63	1.77	3.53	3.57	2.90	3.34	3.60	20.37	...	2.38
1991	1.73	1.53	2.29	2.28	2.56	2.35	3.79	2.09	3.24	3.79	0.00	4.92	...	2.69
1992	0.34	0.00	2.28	1.47	2.33	2.29	2.61	3.19	3.49	3.52	6.61	20.83	...	2.58
1993	1.21	1.51	2.06	1.47	2.22	1.80	2.77	2.98	1.83	3.36	0.00	11.02	...	2.18
1994	0.70	0.75	2.05	2.00	1.75	1.77	2.58	2.38	2.44	3.07	9.98	6.14	...	2.05
1995	0.88	0.74	1.83	1.86	1.86	1.65	2.39	2.07	2.19	3.17	12.95	4.51	...	2.00
1996	1.25	0.73	1.93	1.20	2.12	1.68	3.97	3.14	1.91	3.22	0.00	5.92	...	2.14
1997	1.26	0.00	2.57	1.06	1.81	1.58	2.73	2.45	2.15	2.93	3.10	4.43	...	1.95
1998 ⁴	1.28	0.73	2.56	0.66	1.87	1.37	2.90	3.22	2.20	2.25	9.50	7.41	...	1.84
1999	0.37	0.72	1.38	1.19	1.85	1.40	2.27	1.26	2.06	2.73	3.26	2.40	7.40	1.76

¹ Rates are calculated per 100,000 population.

Estimates of population used:

1961-1990: Revised intercensal estimates

1991-1995: Final intercensal estimates

1996: Final postcensal estimates

1997-1999: Updated postcensal estimates

² As of 1971, population estimates were adjusted to reflect new methods of calculation.

³ Includes Nunavut until 1999.

⁴ Revised.

Source: Homicide Survey, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, October 2000.

Second degree murder is all murder that is not first degree.

Manslaughter is generally considered to be a homicide committed in the heat of passion caused by sudden provocation. It also includes other culpable homicides that are not murders or infanticides.

Infanticide occurs when a female causes the death of her newly-born child, if her mind is considered disturbed from the effects of giving birth or effects of lactation.

Offence - one offence is counted for each victim of homicide.

Incident - an incident is defined as the occurrence of one (or more) criminal offence(s) during one single, distinct event, regardless of the number of victims. If there are multiple victims or multiple suspects, the offences must occur at the same location and at the same time if they are to be included within the same incident. The incident count will normally be lower than the victim (or offence) count due to incidents involving multiple victims.

Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics

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