

## Fact Sheet on Intimate Partner Violence in the African-American Community

One U.S. Department of Justice study of 8 urban counties found that African-American men and women were almost equally likely to be victims of intimate partner homicide: 47% of victims were male, 53% were female.<sup>1</sup>

Studies show that black men and women engage in partner violence at similar rates, as is also true in the general population:

- African-American college students (76 men, 235 women) were surveyed regarding partner violence. Findings reveal that 41% of men and 33% of women were physically abused by a dating partner during the previous year.<sup>2</sup>
- A survey of 865 white and black college students assessed the initiation of violence in their dating experience. It was found that 218 subjects had experienced or expressed violence in current or recent dating relationships. Results indicated that "when one partner could be said to be the usual initiator of violence, that partner was most often the woman. This finding was the same for both black and white respondents."<sup>3</sup>
- A probability sample of 1,440 couples (358 Black, 527 Hispanic, 65 white) was obtained from the 1995 National Alcohol Survey. White men and women had similar rates of partner aggression, Hispanic women were somewhat more aggressive than Hispanic men, and Black men were more aggressive than Black women. Alcohol-related problems were a predictor of intimate partner violence in Black couples.<sup>4</sup>
- One analysis compared a sample of 147 African Americans from the 1975 National Survey with 576 African Americans from the 1985 National Survey with regard to spousal violence. While overall husband-on-wife violence remained stable, wife-on-husband violence *increased* 33% over that time period. For severe violence, husband-on-wife aggression *decreased* by 43%, while wife-on-husband assaults *increased* by 42%.<sup>5</sup>

	Husbands on Wives	Wives on Husbands
1975:		
Overall Violence	16.9%	15.3%
Severe Violence	11.3%	7.6%
1985:		
Overall Violence	16.9%	20.4%
Severe Violence	6.4%	10.8%

When income levels are controlled for, racial differences in interpersonal violence are greatly reduced.<sup>6</sup>

Male victims of domestic violence are far less likely to view the assault as a crime or to call for police assistance, thus biasing the results of crime surveys.<sup>7</sup>

Despite similar levels of intimate partner victimization of men and women, reports sometimes ignore the existence of female abusers and male victims.<sup>8,9,10</sup>

## <sup>1</sup>References

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- <sup>4</sup> Cunradi, C. B., Caetano, R., Clark, C. L., & Schafer, J. (1999). Alcohol-related problems and intimate partner violence among white, Black, and Hispanic couples in the U.S. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*, 23, 1492-1501.
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- <sup>6</sup> Benson, M., Wooldredge, J., Thistlethwaite, A., Fox, G. (2004). The correlations between race and domestic violence is confounded with community context. *Social Problems*, 51, 326-342.
- <sup>7</sup> JE Stets and MA Straus: Gender differences in reporting marital violence and its medical and psychological consequences. In Straus and Gelles (eds.): *Physical violence in American families*, 1990, Table 15.
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- <sup>9</sup> Kaslow, N.J., Thompson, M.P., Meadows, L.A., Jacobs, S., Chance, S., Gibb, B. et al. (1998). Factors that mediate and moderate the link between partner abuse and suicidal behavior in African American women. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 66, 533-540.
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