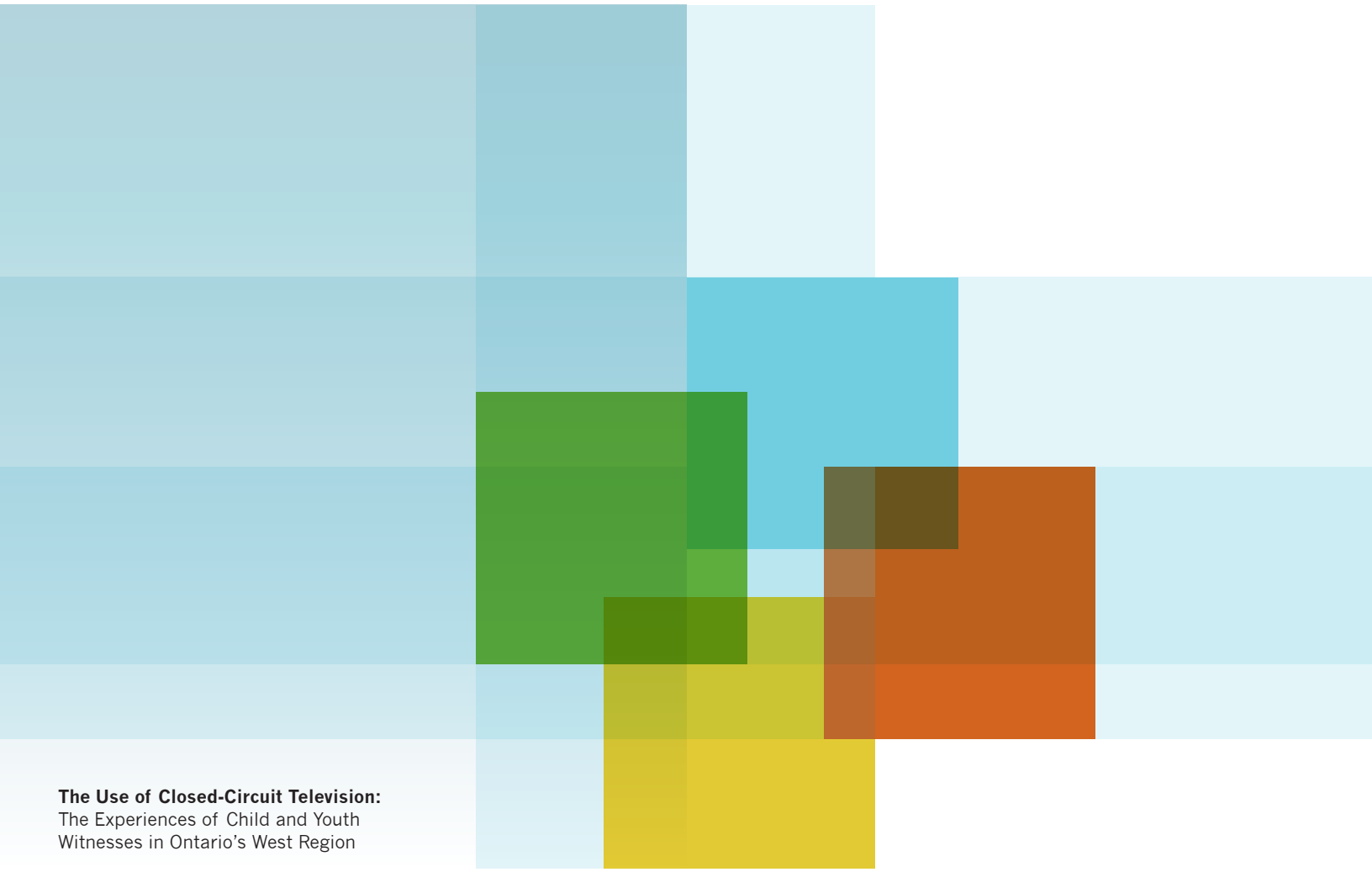

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Issue 8 of the *Victims of Crime Research Digest!* We are excited to bring you five articles about some excellent research occurring in Canada. This research, like the research presented in each issue of the *Victims of Crime Research Digest*, has played and continues to play a role in increasing awareness and building knowledge on victims issues in Canada, just as the National Victims of Crime Awareness Week (NVCAW) raises awareness and builds knowledge of victims issues.

The theme for NVCAW 2015 is "Shaping the Future Together." This year marks the 10th anniversary of the NVCAW, and three symposia will be held across the country – in Ottawa, Vancouver and Halifax.

As the country moves forward with the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights, we thought it important to share research on a variety of issues for which there are no national data. Hence, the focus in this issue is on testimonial aids and victim impact statements. We begin this issue with an article by Pamela Hurley describing the results of interviews with young witnesses about their use of closed-circuit television (CCTV). This article is followed by a media scan by Lisa Ha who sought to determine how often young victims can be identified via media reports. Susan McDonald and Lisa Ha then take a look at how two *Criminal Code* provisions, namely exclusion orders and the appointment of counsel for self-represented accused when cross-examining the victim, are working in the territories. Melissa Lindsay examines data on victim impact statements collected from a number of provincial courts as part of a multi-site criminal court processing study. Finally, Katie Scrim and Naomi Giff-MacKinnon examine the role and impact of Family Liaison Coordinators/Missing Persons Liaisons in the western provinces.

We hope this issue of the *Victims of Crime Research Digest* helps all of us working for victims of crime to raise awareness and build knowledge, so that we are "shaping the future together." As always, if you have comments, please do not hesitate to be in touch.

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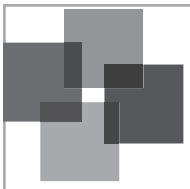

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The Use of Closed-Circuit Television:

THE EXPERIENCES OF CHILD AND YOUTH WITNESSES IN ONTARIO'S WEST REGION

PAMELA HURLEY

For almost three decades the role of young witnesses in the Canadian justice system has received considerable attention from the dual perspectives of minimizing revictimization and maximizing ability to provide best evidence. It is generally accepted that testimonial aids have improved the experience of children in the courtroom. Studies have reported the benefits of testimony outside the courtroom in facilitating the process of giving evidence (Davies and Noon, 1993; Goodman et al., 1998).

Efforts to "humanize" the adversarial process and make it more sensitive to children and youth are reflected in legislative amendments, in Canada and internationally, and research has attempted to ascertain the effects of these provisions on children who give evidence in court. In the past decade, researchers have focused on better understanding children's experiences with the criminal justice system by speaking directly with them, rather than just their parents or the professionals (see Plotnikoff and Woolfson 2012, 2009, 2007, 2004). The present research reflects the experiences of young witnesses (now aged 9–19)[1] in court and the use of testimonial aids, specifically closed circuit television (CCTV).

Since the first series of legislative reforms in 1988, there have been significant changes in the legal system addressing the needs of children called to testify in Canadian criminal courts. With amendments that came into force in 2006,

[1] The witnesses were all under the age of 18 at the time they testified in court, which could have been up to two years before they were asked if they would be willing to be interviewed.

there is now a presumption that all children under age 18 can, upon application, use testimonial aids, including screens and CCTV, and have an identified (court-approved) support person.[2] Although the intention of the legislation was to provide clarity and consistency, there continues to be a wide variation in how these provisions are being used throughout the country.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the use of CCTV in the West Region of Ontario and to determine how, or if, the use of CCTV helps facilitate children's evidence and minimize stress and revictimization for children and youth. Ontario's West Region includes 10 areas and extends from Grey Bruce County (Owen Sound) to Essex County (Windsor). This article describes the method and the findings in light of other similar studies.

METHOD

There were three sources of data: (1) information provided by the Victim/Witness Assistance Program (V/WAP)[3] and the Child Witness Project (CWP);[4] (2) demographic information obtained from a questionnaire completed by parents/guardians; and (3) in-depth interviews conducted with 15 children and youth and with 13 parents.

The study employed in-depth, semi-structured interviews with witnesses to explore their experiences and perceptions about testifying in criminal court. Criteria for inclusion in the study were that the case must have been completed within a two-year period and that the children and youth were under the age of 18 when they testified. Cases that fell within the two-year parameter were reviewed by V/WAP in six of the ten locations in the West Region and by the CWP in one jurisdiction. The following information was retrieved from these files: type of offence(s); number of child witnesses in each case; completion date; disposition; and what if any testimonial aids were used. V/WAP and the CWP informed parents about the research and a total of 29 parents agreed to be contacted about the interviews. Of these, 15 children and youth and 13 parents participated. Participants were provided with a letter of information in adult, youth and child versions. The voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality, and anonymity was explained and discussed with each young person and parent.[5]

Limitations

As with all qualitative studies, the findings presented here are representative of only those interviewed and should not be generalized to the whole population of young witnesses. While many of the cases have similarities (e.g. offences, relationship to the accused, gender), each case is ultimately unique.

[2] *Bill C-2, An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (Protection of children and other vulnerable persons) and the Canada Evidence Act.* received Royal Assent on July 21, 2005. The provisions related to testimonial aids came into force on January 2, 2006

[3] The Victim/Witness Assistance Program (V/WAP) is a court-based government service that provides comprehensive support services to victims and witnesses of violent crime in order to enhance their understanding of, and participation in, the criminal court process. Services include emotional support, information about the criminal process, court preparation, and orientation.

[4] The Child Witness Project (CWP), at the Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System, London, Ontario, provides court preparation services for children and youth under age 18. The program is funded by the Ministry of the Attorney General, Ontario.

[5] The project was granted ethics approval by the Research Ethics Review Committee (RERC) of King's University College at the University of Western Ontario, as it meets the ethical standards outlined in the *TCPS2 - Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (2010)*. The interview protocols and questionnaires were also reviewed by the Steering Committee and Community Advisory Committee. A child psychologist was available to receive an immediate referral should a child need support after the interview. None of the children interviewed were referred to this psychologist.

Participants and the Interviews

Twelve female and three male children and youth participated, ranging in age from 9 to 19 when interviewed. The courts were located in both large and smaller urban centres and most were equipped with CCTV. Of the 15 cases, 13 involved sexual offences. All but one participant was related to or knew the accused. Just over half of the children testified twice. Most used CCTV at least once; two children used a screen, and two children chose to testify in open court. These four witnesses were included to understand how their experience compared to those who used CCTV. The majority of children also had a court-approved support person with them while testifying.

Most participants chose to have the interview in their own home with a parent present. Children were assured that they would not be asked about their evidence. The interview began with an open-ended question: "What do you remember most about going to court?" More focused questions addressed the use (or not) of specific testimonial aids. Children were asked about court preparation. In addition, questions addressed any difficulties they may have experienced testifying and about any positive and helpful aspects of the experience. Parents were also interviewed and completed a questionnaire.They were asked about the use of testimonial aids, court preparation and support, any concerns they had about their child testifying, and what, if anything, helped.

FINDINGS

The findings are organized by five themes: the use of testimonial aids, the witnesses' perceptions about CCTV; cross-examination; preparing for court; and the impact of time and delays.

The Use of Testimonial Aids

Three quarters of the children in the interview group used CCTV, and all of those who used CCTV had a support person with them while testifying. In four of the five courthouses where CCTV was used, both Crown and defence counsel were in the testimony room with the child and support person. In examining the court outcome for the participant cases, there appeared to be little difference associated with whether the child testified using CCTV or a screen or in open court.

Interviews explored reasons why CCTV was not used for four of the young witnesses. Two of the witnesses used a screen; one because the courthouse did not have the equipment. When technical problems with the CCTV arose, the second witness opted to testify in the courtroom rather than adjourning and re-scheduling the matter. The screen was placed in front of the accused in this instance. This witness had used CCTV at the preliminary inquiry.

Three other witnesses testified in open court, without a screen or CCTV, and one youth had used CCTV at the preliminary inquiry but chose open court at trial. She said that,

> *(I) decided to be in the courtroom at trial – I was still afraid of him, but I wanted to show him I was strong enough – show I was not scared any more.*
>
> *Counselling helped me to get stronger; I learned strategies to cope without breaking down.*
>
> · female, aged 14

Children's Perceptions about CCTV

There was a high degree of consistency among the young witnesses about the benefits of CCTV. When testifying outside the courtroom, their most significant concerns were addressed: they did not have to see the accused or be in his or her presence; they did not see people in the courtroom; and it helped them feel safe. The young witnesses noted:

> *[CCTV] helped because I didn't have to be in the courtroom... I didn't have to have people staring at me. If they didn't have CCTV it would have been very difficult for me.*
>
> · female, aged 13

> *I didn't have to see him or people in the court room – it felt safer.*
>
> · female, aged 15

> *I would have been even more scared if I had to go into that little box beside the judge - if he [the accused] was looking at me, I don't think I would have said everything.*
>
> · female, aged 14

Participants who had used CCTV highly endorsed the aid and would recommend its use to other witnesses. One youth noted that it is not easy to testify, but that CCTV makes it easier. Problems with CCTV equipment, however, were identified by several young witnesses, sometimes resulting in delay or re-scheduling ofthe case.

The use of CCTV may not prevent an unanticipated meeting with the accused. One child saw the accused at the security gate and another saw the accused sitting on the bench outside of the testimony waiting room. An accidental move of the camera displayed a view of the accused to the young witness who was testifying via CCTV.

The majority of children reported that they had been very worried before court, and this was confirmed by parents who indicated that their child had been very worried about testifying and that the use of CCTV was helpful. All those interviewed, parents and children, emphasized the importance of having choice and the opportunity for input as to how they testified. The importance of having a choice in how to testify was also identified in an early Australian study (Cashmore 1991).

Cross-Examination

CCTV helps young witnesses provide a full and candid account of their evidence, but for many children the aid does not buffer the process of cross-examination. Many described cross-examination as the most difficult part of the process. Over half of the children said that they were unable to say everything they had wanted primarily due to the questioning by defence counsel.

The age of the witness was not a factor. In response to the question, "Did you say everything you wanted to the judge?" the participants responded:

> *No. Sometimes I said I didn't understand, and sometimes I didn't understand the questions and didn't say*
>
> - male, aged 16

> *No. There was too much focus on time frames that happened a long time ago and not enough focus on the events.*
>
> - female, aged 15

> *Confusing questions, I just tried to answer.*
>
> - male, aged 11

A small number of participants recalled that the defence lawyer had been "nice," but that they were confused by the questions. None of the children or youth reported confusion about questions asked by the Crown.

Participants recalled that court preparation helped somewhat with cross-examination and that they were aware they might be asked difficult questions. One youth recalled that the Crown had said she would, "intervene if there were inappropriate questions" asked during cross-examination. One youth became highly distressed during cross-examination, ran from the room, and was unable to return.

Cross-examination has been the focus of considerable controversy in child witness research for many decades. Studies have highlighted the difficulties children have responding accurately and completely to questions that are leading, suggestive and complicated. In a significant study in the UK (Plotnikoff and Woolfson 2009), undertaken as a follow-up to an earlier study (Plotnikoff and Woolfson 2004), Plotnikoff and Woolfson interviewed 172 children about testifying in criminal proceedings. Two thirds of the children interviewed reported having difficulty with comprehension, the complexity and pace of questions and interruptions. Two thirds reported negative feelings, including being scared, shaky, tired and frustrated while testifying. In a smaller scale study involving 37 interviews, children who had testified in criminal proceedings in Northern Ireland reported similar experiences, with almost half of them having problems understanding all of the questions asked during cross-examination (Hayes et al. 2011). Studies also suggest that testimony is less accurate after cross-examination (Fogliati and Bussey 2014) and that children answer erroneously to leading questions or those they do not understand (Spencer 2012).

Research that looks at the questioning of children has identified that open-ended, non-leading questions elicit the most complete and accurate information (Lamb et al. 2007). This style of questioning, however, is rarely practised in cross-examination. The use of intermediaries to facilitate child witness testimony, initiated in South Africa in the early 1990s, is an example of one innovation. Intermediaries are tasked with facilitating communication for the young witnesses during court proceedings, and they act as a protective factor during cross-examination. The use of intermediaries for children and vulnerable adults has been implemented and evaluated in England and Wales (Henderson 2012; Plotnikoff and Woolfson 2007).

Preparing for Court

All child and youth participants were provided with court preparation services by V/WAP or the CWP, which were highly valued. In most cases, the V/WAP or CWP staff who provided court preparation also acted as a court-approved support person. The majority of children and youth were informed about the availability of CCTV by the Crown prosecutor and/or V/WAP or CWP before going to court. Thirteen of the fifteen witnesses reported meeting with the Crown before court, and many recalled having a second meeting. Meetings with Crowns were described as reassuring and helpful. Many found that they learned what to expect when testifying, and some of the Crowns spent time preparing the witness for cross-examination. Two participants reported they did not have the opportunity to meet the Crown before court as the meetings were cancelled. This was upsetting for both young witnesses, one of whom reflected that the Crown "did not know me."

The Impact of Time and Delays in the System

Children and parents voiced frustration and distress about the multiple delays and the lengthy period of waiting for the court process to reach completion. The time spent in the system by the 15 young witnesses ranged from 11 months to 38 months; on average, cases took just under two years to reach completion.

Children described this waiting period as difficult and stressful. These comments illustrate their experiences:

As soon as I got the subpoena I started reliving the memories about what happened.
– female, aged 18

You had to relive it again and keep thinking about it. I was nervous and stressed about it.
– female, aged 14

I wasted two years stressing about this.
– female, aged 18

It took so long – I didn't want to do it anymore.
– female, aged 14

Waiting many months, even years, can have a negative impact on children and families. Parents spoke about their inability to talk to their child about their victimization until the case was completed, often having to wait up to two years. Parents were called as witnesses in several of the cases. They appreciated the preparation and support provided for their children and noted that they could also benefit from enhanced supports themselves. The need for support for parents has been identified in the literature (Crawford and Bull 2006). For a small number of children, counselling could not begin until the case was completed, as per the policy of some community agencies. Witnesses felt that they could not get on with their lives, as they were required to remember details of events in order to recount the information in court. As well, memories can fade with time.

Delays seem to be part of the criminal justice system, but there are some measures that may address the challenges (see Walsh et al. 2008). For example, the use of children's video-recorded statements as evidence-in-chief may help. So could child and youth advocacy centres, which provide multidisciplinary, seamless services to and families, from the point of the investigation to court outcome and beyond (see McDonald et al. 2013).[6]

[6] See the website www.cac-cae.ca for more information on child and youth advocacy centres in Canada.

FINAL THOUGHTS

CCTV has been available since 1988 on a case-by-case basis, and presumptively since 2006. Despite the clarity provided in the *Criminal Code*, anecdotal evidence shows that testimonial aids are not being used consistently for young witnesses in the country. Crown prosecutors, V/WAP and the CWP were concerned that this was also the case in the West Region. The findings showed that the majority of young witnesses interviewed did have access to CCTV and that most had been informed about CCTV and given the option to use it.

All participants reported that CCTV was beneficial; as one young person stated, "If CCTV is an option, take it." Court preparation and support were both also identified as helpful and as making a difference. On the less positive side, problems with CCTV equipment did occur and often resulted in delays. And it is important to note that the use of CCTV could not buffer two stressful aspects of participation in criminal justice proceedings which were highlighted during the interviews: cross-examination and the negative impact of delays and waiting.

The majority of young witnesses stated that they would not want to testify again. This sentiment was echoed by their parents, who had concerns about the emotional turmoil testifying put their children through. The young witnesses, however, showed remarkable resilience and courage in facing up to the responsibility of testifying, even when the outcome was acquittal. As one youth reflected,

I am proud of myself. Even though he got off, I showed him that I [could stand] up and was not afraid of him anymore.

Although this is a small study from which limited conclusions can be drawn, it supports the findings of a number of related studies dealing with children's participation in the criminal justice system. The views and experiences of the young witnesses explored in this study clearly highlight the benefits of CCTV and support while testifying. These testimonial aids facilitate the participation of child witnesses and, overall, serve to minimize stress associated with testifying.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This article is based on a larger research project undertaken by the Research and Statistics Division, Department of Justice Canada (2014), that included interviews with children and youth and their parents conducted by the author and surveys with Crown prosecutors and victim services in the West Region of Ontario. The author is grateful to the Steering Group that supported and guided the study throughout, to the Victim/Witness Assistance Program managers and staff and the Child Witness Project, who helped facilitate the participation of the children and parents, and to the Crown Community Committee, who identified the need for research.

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Identifying Young Victims in the Media in Canada:

A MEDIA SCAN

LISA HA AND ANNA NDEGWA

The identities of young victims and witnesses can be protected in various ways under existing law. In most cases, the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* does not allow publication of the identity of young victims/witnesses (s.111). This is an automatic ban; neither the Crown nor any other party needs to apply for it. It is also *mandatory*, meaning the judge must implement it. A court can only issue an order permitting the publication of the identity of the victim/witness if the young person makes an application requesting it and the court is satisfied that the publication would not be contrary to his or her best interests or the public interest (s.110(6)).[1] In contrast, under the *Criminal Code* (s.486.4), only child victims and witnesses of primarily sexual offences allegedly committed by an adult accused benefit from a publication ban to protect their identity. A judge must inform a victim or any witness under the age of 18 years of their right to make an application for an order under s. 486.4(1), and if they apply the judge must make the order. There is, therefore, under the current law a difference in approach governing the application of publication bans involving child victims or witnesses under the *Criminal Code* and under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*.[2]

[1] Note that, in addition to s. 110(6), several sections of the *YCJA* allow the court to lift a publication ban for a young accused: s. 75. (1) and (2), s.110 (2)(a), s.110 (2)(b), s.110 (2)(c), s.110 (3), and s.110(4).

[2] Note that *Criminal Code* s.486.5 also governs the ordering of discretionary publication bans in all other cases, including in respect of child witnesses/victims of other crimes.

A 2012 Supreme Court of Canada decision involving a young victim of cyberbullying highlighted the need to protect the privacy of young persons as these cases are brought through the justice system. In doing so, the Court referred to important privacy protections for young persons in the context of criminal justice proceedings and emphasized that these protections are based solely on their age. The Court in *AB v. Bragg Communications*, 2012 SCC 46, stated:

> Recognition of the *inherent* vulnerability of children has consistent and deep roots in Canadian law. This results in protection for young people's privacy under the *Criminal Code*, R.S.C. 1985, c. C-46 (s. 486), the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, S.C. 2002, c. 1 (s. 110), and child welfare legislation, not to mention international protections such as the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, Can. T.S. 1992 No. 3, **all based on age, not the sensitivity of the particular child**. As a result, in an application involving sexualized cyberbullying, there is no need for a particular child to demonstrate that she personally conforms to this legal paradigm. **The law attributes the heightened vulnerability based on chronology, not temperament:** See *R. v. D.B.*, [2008] 2 S.C.R. 3, at paras. 41, 61 and 84-87; *R. v. Sharpe*, [2001] 1 S.C.R. 45, at paras. 170-74.

The statements in the decision apply to all young persons, whether they are accused, victims or witnesses. Bill C-32, *An Act to enact the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights and to amend certain Acts*, introduces amendments to s.486.4 of the *Criminal Code*. The proposed amendments would make a publication ban mandatory upon application for all victims under the age of 18 years in respect of offences not already covered by the current provision. These changes would enhance the protections afforded to child victims in particular under the *Criminal Code*. It is within this context that this small study was undertaken.

In a 2010 study (Jones et al. 2010), researchers examined the nature and extent to which identifying information was being published in child victimization cases in the United States. The authors highlighted the impact that media identification of young victims can have, suggesting it can "exacerbate trauma, complicate recovery, discourage future disclosures and inhibit cooperation with police" (2010, 347). The study found that just over 50% of media articles examined included identifying information (2010, 353).

The purpose of this study is to look at media coverage of cases of violent victimization of children in Canada and to determine, using similar methodology to Jones et al. (2010), the extent to which Canadian media sources publish identifying information on child victimization cases. The focus is on the characteristics of cases of child victimization reported by the media (e.g. type of victimization, demographics), how often the coverage included identifying information about the victim, whether there was an indication of a publication ban in place, and the type of identifying information reported.

METHODOLOGY

Two databases were used to retrieve media articles: the Government of Canada news database, "NewsDesk," and one from a media-monitoring company, Gnowit.com. The focus was on Canadian newspaper articles and media sources reporting on cases of child victimization within a period of roughly six years, from January 1, 2008, to October 31, 2013. The following search terms were used: "child* and (neglect or violence or sexual offence or victim or crime or abuse or assault or rape or crimes against persons or child victim)." Articles were excluded if there was no clearly reported offence against a child (e.g. if a child victim was not indicated). A total of 60 articles were found through the initial search. A further 30 articles were added based on the added search term of "pornography."

Articles were excluded if the case involved child fatalities. Jones et al. (2010) found that media coverage involving child fatalities is more likely to include information that can be used to identify the victims (i.e., the victim or relative's actual names). The analyses presented below were conducted on a final sample of 90 articles covering non-fatal child victimization in Canada between 2008 and 2013.

For each newspaper article and news media source, characteristics about the incident and information about both the accused and victim were collected and documented. Also noted was whether the article reported identifying information about the victim as well as whether it clearly stated there was a publication ban in place. "Identifying information" was defined as those pieces of information that could potentially reveal a child victim to their social group. Identifiers include the victim's name; the street name or full address of the victim; the name of the victim's school, daycare, or church; the name of non-offending relatives; and the name of an offending family member. Information was also collected on the length of time between the victimization and the publication of the article.

FINDINGS

Of the 90 articles reviewed, almost a quarter (23%) contained identifying information (Table 1). The identifying information reported most often was the name of the child's school, church or day care (33%), the child's street or address (29%), and the full name of non-offending relatives (24%). The full name of the victim was included in 4 out of the 21 articles that contained identifying information (23%). More than half of the articles did not mention whether a publication ban was in place (57%); however, 41% of the articles did specify that there was a publication ban. Seven of the articles indicating that a publication ban was in place contained identifying information, including the home address of the victim or the accused (full or partial), name/address of daycare,

Table 1. Identifying information in Canadian media articles on child victimization cases (2008-2013, 90 articles)

Identifying Information	%	(n)
No	77	(69)
Yes	23	(21)
Type of Identifying Information		
Name of church, school, daycare etc.	33	(7)
Street/address	29	(6)
Full name of non-offending relatives	24	(5)
Full name of victim	19	(4)
Full name of offending family member	10	(2)
Other	10	(2)
Publication Ban		
Unspecified	57	(51)
Yes	41	(37)
No	2	(2)
Time between victimization and article		
0 – 1 years	52	(47)
2 – 5 years	32	(29)
6 – 10 years	6	(5)
10+ years	7	(6)
Unspecified	3	(3)

Source: (Canadian media articles from Government of Canada Newsdesk and Gnowit.com)

and partial name of victim (e.g. "baby Alison"). Slightly more than half of the articles (52%) were published within a year of the victimization.

Table 2 presents the victim and accused characteristics in cases of child victimization reported in the media. Victims were more often female than male (61% versus 41%).[3] In terms of age, slightly more than half of victims were under the age of 12 (53%). A large proportion of accused were male (89%). Slightly more than half of accused were 41 years old or older (51%), while 29% were between the ages of 26 and 40 years of age.The majority of cases involved accused who were either a non-family member known to the victim (47%) or a parent of the victim (20%).

[3] Percentages add to more than 100% due to the possibility of multiple victims in one case.

Table 2. Victim and accused characteristics in Canadian media articles on child victimization cases (2008-2013, 90 articles)

	%	(n)
Victim sex		
Female	61	(55)
Male	41	(37)
Unspecified	7	(6)
Victim age at time of incident		
Child (12 years old and under)	53	(49)
Adolescent (13-17 years old)	34	(32)
Unspecified	13	(12)
Accused sex		
Male	89	(80)
Female	14	(13)
Unspecified	1	(1)
Accused age at time of incident		
41+ years	51	(46)
26-40 years	29	(26)
Unspecified	16	(14)
18-25 years	6	(5)
1-17 years	4	(4)
Accused – victim relationship		
Known to victim	47	(42)
Parent	20	(18)
Unknown to victim	18	(16)
Unspecified	12	(11)
Family member	7	(6)

Source: (Canadian media articles from Government of Canada Newsdesk and Gnowit.com)

Table 3 presents the characteristics of the child victimization cases reported in the media. The majority of articles reported on cases of child sexual abuse (71%), while the others reported on physical abuse (17%) and other types of abuse, including neglect (12%). In a majority of the cases the accused were charged with making, possessing, or distributing child pornography (42%); 38% were charged with sexual assault; 23% were charged with sexual interference; 21% were charged with failing to provide the necessaries of life or mistreatment; and 18% of accused were charged with sexual touching involving a young person, a person under the age of 14 or 16. Slightly more than half of cases involved only one victim (51%), and nearly half (48%) of cases involved multiple victims. Child pornography, videotapes or photographs were factors in the victimization in 37% of cases, while 23% of the cases involved an international connection (e.g. a Canadian victimized abroad), 17% of cases involved a high-profile community member (e.g. pastor, RCMP officer), and 14% involved the Internet.

Table 3. Case characteristics in Canadian media articles on child victimization cases (2008-2013, n=90)

Victimization type	%	(n)
Sexual abuse	71	(64)
Physical abuse	17	(15)
Other (neglect)	12	(11)
Type of Offence: Charges laid		
Making, possessing or distributing child pornography	42	(38)
Sexual assault	38	(34)
Sexual interference	23	(21)
Failing to provide necessaries of life/Mistreatment	21	(19)
Sexual touching involving a young person (under 14, under 16)	18	(16)
Assault (aggravated, with weapon)	16	(14)
Luring	12	(11)
Sexual exploitation	8	(7)
Molestation/Incest	7	(6)
Unspecified	7	(6)
Abduction	4	(4)
Number of Victim(s)		
1 victim	51	(46)
2+ victims	48	(44)
Number of accused		
1 accused	91	(82)
2+ accused	9	(8)
Time between victimization and article		
0 – 1 years	52	(47)
2 – 5 years	32	(29)
6 – 10 years	6	(5)
10+ years	7	(6)
Unspecified	3	(3)
Victimization Characteristics		
Photographs, pornography, videotape	37	(33)
International connection	23	(21)
High-profile community member	17	(15)
Internet-related	14	(13)
Abductions	6	(5)
Romantic relationship	2	(2)

Source: (Canadian media articles from Government of Canada Newsdesk and Gnowit.com)

CONCLUSION

Looking at the content of media coverage of young persons who are victims and/or witnesses in the criminal justice system is a straightforward method to understand how publication bans are working. The context for this study is also important and will likely draw greater attention to the privacy protections of young persons in the criminal justice system. The Supreme Court of Canada's decision in *AB v. Bragg Communications* affirmed the inherent vulnerabilities of young persons by way of their chronological age alone. In line with this decision, the proposed changes to the *Criminal Code* under Bill C-32, the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights*, will enhance protections for victims under the age of 18 years in the criminal justice system. While the findings of this study show that the identities of young victims/witnesses are being protected to a greater extent in Canada than what may be seen in the United States (based on the results of the Jones et al. study), it remains important for the courts and media organizations to be sensitive to the vulnerabilities of children.

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Exclusion of the Public and Appointment of Counsel:

TOOLS TO HELP VICTIM WITNESSES IN CANADA'S NORTH

SUSAN MCDONALD
AND LISA HA

Testimonial aids can help a witness give a full and candid account of the alleged incident. The *Criminal Code* and the *Canada Evidence Act* contain numerous provisions on the use of testimonial aids[1] in the context of criminal justice proceedings, all of which recognize the concerns and the needs of victims who testify.[2] This study examined two of these provisions: an order for exclusion of the public and the appointment of counsel for self-represented accused for cross-examination of the victim.

Section 486 of the *Criminal Code* codifies the common law principle that all proceedings shall take place in open court, but it also permits the Crown to request and the judge or justice to order the exclusion of all public members or specific individuals from all or part of the proceedings to ensure the proper administration of justice. Subsection 486(2) was amended so that the "proper administration of justice" includes safeguarding the interests of witnesses under the age of 18 in all proceedings. Before this and other changes came into force and effect in January 2006, the section only referred to proceedings involving sexual offences or personal violence offences.

Other amendments to the testimonial aids provisions also came into force and effect in January 2006. Section 486.3 gives judges the authority to appoint counsel for self-represented accused persons for

[1] Testimonial aids or supports include support persons, screens so the witness does not have to see the accused, and the use of video or closed-circuit television for testifying from outside of the courtroom, among other tools to help witnesses testify.

[2] The term "victim/witness" is used to acknowledge that testimonial aids can be requested for any witness, but in the context of this study, the witness is also the victim.

the purposes of preventing the accused from personally cross-examining children and vulnerable adult witnesses, unless doing so would interfere with the proper administration of justice. Now for example, under s. 486.3(4) there is a presumption that an order preventing in-person cross-examination of the complainant will be made in any case involving a charge of criminal harassment.

In April 2014, Bill C-32, *An Act to enact the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights* and to amend certain Acts, introduced a number of amendments to the testimonial aids provisions in the *Criminal Code*. The amendments enumerate a non-exhaustive list of factors that a court shall take into consideration when determining whether an exclusion order is in the proper administration of justice.

This article summarizes a small study in which Crown prosecutors and victim services providers, primarily in the territories, were interviewed about how these provisions work in practice. Context, method and findings are described in the following sections.

THE NORTHERN CONTEXT – DEMOGRAPHICS, CRIME RATES AND THE DELIVERY OF VICTIM SERVICES

This study provides some insight to improve our understanding of how these two provisions are working in the territories; it was undertaken in the three territories because they share the characteristics of high levels of violent inter-personal crime, and small, isolated communities, many of which have no road access. To understand why and how these particular *Criminal Code* provisions are used in the territories, it is important to consider geographic and demographic context.

The Yukon Territory has a population of 36,402 (Census 2011), of which 23% is Aboriginal and 68% live in Whitehorse. The smallest community is Destruction Bay, with a population of 55 (Census 2011). Old Crow is the only fly-in community in the territory as all other communities have road access, although some of those roads are unpaved. The Northwest Territories (NWT) have a population of 43,523 (Census 2011), with 44% living in Yellowknife. Just over half (51%) of the population is Aboriginal. The territory of Nunavut covers 2,000,000 km^2, 20 percent of Canada's total land mass. The population is 33,697 people, 85% of whom are Inuit (Census 2011). There are 25 communities, including the capital, Iqaluit, and the majority of these are accessible by plane only.

In 2013, Nunavut had the highest violent crime rate in the country (8,659 incidents per 100,000 population), followed by the NWT (7,462 incidents) and the Yukon (4,112 incidents); in comparison, the general Canadian violent crime rate is 1,092 incidents per 100,000 population. It is important to note that violent crime has decreased in the country overall over the past ten years. The violent crime rate decreased by 11% from 2012 in Nunavut and by 9% in the Northwest Territories; the Yukon is the only jurisdiction where the violent crime rate increased (by 2%) from 2012 (Boyce et al. 2014, Table 2b). According to the 2009 General Social Survey on Victimization, which complements police-reported data with self-reported victimization data, incidents of spousal violence and sexual offences were higher in the territories than in any of the provinces, and women and children made up the majority of victims in these cases (Perreault and Hotton Mahony 2012).

The federal government, through the Public Prosecution Service of Canada (PPSC), is responsible for all prosecutions in the territories and also for providing assistance to victims and witnesses through the Crown Witness Coordinator (CWC) program. Territorial governments also provide victim services, as do some non-governmental organizations. Most criminal justice proceedings are conducted through circuit court. Since few communities have permanent court structures, the community centre or other suitable room is transformed into a courtroom for the duration of the visit when all the circuit party – Crown, CWC, defence, justice, etc. – are flown into the communities.

A decade ago, Professor Jamie Cameron of Osgoode Hall Law School prepared a report for the Department of Justice entitled, *Victim Privacy and the Open Court Principle* (Cameron 2005). Beginning with the principle of open court, the author reviewed the case law on publication bans and exclusion orders, looking specifically at cases of sexual violence. Empirical research on both these *Criminal Code* provisions was undertaken in the *Multi-Site Survey of Victims of Crime and Criminal Justice Professionals* across Canada (Prairie Research Associates 2006). As Statistics Canada does not collect any victim or witness-related information from the courts, we do not know how these particular provisions are used on a national scale.

METHOD

Semi-structured, qualitative telephone interviews with Crown Witness Coordinators (CWCs) and Crown prosecutors from the PPSC were conducted across the three territories. The interviews with the nine Crown prosecutors lasted approximately 30-40 minutes each. Eleven CWCs were interviewed in groups and one was interviewed individually. Questions on the use of orders for the exclusion of the public and appointment of counsel were posed by the responsible researcher, while another researcher took notes.

Additional interviews on the topic of appointment of counsel were conducted with seven victim services workers from two western and two eastern provinces.

This approach was taken to highlight the differences that occur across the country, both within and between jurisdictions. Crown prosecutors were not interviewed in the provinces as they had recently been contacted to participate in a separate research project. Victim services workers interviewed were those with experience supporting victims through the courts.

A letter of information and consent was sent to participants in advance of the interview. The letter explained the purpose of the research, confidentiality, anonymity, risk and data issues. Participants gave their consent verbally at the beginning of the interview and asked no questions regarding the method or ethics of the research.

As with all qualitative research, the findings reflect the experiences and perceptions of those who were interviewed and should not be generalized to experiences of all Crown prosecutors or victim services in the territories.

FINDINGS

I. Orders for Exclusion of the Public

There were four key findings on orders for exclusion of the public.

All Crown and CWCs recognize the presumption of the common law principle of open court.

All Crown prosecutors and all CWCs recognized the importance of the common law principle of open court with its twin elements of access and publicity. One Crown noted that orders for publication bans and exclusion of the public may not be challenged to the same extent by media in the north as in the south, where the media continue to play a role in ensuring that the default is open court. Both the Crowns and CWCs recognized that an application for an order for the exclusion of the public needed to demonstrate that there was no other available alternative, such as other testimonial aids like the screen, to ensure the proper administration of justice.

Characteristics of cases and victims are very similar across the three territories.

As noted earlier, spousal and family violence and sexual offences are prevalent in the territories, and women and children make up the majority of victims in these cases. In interviews, Crown prosecutors most often considered an application for an order for exclusion of the public in cases of sexual violence and where there

was a relationship between the accused and the victim. Crowns also noted that in small communities, the victim and accused will almost always know each other, even if they have no personal relationship, and that the facts of the alleged incidents are exceedingly personal, with privacy issues at play. There are rarely witnesses to these alleged incidents, so the credibility of the victim is under scrutiny. The CWCs spoke about the power imbalance between the accused and the victim and how intimidation by the accused or by supporters of the accused may make it difficult for the victim to provide a full and candid account of the incident.

There were a couple of examples of children and adult women who were unable to testify in front of the accused and others in the courtroom and ran from the witness stand. These cases all dealt with sexual violence, and testifying in public proved exceedingly difficult for the witnesses. While such instances are rare, they do occur despite the support provided by CWCs and Crown.

Applications for an order for exclusion of the public are rare across the three territories.

As noted earlier, Crown prosecutors were selected because of their experience with such applications, and all those interviewed noted that these applications are quite rare. For example, a Crown with 14 years of experience in the North had only made two applications. Several Crowns noted that they are reluctant to make the application unless they have exhausted all alternatives, such as the use of other testimonial aids like the screen, or where the case would be heard as late as possible in the day and most members of the public would have left. Several Crown prosecutors had also made applications which were denied by the judge; in these cases, judges were not convinced that there were no other alternatives to ordering the exclusion of the public.

The availability of alternatives, especially technology, as well as the remoteness and size of communities appears to be related to the use of exclusion orders.

The availability and use of technology appears to have an impact on the use of exclusion orders in each of the territories – where there are alternatives to orders for exclusion of the public, the courts will employ these first.

One alternative to an order for exclusion of the public is closed-circuit television (CCTV) or videoconferencing, where the victim/witness testifies from another room (sometimes even another building) and does not enter the courtroom. Unfortunately, CCTV is only available in the capital cities and the technology is not without its challenges.

Interviewees noted that, because of the delay of the audio, the quality of testimony by video conference is not ideal. This can have an adverse impact on how testimony is perceived by the judge or jury, so some Crowns indicated that they are reluctant to request it. Another disadvantage of videoconferencing and CCTV is that the Crown is usually in the room with the witness and so is not able to easily assess how the testimony is being received by the judge or jury. So, while technology provides alternatives to orders for exclusion of the public, the technology is often not available or if it is, there may be challenges with the quality of the testimony.

All CWCs across the three territories agreed that an exclusion of the public order does not address the issue of the witness being intimidated by the accused. In these cases, other testimonial aids, such as a screen or a support person, would be helpful.

Proceedings in the smaller communities may attract a great deal of attention, and it is common for large numbers of community members to attend a trial or other proceeding. Applications for orders for exclusion of the public were most frequently made in Nunavut where CCTV was not available (outside of the capital), where screens were not available (although makeshift screens such as bedding or flags are used), and where communities were quite small and remote. These applications, however, remain the exception and are only made where the circumstances and the lack of alternatives demand them.

II. Appointment of Counsel for Cross-Examination when the Accused Is Self-Represented

Interviews with Territorial Crown and CWCs

Applications for appointment of counsel are not uncommon and are relatively straightforward.

In the NWT and Yukon, applications for appointment of counsel are not uncommon; in fact, a few interviewees reported dealing with them on a weekly or monthly basis. In contrast, the practice is rare in Nunavut, where an interviewee reported that all accused persons are presumed to be represented by legal services.[3]

Most interviewees noted the applications they see are typically for domestic violence cases, assault cases or child victimizations. A few noted that the most serious cases usually do not involve self-represented accused, suggesting the accused is more likely to have counsel due to the complexity of cases (e.g. homicide) and the seriousness of potential sentences. A few interviewees discussed their perceptions as to why an accused might be self-represented, suggesting that many do so by choice or that mental health issues could be at play, or the accused may consider himself or herself "court savvy," while others either did not qualify, or did not apply for legal aid.

Crown prosecutors typically initiate the application, which is generally put in place in advance. One Crown and a few CWCs noted they would flag the file early on if they saw that an application might need to be made. Interviewees indicated that for the most part the process goes fairly smoothly. A few interviewees noted that they have seen an accused fire counsel at the last minute, so in those situations there would have to be an adjournment to make the application and get counsel in place.

Applications are strongly supported by the courts.

All of the Crowns and CWCs who had experience with applications for appointment of counsel indicated that applications are always granted by the courts. None of those interviewed had ever seen an application denied. Interviewees noted the imbalance of power that results when an accused person cross-examines the person they are accused of victimizing. Interviewees highlighted how seriously this power imbalance is taken by judges, suggesting there is little deliberation involved in granting appointment of counsel applications. A few interviewees also noted that judges view appointment of counsel as an important tool to keep the courtroom running smoothly and to curtail the "vexatious behaviour" of self-represented litigants.

[3] The Nunavut Legal Services Board has a presumed eligibility practice for criminal matters, which provides legal aid services for all Nunavummiut appearing before the court for the first time (Legal Services Board of Nunavut Annual Report 2011-2012).

Challenges

While most Crowns and CWCs felt that applications were straightforward and rarely if ever denied, some interviewees highlighted challenges they have encountered or witnessed in the courts. The most common challenge mentioned concerned delays that result from applications for appointment of counsel – specifically, the time it takes to get appointed counsel in place. In some locations, getting counsel appointed is handled by legal aid, and elsewhere it is handled by the courts. Some interviewees identified challenges around appointing counsel who are not familiar with the case. This can create delays and interruptions in court when counsel and the accused need to have frequent discussions. A few interviewees also noted that there have been cases where an accused has fired several lawyers, which causes delays due to the need to obtain new counsel. One interviewee pointed out that, in the North, it could be particularly difficult to find additional counsel when the accused has previously fired several of them.

One interviewee also commented on inconsistencies around the role of appointed counsel, indicating that some are just in and out for cross-examination while others spend time in court to get up-to-speed and prepared.

Impact of appointment of counsel on the victim/witness

When asked to discuss the perceived impact that appointment of counsel has on a victim/witness, all interviewees said that it was positive; many used language such as "it is essential." Two main aspects were discussed: first, the psychological impact on the victim/witness; and second, the impact on the testimony or on the ability of the victim/witness to provide a full and candid account on the stand.

A few interviewees discussed the palpable relief they see in victims/witnesses when informing them the application has been granted. It was also noted that judges consider allowing the accused to cross-examine the victim/witness to be a continuation of the abuse or a form of re-victimization. A few interviewees pointed out that while appointment of counsel does have a positive impact on victims/witnesses, the reality is that they still have to testify in court. The interviewees noted that just having to attend court is a difficult process and seeing the self-represented accused "in charge of the case" in all other aspects can also be challenging and stressful.

With regard to the impact on testimony, many interviewees suggested the witness would refuse to testify knowing that the accused would be permitted to cross-examine them. Others pointed out that having the accused cross-examine a witness would very likely influence the testimony provided.

Interviews with Provincial Victim Services Providers

The findings that emerged from interviews with victim services workers in several provinces were slightly different, due at least in part to the different social and geographical contexts, as well as the different role and perspectives of victim services workers.

Victim services experiences with applications for appointment of counsel

Victim services workers interviewed did not have significant experience with cases where applications were made to have counsel appointed. Those who had some experience noted that the applications are typically sorted out well in advance. Similar to the findings from the interviews in the North, no one had ever seen an application denied. One victim services worker recalled a case of a teenage victim of sexual abuse who would have had to wait for a new trial date if an application for appointment of counsel had been made. In this instance, after much discussion, the witness decided to move forward with the self-represented accused, rather than wait. One interviewee recounted experiences working in the courts prior to being a victim services worker and noted that court-appointed counsel were very common, particularly for domestic violence cases, sexual assaults, and child/youth victim/witnesses.

Minimal Victim Services involvement

Victim services workers interviewed indicated that applications for appointment of counsel were typically handled exclusively by the Crown prosecutor. While a few interviewees noted they had made contact with the Crown in cases where it was evident that the accused would be self-represented, for the most part the victim services workers have no involvement in identifying cases where an application would be appropriate. It was evident in these discussions that in some provinces victim services have little contact with the Crown, so it would be difficult for them to have access to the information that would allow them to flag cases. A few of the interviewees noted that they did have full access to Crown files, and would flag cases if necessary, but indicated that the Crown is typically good about doing so. Others noted that the Crown are "on it" when the need for an application arises, and that it would be rare for a matter to get to trial without representation. One interviewee stated, "We might have to advocate on some of the other testimonial aids, but never on the applications for counsel."

Importance of Crown and victim services communication

There are varying levels of interaction and information-sharing between Crown and victim services workers across jurisdictions. While a few interviewees noted that they would not typically have a role in identifying cases for appointment of counsel, one victim service worker in particular highlighted the challenges that emerge from lack of communication. This interviewee mentioned being involved in several cases where an accused had cross-examined a vulnerable adult victim and the Crown – for an unknown reason – had made no application for appointment of counsel. The lack of access to information meant that the victim services worker would not know about representation until arriving in court that day. This interviewee felt that better communication and more contact between victim services and Crown across this particular province would be beneficial in order to better support victim needs.

Impact of appointment of counsel on the victim/witness

Similar to the Crown and CWCs interviewed in the North, victim services workers in the provinces echoed the importance of appointment of counsel when the accused is self-represented. Interviewees talked about re-victimization, which can happen if the accused cross-examines the victim, as questions asked may be unfair and inappropriate. Interviewees also noted that victims show relief when they are informed that an application has been granted. One victim services worker recounted a case where an

accused was permitted to cross-examine his spouse (why no application for appointment of counsel was made is not known), and the accused brought up details during cross-examination that were irrelevant to the case. The interviewee noted that the stress and anxiety for the victim was extremely high. Another interviewee recounted examples of domestic violence cases where the accused and witness ended up yelling at each other during self-represented cross-examination, noting how difficult it was to watch, as though the cross-examination was a continuation of the abuse. With regard to the impact on testimony in these cases, interviewees agreed that a full and candid account is difficult to achieve. An interviewee noted that testimony often ends up being "well, you know what you did." Another interviewee noted that witnesses may recant testimony or leave full details out if subjected to cross-examination by an accused.

CONCLUSION

In the mid-1990s, in the case of *R. v. Bernardo*, LeSage, Associate Chief Justice of the Ontario Court, observed that "[d]uring recent years, there has been a gradual shift, or evolution ... to a recognition of the concerns, interests and involvement of the individual who has suffered as a result of crime."[4] The provisions in the *Criminal Code* that allow for orders for the exclusion of the public and for the appointment of counsel for self-represented accused during cross-examination of the victim/witness are evidence of that shift or evolution. The court has a truth-seeking function, and it is critical to obtain the best evidence possible from all witnesses. Testimonial aids are valuable tools for victims who testify in criminal proceedings, and the *Criminal Code* provides different options depending upon the specific needs of the victim/witness and the specific context for the proceedings.

All those interviewed were fully aware of the importance of obtaining a "full and candid account" from the victim/witness and the many challenges that may impede this goal. The research described in this article provides a small picture of how these provisions work, in conjunction with other testimonial aids, in the communities of the territories.

In each of the territories, there are plans to improve the technology in the courts and to increase access to testimonial aids such as screens.[5] Ideally, there would be screens permanently in all communities with a permanent court facility and portable screens for other communities.

Challenges remain for prosecutions in the North, but the Crown prosecutors, CWCs and provincial victim services interviewed show a very high level of awareness of the importance of both the open court principle and the needs of victim/witnesses.

[4] *The Queen v. Bernardo*, unreported decision of LeSage A.C.J.O.C., May 29, 1995, at 38.

[5] In the Yukon, CCTV will be installed in 2014 at the Whitehorse courthouse. Video conferencing is currently in use, allowing witnesses to testify to a Whitehorse courtroom from multiple sites across the country, including every Yukon community. Currently, there is no infrastructure to provide video conferencing evidence to community courthouses. In 2012, new screens were purchased for Whitehorse. As part of funding for the Lynx Children's Advocacy Centre, additional screens and CCTV infrastructure were budgeted for purchase in fiscal year 2014-15.
The Nunavut Court has budgeted additional project managers to develop a number of programs in 2014-15: the Court's video-conferencing capabilities will be expanded into all three courtrooms in Iqaluit; the Court's bandwidth will be upgraded to support two video courts running simultaneously; and a portable video-conferencing unit will be purchased and tested for use on court circuits where the available bandwidth and hard wiring can support the use of such a unit (Nunavut Court of Justice 2014, 27-28).

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Victim Impact Statements in a Multi-Site Criminal Court Processing Survey

MELISSA LINDSAY

The Victim Impact Statement (VIS) provision has been in the *Criminal Code* since 1988 and has been amended several times in the past two and a half decades (see Roberts 2008). It is the one provision that applies to all victims, regardless of whether or not they testify during a trial. Bill C-32, the *Victims Bill of Rights Act,* introduces amendments that will clarify the parameters of appropriate VIS content, enable vulnerable victims to present a VIS using testimonial aids, broaden its use to formally allow Community Impact Statements to be presented for all offences, and codify a standard form to be used across Canada.

Canadian research on VISs has shown that they are submitted to courts infrequently. For example, in a survey of judges in three Canadian provinces, Roberts and Edgar (2006) found that judges estimated that they were receiving a VIS in only 8% of cases in BC, 11% in Manitoba and 13% in Alberta. Similarly, a study by the same authors in 2002 found that Ontario judges estimated that victim impact statements were submitted in only 11% of cases.

The purpose of this article is to provide additional insight into the use of victim impact statements in Canadian criminal courts. Court data collected by Statistics Canada does not include any victim-related data, such as whether a VIS was submitted and delivered or whether witnesses used testimonial aids. Consequently, there are no national data, and estimates on the prevalence of VIS are estimates, as with the surveys of judges noted above.

This article describes data collected on victim impacts statements from a multi-site criminal court processing study that assessed court and Crown prosecutor files for criminal cases that were closed in 2008.

METHODOLOGY

The primary goal of the study was to measure effectiveness and efficiency in the criminal justice system by gathering information pertaining to appearances and duration of cases. Information was collected on cases from provincial court and Crown files in cities in five sites in four provinces: Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and British Columbia.[1] Case information was collected for each stage of the criminal justice system, from first appearance to sentencing. Specific information regarding victims involved in the case was collected, including whether victims submitted a VIS. In total, data were collected on 3,093 cases.

In this study, a VIS was flagged if one had been recorded or produced, as noted in a Crown/prosecution file. Even where a VIS may have been flagged, there is no guarantee that the sentencing court in fact considered it. As such, all that is known is that a VIS had been produced and placed on file.

In addition, even where a VIS was considered, it is unknown how it was presented to the court. Although the VIS is always submitted in writing, it can be received in different ways, such as being read silently or out loud by the judge, out loud by the Crown or a representative of the victim, or by the victim him or herself. In many jurisdictions, victims are encouraged to submit their VIS as soon as possible, often in a sealed envelope, which will be included in the court file and only opened if there is a conviction. In some of the files reviewed for this study, there would have been a VIS, even where there was no conviction. Because a VIS is only considered in cases where there is a conviction, these were the cases that were selected for the analyses described below.

Two separate databases were created, which allowed for an exploration of victim-related information. The first database included all of the victim-specific variables that were collected. A victim was flagged and included if the victim-specific section of the multi-site survey was completed, even if data were missing. It is important to note that it is possible that other cases may have included victims, but if this information was not available in the files, the case would not have been included in the analyses. This database captured data on all of the victims in the cases and allowed for analyses of multiple victims in one case. In total, data were collected on 1,586 victims.

The second database included all of the case-related information and was analyzed in the context of the case. In this database, in order for a case to be flagged as having a victim, at least one of the victim-specific items in the multi-site survey had to have been coded as a "yes". As above, it is possible that a case may have involved a victim, but it may not have been captured if this information was missing.

[1] Note that where there is missing data, this is largely because one province did not provide it. The information presented is therefore not necessarily reflective of cases in that province.

As a result, the information presented is likely an undercount of the true number of victims involved. Moreover, this database only captured one victim per case. In total, data were collected on 1,316 victims. Fewer victims were accounted for in this database compared to the victim-specific database as it was not possible to account for multiple victims.

FINDINGS

Victim Impact Statements from the Perspective of the Victim as the Unit of Analysis

VISs were explored from two perspectives: where the unit of analysis is the victim and where the unit of analysis is the case. This first section explores the use of the VIS from the perspective of the victim in terms of injuries experienced by victims, the relationship between the victim and the offender, and the gender of the victim.

In the database of the victim-specific variables that were collected, there were 1,005 cases in which there was a conviction. In 975 cases there was a finding of guilt, and in 30 cases there was a finding of guilt or guilty of a lesser or included offence. There were no cases in which there was a suspended sentence.

Overall, 93 VIS submissions were made in the 1,005 cases in which there were convictions (9%).

First, the submission of a VIS was explored in terms of the most serious injury suffered by the victim. Almost two-thirds (65%) of the VISs were made in cases in which the victim suffered no injury or only minor physical ones for which no professional medical treatment was required (scratches, bruises, etc.). This does not mean that there was no psychological or emotional impact; indeed, a family member of a homicide victim may not have experienced physical harm himself or herself, but might well wish to submit and deliver a VIS to describe the emotional impact of this incident. Sixteen percent of the VISs were made in cases where there was a major physical injury that required medical treatment. The remaining 19% were made in cases where there was damage to property or possessions.

The submission of VISs was also explored in terms of the relationship between the victim and the accused. VISs were most likely to be delivered by victims who were strangers to the accused (39%), followed by former spouses/common-law/intimate partners (22%) and those with an "other"[2] relationship with the offender (11%). The remainder came from victims who were a current spouse/common law partner (8%), friend (8%), business or corporation (7%), or other family member (5%).

The gender of the victims who submitted victim impact statements was also considered. Nearly three-quarters (71%) of the VISs were submitted by female victims.

Victim Impact Statements from the Perspective of the Case as the Unit of Analysis

The second section explored the delivery of VISs from the perspective of the case as the unit of analysis. This section explores the submission of victim impact statements as a function of the most serious offence in the case, the most serious outcome, and the most serious sentence imposed on the accused.

[2] "Other" includes other individuals known to the accused (e.g. teachers, neighbours) or others who came into contact with the accused.

In the database of the case-specific information, there was a conviction and a victim in 828 cases. There were 790 cases in which there was a finding of guilt, 23 cases in which there was a finding of guilt or guilty of a lesser or included offence, and 15 cases in which there was a suspended sentence.

Victim impact statements were submitted in 90 of the 828 cases (11%) in which there was a victim and a conviction. This finding is consistent with research on judges' estimates of the prevalence of VIS in certain jurisdictions (Roberts and Edgar 2002; 2006).

As can be seen in Table 1, the highest proportion of VISs were submitted in cases in which the most serious offence was a violent one, including Assault Level 1[3] (23%), Assault Level 2[4] (21%) and Other violations involving violence or the threat of violence (18%), which includes uttering threats and criminal harassment.

Table 1. Most serious offence by delivery of victim impact statement[5]

Most Serious Offence	Victim Impact Statement
Assault Level 1	21 (23%)
Assault Level 2	19 (21%)
Other violations involving violence or the threat of violence	16 (18%)
Other property offences	9 (10%)
Break and enter	3 (3%)
Robbery and Extortion	5 (6%)
Administration of justice offences	3 (3%)
Traffic Violations	5 (6%)
Sexual Assault Level 1	2 (2%)
Other sexual violations	0 (0%)
Assault Level 3	1 (1%)
Fraud	2 (2%)
Probation and Bond Violations	2 (2%)
Offences causing death	1 (1%)
Other assaults	1 (1%)
Drug Offences	0 (0%)
Violations resulting in the deprivation of freedom	0 (0%)
Firearms and weapons offences	0 (0%)
Sexual Assault Level 3	0 (0%)
Other *Criminal Code* Violations	0 (0%)
Total	**90 (100%)**

[3] There are three levels of assault in the Criminal Code. Assault Level 1 is also referred to as simple assault or common assault.

[4] Assault Level 2 is assault with a weapon or assault causing bodily harm.

[5] Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

The submission of a VIS was also examined in regard to the most serious sentence the accused received. As shown in Table 2, the most serious sentence that was imposed most often in cases in which a VIS was submitted was a custodial sentence (38%), followed by probation (28%) and a conditional sentence (11%). Other most serious sentences imposed in cases in which a VIS was submitted included a fine or restitution (10%), a suspended sentence (6%), and a conditional sentence (5%), and one case each for conditional and absolute discharge, respectively.

Table 2: Most serious sentence by delivery of victim impact statement

Most Serious Sentence	Victim Impact Statement
Custody	31 (38%)
Probation	23 (28%)
Conditional Sentence	9 (11%)
Fine/Restitution	8 (10%)
Suspended Sentence	5 (6%)
Conditional Discharge	4 (5%)
Absolute Discharge	1 (1%)
Other (Prohibition, Alternative Measures)	1 (1%)
Community Service	0 (0%)
Total	82 (100%)

CONCLUSION

The data analyzed show that the proportion of VISs submitted in these cases is similar to what has been estimated by judges surveyed in previous studies. Depending on the unit of analysis (victim or case), the percentage of VISs submitted in cases where there was a victim were low at 9% (victim analysis) and 11% (case analysis).

These data show that VISs were submitted mostly in cases in which the victim sustained no physical injuries or only minor ones. In addition, VISs were most commonly submitted in cases where the accused was a stranger to the victim, and most of the victims who submitted VIS were female.

It was also possible to consider VISs from the case perspective. These analyses revealed that VIS were most often submitted in cases involving a violent offence. This is consistent with the findings from Roberts and Edgar's surveys of the judiciary (2002; 2006). In addition, more than half of offenders received either a custodial sentence or probation.

While this information does shed some light on the use of VISs in Canadian courts, it also has its limitations. For example, the data represent only a portion of the cases that are seen in criminal courts in Canada, so the findings cannot be generalized to all provincial court cases. Moreover, a large amount of data on one jurisdiction was missing, which in turn likely decreased the number of cases that could be examined in the data with VIS-related information.

The data also did not capture how VISs were delivered, as it only captured cases in which a VIS was on the court file. This information would be useful as there is little understanding of how the VIS is being used by victims at sentencing.

As noted in the introduction, the VIS is the one provision that applies to all victims, regardless of whether they testify during a trial or not, and is one of the primary ways in which victims can participate in the criminal justice process. With the *Victims Bill of Rights*, it will be even more important to understand how often victims are exercising their right to participation.

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Specialized Victim Services for the Families of Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women:

AN OVERVIEW OF SCOPE, REACH AND IMPACT

KATIE SCRIM
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Awareness of the needs of victims of crime has been growing across Canada since the first victim services programs were established three decades ago. The design and delivery of services, programs and legislation for victims in each province and territory have benefited from collaboration at the federal-provincial-territorial level towards shared objectives to increase the voice of victims in the criminal justice system. Over the last 20 years, there have been significant changes and adaptations in policy and legislation to meet the needs of victims being served and to provide more services for victims across Canada.

In addition, capacity has increased to meet the specific needs of vulnerable communities, including child victims, sexual assault victims, and victims of hate crimes.

In the last five years in this evolving environment, there has been a growth of specialized police-based victim services that provide dedicated, culturally responsive assistance to family members of missing or murdered Aboriginal women. This article will provide an overview of how these programs are being delivered and identify the impact they have had on clients, investigators and police-family relationships.

ORIGINS AND MODELS: SPECIALIZED VICTIM SERVICES FOR FAMILY MEMBERS OF MISSING AND MURDERED VICTIMS

Specialized victim services for family members of missing and murdered victims have emerged in several provinces across Canada. Many originated from special police units that were established to investigate a subset of missing persons/murder cases that involved vulnerable people, particularly those involved in prostitution. Investigation teams working with families of these victims, many of whom were Aboriginal, identified the need for culturally sensitive support and services.

Current programs employ a variety of service-delivery models, but all involve a dedicated, trained individual to liaise with police and families. In Saskatchewan, for example, there are three Missing Persons Liaison Officers who work out of the Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert municipal police detachments, serving all families of missing persons in each of those cities. In Alberta, there is one Victim Services Coordinator for KARE,[1] the special investigation unit based in RCMP headquarters in Edmonton, who serves clients across the province where the missing or murdered person falls within the KARE mandate. In Manitoba, the Family Liaison Contact works with the families of victims who fall under the mandate of Project Devote, a specialized investigation unit focussed on investigating specific cases of missing and murdered persons in the province. In British Columbia, services for family members of missing women commenced in the early years of the 21st century. These specialized victim services are now being administered to family members of missing women under the Project Even-Handed Joint Task Force, a policing unit that includes a group of specially trained victim service workers and is investigating missing women from the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver.

While these four programs operate differently, their mandates are similar in significant ways.[2] They all provide families with information about the case and the criminal justice system; they provide emotional support and crisis response; and they provide referrals to community supports and services (counselling and other forms of practical assistance). Some also provide court support and accompaniment, as required. The majority of their clients are families of missing or murdered Aboriginal women, and all the programs offer services and assistance that is culturally sensitive and responsive to the needs and concerns of families. The shared goal is to provide dedicated assistance to the family members and ensure they have access to information and services to assist them in healing.

[1] Project KARE is an investigational RCMP unit created in 2003 with the highest priority to examine the deaths of several "high-risk missing persons" who were found in rural areas surrounding the City of Edmonton. KARE has since expanded its mandate to include cases of murdered or missing high-risk persons from all parts of Alberta. One of the objectives of project KARE is to investigate all leads, capture and prosecute the person(s) responsible for these crimes. (See Royal Canadian Mounted Police n.d.)

[2] The focus in Saskatchewan is on providing services to families of missing persons. The MPL program is embedded in existing provincial Victims Services programs, which already provide seamless service delivery to families of homicide victims. In other jurisdictions, the assistance is for families of both missing persons and homicide victims.

THE INTERVIEWS: THE IMPACT OF FAMILY LIAISON COORDINATORS AND MISSING PERSON LIAISON OFFICERS

In order to gather information about the operation and impact of these programs, the Research and Statistics Division, Department of Justice Canada, interviewed a Family Liaison Coordinator (FLC) or Missing Person Liaison (MPL) and a police investigator from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. The FLC/MPL and police member from each respective province were interviewed jointly. Interviews were conducted by telephone and followed a semi-structured interview guide. The purpose of the interviews was to highlight the types of services provided, the types of clients served, and the impact that these services have had on the families from the perspective of the service providers. The interviews also focussed on the FLC/MPL's impact on the police investigation, as well as police/family relationships.

Clients of these victim services were not interviewed for this research. The absence of their point of view means that the findings presented below are missing an important perspective. Nevertheless, the findings do provide insight on the types of services that are emerging in Canada to recognize and respond to the needs of family members of missing or murdered Aboriginal women.

FINDINGS

Dedicated liaison positions between police and family members build trust and understanding.

The use of a dedicated person to liaise between police and family is a relatively new approach to victim services that has been positive and significant in many ways. Analysis of the interview data indicate that their impact so far has been overwhelmingly helpful, both for clients and for police investigators. The most important role of the FLC/MPL mentioned during the interviews was the liaison function between the family members and police. This role was often referred to as a "conduit" between police and families or a position that "bridged the gap" between families and police.

All interviewees reported that the development of trusting relationships between the FLC/MPL and the families was, over time, decreasing the level of mistrust that Aboriginal victims feel when in contact with law enforcement. This development of trust has been driven by the warm, understanding, and non-judgemental approach taken by the FLC/MPLs in their efforts to assist families. Since the FLC/MPLs are not police officers, but civilians, they can connect directly with families outside of the law enforcement context. Interviewees noted that the FLC/MPLs may be helping to repair relationships between Aboriginal clients and police and, to a degree, between police and the larger Aboriginal community.

Consistency is important in meeting the needs of families.

Both police and the FLC/MPLs noted the importance of having a dedicated individual as a liaison with whom families can connect. Police units in many parts of the country operate on the basis of rotation through units. Police members spend limited periods in any one unit before moving on to another, which can result in high turnover of members and inconsistency in the investigational contact for the family members of victims. This can be troubling for family members of victims when investigations can span several years, and even longer when the victim is missing. Since the inception of each program, the FLC/MPL in each jurisdiction has been the same person throughout the investigation, which was described as a major comfort to clients.

FLC/MPLs permit the investigator to investigate knowing that family members have the support and information they need.

Another major aspect of the liaison role of the FLC/MPL is to provide information to client families about the investigation. For this reason and others, the FLC/MPL in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia have been described as invaluable members of the investigation team. The majority of police interviewed recognized the importance of staying in contact with victims' families and to devoting the time to meet face-to-face with families, providing support, and listening to their worries and concerns. However, they also noted that they do not always have the ability to carry this out and believe that the FLC/MPL plays a critical role. With the FLC/MPL taking responsibility for the majority of communications with the victim's family (providing information and updates on the case as well as receiving and responding to inquiries from family members), police can concentrate on the investigation.

One police member explained the importance of the "first 48." This term refers to the first 48 hours of an investigation, which represents the most crucial period for collecting evidence and developing leads in a case. Police indicated that this is a time when they as investigators need to be able to act and react quickly and they may not be at liberty to share any information with family members.

This is also a crucial time for family members, who are often in great need of information. When information or case updates are not available, it is just as important for family members to know. FLC/MPLs provide all available information to families on behalf of police and ensure that family members are not left wondering about case developments. In addition, interviewees noted that this continuous flow in communication provides family members with reassurance that their loved one's case is being looked after, that he/she has not been forgotten about, an important comfort for families.

FLC/MPLs increase family members' awareness about investigation policies and process.

Another significant impact of the FLC/MPLs' role as liaison between police and families is the increased awareness among family members about the police investigation process. Police follow certain policies, practices and routines when investigating a major crime, but civilians are rarely privy to how the investigation process unfolds. When

a loved one has gone missing or has been murdered, a lack of communication from police combined with a lack of understanding of the investigation process generally can lead family members to assume that not enough is being done or that their loved one has been forgotten about; ultimately, it can affect their trust in the work of police. The FLC/MPL addresses this before it becomes a concern by apprising family members of the investigation process: the timelines, the necessary policing practices, and the reasons for the intermittent lack of updates and information. By providing this information directly to the family, the FLC/MPL provides reassurance that the case is progressing and that the missing person has not been overlooked. Both police and FLC/MPLs interviewed agreed that this seemingly simple function has gone a long way in building confidence and trust in police among the victims' families, particularly among those families who were distrustful of police in the past.

FLC/MPLs increase awareness about the experiences and needs of victims' family members.

Another major impact of the FLC/MPL programs is raising awareness about the needs of families of missing and murdered persons and, in doing so, informing and improving policies and practices. In particular, FLC/MPLs are educating police investigators about the needs of victims' family members. Some police indicated that the increased knowledge and awareness is making them more sensitive to families' needs and that they have adapted their approach to witness and family management. As one investigator indicated, in the past their unit tried to restrict family contact to a single individual. This meant that all case communications and updates flowed through one family member. Via the FLC/MPL, police began to understand that information was not always reaching other family members through the single contact (for various reasons, including the individual simply being apprehensive about sharing the information with other family members). This awareness has led to a change in police communication practices.

Strengthened relationships lead to cooperation.

Police investigators pointed out that the liaison work of the FLC/MPLs may also be contributing to the disclosure of pertinent information from family members. Both police and FLC/MPLs identified the strong relationships established through trust and understanding between the FLC/MPLs and families, including the "street family."[3] These relationships may provide an avenue for family members to share new information pertinent to the investigation.

This information has come from families in several ways. Some FLC/MPLs noted that, in their regular meetings with family members, clients may share some piece of information about the victim that may be relevant to the case. At other times, the victim's "street family" may provide information to the FLC/MPL. In addition, those interviewed also mentioned that family members are often more forthcoming and cooperative with police after dealing with the FLC/MPL. For example, some police investigators noted that family members have become more comfortable going directly to them with information and, by the same token, may be more cooperative with police in providing DNA evidence and answering questions.

[3] The "street family" refers to the support network that the missing or murdered person had while living off the street. Members of the "street family" may be involved in illegal activities and, for that reason, may be reluctant to go to police with information.

There is a need to build capacity and develop expertise.

Those interviewed indicated that this area of specialized victim services is relatively new and insights into best practices and standards of care are evolving, as is expertise. All those interviewed indicated that the needs of family members of missing persons differ in many ways from those of other victims. They may need long-term counselling, for example, something that may be difficult to obtain. Child care for the children of victims is another identified need. In the absence of appropriate care, children may be removed from the home and put under the care of child-protection services. The same may be true for the children of family members who are predisposed to mental health or addictions issues. The stress of a missing/murdered loved one can trigger these pre-existing problems, and the person may then need help not only for themselves, but also for their children. The FLC/MPLs are building a repertoire of knowledge of the needs of these clients and are working to establish connections to the supports and services that will fill these needs.

There is a need to reach out and share knowledge.

Part of the mandate of many FLC/MPLs is to promote awareness of the needs of their clients and to share expertise with non-specialized victim service providers across their jurisdiction. Services can be limited in rural and remote regions of any province. In some areas, victim services are staffed by volunteers who may not have the training that those in larger cities have. Victim service providers in these remote areas may have less experience dealing with certain types of victimization and the needs of family members (in the case of homicide, for example). Many FLC/MPL programs are designed to help develop best practices and policies that can be shared with service providers in all towns and communities in order to ensure consistent services for those in need. In some cases, the FLC/MPL will travel to these areas to provide training.

The FLC/MPL is also sometimes considered "the face of police" for many families and, in some circumstances, for the entire community. The FLC/MPL attends family gatherings, community healing activities, and other community events with police members or on their own. Because the FLC/MPL is often seen as an extension of police, their presence at such events serves to demonstrate to the families and the community that the police regard the event – and those participating in it – as important. Police who were interviewed emphasized the importance of having an actual police presence at these types of events, but when this is not possible, they appreciate that the FLC/MPL represents them.

There is a need for inter-jurisdictional linkages and connections.

The FLC/MPLs serve families within their respective cities/provinces, so it is important to be aware of what services are available across their jurisdiction and to establish connections with those agencies and service providers in order to ensure that clients are obtaining the supports and services they need. The FLC/MPL also needs to be aware of services available in other jurisdictions for cases when the family of a victim resides in another province or territory. Networking is an essential part of the job, and it requires establishing connections

with service providers in other parts of Canada and with FLC/MPL counterparts in other parts of Canada. Those interviewed all indicated that they have worked with their counterparts in other jurisdictions, or at least know them. The connection is important not only in terms of being able to coordinate services for families but also for sharing best practices in how to support these families. By maintaining a network of communication and resources among other FLC/MPLs and victim services across Canada, FLC/MPLs are working to increase access to services for families no matter where they reside in the country.

FLC/MPLS: A MODEL OF ADVOCACY FOR VICTIMS' FAMILIES

The concept of a "victim advocate"[4] is an emerging model of specialized victim services in Canada, which varies in form according to the needs of victims and clients being served. For example, in the case of Children's Advocacy Centres (CACs), a specialized model of service delivery for child and youth victims of violent crime that is relatively new to Canada, the victim advocate plays a critical role in serving the needs of these highly vulnerable clients and their families. Evidence to date suggests that the victim advocate has a positive impact as a central point of contact for victims and their families, and one which ensures that their specific needs are being met.[5]

The FLC/MPLs also serve as advocates for the victims' family members and they will put the needs and experiences of the family at the front and centre. For example, the FLC/MPLs recognize that every family is unique and so are their struggles. Given this, the services and support provided are individualized to every family and to every family member. Similarly, they can make referrals to counselling agencies, to elders, and to support groups, as well as to any other services which family members may need, such as child welfare, transportation, or addictions counselling. FLC/MPLs are also aware of the various types of financial resources that may be available to family members, such as compensation or funding to assist with travel to court, and they are able to help clients navigate the application process. FLC/MPLs may also assist families with their own investigation efforts by helping them get access to computers, printers and photocopiers to create tools or social media pages that will bring community attention to their missing loved one. These small acts can be empowering for family members and friends.

The FLC/MPL's role is not restricted to helping family members. Services may also be provided to non-family members, including the victim's "street family." While grieving is not restricted to immediate family, some of those interviewed mentioned that friends and extended family of the victim may not feel comfortable attending the same counselling sessions or family gatherings as the immediate family.

[4] Also referred to as "child advocate" or "family advocate."

[5] See McDonald et al. 2013.

The FLC/MPL can refer these people to other supports; in one instance a coordinator helped the friends of a missing person to set up their own support group.

As an advocate for the victim's family, one of the FLC/MPL's most important tasks is to ensure that family members do not "fall through the cracks." This means that he or she must be available to client families when they need support or simply to be heard. FLC/MPLs mentioned that they commit a significant amount of time and effort to ensure they are responsive to the family members' needs. They meet the client at times and places that work for the family and they provide a caring and listening ear to families for both short and long-term conversations as needed, in support of their clients.

Interviewees mentioned that, in some circumstances, family members may be dealing with other traumatic life issues that are compounded when a family member goes missing or is murdered. Many clients have addictions and mental health issues or are involved in the criminal justice system as the result of issues or events unrelated to the missing or murdered loved one. FLC/MPLs take these realities very seriously, and their multifaceted efforts to support clients illustrate the dedication they bring to their position. In one example, a client with pre-existing mental health issues had attempted suicide. The FLC/MPL visited that client in the hospital and advocated for his cultural needs to hospital staff.

BEST PRACTICES

While the FLC/MPLs are constantly developing capacity and expertise, those interviewed were able to identify some best practices they have learned to date. Among the most important were:

- being a presence in the community (e.g., attending community events);
- having face-to-face contact with clients, which requires travel when the client lives in another city, community, or province; and
- ensuring that the FLC/MPL is co-located with police.

This last point was noted as especially important to ensure that the FLC/MPL receives information about criminal incidents as soon as possible: for example, when remains that may be the victim's are found, it is important to be able to contact the victim's family immediately – whether or not the remains turn out to be the victim's. This is so family members do not learn of the discovery through the media.

NEXT STEPS

The FLC/MPLs noted the importance of establishing and maintaining a network of counterparts in other jurisdictions. This is important for coordinating services and supports for victims' family members who live in different provinces, but also for sharing expertise and best practices and building awareness of the needs of victims' families. Finally, most of those interviewed noted that an expansion of these specialized services into the more rural and remote areas of their respective provinces would go a long way towards ensuring that the needs of all victims' families were being met.

CONCLUSION

This emerging area of victim assistance, sensitive to the context of violence against Aboriginal women and the needs of their surviving family members, is proving to be a much-needed and important response to the concerns and needs of families and investigating police officers.

While this overview was limited to the opinions of the victim service providers and police investigators interviewed, the consensus was that these specialized victim service programs are helping to meet the very unique needs of family members of missing and murdered victims. Police are finding the support beneficial, since it allows them to focus their time on investigation, reassured that the families are getting the support and information they need. The programs provide families and clients with timely information and dedicated, responsive assistance. All those interviewed agreed that these specialized victim services are having a positive impact on clients. All the FLC/MPLs were clearly dedicated to serving and supporting clients, which ultimately translates into a higher level of care for victims' families.

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Victim-Related Conferences in 2015

2015 NASPA Violence Prevention Conference
January 11–13
Harbor, MD, USA
http://www.naspa.org/events/2015VPC

Dallas Children's Advocacy Center: Improving Interviews in Child Sexual Assault Cases
January 12
Dallas, TX, USA
http://www.cvent.com/events/improving-interviews-in-child-sexual-assault-cases/event-summary-88a8cfd-04c3b42888d525e18778e46ec.aspx

The 29th Annual San Diego International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment
January 26–29
San Diego, CA, USA
http://www.sandiegoconference.org/pdf/15_SDConf_Brochure_80714.pdf

29th Annual Conference on the Prevention of Child Abuse
February 23–24
Las Colinas, TX, USA
http://www.preventchildabusetexas.org/nextconference.html

2015 National Conference on Bullying
February 24–27
Orlando, FL, USA
http://www.schoolsafety911.org/event05.html

Texas Association against Sexual Assault 33nd Annual Conference
March 1–5
Austin, TX, USA
http://taasa.org/2014/07/23/33rd-annual-conference-requests-for-proposals/

3rd Annual Innovations in Domestic and Sexual Violence Research and Practice Conference: ''Effecting Change through Evidence-Based Practice and Engaged Scholarship''
March 5–6
Greensboro, NC, USA
http://hhs.uncg.edu/wordpress/cwhw/innovationsconference/

27th Annual Race against Violence
March 7
Houston, TX, USA
http://www.hawc.org/en/support-us/race-against-violence/

AISA International Child Protection Symposium
March 9–10
Cape Town, South Africa
http://www.aisa.or.ke/page.cfm?p=2705

10th Annual Conference on Crimes against Women
March 16–18
Dallas, TX, USA
http://www.cvent.com/events/2015-conference-on-crimes-against-women/event-summary-c10a3a7cac7a4b-32b026e54fa90d291e.aspx

WVCAN 2015 Conference
March 18–19
Morgantown, WV, USA
http://myemail.constantcontact.com/Save-The-Date----WVCAN-2015-Conference-.html?soid=1110109102542&aid=H009pcRwEGE

7th Biennial National Conference on Health and Domestic Violence
March 19–21
Washington, DC, USA
https://www.creativegroupinc.com/nchdv/Public/ShowPage.aspx?PageId=163191

31st International Symposium on Child Abuse
March 23–26
Huntsville, AL, USA
http://www.nationalcac.org/national-conferences/symposium.html

Nuestras Voces National Bilingual Sexual Assault Conference
March 26–27
Laredo, TX, USA
http://arte-sana.com/Nuestras_Voces_2015.html

12th Annual Hawaii Training Summit: Preventing, Assessing, and Treating Trauma across the Lifespan.
March 31–April 2
Honolulu, HI, USA
http://www.ivatcenters.org/Documents/2015/Hawaii/STD-Posters-Speakers.pdf

2015 International Conference on Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence and Campus responses
April 7–9
New Orleans, LA, USA
http://www.evawintl.org/conferencedetail.aspx?confid=26

Association for Death Education and Counselling 37th Annual conference
April 8–11
San Antonio, TX, USA
http://www.adec.org/annual_conference_home.htm

20th Nursing Network on Violence against Women International (NNVAWI) Conference: Innovations in Violence Prevention
April 9–11
Atlanta, GA, USA
https://www.creativegroupinc.com/nchdv/Public/ShowPage.aspx?PageId=163191

National Victims of Crime Awareness Week 2015: Shaping the Future Together/ Semaine Nationale De Sensibilisation Aux Victimes d'actes crimnels.
April 19–25
19-25, Avril
Ottawa, ON, Canada
http://www.victimsweek.gc.ca/abt-apd/index.html

33rd Annual Protecting Our Children National American Indian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect
April 19–22
Portland, OR, USA
http://www.nicwa.org/conference/

15th Annual International Family Justice Center Conference
April 21–23
San Diego, CA, USA
http://www.familyjusticecenter.org/index.php/training-main/annual-conference/upcoming-conferences.html

2015 Sexual Assault Summit: Start by Believing
April 29–May 1
Laramie, WY, USA
http://www.forensicnurses.org/event/id/489299/2015-Sexual-Assault-Summit-XIV-Start-by-Believing.htm

2015 Child Aware Approaches Conference
May 18–19
Melbourne, Australia
http://www.childawareconference.org.au/index.asp?IntCatId=14

Wyoming Crimes against Children Conference
May 26–28
Cheyenne, WY, USA
http://ag.wyo.gov/victim-services-home-page/events-and-training

2015 Annual Crime Victim Law Conference
May 28–29
Portland, OR, USA
https://law.lclark.edu/centers/national_crime_victim_law_institute/projects/education_and_training/annual_conference/archive/2015/overview.php

9th Annual National Conference on Girl Bullying and Relational Aggression
June 22–24
Las Vegas, NV, USA
http://www.stopgirlbullying.com/

No2 Bullying Conference
June 29–30
Surfers Paradise, Queensland, Australia
http://no2bullying.org.au/

15th International Symposium of the World Society of Victimology
July 5–9
Perth, Australia
http://www.aic.gov.au/events/aic%20upcoming%20events/2015/wsv.html

2015 American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children Annual Colloquium
July 22–25
Boston, MA, USA
http://www.apsac.org/

29th Annual Parents of Murdered Children National Conference: ''Remember the Past, Treasure the Present, Embrace the Future.''
July 30 – August 2
Las Vegas, NV, USA
http://www.pomc.com/

27th Annual Crimes against Children Conference
August 10–13
Dallas, TX, USA
http://www.visitdallas.com/includes/events/27th-Annual-Crimes-Against-Children-Conference/27668/

41st NOVA Conference
August 16–19
Dallas, TX, USA
https://www.trynova.org/41stnovaconf/overview/

20th International Conference & Summit on Violence, Abuse and Trauma
August 29–September 2
San Diego, CA, USA
http://www.mdconferencefinder.com/us/california/san-diego/medical-conferences-2014/20th-international-conference-summit-on-violence-abuse-trauma-12418.html

2015 National Sexual Assault Conference
September 2–4
California, LA, USA
http://www.nsvrc.org/projects/national-sexual-assault-conference

Powerful Partnerships: Sustainability and the Safety Profession
September 20–23
Ottawa, ON, Canada
http://www.csse.org/call_for_presentations

14th ISPCAN European Regional Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect
September 27–30
Bucharest, Romania
http://www.ispcan.org/news/168181/2015-ISPCAN-European-Regional-Conference-to-be-Held-in-Bucharest-Romania.htm

21st ISPCAN International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect
August 28–31, 2016
Calgary, AB, Canada
http://www.ispcan.org/event/id/413394/XXIst-ISPCAN-International-Congress-on-Child-Abuse-and-Neglect.htm