



Injuries and death of children at the hands of their parents¹

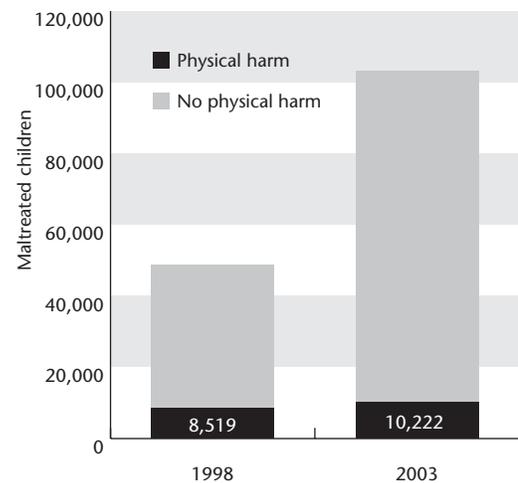
Nico Trocmé, Jules Lajoie, Barbara Fallon & Caroline Felstiner

This information sheet describes rates of physical harm documented in the Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS)^{2,3} and rates of children killed by parents reported in the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics' *Homicide Survey*.^{4,5} The CIS is a national child maltreatment surveillance survey conducted for the Public Health Agency of Canada every five years by the universities of McGill, Toronto and Calgary. The first two national cycles of the study were conducted in 1998 and 2003. Information is collected directly from the investigating child welfare workers using a standard set of definitions. The CIS-2003 tracked a sample of 11,560 child maltreatment investigations as a basis for deriving national estimates, excluding Quebec.⁶ Child homicides are documented in Canada through the *Homicide Survey* maintained by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. The Homicide Survey tracks all homicides reported by police departments across the country.

Physical harm

Figure 1 presents estimated number of substantiated maltreatment cases with and without physical harm identified by child welfare authorities in Canada, excluding Quebec, in 1998 and 2003. Over 8,000 (18%) of substantiated maltreatment cases—including physical and sexual abuse, neglect and emotional maltreatment—involved documented physical harm in 1998. By 2003, the number of physically harmed victims had increased to over 10,000, or 10% of the 103,298 substantiated maltreatment victims identified by child welfare authorities.

Figure 1: Number of substantiated child maltreatment reports involving physical harm
CIS estimate for 1998 and 2003, excluding Quebec



In cases involving physical harm, investigating workers were asked to identify the type of harm and its severity as measured by the need for medical attention. While the total number of cases involving physical harm has increased, the increase is primarily accounted for by cases involving minor injuries (bruises, cuts and scrapes), 85% of which did not require medical attention (Table 1). There has been no change in the rate of serious injuries caused by maltreatment: injuries involving broken bones and head trauma have remained at 0.04 and 0.08 per 1,000 children, while burns, injuries involving burns, and scalds have decreased from 0.09 in 1998 to 0.05 per 1,000 in 2003. In all, medical attention as a result of maltreatment was required for under 3,000 children in 2003, or 3% of known victims in that year.

Table 1: Nature and severity of physical harm in cases of substantiated maltreatment in Canada, excluding Quebec, 1998 and 2003*

	1998		2003	
	Number of child investigations	Rate per 1,000 children	Number of child investigations	Rate per 1,000 children
Bruises/Cuts/Scrapes	6,134	1.27	8,366	1.76
Treatment required	15%		14%	
Burns/Scalds	458	0.09	261	0.05
Treatment required	52%		61%	
Broken bones	176	0.04	169	0.04
Treatment required	100%		100%	
Head trauma	390	0.08	371	0.08
Treatment required	59%		77%	
Other health condition	2,110	0.44	2,916	0.61
Treatment required	46%		55%	

* CIS estimates based on samples of 668 and 647 investigations involving harm in the 1998 and 2003 studies respectively.

Child Fatalities

Over the past 30 years, an average of 35 children a year under the age of 13 have been killed by a parent in Canada. As seen in Table 2 and Figure 2, the number of child homicides has fluctuated between a high of 56 in 1978 and a low of 13 in 2005. Although since 1999 there appears to be a decline in the number of reported child homicides, such fluctuations must be interpreted over longer periods of time and must take into consideration changes in the child population before a significant pattern can be established.

Figure 2: Children under the age of 13 killed by parents in Canada, 1974–2005††

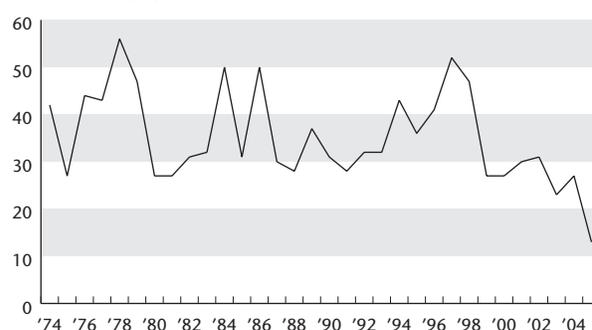


Table 2: Children under the age of 13 killed by a parent†

Year	Number of Victims	Year	Number of Victims
1974	42	1990	31
1975	27	1991	28
1976	44	1992	32
1977	43	1993	32
1978	56	1994	43
1979	47	1995	36
1980	27	1996	41
1981	27	1997	52
1982	31	1998	47
1983	32	1999	27
1984	50	2000	27
1985	31	2001	30
1986	50	2002	31
1987	30	2003	23
1988	28	2004	27
1989	37	2005	13

† Sources: 1) Statistics Canada. Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. *Child Homicide Survey, 1974–1994*. Available online from the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics Child Homicide Survey website at: <http://www.statcan.ca/english/Dli/Data/Ftp/ccjs/hs.htm>; 2) Fedorowycz, O. (2001). Homicide in Canada: 2000. *Juristat*, 21(9), 1–22; 3) Dauvergne, M. & Li, G. (2006). Homicide in Canada: 2005. *Juristat*, 26(6), 1–25.

†† Sources: 1) Statistics Canada. Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. *Child Homicide Survey, 1974–1994*. Available online from the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. Child Homicide Survey website at: <http://www.statcan.ca/english/Dli/Data/Ftp/ccjs/hs.htm>; 2) Fedorowycz, O. (2001). Homicide in Canada: 2000. *Juristat*, 21(9), 1–22; 3) Dauvergne, M. & Li, G. (2006). Homicide in Canada: 2005. *Juristat*, 26(6), 1–25.

Summary

Despite a significant increase in reports of child maltreatment across Canada, the number of children seriously harmed or killed by parents has remained constant. Less than 3% of known victims, under 3,000 cases in 2003, are seriously physically harmed and an average of 35 children a year are killed.

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- 1 This information sheet is based on the 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 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.
 - 3 Trocmé, N., MacLaurin, B., Fallon, B., Daciuk, J., Billingsley, D., Tourigny, M., et al. (2001). *Canadian incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect—1998: Final report*. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada.
 - 4 Fedorowycz, O. (2001). Homicide in Canada: 2000. *Juristat*, 21(9), 1–22.
 - 5 Dauvergne, M. & Li, G. (2006). Homicide in Canada: 2005, *Juristat*, 26(6), 1–25.
 - 6 As a result of differences in data collection procedures, injury estimates for Quebec could not be derived for the 2003 cycle of the study.

About the authors: Nico Trocmé is the Director of the Centre for Research on Children and Families, McGill University School of Social Work. Jules Lajoie is the Communications Coordinator of the Centre for Research on Children and Families, McGill University School of Social Work. Barbara Fallon is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto. Caroline Felstiner is co-manager of the Canadian Incidence Study.

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