

Intimate Partner Violence in British Columbia, 2003-2011

BC Coroners Service
Ministry of Justice



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Introduction

This report summarizes all deaths in BC between 2003 and 2011 known to have resulted from Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). IPV refers to intentional harm or injury inflicted by a current or former spouse, boy or girlfriend, or other romantic partner of the victim. An intimate partner relationship includes opposite- and same-sex relationships, regardless of whether the victim and assailant resided together at the time of the incident or at any time previously.

The cases included in this report were identified by:

- A case file review of all female homicides in BC
- A review of summary information on male homicides for indicators of IPV
- Association with other IPV-identified cases, i.e. suicide deaths associated with homicide deaths

A victim of IPV homicide may include the current or former partner of the assailant, or a child, other family member, or unrelated person who died in an incident targeting the assailant's partner. An IPV suicide death is one immediately following or otherwise linked to an IPV homicide or attempted homicide.

For additional information, a report titled "*Domestic Violence Death*" may be viewed online at: www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/coroners/publications/docs/death-review-panel-domestic-violence.pdf. This report details the findings and recommendations of the Domestic Violence Death Review Panel, which was convened in March 2010. The Panel examined the circumstances surrounding 11 incidents that resulted in 29 deaths, and issued 19 recommendations. The purpose of a Death Review Panel is to review the facts and circumstances of deaths, in order to provide advice to the Chief Coroner with respect to matters that may impact public health and safety and the prevention of deaths.

Key Findings

Table 1. Summary Statistics for All IPV-Related Deaths in BC, 2003-2011

Index	Female	Male	Total
IPV Homicides	87	33	120
IPV Suicides	-	26	26
IPV Undetermined	-	1	1
Total IPV-Related Deaths	87	60	147

There were a total of 147 IPV-related deaths in BC from 2003-2011:

- 81.6% were homicides and 17.7% were suicides
- 72.5% of homicide victims were female
- 100.0% of suicide victims were male
- Male assailants were responsible for 83.7% of all IPV deaths, including 100% of incidents resulting in more than one death.

There were 120 IPV-related homicides from 2003-2011:

- Victims were 72.5% female and 27.5% male
- The IPV homicide rate was highest:
 - for females in the Interior region, at 6.3 per million.
 - for males in the Northern region, at 3.8 per million.
- Individuals of Aboriginal identity were over-represented, accounting for 9.2% of IPV homicide victims while comprising just 4.8% of the general population.
- 75.8% of IPV homicides were committed by the current spouse or romantic partner, 14.2% were committed by an ex-spouse or partner, and 10.0% by another relative or unrelated person.
- 80.0% of IPV homicides were committed by males, including 100% of peripheral victims (e.g. children, other family members, or unrelated individuals)

Statistics

All IPV Deaths: Homicide, Suicide & Undetermined

There were 147 IPV-related deaths in BC between 2003 and 2011:

- Average of 16.3 deaths per year; 13.3 homicides and 2.9 suicides.
- 81.6% were classified as Homicide, 17.7% were Suicide and 0.7% was Undetermined¹.
- Overall, 59.2% of IPV victims were female and 40.8% were male.
 - 72.5% of homicide deaths were female.
 - 100.0% of suicide deaths were male.

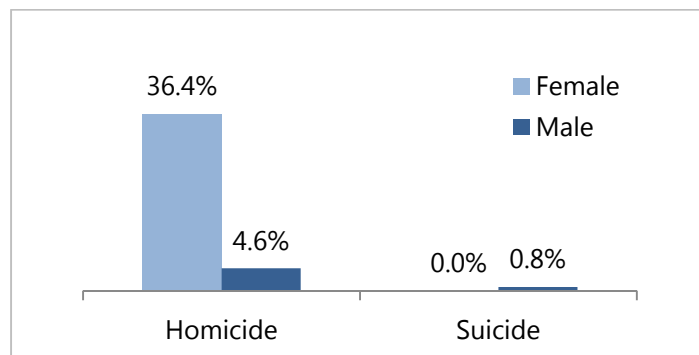


Figure 1. Proportion of Deaths Resulting from IPV, 2003-2011

Table 2. Deaths Resulting from IPV, 2003-2011

Classification	Female	Male	Total
Homicide	87	33	120
Suicide	-	26	26
Undetermined	-	1	1
Total	87	60	147

¹ The Undetermined case was a death that occurred while evading police custody, which could not be conclusively ruled as Suicide or Accidental.

All IPV Deaths: Incident Type

The single fatality homicide and homicide/suicide incidents combined accounted for 80.0% of IPV deaths.

- 63.2% of females died in a single fatality homicide incident.
- 40.0% of males died in a single fatality homicide incident.
- 40.0% of males died in a homicide/suicide incident.

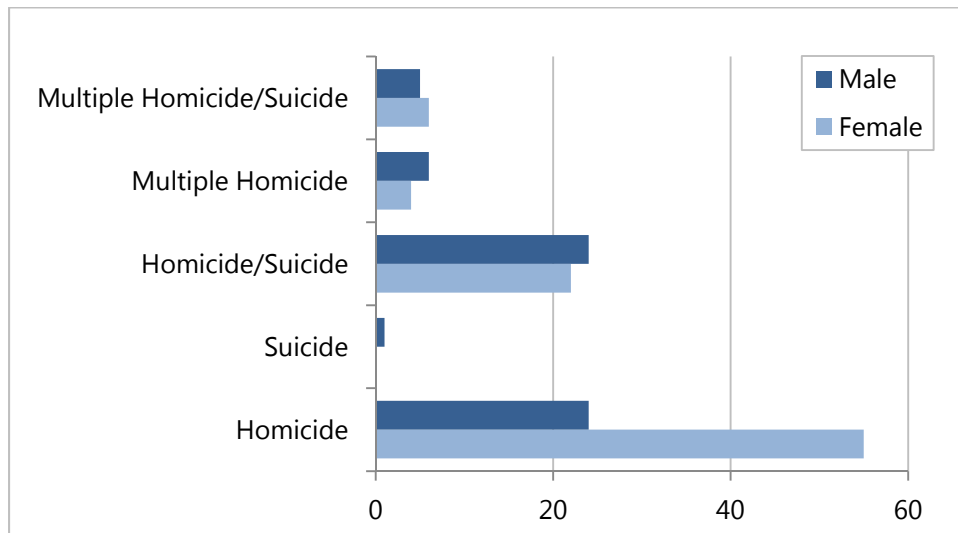


Figure 2. IPV Incident Type by Gender of Victim, 2003-2011

Table 3. IPV Incident Type by Gender of Victim, 2003-2011

Incident Type	Female	Male	Total
Homicide	55	24	79
Suicide	-	1	1
Homicide/Suicide	22	24	46
Multiple Homicide	4	6	10
Multiple Homicide/Suicide ²	6	5	11
Total	87	60	147

²² The case classified as undetermined is included in the 'multiple homicide/suicide' incident category, as the death followed a multiple homicide perpetrated by the decedent.

Male assailants were responsible for 83.7% of all IPV homicide deaths:

- 69.6% of single fatality homicides.
- 100.0% of all other incident types.

Female assailants were responsible for 30.4% of single fatality homicides. All incidents perpetrated by female assailants were single fatality homicides.

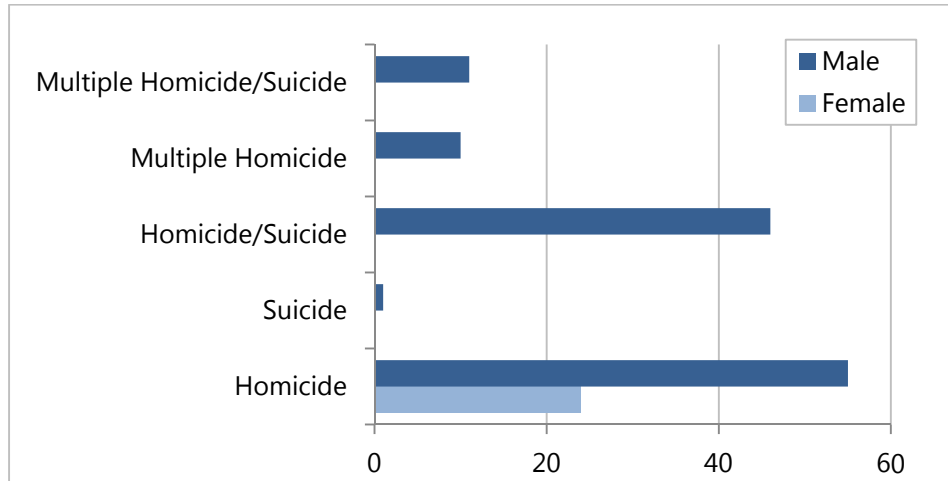


Figure 3. IPV Incident Type by Gender of Perpetrator, 2003-2011

Table 4. IPV Incident Type by Gender of Perpetrator, 2003-2011

Incident Type	Female	Male	Total
Homicide	24	55	79
Suicide	-	1	1
Homicide/Suicide	-	46	46
Multiple Homicide	-	10	10
Multiple Homicide/Suicide	-	11	11
Total	24	123	147

Although most incidents involved the death of the spouse and/or assailant, a few cases did not follow this pattern:

- In one incident a male killed two male children and attempted to kill his spouse, however she survived the attack.

- In one incident a male killed himself and an unrelated male, and attempted to kill his child, while attempting to evade police following a severe IPV attack on his former spouse.
- In one incident a male killed himself after attempting to kill his spouse, however she survived the attack.
- In one incident a male died while attempting to evade police following a double IPV homicide. This death was ruled as Undetermined as it could not be conclusively shown to be either Suicide or Accident. This case is counted in the multiple homicide/suicide category in Figures 2 and 3, and Tables 3 and 4.
- In one incident a man was shot by police after killing his spouse.

IPV Homicide Deaths

Table 5. Summary Statistics for Homicide IPV related deaths in BC, 2003-2011			
Index	Female	Male	Total
Total Number of Homicides in BC	239	713	952
Total Number of IPV Homicides	87	33	120
Average Yearly IPV Homicide Rate per Million Pop. ³	4.4	1.7	3.1
Proportion of Homicides that are IPV	36.4%	4.6%	12.6%

Of the 952⁴ homicide deaths in BC from 2003 through 2011, 12.6% resulted from IPV. There were on average 13.3 IPV homicides per year. The number of IPV homicide deaths each year ranged from 9 to 22.

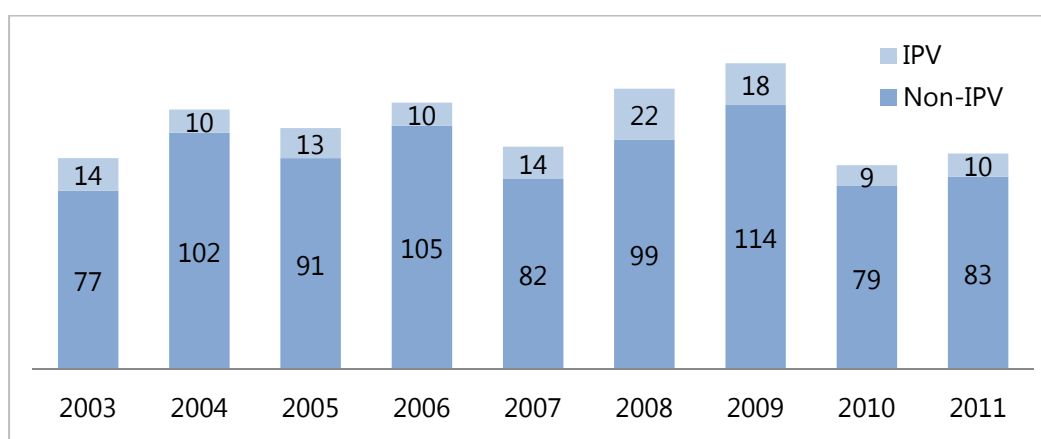


Figure 4. All Homicides in BC, 2003-2011

Table 6. All Homicides in BC, 2003-2011										
Group	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
IPV	14	10	13	10	14	22	18	9	10	120
Non-IPV	77	102	91	105	82	99	114	79	83	832
Total	91	112	104	115	96	121	132	88	93	952

³ Rates were calculated with population estimates obtained from BCStats (www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca). A male rate of 3.0 indicates that 3 out of every million males in BC were victims of homicide.

⁴ There was one non-IPV homicide in 2010 for which gender could not be determined. This case has been excluded from analysis. The total homicide count including this case is 953.

IPV Homicide Rates and Regional Distribution

The Non-IPV average yearly homicide rate⁵ was far lower for females than males, while the average IPV homicide rate was higher. Males are about 4.5 times more likely to be victims of Non-IPV homicide, while females are about 2.5 times more likely to be victims of IPV homicide. The average homicide rates per million population during this period were:

- 4.4 for females and 1.7 for males, for IPV homicides.
- 7.7 for females and 35.3 for males, for Non-IPV homicides.

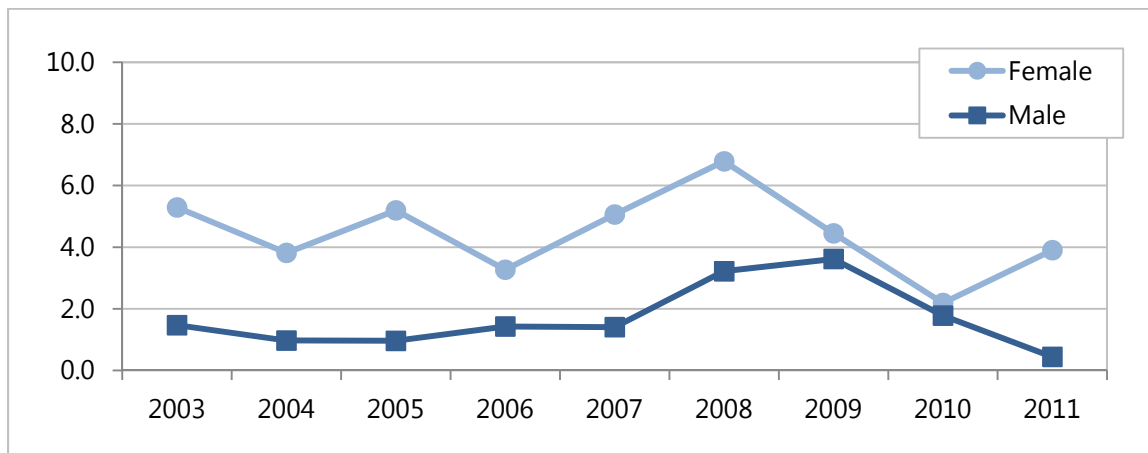


Figure 5. IPV Homicide Rate per Million Population, 2003-2011

Table 7. Homicide Rates per Million Population, 2003-2011

Victim	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Average	
IPV	Female	5.3	3.8	5.2	3.3	5.1	6.8	4.4	2.2	3.9	4.4
	Male	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.4	1.4	3.2	3.6	1.8	0.4	1.7
	Overall	3.4	2.4	3.1	2.4	3.2	5.0	4.0	2.0	2.2	3.1
Non-IPV	Female	5.8	8.6	8.5	10.3	7.4	5.0	8.5	8.8	6.9	7.7
	Male	31.8	40.8	35.1	39.5	30.9	40.5	42.9	26.3	29.6	35.3
	Overall	18.7	24.5	21.7	24.7	19.0	22.6	25.6	17.4	18.1	21.4

⁵ Rates were calculated with population estimates obtained from BCStats (www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca). A male rate of 3.0 indicates that 3 out of every million males in BC were victims of homicide.

Overall, the rate of IPV homicide was highest in the Northern Region⁶ at 4.7 per million, however when split by gender the rate was highest for females in the Interior at 6.3. The rate for males remained highest in the Northern Region, 3.8.

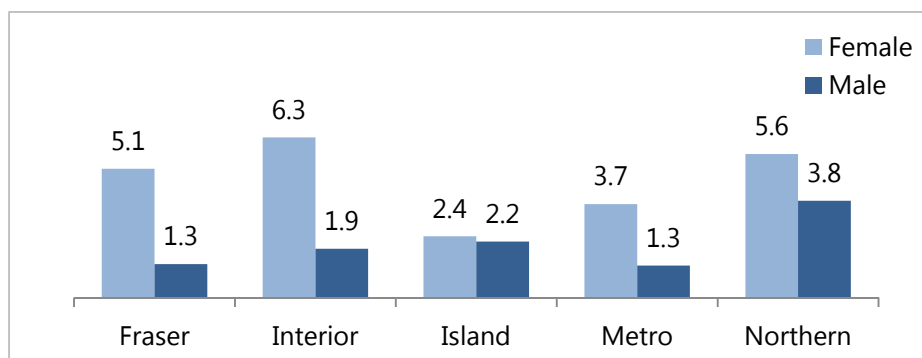


Figure 6. Average Regional IPV Homicide Rate per Million Population, 2003-2011

Table 8. Total Homicides by Region and Gender, 2003-2011

Victim		Fraser	Interior	Island	Metro	Northern	Total
IPV	Female	34	20	8	18	7	87
	Male	9	6	7	6	5	33
	Subtotal	43	26	15	24	12	120
Non-IPV	Female	48	25	19	39	21	152
	Male	232	104	80	187	77	680
	Subtotal	280	129	99	226	98	832
Total		323	155	114	250	110	952

Table 9. Average IPV Rate

Region	Female	Male	Overall
Fraser	5.1	1.3	3.1
Interior	6.3	1.9	4.1
Island	2.4	2.2	2.3
Metro	3.7	1.3	2.5
Northern	5.6	3.8	4.7
Overall	4.5	1.7	3.1

⁶ The average yearly regional IPV homicide rates were calculated using BCStats' population estimates for the Provincial Health Regions, which are very similar, but not identical, to the BCCS regions. The size of the potential discrepancy in population is expected to be minimal, with no meaningful effect on the calculated rates.

IPV Homicide Victim Demographics

There was significant gender disparity in IPV and Non-IPV homicide victims during this period:

- IPV homicide victims were 72.5% female and 27.5% male.
- Non-IPV homicide victims were 18.3% female and 81.7% male.
- Overall, 36.4% of female and 4.6% of male homicides resulted from IPV.
- Female homicide victims were slightly older than male victims, and IPV homicide victims were slightly older than Non-IPV victims.

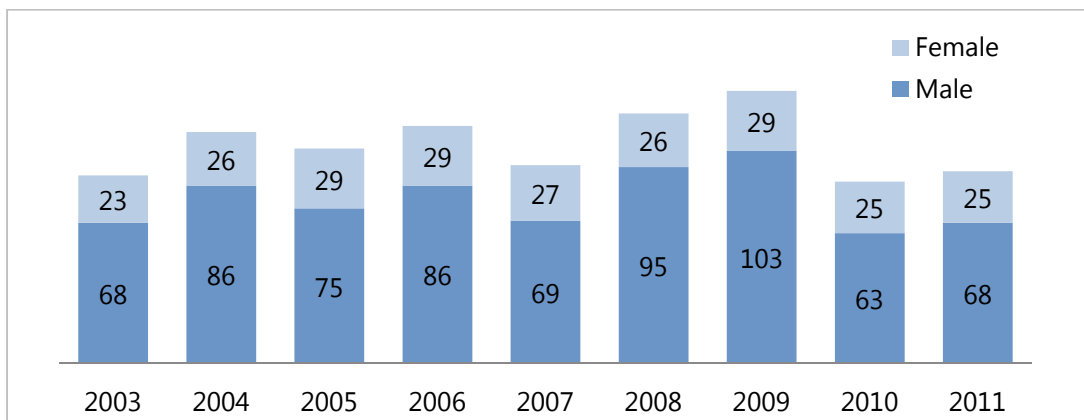


Figure 7. All Homicides in BC by Gender, 2003-2011

Table 10. All Homicides in BC by Gender, 2003-2011

Group		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
IPV	Female	11	8	11	7	11	15	10	5	9	87
	Male	3	2	2	3	3	7	8	4	1	33
	Subtotal	14	10	13	10	14	22	18	9	10	120
Non-IPV	Female	12	18	18	22	16	11	19	20	16	152
	Male	65	84	73	83	66	88	95	59	67	680
	Subtotal	77	102	91	105	82	99	114	79	83	832
Total homicides		91	112	104	115	96	121	132	88	93	952

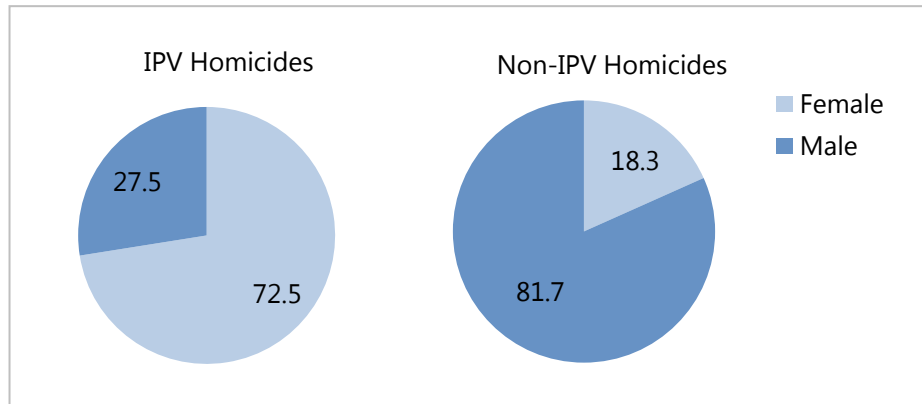


Figure 8. Percentage of IPV and Non-IPV Homicides by Gender, 2003-2011

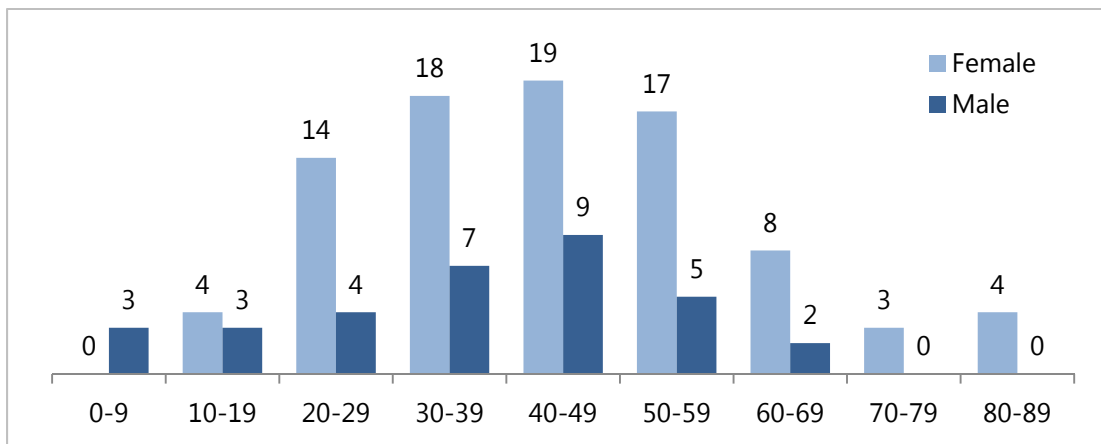


Figure 9. IPV Homicides by Age Group, 2003-2011

Table 11. Homicide Deaths by Age Group, 2003-2011												
Age Group		0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	Unk.	Average Age
IPV	Female	-	4	14	18	19	17	8	3	4	-	44.9
	Male	3	3	4	7	9	5	2	-	-	-	37.4
	Subtotal	3	7	18	25	28	22	10	3	4	-	42.8
Non-IPV	Female	11	20	23	33	34	13	5	11	2	-	37.2
	Male	12	55	227	143	117	84	26	10	5	1	36.1
	Subtotal	24	75	250	176	151	97	31	21	7	1	36.2
Total		27	82	268	201	179	119	41	24	11	1	37.1

The primary differences in ethnicity/identity in the IPV homicide victims⁷, relative to the general population of BC⁸, were that:

- Caucasians were under-represented, accounting for 45.8% of victims while comprising 70.4% of the population, and
- Persons of Aboriginal identity were over-represented, accounting for 9.2% of victims while comprising 4.8% of the general population.
- The Northern region had the highest number and proportion of Aboriginal victims of IPV homicide, despite having the lowest population.
- Both the Fraser and Interior regions had high numbers of Caucasian victims.
- The Fraser region had the highest number of South Asian victims.

The ethnicity/identity findings are approximate and should be interpreted with caution, as this information was not available for a large proportion – 18.3% – of victims.

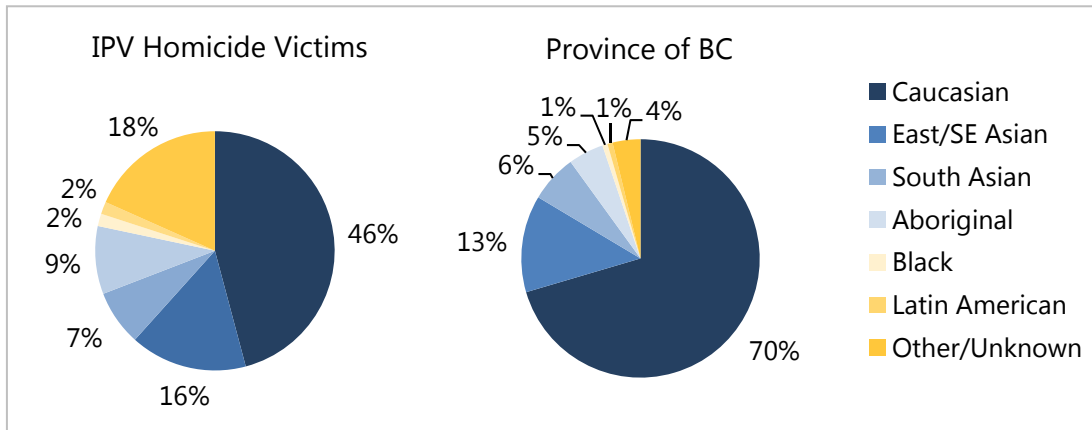


Figure 10. Ethnicity/Identity of IPV Homicide Victims, 2003-2011

Table 12. Ethnicity/Identity of IPV Homicide Victims, 2003-2011

Gender	Caucasian	East/SE Asian	South Asian	Aboriginal	Black	Latin American	Other/Unknown	Total
Female	38	15	6	5	1	2	20	87
Male	17	4	3	6	1	-	2	33
Total	55	19	9	11	2	2	22	120

⁷ Ethnicity/identity of homicide victims is based on information gathered during the coroners' investigation. Aboriginal includes First Nations, Metis and Inuit. Black includes Caribbean, African, etc. Caucasian includes European. East Asian includes Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. South East Asian includes Vietnamese, Filipino, etc. Latin American includes Central and South American. South Asian includes Indian and Pakistani.

⁸ Ethnicity/identity data for the population of BC is from the Statistics Canada 2006 Census.

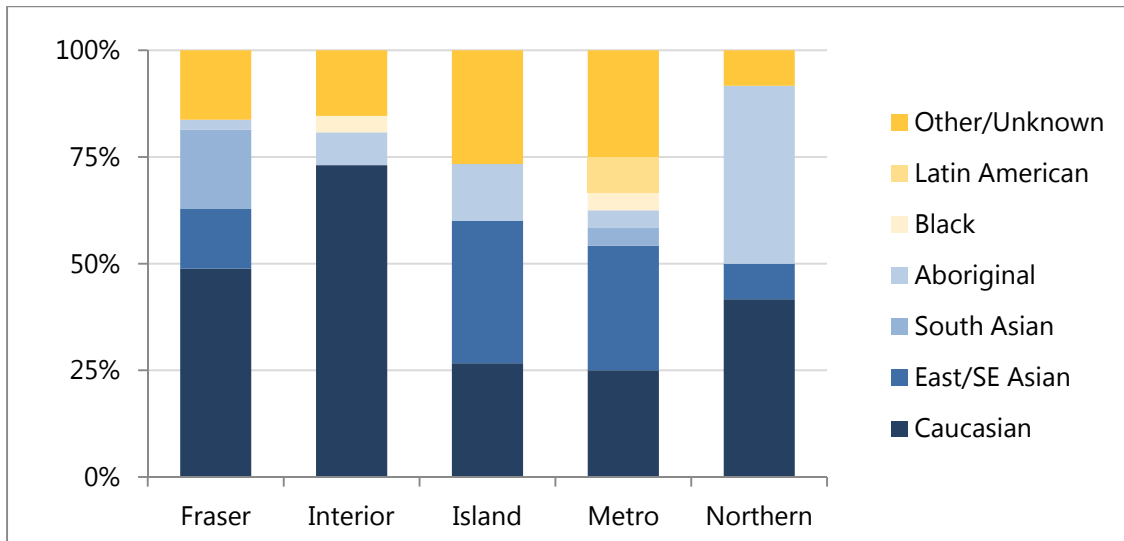


Figure 11. Proportional Ethnicity/Identity of IPV Homicide Victims by Region, 2003-2011

Table 13. Ethnicity/Identity of IPV Homicide Victims by Region, 2003-2011

Region	Caucasian	East/SE Asian	South Asian	Aboriginal	Black	Latin American	Other/Unknown	Total
Fraser	21	6	8	1	-	-	7	43
Interior	19	-	-	2	1	-	4	26
Island	4	5	-	2	-	-	4	15
Metro	6	7	1	1	1	2	6	24
Northern	5	1	-	5	-	-	1	12
Total	55	19	9	11	2	2	22	120

IPV Homicide Deaths: Assailant

‘Spouse’ includes legal and common-law marital partner and fiancé, ‘Boy/girlfriend’ includes boyfriend, girlfriend and other romantic partner of the victim. ‘Unknown’ indicates that the assailant’s identity was not available in the BCCS file, and does not imply that the assailant was unknown to the victim or police.

The largest proportion of victims, 75.8%, were killed by their current spouse or boy/girlfriend, 14.2% were killed by a former current spouse or boy/girlfriend, and 10.0% were killed by a family member or unrelated assailant:

- 79.3% of females and 66.7% of males killed by current partner
- 17.2% of females and 6.1% of males killed by former partner
- 3.5% of females and 27.3% of males killed by a family member or unrelated assailant

Females were more likely than males to be killed by a former partner, while males were more likely to be killed by a family member or unrelated assailant.

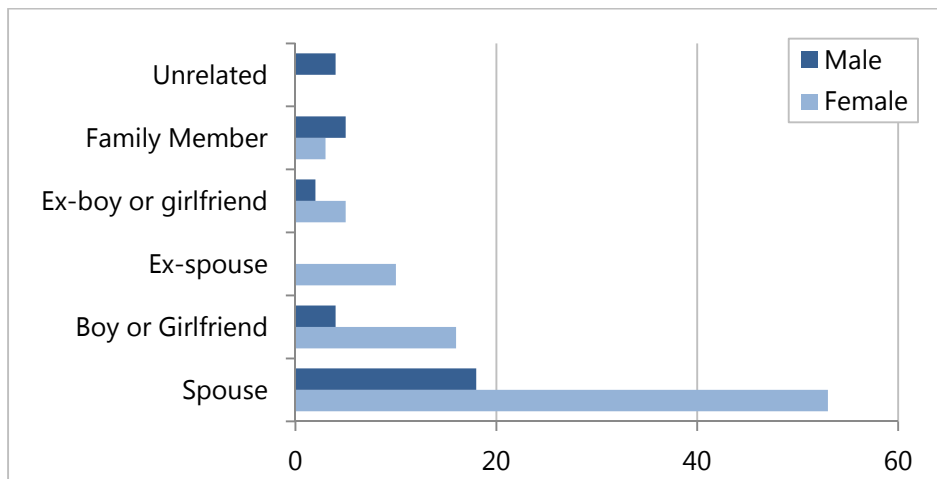


Figure 12. Assailant in IPV Homicide Incidents by Gender of Victim, 2003-2011

Table 14. Assailant in IPV Homicide Incidents by Gender of Victim, 2003-2011							
Gender	Spouse	Boy or Girlfriend	Ex-spouse	Ex-boy or girlfriend	Family Member	Un-related	Total
Female	53	16	10	5	3	-	87
Male	18	4	-	2	5	4	33
Total	71	20	10	7	8	4	120

Overall, 80.0% of IPV homicides were committed by males and 20.0% were committed by females.

- 100% of female victims were killed by males targeting them or another female partner.
- 72.7% of male victims were killed by their female partner.
- 27.3% of male victims were killed by males targeting a current or former female partner.
- 100.0% of peripheral victims (e.g. children, other family members, or unrelated individuals) were killed by males targeting a current or former female partner.
- There were no same-sex IPV homicides deaths during this period.

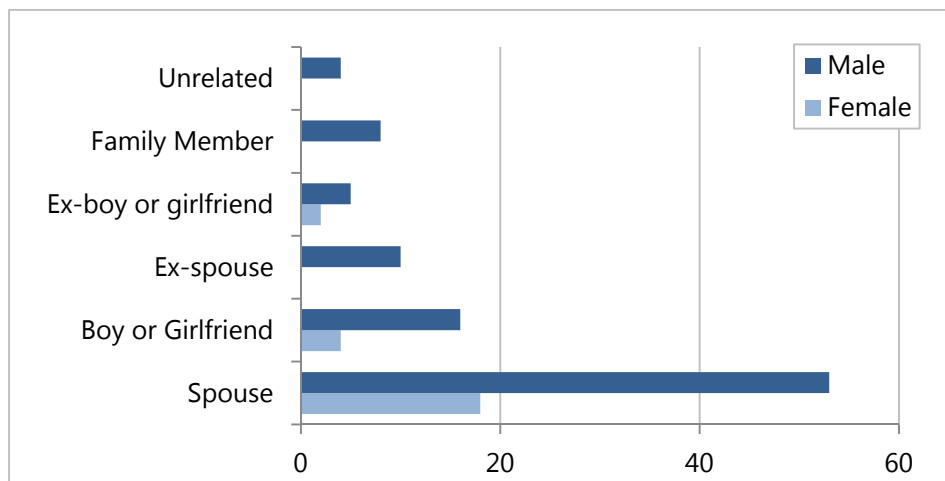


Figure 13. Assailant in IPV Homicide Incidents by Gender of Assailant, 2003-2011

Gender	Spouse	Boy or Girlfriend	Ex-spouse	Ex-boy or girlfriend	Family Member	Un-related	Total
Female	18	4	-	2	-	-	24
Male	53	16	10	5	8	4	96
Total	71	20	10	7	8	4	120

IPV Homicide Deaths: Means of Death

Means of death indicates the mechanism of injury or action of the assailant that caused the death of the victim. 'Under investigation' indicates cases that are still open, for which means of death has not been determined.

Overall, the top three means of death in IPV homicide cases were: stabbing, 35.8%; fire arms, 24.2%; and strangulation, 15.8%. There was considerable gender disparity in means of death:

- 63.6% of males and 25.3% of females died by stabbing
- 27.6% of females and 15.2% of males were killed with a fire arm
- 19.5% of females and 6.1% of males died by strangulation

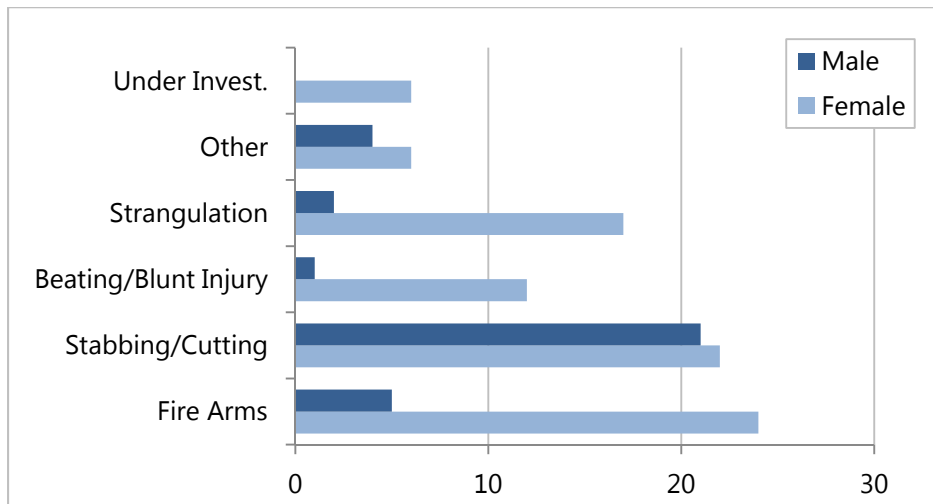


Figure 14. Means of Death for IPV Homicides by Victim Gender, 2003-2011

Gender	Fire Arms	Stabbing/ Cutting	Beating/ Blunt Injury	Strangulation	Other	Under Invest.	Total
Female	24	22	12	17	6	6	87
Male	5	21	1	2	4	-	33
Subtotal	29	43	13	19	10	6	120

IPV Homicide Deaths: Circumstance

A premeditated homicide is one in which the assailant made deliberate advance preparations, e.g. purchase of weapon. A spontaneous homicide is one seemingly without forethought or advance planning; typically these result from a violent argument or outburst and have the appearance of impulsive acts.

Overall, approximately 1/3 of IPV homicides were premeditated, 1/3 were spontaneous, and 1/3 were of unknown circumstances:

- 26.4% of females and 45.5% of males died in spontaneous incidents
- 62.5% of homicides perpetrated by female assailants and 25.0% by male assailants were spontaneous
- 16.7% of homicides perpetrated by female assailants and 38.5% by male assailants were premeditated

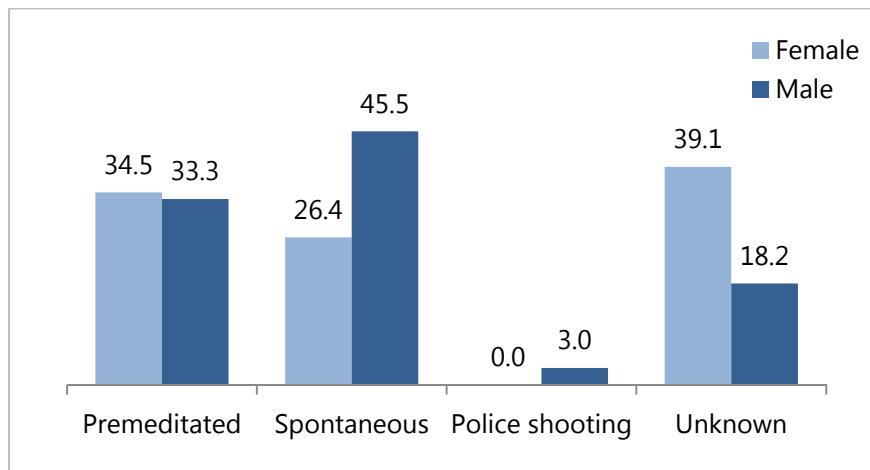


Figure 15. Percent of IPV Homicides: Circumstance by Gender of Victim, 2003-2011

Circumstance	Female	Male	Total
Spontaneous	23	15	38
Premeditated	30	11	41
Police shooting	-	1	1
Unknown	34	6	40
Total	87	33	120

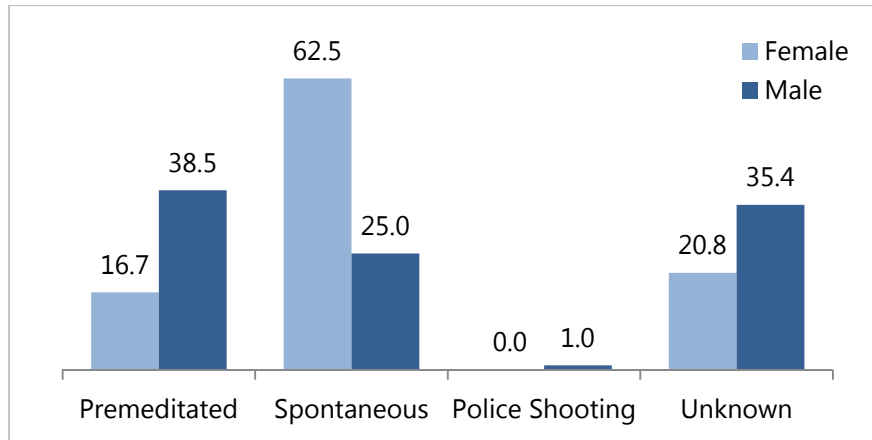


Figure 16. Percent of IPV Homicides: Circumstance by Gender of Assailant, 2003-2011

Circumstance	Female	Male	Total
Spontaneous	15	24	39
Premeditated	4	37	41
Police shooting	-	1	1
Unknown	5	34	39
Total	24	96	120

IPV Homicide Deaths: Motivation

This is the apparent reason for the homicide, as described in the case file, and does not represent the stated motive of the assailant. Motivation 'unknown' indicates this information was not available in the BCCS file, or the file was still open.

Motivation was unknown for almost half of the cases, 45.8%. Of the cases for which motivation was known:

- 17.2% of females and 39.4% of males were killed in the heat of anger
- 16.1% of females and 18.2% of males died following the end of their relationship
- 2.3% of females and 18.2% of males were peripheral victims in incidents following the end of a relationship

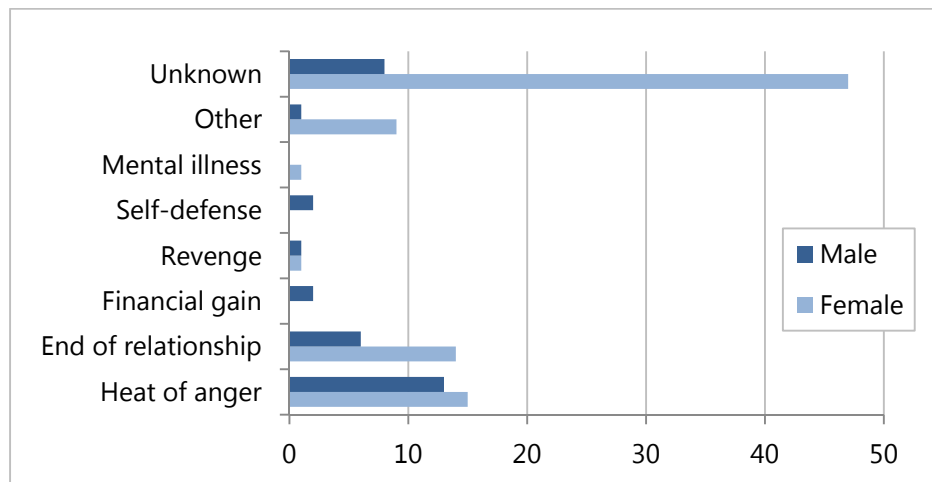


Figure 17. Motivation of IPV Homicides by Gender of Victim, 2003-2011

Table 19. Motivation of IPV Homicides by Gender of Victim, 2003-2011			
Motivation	Female	Male	Total
Heat of anger	15	13	28
End of relationship	14	6	20
Financial gain	-	2	2
Revenge	1	1	2
Self defence	-	2	2
Mental illness	1	-	1
Other	9	1	10
Unknown	47	8	55
Total	87	33	120

Females were most likely to commit homicide due to anger, 54.2%. Males were most likely to commit homicide following the end of a relationship, 20.8%, whereas no females were known to have committed homicide for this reason.

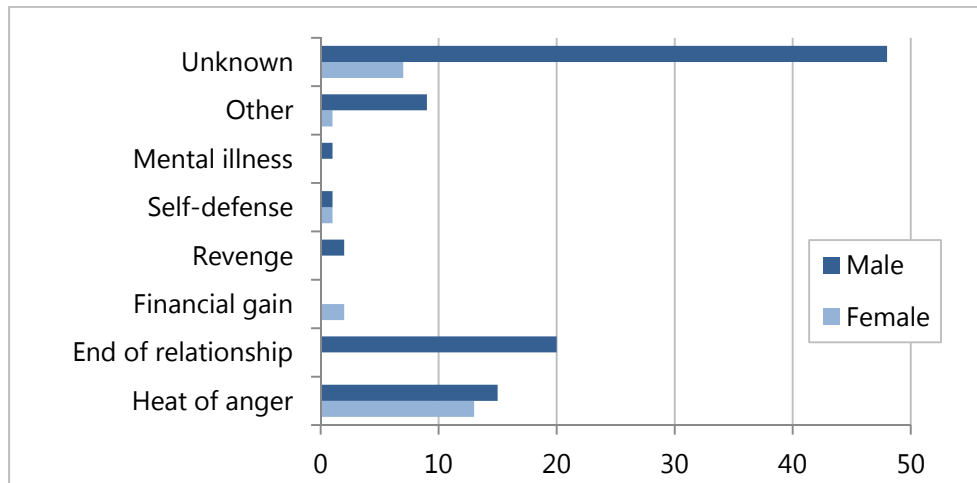


Figure 18. Motivation of IPV Homicides by Gender of Assailant, 2003-2011

Table 20. Motivation of IPV Homicides by Gender of Assailant, 2003-2011

Motivation	Female	Male	Total
Heat of anger	13	15	28
End of relationship	-	20	20
Financial gain	2	-	2
Revenge	-	2	2
Self defence	1	1	2
Mental illness	-	1	1
Other	1	9	10
Unknown	7	48	55
Total	24	96	120

IPV Suicide Deaths

Index	Female	Male
Total Number of Suicides	1,092	3,369
Total Number of IPV Suicides	-	26
Average Yearly Suicide Rate per Million Pop.	55.7	174.4
Average Yearly IPV Suicide Rate per Million Pop.	-	1.4
Proportion of Suicides that are IPV	-	0.8%

There were 4,461 suicides from 2003 to 2011 in BC:

- 24.5% of victims were female, 75.5% were male.
- Fewer than 1.0% of all suicides were IPV-related (defined as death by suicide following the homicide or attempted homicide of the decedent's current or former spouse or other romantic partner).
- 100.0% of IPV suicides were male

Victim		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
IPV S	Female	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Male	2	5	4	3	5	1	2	1	3	26
	Subtotal	2	5	4	3	5	1	2	1	3	26
Non-IPV	Female	120	128	135	105	131	124	114	110	125	1,092
	Male	356	393	347	352	340	358	394	419	384	3,343
	Subtotal	476	521	482	457	471	482	508	529	509	4,435
Total		478	526	486	460	476	483	510	530	512	4,461

Glossary

Homicide: Death due to injury intentionally inflicted by the action of another person. Homicide is a neutral term that does not imply fault or blame.

Suicide: Death resulting from self-inflicted injury, with intent to cause death.

Undetermined: Death that, because of insufficient evidence or other inability to determine circumstances, cannot reasonably be classified as Accidental, Homicide, Natural, or Suicide.