



Children's exposure to domestic violence in Canada¹

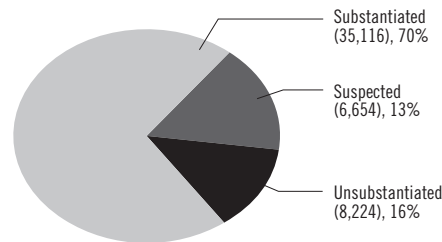
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The Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS-2003) is the second nation-wide study to examine the incidence of reported child maltreatment and the characteristics of the children and families investigated by Canadian child welfare services. The CIS-2003 tracked a sample of 14,200 child maltreatment investigations² which were a basis for deriving national estimates. Information was collected directly from the investigating child welfare workers using a standard set of definitions.³ This information sheet describes cases of exposure to domestic violence that were tracked by the CIS-2003 in Canada, excluding Quebec.⁴

Primary and secondary forms of exposure to domestic violence

An estimated 49,994 investigations (a rate of 10.51 per 1,000 children) involved exposure to domestic violence as either the primary or secondary category of maltreatment. Seventy percent of these investigations were substantiated (an estimated 35,116 child investigations), 13% were suspected, and 16% were unsubstantiated (see Figure 1). Exposure to domestic violence was the primary form of investigated maltreatment in 38,079 cases.

Figure 1. Primary or secondary forms of exposure to domestic violence (CIS-2003)
Estimates based on a sample of 2,791 child maltreatment investigations

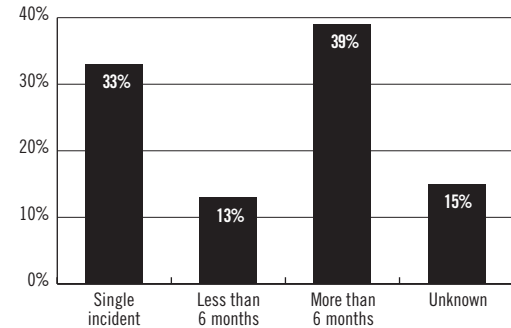


Source: CIS-2003 Major Findings, Table 3-9. Percentages add up to 99% because of rounding.

Maltreatment characteristics

One third of cases of substantiated exposure to domestic violence (33%) involved single incident cases and 13% involved less than six months of multiple incidents, while 39% involved more than six months of multiple incidents (see Figure 2).

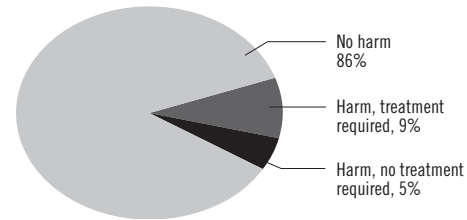
Figure 2. Duration of substantiated exposure to domestic violence (CIS-2003)
Estimates based on a sample of 5,603 child maltreatment investigations



Source: CIS-2003 Major Findings, Table 4-3.

Physical harm was noted in only 1% of cases where exposure to domestic violence was substantiated.⁵ Emotional harm was noted in 14% of substantiated cases of exposure to domestic violence; in 9% of cases, harm was severe enough to require treatment (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Emotional harm for substantiated exposure to domestic violence (CIS-2003)
Estimates based on a sample of 5,642 child maltreatment investigations



Source: CIS-2003 Major Findings, Table 4-2.

Service outcomes

Thirty-nine percent of cases involving exposure to domestic violence as the primary form of maltreatment remained open for ongoing child welfare services.⁶ At least one referral was made in 69% of cases of substantiated exposure to domestic violence.⁷ Only 2% of cases resulted in a child welfare placement. An additional 2% resulted in informal kinship care placement, and placement was considered for another 2%. In total, 4% of substantiated exposure to domestic violence investigations resulted in children experiencing a change in residence.⁸ An application to child welfare court was made in 3% of cases, and applications were considered for an additional 4%.⁹

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- 1 This information sheet is based on the peer-reviewed report, Trocmé, N., Fallon, B., MacLaurin, B., Daciuk, J., Felstiner, C., Black, T., et al. (2005). *Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect-2003: Major Findings*. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada.
 - 2 The CIS does not track incidents that were not reported to child welfare services, reported cases that were screened out by child welfare services before being fully investigated, new reports on cases already opened by child welfare services, and cases that were investigated only by the police.
 - 3 In Quebec information was extracted directly from the administrative information systems.
 - 4 National estimates including Quebec are excluded from this information sheet because of incomplete or unavailable data. Where available, estimates including Quebec can be obtained from the CIS-2003 Major Findings report.
 - 5 See CIS-2003 Major Findings Report, Table 4-1(a).
 - 6 See CIS-2003 Major Findings Report, Table 5-2.
 - 7 See CIS-2003 Major Findings Report, Table 5-3.
 - 8 See CIS-2003 Major Findings Report, Table 5-4.
 - 9 See CIS-2003 Major Findings Report, Table 5-5.



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