We believe that children need both parents.

*And here is the research that proves it!*

Almost 100 pages of citations to published research, mostly from respected peer-reviewed journals, outlines the case for shared residence after divorce. It also demolishes many of the complaints presented by vested-interest advocacy groups who are resisting reform.

Citations are arranged by subject matter and each has a brief summary of the relevant point.

This is designed to be a resource for reformers around the World.

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Endorsed by the  
Non Custodial Parents Party, 2006

Collated by  
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Prepared by volunteers
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Endorsed by the
**Non Custodial Parents Party, 2006**

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Prepared by volunteers
Shared residence is best for children

We have found 34 citations to published research showing that joint residence is better for children than any other kind of post-divorce residence.

# Rejecting mandatory joint residence places the interests of parents ahead of the best interests of the child


# Children who fared best after the divorce were those who were free to develop loving and full relationships with both parents. (this is unlikely with alternate weekend contact)

Folberg J, & Graham M. Joint Custody of Children Following Divorce. 12 University of California Davis Law Review (1979) p 535

# Empirical and clinical evidence that joint residence encourages responsible behaviour and is psychologically sound

Coller D R. Joint Custody; Research, Theory and Policy. 27(4) Family Process (December 1988) pp 259-269
Sharply C F, & Wehber R F. Co-Parenting: An Alternative To Consider In Separation Counselling. 10(3) Australian Journal of Sex, Marriage and Family (1992) pp 111-117
Kruk E. Promoting Shared Parenting After Separation; A Therapeutic/Interventionist Model of Family Mediation. 15(3) Journal of Family Therapy (August 1993)
Farrell W. Father and Child Reunion: How To Bring The Dads We Need To The Children We Love. Tarsher/Putman, New York (January 2001)

# Other research has also shown that fathers were much more involved with their children in joint residence situations than in maternal residence

Kelly J B. Longer-Term Adjustment In Children of Divorce: Converging Findings and Implications For Practice. 2 Journal of Family Psychology (1988a) pp 119-140
That the best and perhaps only way to achieve true continuity of family relationships is through the medium of joint residence which aims to preserve the child’s perception of both mother and father as an integral part of his or her life, a positive role model, and a continuing and consistent source of love, security, respect, discipline, and exposure to a varied range of life experiences.


Coller D R. Joint Custody: Research, Theory and Policy. 27(4) Family Process (December 1988) pp 259–269

Farrell W. Father and Child Reunion: How To Bring The Dads We Need To The Children We Love. Tarsher/Putman, New York (January 2001)

Lately have we begun to understand that children suffer serious negative consequences when fathers are marginalized.


Farrell W. Father and Child Reunion: How To Bring The Dads We Need To The Children We Love. Tarsher/Putman, New York (January 2001)

The usual way of divorce (mother gets residence (custody), father gets contact and financial obligation), is based on outmoded, erroneous, and damaging concepts of men’s and women’s parenting roles, abilities, and parent–child relationships.


Joint residence is the optimal post–divorce arrangement and that courts should begin with a rebuttable presumption of joint residence.


Joint residence, because it allows them to continue their relationship with both parents is what children want and generally ask for. The sole residence children in responding to the question, With whom would you have wanted to live after the divorce? by saying, With both


Children seem to benefit from increased time with the non-custodial parent when certain conditions are met: low levels of inter-parental conflict and a warm, consistent relationship with the non-custodial parent. They benefit from authoritative parenting with the non-resident parent (i.e., advice and help with projects, supervision of homework; discipline)... In other words, how often fathers see their children is less important than what they actually do with them.

Amato & Gilbreath, 1999; Clarke-Stewart & Hayward, 1996; Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1982

A sole residence order is that the law is seen to be designating one psychological parent for the child. This interpretation can prove to be emotionally devastating for both parent and child.

Boys as a group are happier and show lower rates of delinquency and school drop-out in father-custody homes. These results are consistent and robust. There are no studies which find the reverse - that children function better with the opposite-sex parent. However, some have suggested that this may be an artifact of demographic differences between mothers and fathers who are primary custodial parents, e.g., fathers who pursue and are awarded custody are generally more educated, more affluent, have more professional occupations, and have been more involved with their children.


Most experts agree that children, especially very young ones, need consistency and routine. Unfortunately, too many of these people, relying on outmoded sexist stereotypes about men and women, believe that infants and toddlers should live with the primary parent (the mother) and that the father should be allowed to visit only two or three hours every weekend with no overnights. This kind of schedule however, is absolutely inappropriate for infant contact, writes paediatrician Fay (1995).

Fay R. Joint Custody In Infants and Toddlers: Theoretical and Practical Aspects (1995)

Low parenting time for either parent will lead to adjustment problems later for the child.


Researchers recommend that in a child’s best interests, the job of the courts is to protect children from emotional damage by safeguarding the child’s relationship with each parent to the fullest extent possible


Kelly J B (1988a). Longer-Term Adjustment In Children of Divorce: Converging Findings and Implications For Practice. 2 Journal of Family Psychology pp 119-140

Most experts agree that children, especially very young ones, need consistency and routine. Unfortunately, too many of these people, relying on outmoded sexist stereotypes about men and women, believe that infants and toddlers should live with the primary parent (the mother) and that the father should be allowed to visit only two or three hours every weekend with no overnights. This kind of schedule however, is absolutely inappropriate for infant contact, writes paediatrician Fay (1995).

Fay R. Joint Custody In Infants and Toddlers: Theoretical and Practical Aspects (1995)

Joint residence reduces conflict

Joint residence reduces conflict between the parents and consequently improves the lives of the children and their parents. Joint residence also means that the family’s assets are more equally divided and this is often the un-stated motivation of advocates objecting to reforms.
We have found 8 citations to published research showing that joint residence reduces conflict between separated parents

Joint residence arrangements show reduced conflict because joint residence appears to more fully satisfy the needs of both parents. It provides a combination of time off for one parent and enhanced involvement in child rearing for the other.


The advantages of joint residence leads to less litigation in the Family Court.


Dramatically higher compliance with child support orders.


Studies constantly report parental satisfaction, even from parents who initially had reservations about joint residence.

Sharply C F, & Webber R F. Co-Parenting: An Alternative To Consider In Separation Counselling. 10(3) Australian Journal of Sex, Marriage and Family (1992) pp 111-117

Shared parenting saves marriages

Family law can be summarised by the saying “if you get the kids, you get everything!” The house, any other assets including the super, and ongoing tax-free CSA payments. In Australia, over two thirds of divorces are initiated by the woman, partly because she rarely has anything to lose. Shared parenting means the assets and money are split. This removes the incentives for a women to divorce her husband and thus decreases divorce rates. We have found three citations to this difficult to research fact.

There is a significant correlation between joint physical custody awards and reduced divorce. A parent who expects to receive sole custody is more likely to file for divorce than one who may be awarded shared custody. Sole custody allows one parent to hurt the other by taking away the children, and usually involves higher child support payments.


The same correlation between joint physical custody awards and reduced divorce has been found independently. Fathers are more likely to form strong bonds with children if they know that their
relationship would be protected through joint physical custody in the event of a divorce. This would reduce the likelihood that fathers would initiate divorce.


The parent who receives custody is more likely to be the one who files for divorce. That is, among cases where the mother received custody, the mother usually filed for divorce, and where the father received custody, the father was more likely to be the one who filed. They concluded that filing behaviour is largely driven by attempts to “exploit the other partner through divorce.”


![Graph from Kuhn and Guidubaldi.](image)

**Best if relationships are maintained**

The central event of the divorce process for most children is the parental separation...The child frequently perceives the parents departure as a departure from him personally...The central event of divorce for children is psychologically comparable to the event of death, and frequently evokes similar responses of disbelief, shock and denial.

Sole residence for the mother/contact for the father arrangement does not protect the right of the child to be cared and loved by their non–resident father. These arrangements victimise children emotionally by denying them the relationship with both parents, which is crucial for reasonably healthy development.
The importance of the relationship with the father is decisively documented. Increased contacts, in meaningful care giving situations, lead to improved behaviour, improved peer relationships, more positive self-esteem, and even improved academic scores in numerous subjects.

Infrequent paternal contact, on the other hand, has been associated with poor self-esteem, depression, and high levels of anger in children.

We have found 49 citations to published research showing a wide variety of benefits for children when they maintain meaningful relationships with both their natural parents.

# The United States Congress has found:

(1) Nearly 24,000,000 children in the United States, or 34 percent of all such children, live apart from their biological father.
(2) Sixty percent of couples who divorce have at least 1 child.
(3) The number of children living with only a mother increased from just over 5,000,000 in 1960, to 17,000,000 in 1999, and between 1981 and 1991 the percentage of children living with only 1 parent increased from 19 percent to 25 percent.
(4) Forty percent of children who live in households without a father have not seen their father in at least 1 year and 50 percent of such children have never visited their father's home.
(5) The most important factor in a child's upbringing is whether the child is brought up in a loving, healthy, supportive environment.
(6) Children who live without contact with their biological father are, in comparison to children who have such contact:
   (A) 5 times more likely to live in poverty;
   (B) more likely to bring weapons and drugs into the classroom;
   (C) twice as likely to commit crime;
   (D) twice as likely to drop out of school;
   (E) more likely to commit suicide;
   (F) more than twice as likely to abuse alcohol or drugs; and
   (G) more likely to become pregnant as teenagers.
(7) Violent criminals are overwhelmingly males who grew up without fathers.
(15) For the future of the United States and the future of our children, Congress, States, and local communities should assist parents to become more actively involved in their children's lives.


A longitudinal study of 60 California families and 131 children aged two through eighteen found that preschoolers feared being abandoned after their parents separation and that children of all ages expressed verbally and behaviourally a great sense of loss if one parent was absent. Among the twenty-six seven and eight year old children studied, the most pronounced reaction to the parental divorce was the sense of loss suffered with regard to the departed father. The study noted that the effects of being left almost exclusively in the care of only one parent were negative. In other research the authors recorded children's intense dissatisfaction with the traditional two weekends contact per month, dictated by the sole residence model, and their desire for more frequent contact with their non-resident parents. Only the children who could see their fathers several times a week were even moderately content.

“...young girls experience the loss of father egocentrically as a rejection of them….the continued lack of involvement is experienced as ongoing rejection by (the father). Many girls attribute this rejection to their being not pretty enough, affectionate enough, athletic enough, or smart enough to please father engage him in regular, frequent contacts… The continuous sense of being valued and loved as a female seems an especially key element in the development of the conviction that one is indeed femininely lovable. Without this regular source of nourishment, a girls sense of being valued as a female does not seem to thrive”


These feelings of loss have also been reported in subsequent British studies. Mitchell’s account of her interviews with 116 Scottish adolescents which were conducted five years after separation, provides a moving record of the initial loneliness and bewilderment of children that results from the inaccessibility of one parent following separation (and sometimes in emotional terms, both). The remarriage of one or the other parent constituted a second crisis for some of the children in her sample because it dispelled the last vestiges of hope (however unsubstantiated) that their parents might eventually come back together again – often the precondition children believed necessary for recovering two parents. They emphasised again and again their need to be kept informed about what was happening. Mitchell argued that doctors, lawyers, teachers, and social workers were important attendants upon the process of marriage breakdown who therefore had a primary mental health care role to play in the reconstruction of family life after divorce. The case for educating professionals about the known effects of divorce on children and their parents is well made by Mitchell and other writers.


An important Australian study interviewed 402 Victorian children and asked them about relationships with parents and their general feelings about family life. It sought to connect their responses to how the children were doing in their lives. For the broad range of children support from both mothers and fathers was associated with positive development. When fathers had little association with their children, these children had relatively low self-esteem, strongly desired more contact with their fathers, and were doing poorly compared to other children whose fathers were more involved in their lives.


Loyalty conflicts, attachment and separation anxiety have also been found to be associated with sole residence arrangements. Some researchers believe that the psychological process underlying post-divorce symptoms in children resemble mourning or bereavement. Even those authors, who do not ascribe to the mourning theory, note that loss, or severe attenuation of the parent-child bond is a real possibility among children and non-resident parents.

Wallerstein & Kelly. The Effects of Parental Divorce: Experience of The Child In Early Latency. 46(1) American Journal of Orthopsychiatry (1976)


Another study found that limited contact by the non-resident parent severely restricts the opportunity to provide the daily nurturing needed to strengthen the parent-child relationship. Often non-resident parents, reacting to the pain of being forced to see their children only intermittently cope by seeing them infrequently.

Greif J. B. Fathers, Children and Joint Custody. 49 American Journal of Orthopsychiatry (1979), pp 311-319 at 314:
According to the Western Australian Child Health Survey, children in single parent and step/blended households have up to two times greater incidence of mental health problems than children in intact families (two natural parents).

Garrison et al documented an almost 15 times higher prevalence of depression in 12 to 14 years olds not living with both of their natural parents.


Higher divorce rates in a society lead to higher suicide rates among children. Prior to the divorce revolution of the 1970s unemployment was the biggest correlate with suicide, but that has changed. The largest demographic indicator of suicide is the family structure within which the person resides, and that the divorced family structure is most dangerous. This link between the rise in adolescent suicide in the past three decades with parental divorce has been found again and again in the literature, and in cross-cultural studies of Japan and the United States. For children the suicide is often triggered by thoughts that their parents have rejected them or have lost interest in them (Wodarski & Harris 1987).

Such a perception on the part of children may sometimes be based in reality and not just a figment of their imagination. Not only do parents divorce each other, a divorce or mini divorce happens between them and their children. Unlike the experience of their parents, the child’s suffering does not reach its peak at the divorce and then level off. Rather, the effect of the parents’ divorce can be played and replayed throughout the next three decades of the children’s lives. These long-lasting effects are found in country after country no matter what the socio-economic status of the family. In 1998 the Australian House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs came to similar conclusions in its report To Have and To Hold.

Many researchers support the conclusion that children in joint residence situations do have a much better prognosis for positive post-divorce adjustment.
Most children considered having two homes advantageous and worth the effort of making the transition between homes because it enabled them to remain close to both parents. Joint residence does not create uncertainty and confusion for most youngsters about either the arrangements or about the finality of the divorce.

Reviews of the evidence on post-divorce adjustment indicate the importance of a continuing relationship with both parents.

Children in joint residence were better adjusted than children in sole-residence. Children in joint residence were better adjusted than children in sole residence settings, but no different from those in intact families. Factors including, general adjustment, family relationships, self–esteem, emotional and behavioural adjustment, and divorce specific adjustment were considered. Moreover, joint residence parents reported less current conflict than did sole residence parents. Joint residence can be advantageous for children, by facilitating ongoing positive involvement with both parents.

Equal groups in joint guardianship, sole maternal residence and joint residence were compared and the amount of father-child contact were found to be significant predictors of child adjustment, with higher father-child contact associated with better adjustment of the children. The results in this study, as in the vast majority of this research, suggest that joint residence is much more beneficial for successful post-divorce adjustment of children than sole residence.

Goldstein also found children were strongly attached to both parents, but a small number of these children felt a strong need to be fair to both parents and were meticulous about dividing their time equally between them. While these children did perceive their parents’ divorce as undesirable, and in some cases harboured fantasies of reconciliation, they did not experience the overwhelming sense of having been rejected that is common in the more usual maternal sole residence/father-absent post-divorce arrangement (Wallerstein & Kelly 1980; Mitchell 1985).
The argument that children in joint residence experience more confusion and frustration was not supported. Based on this research result, and many other similar studies, it is known now that the argument that children need the stability of one home etc is not valid.


Children obtain emotional stability from important emotional relationships with two parents and two sets of grandparents, and these are much more important than where a child sleeps on weekends.


Children in sole residence situations did not maintain strong healthy emotional relationships with both parents, children in joint residence situations did. The children in joint residence arrangements indicated that they were generally satisfied with their level of involvement with both parents, in marked contrast, children in sole residence indicated that they were not satisfied. She found:

- There was no evidence that joint residence families sustained more post divorce conflict than sole residence households;
- There was no evidence that children experience disruption from living in two houses. In fact, most children felt their new lifestyles held certain advantages over the nuclear family household;
- Children in sole residence desired more contact with their non-resident parents;
- Many non-resident parents but no joint residence parents lost contact with their children;
- No joint residence fathers had ceased to support their children financially, as many non-resident fathers had;
- Joint residence children had maintained meaningful relationships with both parents, in contrast with single residence children for whom the visit was a vacation;
- Single residence parents reported feeling burnt out and overwhelmed in a way that joint residence did not.
- The claim that children of divorce need one primary parent and one primary home is refuted.
- All of the joint residence children valued the arrangement and said they would have chosen it. By contrast, half of the sole residence children were dissatisfied with their arrangements and wanted more contact with the non-resident parent.
- Children’s response to parental authority were not shown to be adversely affected by the fact that their parents no longer cared for each other. Joint residence should be a rebuttable presumption at law. She concluded that joint residence at it's best is superior to sole residence at its best.


Joint residence have reported fewer negative life experiences after divorce than boys in maternal residence


Some experts to recommend paternal residence as a preference for boys and maternal residence for girls. However, such a legislative mandate would be inappropriate at present for two reasons. First, no child should ever be denied the right to know and love two care-giving parents (except, obviously, in abuse situations). Second, no parent should be denied his or her parental rights (i.e.,
human rights) without conclusive evidence that the exercise of those rights is destructive of the child). Thirdly, This can deny children from having a relationship with their siblings.

Finally, this would fail to achieve the only justification of sole-residence – which is to remove one parent from the children's lives.


# Increased contacts in meaningful care giving situations, lead to improved behaviour, improved peer relationships, more positive self-esteem, and even improved academic scores in numerous subjects. Infrequent paternal contact, on the other hand, has been associated with poor self-esteem, depression, and high levels of anger in children

Kelly J B. Longer-Term Adjustment In Children of Divorce: Converging Findings and Implications For Practice. 2 Journal of Family Psychology (1988a) pp 119-140

# There is a general consensus that children who are able to maintain a loving, involved relationship with both parents after divorce adjust much better than children who find their relationship with either parent curtailed.


Meaningful relationships need shared residency

We have found 29 citations to published research showing that sole residency (or when the majority of time is with one parent), the relationship with the other parent frequently withers and dies, to the detriment of this parent and the children.

Sadly the relationship with the other parent is often destroyed by the parent with majority residence as a side effect of spite or because the resident parent sees little value in the children having a relationship with the person she rejected.

Other times the relationship simply withers due to the artificial nature of being a “Disney dad”.

The most serious impediment to a father continuing to parent his children after separation is the Family Court.


Non-custodial parents continued meaningful relationship with his children, especially with younger children, will be subject to mother’s approval and permission. Sadly, too few resident mothers, dealing with feelings of vulnerability, anger, and guilt, are willing freely to grant such permission. This autonomy (power) over their children’s contact with the father, often is in tandem with revenge for real or perceived misdeeds.


“There is not only the most solid evidence of being loved by both parents, but the chance to express rather than bury, whatever angers and conflicts the divorce engenders. This chance is absent in the sole custody household. Children are not only deeply pained by one parent’s absence, but they interpret it as abandonment; as a consequence, they feel devalued and guilty, yet they find they have few ways to express their anger and confusion.”

Findings from research projects in Virginia, California, Arizona and Texas support the position that in most cases, children benefit from post-divorce arrangements that foster continuing relationships with both parents and more contact with non-resident fathers than was typically taking place.


A growing number of non-custodial parents (mainly fathers) are unable to maintain contact with their children after separation. A recent NZ survey found that 18% of custodial parents (mostly mothers) and 15% of non-custodial parents (usually fathers) reported that the non-custodial parent had no contact with their children six months after the couple had separated.


Large numbers of post separation children are denied their Court ordered (and deserved) contact to their non–resident fathers on many occasions, often with cold and calculating regularity. The reasons are often frivolous and ridiculous and are usually mis-stated.


Kelly J B. Longer-Term Adjustment In Children of Divorce: Converging Findings and Implications For Practice. 2 Journal of Family Psychology (1988a) pp 119-140
Other research by the Family Court shows that within a few years of the divorce, less than a quarter of fathers still have contact with their children, and more than half have contact only twice a year or not at all. Most non-resident fathers wanted to see their children more often, but almost half of the fathers reported that their former wives frequently opposed contact and employed strategies to reduce it. Overall the men presented a bleak view of the role of the non-resident father. Many feel it painful and unrewarding. It is totally devastating said one. The child cannot understand how I am forced to see so little of him its breaking my heart said another.


The fall off in contact does not lie in background variables like economic factors, parental involvement prior to the break-up or the age of the child, but in the structure of contact ordered by court. The marginalisation and disengagement of fathers is an inevitable consequence of the sole residence.


Fathers who had a close pre-separation relationship with their children are more likely to become disengaged because of the artificiality and limitations of contact parenting.

Kruk E. Psychological and Structural Factors Contributing To The Disengagement of Non Custodial Fathers After Divorce. 30(1) Family and Conciliation Courts Review (January 1992 ) pp 81-101

Often the non-resident father reacts to a sole residence award as if they have lost their child, and soon a meaningful relationship also dies and they become a holiday parent or Disneyland Dad bringing gifts. Contact becomes a frantic effort to entertain and court the child in order to retain the child’s affection. This pseudo-relationship is not an adequate substitute for a meaningful relationship. It’s artificial structure lacks normal activities: putting a child to sleep, helping with homework, preparing a meal together etc.


“Fathers could not endure the pain of seeing their children only intermittently, and by two years after the divorce coped with this stress by seeing their children infrequently, although they continued to experience a great sense of loss and depression.


“The father's anxieties centre around having lost his children, so he courts them. But after a while the frantic drive to maintain contact with his children during a hurried meal, a visit to the zoo, the park and other entertainment places is too painful. He feels as if his son or daughter has become his guest, someone he amuses for a few hours. He has lost meaningful, that is to say non-holiday, contact with his children and, in time, often withdraws. He protects himself by moving away from his children since the situation, as it exists, is emotionally too difficult for him and he can see no way to change it”

“As things now stand it is very difficult – financially, socially, and emotionally for men and women to do anything but conform to the irrational bias in favour of sole custody. Under joint custody on the other hand, both parents are equal.

“Central to this younger group of children was the very strong sense of loss with regard to the departed father...Many felt abandoned and rejected, and expressed their longing in ways reminiscent of grief for a dead parent...The intensity of the response in this age group was striking...The degree of closeness and gratification in the pre-divorce father-child relationship, at least from our perspective was not a factor in determining this acute reaction.”


Continuing a broad based relationship with the child (e.g. joint residence) considerably diminished the negative psychological effects on the non-resident father and his child.


Mitigating the parental sense of loss has legal and practical ramifications. In reaction to depression caused by the loss of one’s child, a parent may result to renewal of litigation - a potentially devastating course for both parent and child.


“For fathers with more than one child, a limited visitation period severely restricts the opportunity for much needed time alone with each child... Yet repeatedly, they talked of missing the intimacy of time alone...”

Greif G L, & Pabst M S. Mothers Without Custody (1988) at 147-149

The central and most compelling argument in favour of joint residence is that it helps children and fathers maintain their relationship. This is a powerful argument because a number of studies have documented that a father's continued involvement with his child is associated with a positive outcome for the child.


Children are better off with both parents – psychology & crime

We have found 27 citations to published research showing a cause-and-effect relationship between a child being fatherless-ness and future criminal and delinquency.

It has also been found that boys from divorced families often exhibit delinquent-like behaviour and have difficulty in controlling their impulses (Biller 1981; Buckingham 2000). Investigators believe that boys need a firm, positive identification with their fathers in order to be able to develop internalised controls over their behaviour. The fact that post divorce boys have much less contact
with their fathers would explain their higher incidence of delinquent-like and generally aggressive behaviour.


Buckingham, J. Boy Troubles – Understanding Rising Suicide, Rising Crime and Educational Failure. *Centre For Independent Studies, St. Leonards, NSW* (June 2003).

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In 1988, a survey of preschool children admitted to New Orleans hospitals as psychiatric patients over a 34-month period found that nearly 80 percent came from fatherless homes.

In spite of the relative inability of children to articulate their feelings (at least compared to the average adult), their is increasing evidence that children, when presented with the opportunity to do so, have articulated their desire to maintain a loving, involved relationship with both parents after divorce. This desire on the part of children is understandable, given the evidence that children form meaningful attachment bonds to both parents.


### Australian data indicates the proportion of children with mental health problems – including behavioural, affective (mood), and attention deficit disorders – is lowest in intact families. The highest proportion of children with problems occurs in single parent households, but boys are most likely to suffer from mental health problems in step/blended households.

Sawyer et al. *The Mental Health of Young People in Australia*. Mental Health and Special Programs Branch, Department of Health and Aged Care, Canberra (2000).

### Assault rates more than doubled in the decade from 1980 to 1990 and there is a statistical association between rising crime and rising rates of divorce. (There is no such association between crime and unemployment or the number of young men in society).

Intact families are generally the most effective way to socialise the young. Disturbed behaviour among young people was noted during World War II, when many fathers were away from their families. Sullivan suggests that our present way of dealing with this problem, through intervention at the individual level by social workers and the police, has little effect, and calls for a public health approach, preventing the problems before they occur by encouraging intact families.


### The NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSR) implicates child neglect is currently the most powerful social predictor of juvenile crime.


"The high incidence of violent behaviour from boys was strongly correlated to being fatherless but it was not, in my experience, prevalent among any one community. It was not related to one race or community, but it was related to having no father."

The issue is not about the child's socioeconomic background, he says, but about parents who cannot resolve their disputes and kids who fall through the cracks.

Harvey Brownstone (family court judge, North York Canada) quoted in "Put kids first, judge tells parents His family court sees conflicts daily Complex reasons why dads absent" ANDREA GORDON, Toronto Star newspaper, Jan. 16, 2006
Abuse has been shown to be related to violent juvenile crime, but not to property crime


Children of divorced parents are significantly more likely to be delinquent by age fifteen, regardless of when the divorce took place, than are children of intact families


Adolescents from single-mother households are consistently more likely to be delinquent than those from intact families, though the same holds for children from intact conflict ridden families


A longitudinal study of males found that the divorce of parents before the children were aged ten was one of the major predictors of adolescent delinquency and adult criminality.


Among adolescent girls there is a strong correlation between family structure and delinquency


Among adolescent girls there is a strong correlation between family structure and hostile behaviour


Among adolescent girls there is a strong correlation between family structure and drug use, larceny, skipping school


Among adolescent girls there is a strong correlation between family structure and alcohol abuse


One U.S. study tracked one thousand families with children aged six to eighteen for six years and found that those children living in intact married families exhibited the least delinquency, while children with stepfathers had the greatest risk of the most disruptive behaviour. (In this study single-parent children fell in between).

Rickel A U, & Langer T S. Short-Term and Long-Term Effects of Marital Disruption On Children. 13 American Journal of Community Psychology (1985) pp 599-661
The divorce rate predicted the rate of robbery in any given area, regardless of the economic and the racial composition, based on a study of 171 American cities with populations over 100,000. In these communities, he found that the lower the rates of divorce the less the crime.


At every income level except the very highest (over $50,000 a year), children living with never-married mothers were more likely than their counterparts in two-parent families to have been expelled or suspended from school, to display emotional problems, and to engage in antisocial behaviour.


“Girls without a father in their life are two and a half times as likely to get pregnant and 53 percent more likely to commit suicide. Boys without a father in their life are 63 percent more likely to run away and 37 percent more likely to abuse drugs. Both girls and boys are twice as likely to drop out of high school, twice as likely to end up in jail and nearly four times as likely to need help for emotional or behavioural problems.”


Other American data indicates that 43 percent of prison inmates grew up in a single–parent household—39 percent with their mothers, 4 percent with their fathers—and an additional 14 percent lived in households without either biological parent. Another 14 percent had spent at least part of their childhood in a foster home, agency or other juvenile institution.


Sixty percent of rapists and seventy-two percent of adolescent murderers in America grew up in homes without fathers

Davidson N. Life Without Father. (1990)

The one factor that most closely correlates with crime is the absence of the father in the family. Controlling for family configuration erases the relationship between race and crime and between low income and crime. This conclusion shows up time and again in the literature


Fathers are an important influence on their children’s development, and a close relationship between father and child benefits the father as well as the child. Children need their fathers, but fathers need their children

Children are better off with both parents- Children’s development

We have found 24 citations to published research showing a cause-and-effect relationship between a child being fatherlessness and future happiness and healthy adjustment.

# It is abundantly clear that existing divorce procedures have not worked in the best interests of the child. Repeatedly, in study after study since the mid-1970’s, divorced-family children have been shown to function more poorly than children from families with both natural parents on a wide range of academic, social, and emotional measures.

A huge 33 year study tracked the lives of 17,000 individuals born in 1958. The study released in March 2002 found that close paternal involvement not only improves academic performance but also relationships and health. The benefits are greatest for youngsters who establish a strong bond from at least the age of seven. The highest scorers performed best at school, socially and in their marital relationships. After inspection of all the factors influencing a child’s later marital success, such as mental health, academic achievement and emotional behaviour, the influence of a father was most telling. Daughters benefiting from a strong paternal bond were less likely to have mental health problems and boys were less likely to get into trouble with the police.


# A thirty-six year longitudinal study in the U.S. found that the children of affectionate fathers were much more likely in there forties to be happily married and mentally healthy and to report good relationships with friends


# Furthermore, the child with an available father, both in the early and the adolescent years, is more companionable and responsible as adults.


# The Western Australian Child Health Survey found that the proportion of children with low academic competence was almost twice as high for sole parent households as for couple families – 30% and 17% respectively

Even after controlling for income it has been found that children whose parents are divorced or separated have lower levels of educational attainment than children from intact families.


If economic hardship were the main predictor of school performance, there would presumably be no difference between children in

Children in step-parent households and children in intact families where both family types received similar incomes. Yet children in stepparent households still generally perform less well, even after controlling for income.


In the Impact of Divorce Project of Ohio's Kent State University—the first nationwide sample study of 699 elementary students from 38 American states—children from divorced homes performed more poorly in reading, spelling, and maths, and repeated a grade more frequently than did children in intact two parent families.

(a) the effects of divorce are not temporary stressors but rather long-term influences,
(b) boys have more difficulties, particularly as they approach adolescence,
(c) the decline in socio-economic status after divorce is not a explanation for children's decreased performance, and
(d) authoritative child-rearing routines such as bedtimes, mealtimes, and television viewing habits relate to better child outcomes.

One of the most striking findings was that 51% of children from sole mother custody families see their fathers once or twice a year or never. Even 11 or 12 years following the divorce, adolescents who have good relationships with their non-custodial fathers have fewer school behaviour problems, fewer attention or aggression problems, higher grades in Language and Social Studies, and are less likely to abuse drugs or alcohol.


Many studies have replicated the finding that boys fare much more poorly than girls in post-divorce households.


Boys in sole parent households frequently lack a positive male role model and miss the discipline exercised by most fathers. Half of Australian boys with separated parents see their fathers on the average of only six times a year or less. It is clear that many boys are being reared without benefit of a same-sex parental figure.

# 70% of children (mostly boys) with severe behavioural handicaps have no father contact at all. These children and adolescents are often the most disturbed or potentially dangerous students in school.


# Father absence lowers cognitive test scores for young children in general


# Father absence lowers girls’ math scores. Girl’s verbal capacities increase when the father is present and especially when he reads aloud to her when she is young.


# By the age of thirteen there is an average difference of half a year in reading abilities between children of divorced parents and those from intact families.


# Poor control of the custodial parent, inconsistency and family disorganisation are often reported in single-parent households, and lead to inattention ultimately resulting in poor performance on tasks requiring sustained attention


# Paternal availability seems to be especially important in the IQ performance of boys of all ages and girls in later latency.


# Divorce affects the educational level that children attain. Among girls who have completed high school there is a 33 percent lower divorce rate among their parents compared to girls who drop out of high school


# Children in step families also suffer educationally. Schools may expel as many as one in four stepchildren.


# Children raised in intact families complete more total years of education and have higher earnings than children from other family structures
The divorce of parents reduces the likelihood of attaining a university education. Studies indicate among women who completed university there was a massively lower divorce rate (88 percent lower) among their parents compared to women who did not get a college degree.


Among university-age students who went to the same high schools in affluent Marin County, San Francisco, only two thirds of the children from divorced families attended university, compared with 85 percent of students from intact families.

There is NO evidence that sole custody is better for children

We have found 2 citations to published research where the researcher specifically says that they believe that there is no evidence that sole parenting is best for children.

This is a difficult claim to make, it requires considerable knowledge in the field because finding something that does exist is a lot easier than proving something doesn’t exist.

# “…nor does their exist, any social science data to support the proposition that a single official parent is preferable to two.”


# No study has found that joint residence is disadvantageous to children. Where researchers have found significant differences, they favour the joint residence arrangement. Only a few empirical studies raise any concerns at all about joint residence and these have been given an unwarranted anti joint residence spin. It is interesting to note that even those researchers who currently oppose joint residence do not argue that sole residence leads to a better adjustment of the children (one can find little evidence for that proposition). The strongest argument is merely that children in sole residence do not do any worse than children in joint residence.

Men and women are equally violent

Many of the defenders of awarding mothers majority custody, use the issue of violence to justify their case.

We do not condone violence in any domestic situation. We also do not believe that men or women are better or less violent and research citations shows that mothers are as violent as fathers.

Denying a child a meaningful relationship with her father because of violence between the parents is putting the best interest of the mother above the best interest of the child.

Finally, the Family Court places too much weight on unsubstantiated accusations of violence, fear of violence or violence that happened only once. Again, this places the best interest of the accusing parent above the best interest of the child.

Killing their own children

We have found 11 citations to published research showing that where a parent (including step-parent) kills their child, the parent is the biological mother in the majority of cases. There is remarkable consistency that 55%-60% of perpetrators were mothers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perpetrator Status</th>
<th>Percent of Victims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>other Only</td>
<td>32.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other and Father</td>
<td>12.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other and Other</td>
<td>1.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonparental Perpetrator</td>
<td>0.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown or Missing</td>
<td>1.4 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


# Biological mothers posed a more lethal risk to their own. Biological mothers account for about 35 per cent of all filicides (about the same proportion as stepfathers and de factos), while biological fathers account for only 29 per cent.”

ISBN 0 642 24165 1 ; ISSN 1326-6004  Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology, 2000
Most studies indicate that women kill their children at least as frequently as men.


A 1988 report on parent-child homicides in Canada between 1974 and 1983 found that 54 per cent of children under 17 who had been murdered by a parent had been killed by their mothers. The U.S. Statistical Abstract 1987 reported that, of the reported child-maltreatment cases between 1980 and 1984, between 57 and 61.4 per cent had been perpetrated by the mother, while a 1977 study found that 53.1 per cent of perpetrators were female, 21 per cent male and 22.6 per cent of cases involved both parents.


Statistical Abstract of the United States 1987 (table 277)

In July 1994 the Bureau of Justice Statistics of the U. S. Department of Justice released a Special Report detailing the results of a survey of family homicides in 33 urban U. S. counties. The report said: “In murders of their offspring, women predominated, accounting for 55 per cent of killers.”

U.S. Department of Justice

Women commit MORE domestic violence against children

Of all forms of domestic violence, violence against children must be given far more significance than violence between parents.

We have found 11 citations to published research showing that men are no more likely to abuse their children than their mothers. In six of the citations, mothers are shown to be more likely to abuse their children than a father.

A study of 582 college men found that up to 78 per cent of those abused as children had been abused by females.


Biological mothers were the perpetrators of physical abuse in 39% of the substantiated cases and biological fathers in 40% of the substantiated cases.

A 2005 report on domestic violence released by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) found that a surprising number of the domestic violence incidents recorded by police involve male victims. Where the victim is younger than 15 or older than 39, male victims outnumber female victims (by more than two-to-one for the younger age group).


Kid Abuse
61% of all child abuse committed by mothers:
38% of all child abuse committed by fathers:

Child maltreatment : reports from the states to the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect. National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse & Neglect Information (U.S.) 1995

A U.S. national study found that 29 per cent of women and 22 per cent of men had experienced physical, sexual, or psychological Intimate partner violence during their lifetime.


The British Lord Chancellor’s guidance on domestic violence makes a reference to evidence that most violence against children is perpetrated by mothers.


Mothers (49% of incidents) are more likely than fathers (40%) to be responsible for physical abuse


Approximately five per cent of female and 20 per cent of male victims experience sexual abuse perpetrated by a woman.


Women who fail to protect their child from sexual abuse may in some cases be seen as at least partially responsible for that sexual abuse.


Approximately two-fifths (40.3%) of child victims were maltreated by their mothers acting alone; another 19.1 percent were maltreated by their fathers acting alone; 18.0 percent were abused by both their mother and father.


Child abuse by perpetrator relationship, 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perpetrator Status</th>
<th>Percent of Victims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother Only</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Only</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both Mother &amp; Father</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Her Only</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother and Father</td>
<td>18.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother and Other</td>
<td>5.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father and Other</td>
<td>1.0 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nonparental Perpetrator(s)</td>
<td>13.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known or Missing</td>
<td>3.2 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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**Domestic violence statistics are often exaggerated or fraudulent**

# This research lists many examples of exaggerated or fraudulent domestic violence statistics. Domestic Violence Factoids Richard J. Gelles. University of Rhode Island Family Violence Research Program, 1995

Mummies new boyfriend

The Family Court awards sole custody to the mother in the majority of cases. These children have a high risk of living with “mummies-new-boyfriend” in the future. These children face a vastly increased risk of being abused or killed. Cinderella isn't the only child abused by a wicked step-parent.

We have found 46 citations to published research showing a tremendous increase in risk when children live with a step-parent or “mummies-new-boyfriend”.

A child has round twenty (20) times more likely to be abused with a step-parent than when the child is with it's natural (biological) parents.

Sadly, most studies about child abuse don't separate “natural fathers” from “step fathers”.

Since few children live with a step-parent, the risk when living with a step-parent is much higher than the raw percentage of abuse suggests.

Simply multiply by 20 to get the increased risk for a child living with a step parent or mummies-new-boyfriend.

Simply multiply by 7 to get the increased risk for a child living in a sole parent household.

For example if 30% of abuse occurs in stepfamilies, you multiply 30% x 20 = 6. Children in step families are at six times more likely to be abused than if they were living with both their natural parents.

The calculations work like this.

81% of children live with both natural parents while 13.5% live with a sole parent and only 4.2% live with a stepparent.

So,

% x 81% divided by 13.5% = 6 times the risk of living with both natural parents
% x 81 divided by 4.2% = 20 times the risk of living with both natural parents

Numerous authors have expressed concern about the injury to children when a parent with psychological problems is given total responsibility for the children. Decisions in favour of sole residence will result in awarding residence to a small number of parents who have serious psychological problems. Given the total authority which parents in sole residence situations have, the potential for child abuse, in that context, is almost unchecked.


Kelly J B. Longer-Term Adjustment In Children of Divorce: Converging Findings and Implications For Practice. 2 Journal of Family Psychology (1988a) pp 119-140

Children are at far greater risk of abuse from step-parents than from natural parents. A birth cohort of over 1019 youngsters when they were aged 18 year-olds found an overall prevalence rate of child sexual abuse of 10.4%. Only 2 (1.5%) of those cases involved natural parents as perpetrators but 22.5% of accused offenders were step-parents.
A number of other studies also have indicated that step-fathers are far more likely to engage in serious sexual abuse with their step-daughters than natural fathers. For example, Finkelhor found that “a step-father was five times more likely to sexually victimise a daughter than was a natural father”.


A second potential for abuse is contact denial, because parental loss injures the child in terms of post-divorce adjustment, contact denial may be viewed as one form of emotional abuse in a large percentage of sole residence households.

Fulton J A. Parental Reports of Children's Post-Divorce Adjustment. 35 Journal of Social Issues (1979) pp 126-139. See also, supra text pp 73-74

Available evidence suggests that both sole residence mothers and sole residence fathers are guilty of that form of child abuse.


Perhaps the most striking information suggesting that sole residence arrangements victimise children are several reports which indicate an increased risk for all forms of child abuse for sole maternal residence Ditson & Shay (1984) presented data which indicates that 63% of all confirmed child abuse took place in the homes of single parents and that the mother was the perpetrator of the abuse in 77% of those cases.


Other U.S. data from various state departments of human resources suggest that, in most cases of child abuse and neglect, the mother is the perpetrator.

Burmeister H W. Destroying The Myths. 3(1) FAPT Briefings 1990. pp 3-4
A study of all state child protective services agencies by the Children’s Rights Coalition (a child advocacy and research organisation in Austin Texas), found that biological mothers physically abuse their children at twice the rate of biological fathers. The majority of the rest of the time, children were abused because of the single-mothers’ poor choices in the subsequent men in their lives. Incidences of abuse were almost non-existent in single-father-headed households (Anderson 1990).


These data could result from the increased stress associated with single parent responsibilities, since the Ditson & Shay (1984) data also indicated that in married families the abuse was evenly split between the mother and the father.


National data collected by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) show child abuse and neglect statistics have an over-representation of single-parent households. More cases involved children from female single-parent households (39%) than families with two natural parents (30%) or other two parent households such as step parent households (21%).

Since only 13% of children live in female single parent households (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1995) and 34% of child sexual abuse occurs in this type of household—it follows that the relative risk of child sexual abuse in a female single parent household is over seven times the risk in a two natural parent family (34/13 x 81/30). The relative risk of any kind of abuse in a single parent household is eight times that of a two natural parent family.

The situation is becoming more serious. The Australian Bureau of Statistics reports that between 1982 and1992, the number of families headed by a lone parent grew by more than 180,000, reaching an estimated 619,000—an increase of 42% in just ten years (ABS 1995).


Australian Bureau of Statistics. Australian Social Trends 1995. Australian Bureau of Statistics, catalogue number 4102.0, Australian Publishing Service, Canberra (1995). Further, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reports that in 1992 approximately 81% of children under the age of fifteen resided with both natural parents, 4% resided in step-families (one natural parent and a married or defacto partner), 3% were in joint custody and less than 1% resided in some other type of household (e.g. with extended family members).

Child abuse is intimately related to later delinquency and violent crime, and here too divorce is implicated.


Higher levels of divorce mean higher levels of child abuse. Remarriage does not reduce this level of child abuse and may even add to it. Serious abuse is much higher among stepchildren compared with children of intact families.


The rate of sexual abuse of girls by stepfathers is estimated to be from six to seven times more likely by Russell, and much as 40 times more when compared with such abuse by biological fathers in intact families.

Australian Human Rights Commissioner Brian Burdekan reported that sexual abuse of girls is around 17 times higher in households where the adult male is not the natural father than in a two natural parent family. In a stepfamily, the abuser may be an older stepsibling – not necessarily the stepparent.


Children two years and younger are seventy to a hundred times more likely to be killed at the hands of stepparents than at the hands of biological parents.


Fatal abuse of children of all ages occurs three times more frequently in stepfamilies than in intact married families. Neglect of children, which frequently is more psychologically damaging than physical abuse is also twice as high among separated and divorced parents.


Australian Institute of Health and Welfare information on the sex of perpetrators in substantiated child abuse cases was 968 men and 1138 women. In 1997 by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare to no longer publish data indicating the sex of perpetrators in substantiated child abuse cases must be reversed. Curiously, these reasons did not preclude the publication of these data in 1996.


When parenting responsibilities are totally loaded totally on one parent, sole residence may lead to increased parental stress, and research has associated increased maternal stress with increased violence against children.


Female offenders usually being the child’s biological mother and male offenders usually a de-facto or a step-parent.


When (AIC) research analyst Jenny Mouzos crunched figures on the distribution of parents who killed children by gender and biological ties, she found biological mothers posed a more lethal risk to their own. Biological mothers account for about 35 per cent of all filicides (about the same proportion as stepfathers and de facto), while biological fathers account for 29 per cent.”

De-facto or step-parents are more likely to kill children in their care than biological parents, and step-fathers are more likely to kill a child than a step-mother. This is in part due to small children rarely residing with a biological father and step-mother. The most common offender is a young male living in a de-facto relationship with the child’s mother.


Daly & Wilson (1994) Some differential attributes of lethal assaults on small children by stepfathers versus genetic fathers. In Ethology and Sociobiology, 15 (pp. 207-217)

Step-fathers and de-facto fathers are disproportionately represented as sex offenders. Girls living with stepfathers are seven times more likely to be sexually abused by a step-father or by their mother’s de-facto partner than girls living with their biological father.


If kids stay with their mother after divorce, they often end up living with a step-father, or "mummy's new boyfriend". Recent research suggests that the most dangerous place for a child could be with its mother and her new man.

Of 58 children killed by a family member, 22 were killed by their mother and a further 27 by a step-father. Only nine of the victims were killed by their real father (16%).

Jenny Morgan, Who Kills Whom and Why: Looking beyond Legal Categories University of Melbourne. Published by the Victorian Law Reform Commission, 2002

However, a startling 84% were killed either by the mother or her new boyfriend/stepfather. In fact, mothers were as likely to kill their own children as (real) fathers and step-fathers combined.


“There are more children growing up without their biological fathers. Biological fathers, by and large, do not sexually abuse their children - 2 per cent compared with 10 per cent of stepfathers or de-factos.”

Professor of forensic psychiatry at Monash University, Professor Paul Mullen, cited in "Betraying the trust of children", Author: Sally Heath, Date: 26/04/1996, Words: 1550, Publication: The Age, Section: News, Page: 17

Stepparents always have had a difficult time establishing close bonds with new stepchildren as even traditional fairy tales recount. Sole residence is the judicial preferment of stepparents. Difficulties between children and stepparents are not confined to Grimm’s fairy tales. The fairytale theme is confirmed in the research literature: The rate of bonding between stepparents and stepchildren is rather low. By one study only 53 percent of stepfathers and 25 percent of stepmothers may have parental feelings toward their stepchildren, and still fewer to love them.

A Melbourne study (Hodges 1982), indicated considerable difficulties were experienced by adolescents on the re-marriage of the resident parent (usually the mother). The majority appeared uncomfortable. Parents favour their own children. Bi-parental care is universal in our species and is a fundamental attribute (Dally & Wilson 1980).


With these recorded results, it is somewhat surprising that the factor of sole maternal residence is not considered in much of the literature on child abuse. Numerous factors are considered as correlates of child abuse including age and sex of the child, race, family income, number of siblings and social status. While a number of Australian studies have considered the effects of the family structure on child victimisation, most merely refer to structure as part of the family demographic information, noting the over-representation in their sample (e.g. Goodard & Hiller 1992). However, results are not reported which would indicate whether mothers were more prone to child abuse than fathers, or if sole maternal residence—as compared to joint residence, sole paternal residence, or intact family status—contributed to an increased risk for child abuse. These are simple questions. Yet these fundamental questions are not being addressed.


Sole residence arrangements may suffer an increased risk for child abuse.


Womens’ domestic violence against men

We believe that violence between parents is much less significance than violence against children. Especially since previous violence between parents is unlikely to continue after separation. Never-the-less it is used as the justification of the Family Court to remove a father from the lives of his children.

We have found 387 citations to published research showing that women’s domestic violence to men has similar frequency as men’s to women. The majority of the studies show that women are a little more likely to initiate violence than men.

Many of them also note that the rate of injury is similar also, with women more likely to use a weapon than men.

According to local researchers Headey et.al., one important limitation of sample surveys such as the 1996 survey on violence against women is that they: “… suffer from having just sampled women, even though two national studies in the United States a decade ago showed no significant difference between physical assault rates experienced by male and female partners.”

“Men were just as likely to report being physically assaulted by their partners as women. Further men and women were equally about likely to admit being violent themselves.”

“Men and women report experiencing the same level of pain and need for medical attention resulting from domestic violence.”

“Violence runs in couples. In over 50 per cent of partnerships in which violence occurred both partners struck each other.”

Headey & colleagues say that “the first two results ran counter to conventional wisdom… Some degree of confirmation…derives from the fact that mens’ and womens’ reports on rates of domestic violence more or less agree. If women are to be believed (as they have been by previous investigators), then so are the men. Further, the results relating to women being as violent as men are in line with some recent American research.”

828 young adults in NZ (437 women and 391 men) were interviewed about the domestic violence in their most recent relationship. Key findings of the study were:

(a) domestic conflict was present in 70% of relationships, with this conflict ranging from minor psychological abuse to severe assault;
(b) men and women reported similar experiences of victimization and perpetration of domestic violence; and (c) exposure to domestic violence was significantly related to increased risks of major depression ($p < .05$) and suicidal ideation ($p < .005$) even after controlling for other possible factors.

DAVID M. FERGUSSON, L. JOHN HORWOOD, AND ELIZABETH M. RIDDER. *Partner Violence and Mental Health Outcomes in a New Zealand Birth Cohort*. Journal of Marriage and Family 67 (December 2005): 1103–1119. Christchurch School of Medicine & Health Sciences

Most Intimate partner violence incidents are not reported to the police. About 20 per cent of Intimate partner violence rapes or sexual assaults, 25 per cent of physical assaults, and 50 per cent of stalkings directed toward women are reported. Even fewer Intimate partner violence incidents against men are reported. Thus, it is believed that available data greatly underestimate the true magnitude of the problem.

In the United States each year, about 1.5 million women and more than 800,000 men are raped or physically assaulted by an intimate partner. This translates into about 47 Intimate partner violence assaults per 1,000 women and 32 assaults per 1,000 men.

In 2002, 76 per cent of Intimate partner violence homicide victims were female and 24 per cent were male.


In a study comparing male and female domestic violence, researchers found that 47 per cent of husbands had used physical violence against their wives whilst 33 per cent of women had used violence on their husbands. Half of the respondents in this study were selected from either cases of domestic violence reported to the police or cases identified by the social service agency.

As very few men report being assaulted by their wives, there is a lower statistic for violent females. Later studies, however, are more accurate.


Women are equally violent towards men in intimate relationships. One of the bases for Chesanow’s arguments is that domestic violence – based on crime statistics – among lesbian intimates is as common as domestic violence among heterosexual intimates.


(Of intimate partner violence) Curtis’ 1974 American study showed the number of women murdered by men (17.5 per cent of total homicides) was about the same as the number of men murdered by women (16.4 per cent). This study, taken from police records, showed that men were three times as likely to assault women as vice-versa.


Wolfgang’s investigation of spousal homicides between 1948 and 1952 found that 7.8 per cent of murder victims were husbands murdered by wives and eight per cent were wives murdered by husbands.
Mercy & Saltzman’s 1989 study of U.S. spousal homicides between 1976 and 1985 found there was an overall ratio of 1.3:1 of murdered wives to murdered husbands, with “Black husbands… at greater risk of spousal homicide victimization than Black wives or White spouses of either sex.”


Several studies showing that the percentage of wives who have used physical violence is higher than the percentage of husbands and that the average violence score of wives tended to be higher although men were somewhat more likely to cause greater injury. Women were found to be as likely to initiate physical violence as men, with similar motives as men for their violent acts.


A telephone survey in which subjects were asked about their experiences of domestic violence, finding that 15.5 per cent of men and 11.3 per cent of women reported having hit their spouse. 18.6 per cent of men and 12.7 per cent of women surveyed reported having been hit by their spouse.

Nisonoff & Bitman (1979) Spouse Abuse: Incidence and Relationship to Selected Demographic Variables Victimology 4, 1979, pp.131-140.

An attempt to address some of the concerns arising from earlier surveys, creating a (U.S.) nationally-representative study of family violence, finding the total violence scores seemed to be about even between husbands and wives, with wives tending to be more abusive in almost all categories except pushing and shoving.


A followup survey, comparing data against that of a 1975 survey. In the intervening decade, the researchers found that domestic violence against women had dropped from 12.1 per cent to 11.3 per cent whilst domestic violence against men had risen from 11.6 per cent to 12.1 per cent. The rate of severely violent incidents dropped for both groups (from 3.8 per cent to 3.0 per cent for women victimized and from 4.6 per cent to 4.4 per cent for men).


A 1986 report in the journal of the (U.S.) National Association of Social Workers stated that girls were more frequently violent than boys in adolescent dating relationships.


Another report on premarital violence found that 34 per cent of males and 40 per cent of females reported engaging in some form of physical aggression against their mates in a year; 17 per cent of women and 7 per cent of men reported engaging in severe physical aggression whilst 35 per cent of the men surveyed and 30 per cent of the women reported having been abused.


Wives are more violent then husbands, although men and women reported quite similar instances of violence both by themselves and by their partners.
Two separate studies – conducted 30 years apart – showed that on average wives kill their husbands at a similar rate to that at which husbands kill their wives.

Spousal abuse is almost gender-neutral in almost all categories of violence.

Domestic violence by women is increasing whilst domestic violence by men is decreasing. A more recent study, reported at a conference by Straus, shows this trend to be continuing.

Less than half the female murderers have a history of being beaten. Most women who murder their husbands are impulsive, violent and have criminal records. An investigation of 24 cases in which women killed their partners found that the victim initiated physical forces in 40 per cent of the cases. Only five of the 24 homicides (21 per cent) were in response to “prior abuse” or “threat of abuse/death.”

In a longitudinal study of early marriage, a community of 272 couples were assessed. More women then men in this group reported physically aggressing against their partners at premarriage (44 per cent v. 31 per cent), and 18 months after marriage (36 per cent v. 27 per cent). At 30 months, women did not report significantly different rates of aggression (32 per cent v. 25 per cent). However, using either the self-report or the partner’s report, the prevalence of aggression was higher for women than for men at each assessment period.

In fact, some degree of violence occurs at a rate of 113 incidents per 1000 couples per year (husband on wife) and 121 incidents per 1000 couples per year (wife on husband).

In July 1994 the Bureau of Justice Statistics of the U. S. Department of Justice released a Special Report detailing the results of a survey of family homicides in 33 urban U. S. counties. The report said:

‘But in spouse murders, women represented 41 per cent of killers. In murders of their offspring, women predominated, accounting for 55 per cent of killers.'
“Among black marital partners, wives were just about as likely to kill their husbands as husbands were to kill their wives: 47 per cent of the victims of a spouse were husbands and 53 per cent were wives.”

U.S. Department of Justice, 1994

# A 1984 study of 6200 cases found that 86 per cent of female-on-male violence involved weapons, contrasted with 25 per cent in cases of male-on-female violence.

McLeod, Justice Quarterly (2), 1984, pp 171-193

# Of every 100 families, 3.8 experience severer husband-to-wife violence, but 4.5 per cent experience severe wife-to-husband violence.


# A 1985 study of Texas University students found that 18 per cent of men and 14 per cent of women reported a violent act by a romantic partner. In the same study, 28 per cent of married men reported that their wives had slapped, punched or kicked them.


# In another study, 15.5 per cent of men and 11.3 per cent of women reported having hit a spouse while 18.6 per cent of men and 12 per cent of women report being struck by a spouse.


# A sample of 1,643 subjects (804 men, 839 women) responded to questions about their experience with domestic violence in the previous 12 months. The results revealed that 5.7 per cent of men and 3.7 per cent of women reported being victims of domestic assaults. With regard to injuries, results revealed that women inflict serious injuries at least as frequently as men. 1.8 per cent of men and 1.2 per cent of women reported that their injuries needed first aid, whilst 1.5 per cent of men and 1.1 per cent of women reported that their injuries needed treatment by a doctor or a nurse.


# The British Crime Survey reported in 1996 that an equal proportion (4.2 per cent) of men and women had said they had been physically assaulted by a current or former spouse or lover in the past year, with 41 per cent of these assaults resulting in injuries. 47 per cent of women and 31 per cent of men assaulted had sustained injuries during the assault/s.


# Spousal assaults expressed as rate per 1000 couples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minor Assaults:</th>
<th>Assault by husband</th>
<th>Assault by wife</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Severe Assaults</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>45</td>
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</table>

Change In Spouse Assault Rates From 1975 to 1992: A Comparison of Three National Surveys In The United States”, by Murray A. Straus and Glenda Kaufman Kantor.
# A 2005 report on domestic violence released by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) found that a surprising number of the domestic violence incidents recorded by police involve male victims. Where the victim is younger than 15 or older than 39, male victims outnumber female victims (by more than two-to-one for the younger age group).


# A study of 582 college men found that up to 78 per cent of those abused as children had been abused by females.


# A U.S. national study found that 29 per cent of women and 22 per cent of men had experienced physical, sexual, or psychological Intimate partner violence during their lifetime.


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**First Punch**

% of the time that wives admitted to hitting first: 53
- *Physical Assaults by Wives, 1993 (US)*

**Going for the Knife**

% of women knifed by their spouse or partner: 4.1
% of men knifed by their spouse or partner: 11
- *The Risk of Serious Physical Injury from Assault by a Woman Intimate, 1999 (US)*

**Losing It**

Number of wives/husbands who hit or tried to hit their spouse with something:
- 30 wives per 1,000
- 17 husbands per 1,000
- *US National Family Violence Survey, 1985*

**Totally Losing It**

Number of wives/husbands who engaged in severe violence against their spouse:
- 46 wives per 1,000
- 30 husbands per 1,000
- *US National Family Violence Survey, 1985*

**Coed Violence**

32% of college women who admitted to initiating violence against their boyfriend:
46% who said it was because their boyfriend wasn't sensitive to their needs:
43% who said it was because their boyfriend wasn't listening:
- *College women who initiate assaults on their male partners and the reasons offered for such behaviour*
  Fiebert, M S 1997 pp.583-590

**Kid Abuse**

61% of all child abuse committed by mothers:
38% of all child abuse committed by fathers:
*Child maltreatment : reports from the states to the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse & Neglect Information (U.S.) 1995*

**Termination of Childhood**

55% of murdered kids killed by their mothers:
- *Murder in Families 1994, US Bureau of Justice Statistics*

**Blind Justice**
In a survey of 6,002 people, 0% of incidents in which women were arrested after their husbands called the police: 15% of incidents in which men were arrested after their wives called the police: 12% of incidents in which men were arrested after they called the police: - US National Family Violence Survey, 1985

**Domestic Homicide**
60% of female murderers who killed an intimate or family member: 20% of male murderers who killed an intimate or family member: - Women Offenders 1999, US Bureau of Justice Statistics

**Sentencing Stats**
81% of women receiving prison sentences for murdering their spouse: 94% of men receiving prison sentences:
- Spouse Murder Defendants in Large Urban Counties 1995, US Bureau of Justice Statistics

**Prison Terms**
Length of prison sentences given to women convicted of spousal abuse compared to those given to men: 10 years shorter
- Spouse Murder Defendants in Large Urban Counties 1995, US Bureau of Justice Statistics

**Dumb Justice**
27% of women acquitted by a jury in a spouse murder trial: 0% of men acquitted:
- Spouse Murder Defendants in Large Urban Counties 1995, US Bureau of Justice Statistics

**Calls from the Brach**
37% of women acquitted by a judge in a spouse murder trial: 17% of men acquitted:
- Spouse Murder Defendants in Large Urban Counties 1995, US Bureau of Justice Statistics

**Capital Punishment**
33% of all domestic homicides committed by women: 1% of all the inmates on Death Row who are women:

**Women on Women I**
Number of violent crimes committed by women each year in the United States: 2.1 million 75% that are simple assaults on other women:
- Women Offenders 1999, US Bureau of Justice Statistics

**Women on Women II**
40% of lesbians abused by their current or most recent partners: 18% of gay men abused by their current or most recent partners:

**Instinct to Swing**
During one survey of corporal punishment of children, 6.2% of mothers who hit their child during the interview: 6.2%
- Corporal Punishment by Mothers and Child's Cognitive Development, 1998 (US)

348 studies show that women and men initiate domestic violence equally

This summary bibliography examines 174 scholarly investigations: 138 empirical studies and 36 reviews and/or analyses, which demonstrate that women are as physically aggressive, or more aggressive, than men in their relationships with their spouses or male partners. The aggregate sample size in the reviewed studies exceeds 163,800. shows that men constitute anywhere from 36 to 50 percent of domestic violence victims.

Aizenman, M., & Kelley, G. (1988). The incidence of violence and acquaintance rape in dating relationships among college men and women. Journal of College Student Development, 29, 305-311. (A sample of actively dating college students <204 women and 140 men> responded to a survey examining courtship violence. Authors report that there were no significant differences between the sexes in self reported perpetration of physical abuse.)

Archer, J. (2000). Sex differences in aggression between heterosexual partners: A meta-analytic review. Psychological Bulletin, 126, 651-680. (Meta-analyses of sex differences in physical aggression indicate that women were more likely than men to “use one or more acts of physical aggression and to use such acts more frequently.” In terms of injuries, women were somewhat more likely to be injured, and analyses reveal that 62% of those injured were women.)

Archer, J. (2002). Sex differences in physically aggressive acts between heterosexual partners: A meta-analytic review. Aggression and Violent Behavior, 7, 213-351. (Analyzing responses to the Conflict Tactic Scale and using a data set somewhat different from the previous 2000 publication, the author reports that women are more likely than men to throw something at their partners, as well as slap, kick, bite, punch and hit with an object. Men were more likely than women to strangle, choke, or beat up their partners.)

Archer, J., & Ray, N. (1989). Dating violence in the United Kingdom: a preliminary study. Aggressive Behavior, 15, 337-343. (Twenty three dating couples completed the Conflict Tactics scale. Results indicate that women were significantly more likely than their male partners to express physical violence. Authors also report that, "measures of partner agreement were high" and that the correlation between past and present violence was low.)

Arias, I., Samios, M., & O'Leary, K. D. (1987). Prevalence and correlates of physical aggression during courtship. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 2, 82-90. (Used Conflict Tactics Scale with a sample of 270 undergraduates <95 men, 175 women> and found 30% of men and 49% of women reported using some form of aggression in their dating histories with a greater percentage of women engaging in severe physical aggression.)

Arias, I., & Johnson, P. (1989). Evaluations of physical aggression among intimate dyads. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 4, 298-307. (Used Conflict Tactic Scale-CTS- with a sample of 103 male and 99 female undergraduates. Both men and women had similar experience with dating violence, 19% of women and 18% of men admitted being physically aggressive. A significantly greater percentage of women thought self-defense was a legitimate reason for men to be aggressive, while a greater percentage of men thought
slapping was a legitimate response for a man or woman if their partner was sexually unfaithful.

Arriaga, X. B., & Foshee, V. A. (2004). Adolescent dating violence. Do adolescents follow in their friends’ or their parents’ footsteps? Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 19, 162-184. (A modified version of Conflict Tactics Scale was administered on two occasions, 6 months apart, to 526 adolescents, <280 girls, 246 boys> whose median age was 13. Results reveal that 28% of girls reported perpetrating violence with their partners <17% moderate, 11% severe> on occasion one, while 42% of girls reported perpetrating violence <25% moderate, 17% severe> on occasion two. For boys, 11% reported perpetrating violence <6% moderate, 5% severe> on occasion one, while 21% reported perpetrating violence <6% moderate, 15% severe> on occasion two. In terms of victimization, 33% of girls, and 38% of boys reported being victims of partner aggression on occasion one and 47% of girls and 49% of boys reported victimization on occasion two.

Basile, S. (2004). Comparison of abuse by same and opposite-gender litigants as cited in requests for abuse prevention orders. Journal of Family Violence, 19, 59-68. (Author examined court documents in Massachusetts for the year 1997 and found that, "male and female defendants, who were the subject of a complaint in domestic relations cases, while sometimes exhibiting different aggressive tendencies, measured almost equally abusive in terms of the overall level of psychological and physical aggression.

Bernard, M. L., & Bernard, J. L. (1983). Violent intimacy: The family as a model for love relationships. Family Relations, 32, 283-286. (Surveyed 461 college students, 168 men, 293 women, with regard to dating violence. Found that 15% of the men admitted to physically abusing their partners, while 21% of women admitted to physically abusing their partners.)

Billingham, R. E., & Sack, A. R. (1986). Courtship violence and the interactive status of the relationship. Journal of Adolescent Research, 1, 315-325. (Using CTS with 526 university students <167 men, 359 women> found Similar rates of mutual violence but with women reporting higher rates of violence initiation when partner had not--9% vs 3%)

Bland, R., & Orne, H. (1986). Family violence and psychiatric disorder. Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 31, 129-137. (In interviews with 1,200 randomly selected Canadians <489 men, 711 women> found that women both engaged in and initiated violence at higher rates than their male partners.)

Bohannon, J. R., Dosser Jr., D. A., & Lindley, S. E. (1995). Using couple data to determine domestic violence rates: An attempt to replicate previous work. Violence and Victims, 10, 133-41. (Authors report that in a sample of 94 military couples 11% of wives and 7% of husbands were physically aggressive, as reported by the wives.)

Bookwala, J. (2002). The role of own and perceived partner attachment in relationship aggression. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 17, 84-100. (In a sample of 161 undergraduates, 34.3% of women <n=35> reported being victims of partner aggression compared to 55.9% <n=33> of men.)

Bookwala, J., Frieze, I. H., Smith, C., & Ryan, K. (1992). Predictors of dating violence: A multi variate analysis. Violence and Victims, 7, 297-311. (Used CTS with 305 college students <227 women, 78 men> and found that 133 women and 43 men experienced violence in a current or recent dating relationship. Authors reports that "women reported the expression of as much or more violence in their relationships as men." While most violence in relationships appears to be mutual--36% reported by women, 38% by men--women report initiating violence with non violent partners more frequently than men <22% vs 17%>.

Brinkerhoff, M., & Lupri, E. (1988). Interspousal violence. Canadian Journal of Sociology, 13, 407-434. (Examined Interspousal violence in a representative sample of 562 couples in Calgary, Canada. Used Conflict Tactics Scale and found twice as much wife-to-husband as husband-to-wife severe violence <10.7% vs 4.8%>. The overall violence rate for husbands was 10.3% while the overall violence rate for wives was 13.2%. Violence was significantly higher in younger and childless couples. Results suggest that male violence decreased with higher educational attainment, while female violence increased.)
Brown, G. (2004). Gender as a factor in the response of the law-enforcement system to violence against partners. Sexuality and Culture, 8, (3-4), 3-139. (Summarizes partner violence data from the 1999 Canadian General Social Survey <GSS>. The GSS is based on a representative sample of 25,876 persons. Overall in the 12-month period preceding the survey, an estimated 3% Canadian women and 2% of Canadian men reported experiencing violence from their partners. During the 5 year period from 1995-1999, an estimated 8% of Canadian women and 7% of Canadian men reported violence from their partners. Reviewed police and legal responses to partner violence in Edmonton, Canada and concludes that "...men who are involved in disputes with their partners, whether as alleged victims or as alleged offenders or both, are disadvantaged and treated less favorably than women by the law-enforcement system at almost every step.")


Brutz, J., & Ingoldsby, B. B. (1984). Conflict resolution in Quaker families. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 46, 21-26. (Used Conflict Tactics Scale with a sample of 288 Quakers <130 men, 158 women> and found a slightly higher rate of female to male violence <15.2%> than male to female violence <14.6%).

Burke, P. J., Stets, J. E., & Pirog-Good, M. A. (1988). Gender identity, self-esteem, and physical and sexual abuse in dating relationships. Social Psychology Quarterly, 51, 272-285. (A sample of 505 college students <298 women, 207 men> completed the CTS. Authors reports that they found "no significant difference between men and women in reporting inflicting or sustaining physical abuse." Specifically, within a one year period they found that 14% of the men and 18% of the women reported inflicting physical abuse, while 10% of the men and 14% of the women reported sustaining physical abuse.

Caetano, R., Schafter, J., Field, C., & Nelson, S. M. (2002). Agreement on reports of intimate partner violence among white, Black, and Hispanic couples in the United States. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 17, 1308-1322. (A probability sample of 1635 couples was interviewed and assessed with the CTS. Agreement concerning intimate partner violence was about 40%, with no differences reported across ethnicities. Women significantly reported perpetrating more partner violence than men in all three ethnic groups.)

Capaldi, D. M. & Crosby, L. (1997). Observed and reported psychological and physical aggression in young, at-risk couples. Social Development, 6, 184-206. (A sample of 118 young men and their dating partners were surveyed regarding their own physical aggression as well as that of their partners. Findings reveal that 31% of men and 36% of women engaged "in an act of physical aggression against their current partner.")

Capaldi, D. M. & Owen, L. D. (2001). Physical aggression in a community sample of at-risk young couples: Gender comparisons for high frequency, injury, and fear. Journal of Family Psychology, 15(3), 425-440. Drawn from a community based at-risk sample, 159 young couples were assessed with the Conflict Tactics scale and measures of self reported injuries. Findings indicated that 9.4% of men and 13.2% of women perpetrated frequent physical aggression toward their partners. Contrary to expectations, 13% of men and 9% of women, indicated that they were physically injured at least once. Authors report "2% of the men and none of the women indicate that they had been hurt by their partners between five and nine times."

Carlson, B. E. (1987). Dating violence: a research review and comparison with spouse abuse. Social Casework, 68, 16-23. (Reviews research on dating violence and finds that men and women are equally likely to aggress against their partners and that "the frequency of aggressive acts is inversely related to the likelihood of their causing physical injury.")

found, using a modified version of the CTS, that 18% of the men and 13% of the women reported being victims of physical violence at some point in their heterosexual relationships. With regard to current relationships, 11% of men and 5% of women reported being victims of partner aggression.

Cascardi, M., Langhinrichsen, J., & Vivian, D. (1992). Marital aggression: Impact, injury, and health correlates for husbands and wives. Archives of Internal Medicine, 152, 1178-1184. (Examined 93 couples seeking marital therapy. Found using the CTS and other information that 71% reported at least one incident of physical aggression in past year. While men and women were equally likely to perpetrate violence, women reported more severe injuries. Half of the wives and two thirds of the husbands reported no injuries as a result of all aggression, but wives sustained more injuries as a result of mild aggression.)

Caulfield, M. B., & Riggs, D. S. (1992). The assessment of dating aggression: Empirical evaluation of the Conflict Tactics Scale. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 4, 549-558. (Used CTS with a sample of 667 unmarried college students <268 men and 399 women> and found on a number of items significantly higher responses of physical violence on part of women. For example, 19% of women slapped their male partner while 7% of men slapped their partners, 13% of women kicked, bit, or hit their partners with a fist while only 3.1% of men engaged in this activity.)


Claxton-Oldfield, S. & Arsenault, J. (1999). The initiation of physically aggressive behaviour by female university students toward their male partners: Prevalence and the reasons offered for such behaviors. Unpublished manuscript. (In a sample of 168 actively dating female undergraduates at a Canadian university, 26% indicated that they initiated physical aggression toward their male partners. Most common reason for such behavior was because partner was not listening to them.)

Coney, N. S., & Mackey, W. C. (1999). The feminization of domestic violence in America: The woozle effect goes beyond rhetoric. Journal of Men's Studies, 8, (1) 45-58. (Authors review the domestic violence literature and report that while society in general as well as the media portray women as "recipients of domestic violence...epidemiological surveys on the distribution of violent behavior between adult partners suggest gender parity.")


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. (A probability sample of 1440 couples <565 white, 358 Black, 527 Hispanic> was obtained from the 1995 National Alcohol Survey. Subjects completed the Conflict Tactics Scale. Ethnicity results reveal that overall rates of partner aggression were similar for whites and Hispanic while Black rates were significantly higher. In terms of gender, 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.)

students <295 women, 115 men> responding to CTS and other instruments, it was revealed that 47% experienced some violence in dating relationships. The majority of experiences were reciprocal. When not reciprocal men were three times more likely than women to report being victims. Violent experiences in previous relationships was the best predictor of violence in current relationships.)

DeKeseredy, W. S. & Schwartz, M. D. (1998). Woman abuse on campus. Results from the Canadian National survey. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. (A large sample <1,835 women; 1,307 men> of Canadian college students completed the Conflict Tactics Scale. Results reveal that women report engaging in higher rates of violence than men. Specifically, 46.1% of women reported engaging in some physical violence in intimate relationship since leaving high school. With 38% employing "minor" violence and 19% employing "severe" violence.)

DeMaris, A. (1992). Male versus female initiation of aggression: The case of courtship violence. In E. C. Viano (Ed.), Intimate violence: interdisciplinary perspectives. (pp. 111-120). Bristol, PA: Taylor & Francis. (Examined a sample of 865 white and black college students with regard to the initiation of violence in their dating experience. Found that 218 subjects, 80 men and 138 women, had experienced or expressed violence in current or recent dating relationships. Results indicate that "when one partner could be said to be the usual initiator of violence, that partner was most often the women. This finding was the same for both black and white respondents.")


Dutton-Greene, L. B., & Straus, M. A. (2005, July). The relationship between gender hostility and partner violence and injury. Paper presented at the 9th International Family Violence Research Conference, Portsmouth, NH. (Report of findings from international dating violence Study which collected data from over 11,000 <70% women> college students from 50 universities in 21 countries. Subjects responded to the revised Conflict Tactics scale, gender hostility scales and injury scales. Findings reveal that women perpetrated greater partner violence than men, that women were more seriously injured than men and that hostility toward the opposite sex was significantly and similarly correlated with partner violence for men and women.)

Ehrensaft, M. K., Moffitt, T. E., & Caspi, A. (2004). Clinically abusive relationships in an unselected birth cohort: men's and women's participation and developmental antecedents. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 113 (2) 258-270. (Assessed 980 individuals, ages 24-26, who were participants in longitudinal study in New Zealand. Subjects were examined with the CTS, the Partner Conflict Calendar, PCC, a measure of the consequences of abuse and a variety of personality and psychopathology scales. Findings reveal that 9% of the total sample, with an equal number of men and women, were victims of clinical abuse in their relationships with partners.)

Ernst, A. A., Nick, T. G., Weiss, S. J., Houry, D., & Mills, T. (1997). Domestic violence in an inner-city ED. Annals of Emergency Medicine, 30, 190-197. (Assessed 516 patients <233 men, 283 women> in a New Orleans inner-city emergency Department with the Index of Spousal Abuse, a scale to measure domestic violence. Found that 28% of the men and 33% of the women <a nonsignificant difference>, were victims of past physical violence while 20% of the men and 19% of the women reported being current victims of physical violence. In terms of ethnicity, 82% of subjects were African-American. Authors report that there was a significant difference in the number of women vs. men who reported past abuse to the police, 19% of women, 6% of men.>

Feather, N. T. (1996). Domestic violence, gender and perceptions of justice. Sex Roles, 35, 507-519. (Subjects <109 men, 111 women> from Adelaide, South Australia, were presented a hypothetical scenario in which either a husband or wife perpetrated domestic violence. Participants were significantly more negative in their evaluation of the husband than the wife, were more sympathetic to the wife and believed that the husband deserved a harsher penalty for his behavior.)

Felson, R. B. (2002). Violence and Gender Reexamined. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. (Scholarly review and analysis of the literature. Author concludes that, "Women are just as likely as men to be victims of violence from their partners . . . " Also "casts doubt on the battered wife syndrome as an explanation for why women kill their male partners.")

Fiebert, M. S., & Gonzalez, D. M. (1997). Women who initiate assaults: The reasons offered for such behavior. Psychological Reports, 80, 583-590. (A sample of 968 women, drawn primarily from college courses in the Southern California area, were surveyed regarding their initiation of physical assaults on their male partners. 29% of the women, n=285, revealed that they initiated assaults during the past five years. Women in their 20's were more likely to aggress than women aged 30 and above. In terms of reasons, women appear to aggress because they did not believe that their male victims would be injured or would retaliate. Women also claimed that they assaulted their male partners because they wished to engage their attention, particularly emotionally.)

Fiebert, M. S. (1996). College students' perception of men as victims of women's assaultive behavior. Perceptual & Motor Skills, 82, 49-50. (Three hundred seventy one college students <91 men, 280 women> were surveyed regarding their knowledge and acceptance of the research finding regarding female assaultive behavior. The majority of subjects (63%) were unaware of the finding that women assault men as frequently as men assault women; a slightly higher percentage of women than men (39% vs 32%) indicated an awareness of this finding. With regard to accepting the validity of these findings a majority of subjects (65%) endorsed such a result with a slightly higher percentage of men (70% vs 64%)indicating their acceptance of this finding.)

Flynn, C. P. (1990). Relationship violence by women: issues and implications. Family Relations, 36, 295-299. (A review/analysis article that states, "researchers consistently have found that men and women in relationships, both marital and premarital engage in comparable amounts of violence." Author also writes, "Violence by women in intimate relationships has received little attention from policy makers, the public, and until recently, researchers...battered men and abusive women have receive 'selective inattention' by both the media and researchers.")

Follingstad, D. R., Wright, S., & Sebastian, J. A. (1991). Sex differences in motivations and effects in dating violence. Family Relations, 40, 51-57. (A sample of 495 college students <207 men, 288 women> completed the CTS and other instruments including a "justification of relationship violence measure." The study found that women were twice as likely to report perpetrating dating violence as men. Female victims attributed male violence to a desire to gain control over them or to retaliate for being hit first, while men believed that female aggression was a based on their female partner's wish to "show how angry they were and to retaliate for feeling emotionally hurt or mistreated.")

Foo, L., & Margolin, G. (1995). A multivariate investigation of dating aggression. Journal of Family Violence, 10, 351-377. (A sample of 290 college students <111 men, 179 women> responded to the CTS. Results reveal that 24.3% of men and 38.5% of women reported perpetrating physical violence toward their dating partners.)

Foshee, V. A. (1996). Gender differences in adolescent dating abuse prevalence, types and injuries. Health Education Research, 11, (3) 275-286. (Data collected from 1965 adolescents in eighth and ninth grade in 14 schools in rural North Carolina. Results reveal that 36.5% of dating females and 39.4% of dating males report being victims of physical dating violence. In terms of perpetrating violence 27.8% of females while only 15.0% of males report perpetrating violence.)
Gelles, R. J. (1994). Research and advocacy: Can one wear two hats? Family Process, 33, 93-95. (Laments the absence of objectivity on the part of "feminist" critics of research demonstrating female perpetrated domestic violence.)

George, M. J. (1994). Riding the donkey backwards: Men as the unacceptable victims of marital violence. Journal of Men's Studies, 3, 137-159. (A thorough review of the literature which examines findings and issues related to men as equal victims of partner abuse.)

George, M. J. (1999). A victimization survey of female perpetrated assaults in the United Kingdom. Aggressive Behavior, 25, 67-79. (A representative sample of 718 men and 737 women completed the CTS and reported their experience as victims of physical assaults by women during a five year period. Men reported greater victimization and more severe assaults than did women. Specifically, 14% of men compared to 7% of women reported being assaulted by women. Highest risk group were single men. The majority (55%) of assaults on men were perpetrated by spouses, partners, or former partners.)

George, M. J. (2002). Skimmington Revisited. Journal of Men's Studies, 10, No. 2, 111-127. (Examines historical sources and finds that men who were victims of spousal aggression were subject to punishment and humiliation. Inferences to contemporary trivialization of male victims of partner aggression is discussed.)


Goldberg, W. G., & Tomlanovich, M. C. (1984). Domestic violence victims in the emergency department. JAMA, 251, 3259-3264. (A sample of 492 patients <275 women, 217 men> who sought treatment in an emergency department in a Detroit hospital were survey regarding their experience with domestic violence. Respondents were mostly African-American (78%), city dwellers (90%), and unemployed (60%). Victims of domestic violence numbered 107 (22%). While results indicate that 38% of victims were men and 62% were women this gender difference did not reach statistical significance.

Gonzalez, D. M. (1997). Why females initiate violence: A study examining the reasons behind assaults on men. Unpublished master's thesis, California State University, Long Beach. (225 college women participated in a survey which examined their past history and their rationales for initiating aggression with male partners. Subjects also responded to 8 conflict scenarios which provided information regarding possible reasons for the initiation of aggression. Results indicate that 55% of the subjects admitted to initiating physical aggression toward their male partners at some point in their lives. The most common reason was that aggression was a spontaneous reaction to frustration).

Goodyear-Smith, F. A. & Laidlaw, T. M. (1999). Aggressive acts and assaults in intimate relationships: Towards an understanding of the literature. Behavioral Sciences and the Law, 17,285-304. (An up to date scholarly analysis of couple violence. Authors report that, "...studies clearly demonstrate that within the general population, women initiate and use violent behaviors against their partners at least as often as men.

Graham-Kevan, N., & Archer, J. (July, 2005). Using Johnson's domestic violence typology to classify men and women in a non-selected sample. Paper presented at the 9th Annual Family Violence Research Conference, Portsmouth, NH. (A total of 1339 subjects, students and staff from the University of Central Lancashire, responded to a modified version of the CTS. Authors report that, "the proportion of women and men using any act of physical aggression towards their partners was as follows: from self-reports 29% for women and 17% for men, and from partner reports 31% of women and 22% for men.

finding is counter to the "culture of violence theory." Moreover, in both cultures the rates of violence of wives to husbands were higher than husbands to wives. Specifically, the overall violence index for men in America was 10.6 and in Canada it was 18.3; while the overall violence index for women in America was 12.2 and in Canada it was 25.3.)

Gray, H. M. & Foshee, V. (1997). Adolescent dating violence. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 12, 126-142. (A sample of 185 adolescents responded to a questionnaire about dating violence; 77 students reported being involved in physical violence in their current or most recent dating relationship. Mutual violence was present in 66% of cases; while 26% of males and 8% of females reported being victims of violence and 29% of females and 4% of males reported being sole perpetrators of violence.)

Gryl, F. E., Stith, S. M., & Bird, G. W. (1991). Close dating relationships among college students: differences by use of violence and by gender. Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 8, 243-264. (A sample of 280 first year college students <156 women, 124 men> at a mid-Atlantic university completed the violence sub-scale of the Conflict Tactics Scale. Results reveal that almost 30% of the females and 23% of males reported that they had been violent in the current relationship. Also almost 28% of women and 39% of men reported sustaining violence in their current relationship.)

Hamel, J. (2005). Gender Inclusive Treatment of Intimate Partner Abuse. New York: Springer. (Reviews the "most reliable and empirically sound research" and concludes that "men and women physically and emotionally abuse each other at equal rates. . ." Offers a comprehensive gender inclusive treatment approach to domestic violence.)

Hampton, R. L., Gelles, R. J., & Harrop, J. W. (1989). Is violence in families increasing? A comparison of 1975 and 1985 National Survey rates. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 51, 969-980. (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. Using the CTS found that the rate of overall violence (169/1000) of husbands to wives remained the same from 1975 to 1985, while the rate of overall violence for wives to husbands increased 33% (153 to 204/1000) from 1975 to 1985. The rate of severe violence of husbands to wives decreased 43% (113 to 64/1000) from 1975 to 1985, while the rate of severe violence of wives to husbands increased 42% (76 to 108/1000) from 1975 to 1985. In 1985 the rate of abusive violence by black women was nearly 3 times greater than the rate of white women.)

Harned, M. S. (2002). A multivariate analysis of risk markers for dating violence victimization. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 17, 1179-1197. (In a university sample of 874 daters <489 women, 385 men> assessed with the revised CTS, 22% of women and 21% of men reported experiencing physical aggression from dating partners.)

Harders, R. J., Struckman-Johnson, C., Struckman-Johnson, D. & Caraway, S. J. (1998). Verbal and physical abuse in dating relationships. Paper presented at the meeting of American Psychological Association, San Francisco, CA. (Surveyed 274 college students <92 men, 182 women> using a revised formed of the Conflict Tactics Scale. Found that women were significantly more physically aggressive than men, particularly in the areas of: pushing, slapping and punching.)

Headey, B., Scott, D., & de Vaus, D. (1999). Domestic violence in Australia: Are women and men equally violent? Data from the International Social Science Survey/ Australia 1996/97 was examined. A sample of 1643 subjects (804 men, 839 women) responded to questions about their experience with domestic violence in the past 12 months. Results reveal that 5.7% of men and 3.7% of women reported being victims of domestic assaults. With regard to injuries results reveal that women inflict serious injuries at least as frequently as men. For example 1.8% of men and 1.2% of women reported that their injuries required first aid, while 1.5% of men and 1.1% of women reported that their injuries needed treatment by a doctor or nurse.

men, 444 women> were surveyed with the Conflict Tactics Scale. Results indicate that 16% of men and 26% of women report inflicting violence on their current romantic partner.

Henton, J., Cate, R., Koval, J., Lloyd, S., & Christopher, S. (1983). Romance and violence in dating relationships. Journal of Family Issues, 4, 467-482. (Surveyed 644 high school students <351 men, 293 women> and found that abuse occurred at a rate of 121 per 1000 and appeared to be reciprocal with both partners initiating violence at similar rates.)


Hines, D. A. & Saudino, K. J. (2003). Gender differences in psychological, physical, and sexual aggression among college students using the revised Conflict Tactics Scales. Violence and Victims, 18, (2) 197-217. (A sample of 481 college students <179 men, 302 women> responded to the revised Conflict Tactics scale. Results indicate that 29% of men and 35% of women reported perpetrating physical aggression in their relationships.)

Hoff, B. H. (1999). The risk of serious physical injury from assault by a woman intimate. A re-examination of National Violence against women survey data on type of assault by an intimate. WWW.vix.com/menmag/nvawrisk.htm. (A re-examination of the data from the most recent National violence against women survey (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998) shows that "assaulted men are more likely than assaulted women to experience serious attacks by being hit with an object, beat up, threatened with a knife or being knifed.")


Jouriles, E. N., & O'Leary, K. D. (1985). Interpersonal reliability of reports of marital violence. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 53, 419-421. (Used the Conflict Tactics Scale with a sample of 65 couples in marriage therapy and 37 couples from the community. Found moderate levels of agreement of abuse between partners and similar rates of reported violence between partners.)

Kalmuss, D. (1984). The intergenerational transmission of marital aggression. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 46, 11-19. (In a representative sample of 2,143 adults found that the rate of husband to wife severe aggression is 3.8% while the rate of wife to husband severe aggression is 4.6%).

Katz, J., Kuffel, S. W., & Coblentz, A. (2002). Are there gender differences in sustaining dating violence? An examination of frequency, severity, and relationship satisfaction. Journal of Family Violence, 17, 247-271. (Authors report two studies where dating men and women experienced violence at comparable levels, "although men experienced more frequent moderate violence." In the first study n=286, <183 women, 103 men> 55% of women had nonviolent partners, while 50% of men had nonviolent partners; in the second study n=123 <78 women, 45 men> 73% of women had nonviolent partners, while 58% of men had nonviolent partners.)


Kelly, L. (2003). Disabusing the definition of domestic abuse: how women batter men and the role of the feminist state. Florida State Law Review, 30, 791-855. (A scholarly examination of the issue of male victimization which is critical of feminist perspectives.)

Taylor and Francis. (Utilized the Conflict Tactics scale in interviews with a random sample of 1,316 married Koreans <707 women, 609 men>. Compared to findings with American couples, results indicate that Korean men were victimized by their wives twice as much as American men, while Korean women were victimized by their spouses three times as much as American women.)

Kim, J-Y., & Emery, C. (2003). Marital power, conflict, norm consensus, and marital violence in a nationally representative sample of Korean couples. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 18, 197-219. (A sample of 1500 South Koreans were surveyed. Marital power, conflict and norm consensus were correlated with marital violence. Findings reveal that the incidence of husband to wife violence 27.8%, while wife to husband was 15.8%)

Kwong, M. J., Bartholomew, K., & Dutton, D. (1999). Gender differences in patterns of relationship violence in Alberta. Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science, 31, (3) 150-160. (A representative sample of men <n=356> and women <n=351> from Alberta using the Conflict Tactics Scale, reported on their experience of marital aggression during a one year period. Similar levels of reported perpetration of physical violence were found, viz., husband to wife 27.8%, wife to husband, 15.8%).


Laner, M. R., & Thompson, J. (1982). Abuse and aggression in courting couples. Deviant Behavior, 3, 229-244. (Used Conflict Tactics Scales with a sample of 371 single individuals <129 men, 242 women> and found similar rates of male and female violence in dating relationships.)

Langhinrichsen-Rohling, J., & Vivian, D. (1994). The correlates of spouses’ incongruent reports of marital aggression. Journal of Family Violence, 9, 265-283. (In a clinic sample of 97 couples seeking marital therapy, authors found, using a modified version of the CTS, that 61% of the husbands and 64% of the wives were classified as aggressive, 25% of the husbands and 11% of the wives were identified as mildly aggressive and 36% of husbands and 53% of wives were classified as severely aggressive. Sixty-eight percent of couples were in agreement with regard to husband’s overall level of aggression and 69% of couples were in agreement on wife’s overall level of aggression. Aggression levels were identified as ”nonviolent, mildly violent, or severely violent.” Where there was disagreement, 65% of husbands <n=20> were under-reporting aggression and 35% of husbands <n=11> were over-reporting aggression; while 57% of wives <n=17> were under-reporting aggression and 43% of wives <n=13> were over-reporting aggression.)

Lewis, A. & Sarantakos, S. (2001). Domestic Violence and the male victim. Nuance, issue 3. (Based on interviews with 48 men in Australia and New Zealand, authors present findings that domestic violence by women toward men exists, that the refusal to examine the prevalence of this abuse is a "disempowerment" of men and that official policy should be changed to provide help for abused men.)

Lillja, C. M. (1995). Why women abuse: A study examining the function of abused men. Unpublished master's thesis, California State University, Long Beach. (A review of the literature examining the issue of men as victims of female assaults. Includes an original questionnaire to test assumption that women who lack social support to combat stress are likely to commit domestic violence.)

Lo, W. A., & Sporakowski, M. J. (1989). The continuation of violent dating relationships among college students. Journal of College Student Development, 30, 432-439. (A sample of 422 college students completed the Conflict Tactics Scale. Found that, "women were more likely than men to claim themselves as abusers and were less likely to claim themselves as victims.")

men, 278 women> responded to items on the CTS. Results reveal that 31% of U.S. men compared to 18% of Swedish men reported being victims of physical violence by female partners during the previous 12 months. While 31% of U.S. women compared to 19% of Swedish women reported being victims of physical violence by male partners during the previous 12 months.)


Makepeace, J. M. (1986). Gender differences in courtship violence victimization. Family Relations, 35, 383-388. (A sample of 2,338 students <1,059 men, 1,279 women> from seven colleges were surveyed regarding their experience of dating violence. Courtship violence was experienced by 16.7% of respondents. Authors report that "rates of commission of acts and initiation of violence were similar across gender." In term of injury, both men (98%) and women (92%) reported "none or mild" effects of violence.)

Malik, S., Sorenson, S. B., & Aneshensel, C. S. (1997). Journal of Adolescent Health, 21, 291-302. (A sample of 707 high school students <281 boys, 426 girls> responded to the CTS. Results reveal that girls were almost 3 times more likely than boys to perpetrate dating violence. In terms of ethnicity African-Americans had the highest level of dating violence, followed by Latinos, whites, and Asian Americans.)

Malone, J., Tyree, A., & O'Leary, K. D. (1989). Generalization and containment: Different effects of past aggression for wives and husbands. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 51, 687-697. (In a sample of 328 couples it was found that men and women engaged in similar amounts of physical aggression within their families of origin and against their spouses. However, results indicate that women were more aggressive to their partners than men. Aggression was more predictable for women, i.e., if women observed parental aggression or hit siblings they were more likely to be violent with their spouses.)

Margolin, G. (1987). The multiple forms of aggressiveness between marital partners: how do we identify them? Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 13, 77-84. (A paid volunteer sample of 103 couples completed the Conflict Tactics Scale. It was found that husbands and wives perpetrated similar amounts of violence. Specifically, the incidence of violence, as reported by either spouse was: husband to wife =39; wife to husband =41.)


Marshall, L. L., & Rose, P. (1990). Premarital violence: The impact of family of origin violence, stress and reciprocity. Violence and Victims, 5, 51-64. (454 premarital undergraduates <249 women, 205 men> completed the CTS and other scales. Overall, women reported expressing more violence than men, while men reported receiving more violence than women. Female violence was also associated with having been abused as children.)

no significant gender differences in terms of the infliction of physical abuse. Men with high power needs were more likely to be physically abusive while highly stressed women with high needs for affiliation and low activity inhibition were the most likely to be physically abusive. Results indicate that physical abuse occurred most often among committed couples.

Matthews, W. J. (1984). Violence in college couples. College Student Journal, 18, 150-158. (A survey of 351 college students <123 men and 228 women> revealed that 79 <22.8 %> reported at least one incident of dating violence. Both men and women ascribed joint responsibility for violent behavior and both sexes, as either recipients or expressors of aggression, interpreted violence as a form of "love."


McCarthy, A. (2001.) Gender differences in the incidences of, motives for, and consequences of, dating violence among college students. Unpublished Master's thesis, California State University, Long Beach. (In a sample of 1145 students <359 men, 786 women> found that 36% of men and 28% of women responding to the CTS2 reported that they were victims of physical aggression during the previous year. There were no differences in reported motives for aggression between men and women.)

McKinney, K. (1986). Measures of verbal, physical and sexual dating violence by gender. Free Inquiry in Creative Sociology, 14, 55-60. (Surveyed 163 college students, 78 men, 85 women, with a questionnaire designed to assess involvement in dating abuse. Found that 38% of women and 47% of men indicated that they were victims of physical abuse in dating relationships. Also found that 26% of women and 21% of men acknowledged that they physically assaulted their dating partners.

McLeod, M. (1984). Women against men: An examination of domestic violence based on an analysis of official data and national victimization data. Justice Quarterly, 1, 171-193. (From a data set of 6,200 cases of spousal abuse in the Detroit area in 1978-79 found that men used weapons 25% of the time while female assailants used weapons 86% of the time, 74% of men sustained injury and of these 84% required medical care. Concludes that male victims are injured more often and more seriously than female victims.)


McNeely, R. L., & Mann, C. R. (1990). Domestic violence is a human issue. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 5, 129-132. (A review article which discusses the findings that women are more prone than men to engage in severely violent acts and that "classifying spousal violence as a women's issue rather than a human issue is erroneous.")


Mercy, J. A., & Saltzman, L. E. (1989). Fatal violence among spouses in the United States, 1975-85. American Journal of Public Health, 79, 595-599. (Examined FBI figures regarding spousal homicides. During the 10 year period from 1975 to 1985 found higher murder rates of wives than husbands <43.4% vs 56.6%>. Black husbands were at the greatest risk of victimization. Spouse homicide among blacks was 8.4 times higher than that of whites. Spouse homicide rates were 7.7 times higher in interracial marriages and the risk of victimization for both whites and blacks increased as age differences between spouses increased. Wives and husbands were equally likely to be killed by firearms <approximately 72% of the time> while husbands were more likely to be stabbed and
wives more likely to bludgeoned to death. Arguments apparently escalated to murder in 67% of spouse homicides.

Meredith, W. H., Abbot, D. A., & Adams, S. L. (1986). Family violence in relation to marital and parental satisfaction and family strengths. Journal of Family Violence, 1, 299-305. (Authors report that 6% of men and 5% of women in Nebraska indicated that they used severe violence at least once in the previous year.)

Merrill, L. L., King, L. K., Milner, J. S., Newell, C. E., & Koss, M. P. (1998). Premilitary intimate partner conflict resolution in a Navy basic trainee sample. Military Psychology, 10, 1-15. (A sample of 2,987,1,560 women, 1,427 men> Navy basic trainees responded to the CTS. More men <43.3%> than women <40.3%> reported receiving physical violence from an intimate partner, and more women <46.9%> than men <31.9%> reported at least one instance of inflicting physical violence on an intimate partner.

Mihalic, S. W., & Elliot, D. (1997). A social learning theory model of marital violence. Journal of Family Violence, 12, 21-46. (Based on data from the National Youth Survey <see Morse, 1995> a social learning model of marital violence for men and women was tested. For men ethnicity, prior victimization, stress and marital satisfaction predicted both perpetration and experience of minor violence. With regard to serious violence ethnicity, prior victimization, marital satisfaction predicted men's experience of marital violence, while ethnicity, class and sex role attitudes predicted the perpetration of male marital violence. For women the most important predictor of the experience of both minor and serious marital violence was marital satisfaction, class was also a predictor. With regard to female perpetrators of marital violence the witnessing of parental violence was an important predictor along with class and marital satisfaction. The social learning model worked better for women than men.)

Milardo, R. M. (1998). Gender asymmetry in common couple violence. Personal Relationships, 5, 423-438. (A sample of 180 college students <88 men, 72 women> were asked whether they would be likely to hit their partner in a number of situations common to a dating relationship. Results reveal that 83% of the women, compared to 53% of the men, indicated that they would be somewhat likely to hit their partner.)


Morse, B. J. (1995). Beyond the Conflict Tactics Scale: Assessing gender differences in partner violence. Violence and Victims, 10 (4) 251-272. (Data was analyzed from the National Youth Survey, a longitudinal study begun in 1976 with 1,725 subjects who were drawn from a probability sample of households in the United States and who, in 1976, were between the ages of 11-17. This study focused on violence as assessed by the CTS between male and female married or cohabiting respondents during survey years 1983 <n=1,496>, 1986 <n=1,384>, 1989 <n=1,436>, and 1992 <n=1,340>. For each survey year the prevalence rates of any violence and severe violence were significantly higher for female to male than for male to female. For example, in 1983 the rate of any violence male to female was 36.7, while the rate of any violence female to male was 48; in 1986, the rate of severe violence male to female was 9.5, while the rate of severe violence female to male was 22.8. In 1992, the rate of any violence male to female was 20.2, with a severe violence rate male to female of 5.7; while the rate of any violence female to male was 27.9, with a severe violence rate female to male of 13.8. Author notes that the decline in violence over time is attributed to the increase in age of the subjects. Results reveal <p. 163> that over twice as many women as men reported assaulting a partner who had not assaulted them during the study year.” In 1986 about 20% of both men and women reported that assaults resulted in physical injuries. In other years women were more likely to self report personal injuries.)
Moffitt, T. E., Robins, R. W., & Caspi, A. (2001). A couples analysis of partner abuse with implications for abuse-prevention policy. Criminology & Public Policy, 1, (1) 5-36. (A representative longitudinal sample of 360 young-adult couples in New Zealand completed a 13 item physical abuse scale. Results reveal that 40% of males and 50% of females had perpetrated at least one act of physical violence toward their partners.)

Murphy, J. E. (1988). Date abuse and forced intercourse among college students. In G. P. Hotaling, D. Finkelhor, J. T. Kirkpatrick, & M. A. Straus (Eds.) Family Abuse and its Consequences: New Directions in Research (pp. 285-296). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage. (A sample of 485 single college students <230 men, 255 women> completed the CTS. Overall men reported greater victimization than women. For example, 20.7% of men compared to 12.8% of women reported being kicked, bit or hit with a fist and 6% of men compared to 3.6% of women reported being beaten up by their heterosexual partner.)

Mwamwenda, T. S. (1998). Reports of husband battering from an undergraduate sample in Umtata. Psychological Reports, 82, 517-518. (Surveyed a sample of 138 female and 81 male college students in Transkei, South Africa, regarding their witnessing husbanding battery. Responses reveal that 2% of subjects saw their mother beat their father, 18% saw or heard female relatives beating their husbands, and 26% saw or heard female neighbors beating their husbands.)

Niaz, U., Hassan, S., & Tariq, Q. (2002). Psychological consequences of intimate partner violence: forms of domestic abuse in both genders. Pakistan Journal of Medical Science, 18(3), 205-214. (A sample of 140 <70 men, 70 women> outpatient psychiatric patients in Pakistan were assessed with the Karachi Domestic Violence Screening Scale. Findings reveal that 19 men <27%> and 30 women <43%> reported being victims of physical abuse in their domestic relationships.)

Nicholls, T. L. & Dutton, D. G. (2001). Abuse committed by women against male intimates. Journal of Couples Therapy, 10 (1) 41-57. (A comprehensive review of the literature which concludes that "men are as likely as women to be victims of intimate assaults.")

Nisonoff, L. & Bitman, I. (1979). Spouse abuse: Incidence and relationship to selected demographic variables. Victimology, 4, 131-140. (In a sample of 297 telephone survey respondents <112 men, 185 women> found that 15.5% of men and 11.3% of women report having hit their spouse, while 18.6% of men and 12.7% of women report having been hit by their spouse.)

O'Keefe, M. (1997). Predictors of dating violence among high school students. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 12, 546-568. (Surveyed 939 students <385 boys, 554 girls> ranging in age from 14-20. Sample was ethnically diverse: 53% Latino, 20% White, 13% African-American, 6.7% Asian American, and 7% "other." A modified version of the violence subscale of the Conflict Tactics Scale was used to assess dating violence. Results reveal that 43% of females and 39% of males reported that they perpetrated some form of physical aggression on their dating partners.)

O'Keefe, N. K., Brockopp, K., & Chew, E. (1986). Teen dating violence. Social Work, 31, 465-468. (Surveyed 256 high school students from Sacramento, CA., 135 girls, 121 boys, with the CTS. Ninety percent of students were juniors or seniors, the majority came from middle class homes, 94% were average or better students, and 65% were white and 35% were black, Hispanic or Asian. Found that 11.9% of girls compared to 7.4% of boys admitted to being sole perpetrators of physical violence. 17.8% of girls and 11.6% of boys admitted that they were both "victims and perpetrators" of physical violence.)

O'Leary, K. D., Barling, J., Arias, I., Rosenbaum, A., Malone, J., & Tyree, A. (1989). Prevalence and stability of physical aggression between spouses: A longitudinal analysis. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 57, 263-268. (272 couples were assessed regarding physical aggression. More women reported physically aggressing against their partners at premarrriage <44% vs 31%> and 18 months of marriage <36% vs 27%>. At 30 months there was a nonsignificant but higher rate for women <32% vs 25%>.)
Pedersen, P. & Thomas, C. D. (1992). Prevalence and correlates of dating violence in a Canadian University sample. Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science, 24, 490-501. (A sample of 166 undergraduates <116 women, 50 men> responded to the CTS; 45.8% of subjects reported experiencing physical violence in their current or most recent dating relationship. Of this total, 44.8% of women and 48% of men reported being physically aggressed upon by their partners. It was also found that only 22% of men and 40.5% of women reported using physical aggression against a dating partner.)

Plass, M. S., & Gessner, J. C. (1983). Violence in courtship relations: a southern sample. Free Inquiry in Creative Sociology, 11, 198-202. (In an opportunity sample of 195 high school and college students from a large southern city, researchers used the Conflict Tactics scale to examine courtship violence. Overall, results reveal that women were significantly more likely than men to be aggressors. Specifically, in committed relationships, women were three times as likely as men to slap their partners, and to kick, hit or hit with the fist seven times as often as men. In casual relationships, while the gender differences weren’t as pronounced, women were more aggressive than men. Other findings reveal that high school students were more abusive than college students, and that a “higher proportion of black respondents were involved as aggressors.”)

Riggs, D. S., O'Leary, K. D., & Breslin, F. C. (1990). Multiple correlates of physical aggression in dating couples. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 5, 61-73. (Used CTS and studied 408 college students <125 men and 283 women>. Found that significantly more women <39%> than men <23%> reported engaging in physical aggression against their current partners.)

Rollins, B. C., & Oheneba-Sakyi, Y. (1990). Physical violence in Utah households. Journal of Family Violence, 5, 301-309. (In a random sample of 1,471 Utah households, using the Conflict Tactics Scale, it was found that women's rate of severe violence was 5.3% compared to a male rate of 3.4%.)

Rouse, L. P. (1988). Abuse in dating relationships: A comparison of Blacks, Whites, and Hispanics. Journal of College Student Development, 29, 312-319. (The use of physical force and its consequences were examined in a diverse sample of college students. Subjects consisted of 130 whites <58 men, 72 women>, 64 Blacks <32 men, 32 women>, and 34 Hispanics <24 men, 10 women>. Men were significantly more likely than women to report that their partners used moderate physical force and caused a greater number of injuries requiring medical attention. This gender difference was present for Whites and Blacks but not for Hispanics.)

Rosenfeld, R. (1997). Changing relationships between men and women. A note on the decline in intimate partner violence. Homicide Studies, 1, 72-83. (Author reports on homicide rates in ST. Louis from 1968-1992. Findings indicate that while men and women were equally likely to be victims of partner violence in 1970, in subsequent years men, primarily black men, were more likely to be murdered by their intimate partners.)

Rouse, L. P., Breen, R., & Howell, M. (1988). Abuse in intimate relationships. A Comparison of married and dating college students. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 3, 414-429. (A sample of 130 married (48 men, 82 women) college students and 130 college students in dating relationships (58 men, 72 women) reported their experience of physical abuse in intimate relationships. Men were more likely to report being physically abused than women in both dating and marital relationships.)

Russell, R. J. H., & Hulson, B. (1992). Physical and psychological abuse of heterosexual partners. Personality and Individual Differences, 13, 457-473. (In a pilot study in Great Britain 46 couples responded to the Conflict Tactics Scale. Results reveal that husband to wife violence was: Overall violence= 25% and severe violence= 5.8%; while wife to husband violence was: Overall violence= 25% and severe violence=11.3%)

Ryan, K. A. (1998). The relationship between courtship violence and sexual aggression in college students. Journal of Family Violence, 13, 377-394. (A sample of 656 college students <245 men, 411 women> completed the CTS. Thirty four percent of the women and 40% of the men reported being victims of their partner's physical aggression.)
Sack, A. R., Keller, J. F., & Howard, R. D. (1982). Conflict tactics and violence in dating situations. International Journal of Sociology of the Family, 12, 89-100. (Used the CTS with a sample of 211 college students, 92 men, 119 women. Results indicate that there were no differences between men and women with regard to the expression of physical violence.)

Saenger, G. (1963). Male and female relations in the American comic strip. In D. M. White & R. H. Abel (Eds.), The funnies, an American idiom (pp. 219-231). Glencoe, NY: The Free Press. (Twenty consecutive editions of all comic strips in nine New York City newspapers in October, 1950 were examined. Results reveal that husbands were victims of aggression in 63% of conflict situations while wives were victims in 39% of situations. In addition, wives were more aggressive in 73% of domestic situations, in 10% of situations, husbands and wives were equally aggressive and in only 17% of situations were husbands more violent than wives.)

Sarantakos, S. (2004). Deconstructing self-defense in wife-to-husband violence. Journal of Men's Studies, 12 (3) 277-296. (Members of 68 families with violent wives in Australia were studied. In 78% of cases wives' violence was reported to be moderate to severe and in 38% of cases husbands needed medical attention. Using information from husbands, wives, children and wives' mothers study provides compelling data challenging self defense as a motive for female-to-male violence.)

Schafer, J., Caetano, R., & Clark, C. L. (1998). Rates of intimate partner violence in the United States. American Journal of Public Health, 88, 1702-1704. (Used modified CTS and examined reports of partner violence in a representative sample of 1635 married and cohabiting couples. Both partners reports were used to estimate the following lower and upper bound rates: 5.21% and 13.61% for male to female violence, and 6.22% and 18.21 % for female to male violence.)

Sharpe, D., & Taylor, J. K. (1999). An examination of variables from a social-developmental model to explain physical and psychological dating violence. Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science, 31:3, 165-175. (Canadian college students <110 men, 225 women> were surveyed with the Conflict Tactics Scale regarding dating violence. Results reveal that 38% of men and 27% of women report receiving physical violence from their partners. Twice as many women compared to men reported inflicting violence without receiving physical violence from dating partners.)

Shook, N. J., Gerrity, D. A., Jurich, J. & Segrist, A. E. (2000). Courtship violence among college students: A comparison of verbally and physically abusive couples. Journal of Family Violence, 15, 1-22. (A modified Conflict Tactics Scale was administered to 572 college students <399 women; 177 men>. Results reveal that significantly more women than men, 23.5% vs 13.0%, admitted using physical force against a dating partner.)

Sigelman, C. K., Berry, C. J., & Wiles, K. A. (1984). Violence in college students' dating relationships. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 5, 530-548. (Surveyed 504 college students <116 men, 388 women> with the Conflict Tactics Scale and found that men and women were similar in the overall amount of violence they experienced but that men reported experiencing significantly more violence than women.)

Simonelli, C. J. & Ingram, K. M. (1998). Psychological distress among men experiencing physical and emotional abuse in heterosexual dating relationships. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 13, 667-681. (Responses from 70 male undergraduates to the CTS and a Psychological Maltreatment Inventory revealed that 40% reported being the target of some form of physical aggression from their female dating partners while only 23% reported expressing physical aggression to their partners. Men who were victims of emotional and physical abuse also reported greater levels of distress and depression.)

Simonelli, C. J., Mullis, T., Elliot, A. N., & Pierce, T. W. (2002). Abuse by siblings and subsequent experiences of violence within the dating relationship. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 17, 103-121. (A sample of 120 undergraduates <61 men, 59 women> completed the CTS. Ten percent of men and 33% of women reported that they perpetrated at least
one type of physical aggressive behavior against their dating partner and 18% of men and 15% of women reported receiving physical aggression from their dating partner.

Sommer, R. (1994). Male and female partner abuse: Testing a diathesis-stress model. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada. (The study was in two waves: the first was from 1989-1990 and included a random sample of 452 married or cohabiting women and 447 married or cohabiting men from Winnipeg, Canada; the second was from 1991-1992 and included 368 women and 369 men all of whom participated in the first wave. Subjects completed the CTS & other assessment instruments. 39.1% of women reported being physically aggressive (16.2% reporting having perpetrated severe violence) at some point in their relationship with their male partner. While 26.3% of men reported being physically aggressive (with 7.6% reporting perpetrating severe violence) at some point in their relationship with their female partner. Among the perpetrators of partner abuse, 34.8% of men and 40.1% of women reported observing their mothers hitting their fathers. Results indicate that 21% of 'males' and 13% of females' partners required medical attention as a result of a partner abuse incident." Results also indicate that "10% of women and 15% of men perpetrated partner abuse in self defense.")

Sommer, R., Barnes, G. E. & Murray, R. P. (1992). Alcohol consumption, alcohol abuse, personality and female perpetrated spouse abuse. Journal of Personality and Individual Differences, 13, 1315-1323. (The responses from a subsample of 452 women drawn from a sample of 1,257 Winnipeg residents were analyzed. Using the CTS, it was found that 39% of women physically aggressed against their male partners at some point in their relationship. Younger women with high scores on Eysenck's P scale were most likely to perpetrate violence. Note: The sample of subjects is the same as the one cited in Sommer's 1994 dissertation.)

Sorenson, S. B., & Telles, C. A. (1991). Self reports of spousal violence in a Mexican-American and non-Hispanic white population. Violence and Victims, 6, 3-15. (Surveyed 1,243 Mexican-Americans and 1,149 non-Hispanic whites and found that women compared to men reported higher rates of hitting, throwing objects, initiating violence, and striking first more than once. Gender difference was significant only for non-Hispanic whites.)

Sorenson, S. B., Upchurch, D. M., & Shen, H. (1996). Violence and injury in marital arguments: risk patterns and gender differences. American Journal of Public Health, 66(1), 35-40. (Data analysis was based on findings from the National Survey of Families and Households conducted in 1987-88. Subjects included 6779 currently married White, Black and Hispanic individuals who completed a modified version of the Conflict Tactics Scale. Authors report that, "women <6.2% vs 4.9%> were slightly more likely than men to report that they had hit, shoved or thrown something at their spouse in the previous year." Women also reported higher rates of causing injury than did men. Other findings of note: 1) Blacks were 1.58 times more likely and Hispanics 0.53 times less likely than Whites to report that physical violence occurred in their relationship; 2) Subjects under 30 reported more violence and those above 50 reported less violence; 3) lower annual income was associated with higher rates of physical violence.)

Spencer, G. A., & Bryant, S. A. (2000). Dating violence: A comparison of rural, suburban and urban teens. Journal of Adolescent Health, 25 (5) 302-305. (A sample of 2094 high school students in upper New York State indicated their experience of physical dating violence. There were a similar number of boys and girls surveyed, with more subjects from urban areas than rural or suburban areas. The majority of subjects were white non-Hispanic. Males in each region were more likely to report being victims of physical dating violence than females in each region. Specifically, 30% of rural boys and 20% of urban and 20% of suburban boys reported being victims of partner physical aggression while 25% of rural girls and 16% of suburban and 13% of urban girls reported victimization.)

Steinmetz, S. K. (1977-78). The battered husband syndrome. Victimology: An International Journal, 2, 499-509. (A pioneering article suggesting that the incidence of husband beating was similar to the incidence of wife beating.)

Steinmetz, S. K. (1981). A cross cultural comparison of marital abuse. Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, 8, 404-414. (Using a modified version of the CTS, examined marital violence in small samples from six societies: Finland, United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, Belize, and Israel <total n=630>. Found that "in each society the percentage of husbands who used violence was similar to the percentage of violent wives." The major exception was Puerto Rico where men were more violent. Author also reports that, "Wives who used violence... tended to use greater amounts.")

Stets, J. E. & Henderson, D. A. (1991). Contextual factors surrounding conflict resolution while dating: results from a national study. Family Relations, 40, 29-40. (Drawn from a random national telephone survey, daters <n=277; men=149, women=128> between the ages of 18 and 30, who were single, never married and in a relationship during the past year which lasted at least two months with at least six dates were examined with the Conflict Tactics Scale. Findings reveal that over 30% of subjects used physical aggression in their relationships, with 22% of the men and 40% of the women reported using some form of physical aggression. Women were "6 times more likely than men to use severe aggression <19.2% vs. 3.4%>....Men were twice as likely as women to report receiving severe aggression <15.7% vs. 8%>." Also found that younger subjects and those of lower socioeconomic status (SES) were more likely to use physical aggression.)

Stets, J. E., & Pirog-Good, M. A. (1987). Violence in dating relationships, Social Psychology Quarterly, 50, 237-246. (Examined a college sample of 503 white students. Found that men and women were similar in both their use and reception of violence. Jealousy was a factor in explaining dating violence for women.)

Stets, J. E. & Pirog-Good, M. A. (1989). Patterns of physical and sexual abuse for men and women in dating relationships: A descriptive analysis. Journal of Family Violence, 4, 63-76. (Examined a sample of 287 college students <118 men and 169 women> and found similar rates for men and women of low level physical abuse in dating relationships. More women than men were pushed or shoved <24% vs 10%> while more men than women were slapped <12% vs 8%>. In term of unwanted sexual contact 22% of men and 36% of women reported such behaviour. The most frequent category for both men <18%> and women <19%> was the item, "against my will my partner initiated necking").

Stets, J. E., & Straus, M. A. (1990). Gender differences in reporting marital violence and its medical and psychological consequences. In M. A. Straus & R. J. Gelles (Eds.), Physical violence in American families: Risk factors and adaptations to violence in 8,145 families (pp. 151-166). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction. (Reports information regarding the initiation of violence. In a sample of 297 men and 428 women, men said they struck the first blow in 43.7% of cases, and their partner hit first in 44.1% of cases and could not disentangle who hit first in remaining 12.2%. Women report hitting first in 52.7% of cases, their partners in 42.6% and could not disentangle who hit first in remaining 4.7%. Authors conclude that violence by women is not primarily defensive.)

Straus, M. (1980). Victims and aggressors in marital violence. American Behavioral Scientist, 23, 681-704. (Reviews data from the 1975 National Survey. Examined a subsample of 325 violent couples and found that in 49.5% of cases both husbands and wives committed at least one violent act, while husbands alone were violent in 27.7% of the cases and wives alone were violent in 22.7% of the cases. Found that 148 violent husbands had an average number of 7.1 aggressive acts per year while the 177 violent wives averaged 6.8 aggressive acts per year.)

Straus, M. A. (1995). Trends in cultural norms and rates of partner violence: An update to 1992. In S. M. Stich & M. A. Straus (Eds.) Understanding partner violence: Prevalence, causes, consequences, and solutions (pp. 30-33). Minneapolis, MN: National Council on Family Relations. (Reports finding that while the approval of a husband slapping his wife declined dramatically from 1968 to 1994 <21% to 10%> the approval of a wife slapping her husband did not decline but remained at 22% during the same period. The most
frequently mentioned reason for slapping for both partners was sexual unfaithfulness. Also reports that severe physical assaults by men declined by 48% from 1975 to 1992--38/1000 to 19/1000 while severe assaults by women did not change from 1975 to 1992 and remained above 40/1000. Suggests that public service announcements should be directed at female perpetrated violence and that school based programs "explicitly recognize and condemn violence by girls as well as boys."


Straus, M. A. (2001). Prevalence of violence against dating partners by male and female university students worldwide. Violence Against Women, 10, 790-811. (Dating aggression was studied at 31 universities in 16 countries worldwide. Responding to the revised Conflict Tactics Scale were 8666 students <5919 women, 2747 men>. Results reveal that overall 25% of men and 28% of women assaulted their dating partner in the past year. At 21 of the 31 universities studied a larger percentage of women than men assaulted their dating partner. In terms of severe assaults a higher rate of perpetration by women occurred in a majority (18 of the 31) of the sites.)


Straus, M. A., Gelles, R. J., & Steinmetz, S. K. (1981). Behind closed doors: Violence in the American family, Garden City, NJ: Anchor. (Reports findings from National Family Violence survey conducted in 1975. In terms of religion, found that Jewish men had the lowest rates of abusive spousal violence (1%), while Jewish women had a rate of abusive spousal violence which was more than double the rate for Protestant women <7%>, pp. 128-133. Abusive violence was defined as an "act which has a high potential for injuring the person being hit," pp.21-2.)

Straus, M. A., Hamby, S. L., Boney-McCoy, S., & Sugarman, D. B. (1996). The Revised Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS2). Development and preliminary psychometric data. Journal of Family Issues, 17, 283-316. (The revised CTS has clearer differentiation between minor and severe violence and new scales to measure sexual coercion and physical injury. Used the CTS2 with a sample of 317 college students <114 men, 203 women> and found that: 49% of men and 31% of women reported being a victim of physical assault by their partner; 38% of men and 30% of women reported being a victim of sexual coercion by their partner; and 16% of men and 14% of women reported being seriously injured by their partners.)


Sociological Association, Los Angeles, CA. (Compared surveys conducted in 1968 (n=1,176), 1985 (n=6,002), 1992 (n=1,970), and 1994 (n=524), with regard to the approval of facial slapping by a spouse. Approval of slapping by husbands decreased from 21% in 1968 to 13% in 1985, to 12% in 1992, to 10% in 1994. The approval of slapping by wives was 22% in 1968 and has not declined over the years.)

Straus, M. A., & Medeiros, R. A. (2002, November). Gender differences in risk factors for physical violence between dating partners by university students. Paper presented at annual meeting of the American Society for Criminology, Chicago, Illinois. (A sample of 232 men and 334 women responded to revised CTS. Results indicate that for minor violence the rates for both men and women are 22% and for severe violence rates are 10% for men and 11% for women.)

Straus, M. A., & Mouradian, V. E. (1999, November). Preliminary psychometric data for the Personal Relationships Profile (PRP): A multi-scale tool for clinical screening and research on partner violence. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology, Toronto, Canada. (In a study of 1,034 dating couples at two US universities, injury rates based on responses to the revised CTS (CTS2) revealed that 9.9% of men and 9.4% of women report being injured by the opposite sex. In terms of inflicting injuries, 10.1% men and 8.0% women indicated that they inflicted injuries on their partners.)

Straus, M. A., & Ramirez, I. L. (2002, July). Gender symmetry in prevalence, severity, and chronicity of physical aggression against dating partners by university students in Mexico and USA. Paper presented at the XV World Meeting of the International Society for Research on Aggression, Montreal, Canada. Available at: http://pubpages.unh.edu/~mas2/. (Reports findings from four samples of university students in Juarez, Mexico, El Paso and Lubbock, Texas, and New Hampshire. Subjects (N=1,554) responded to the revised Conflict Tactics Scale. Results indicate that there were no significant differences between males and females in either the overall prevalence of physical aggression or the prevalence of severe attacks. However, when only one partner was violent it was twice as likely to be the female than the male <19.0% vs 9.8%). Moreover, in terms of severe aggression females were twice as likely to be violent than men <29.8% vs 13.7%).

Sugarman, D. B., & Hotaling, G. T. (1989). Dating violence: Prevalence, context, and risk markers. In M. A. Pirog-Good & J. E. Stets (Eds.) Violence in dating relationships: Emerging social issues (pp.3-32). New York: Praeger. (Reviewed 21 studies of dating behavior and found that women reported having expressed violence at higher rates than men--329 per 1000 vs 393 per 1000.)

Szinovacz, M. E. (1983). Using couple data as a methodological tool: The case of marital violence. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 45, 633-644. (Used Conflict Tactics Scale with 103 couples and found that the wives' rates of physical aggression was somewhat higher than husbands')

Tang, C. S. (1994). Prevalence of spouse aggression in Hong Kong. Journal of Family Violence, 9, 347-356. (Subjects were 382 undergraduates <246 women, 136 men> at the Chinese University in Hong Kong. The CTS was used to assess students' evaluation of their parents responses during family conflict. 14% of students reported that their parents engaged in physical violence. "Mothers were as likely as fathers to use actual physical force toward their spouses.")

Thompson Jr., E. H. (1990). Courtship violence and the male role. Men's Studies Review, 7, (3) 1, 4-13. (Subjects were 336 undergraduates <167 men, 169 women> who completed a modified version of the CTS. Found that 24.6% of men compared to 28.4% of women expressed physical violence toward their dating partners within the past two years. Found that women were twice as likely as men to slap their partners.)

Thompson Jr., E. H. (1991). The maleness of violence in data relationships: an appraisal of stereotypes. Sex Roles, 24, 261-278. (In a more extensive presentation of his 1990 article, the author concludes that, "a more masculine and/or less feminine gender orientation and
variations in relationship seriousness proved to be the two strongest predictors of both men's and women's involvement in courtship violence.

Tyree, A., & Malone, J. (1991). How can it be that wives hit husbands as much as husbands hit wives and none of us knew it? Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association. (Reviews the literature and discusses results from their study attempting to predict spousal violence. Found that women's violence is correlated with a history of hitting siblings and a desire to improve contact with partners.)

Vivian, D., & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, J. (1996). Are bi-directionally violent couples mutually victimized? In L. K. Hamberger & C. Renzetti (Eds.) Domestic partner abuse (pp. 23-52). New York: Springer. (Authors found using a modified version of the CTS, that in a sample of 57 mutually aggressive couples, there were no significant differences between husbands' and wives' reports concerning the frequency and severity of assault victimization. With regard to injuries, 32 wives and 25 husbands reported the presence of a physical injury which resulted from partner aggression.)

Waiping, A. L., & Sporakowski, M. J. (1989). The continuation of violent dating relationships among college students. Journal of College Student Development, 30, 432-439. (Using a modified version of the CTS, authors examined courtship violence in a sample of 422 college students <227 women, 195 men>. Women more often than men <35.3% vs 20.3%> indicated that they physically abused their partners.)

White, J. W., & Humphrey, (1994). Women's aggression in heterosexual conflicts. Aggressive Behavior, 20, 195-202. (Eight hundred and twenty nine women <representing 84% of entering class of women> 17 and 18 years old, entering the university for the first time completed the CTS and other assessment instruments. Results reveal that 51.5% of subjects used physical aggression at least once in their prior dating relationships and, in the past year, 30.2% reported physically aggression against their male partners. Past use of physical aggression was the best predictor of current aggression. The witnessing and experiencing of parental aggression also predicted present aggression.)

White, J. W., & Kowalski, R. M. (1994). Deconstructing the myth of the nonaggressive woman: A feminist analysis. Psychology of Women Quarterly, 18, 487-508. (A review and analysis which acknowledges that "women equal or exceed men in number of reported aggressive acts committed within the family." Examines a variety of explanations to account for such aggression.)

White, J. W., & Koss, M. P. (1991). Courtship violence: Incidence in a national sample of higher education students. Violence and Victims, 6, 247-256. (In a representative sample of 2,603 women and 2,105 men it was found that 37% of the men and 35% of women inflicted some form of physical aggression, while 39% of the men and 32% of the women received some form of physical aggression.)

Wilson, M. I. & Daley, M. (1992). Who kills whom in spouse killings? On the exceptional sex ratio of spousal homicides in the United States. Criminology, 30, 189-215. (Authors summarize research which indicates that between 1976 and 1985, for every 100 men who killed their wives, about 75 women killed their husbands. Authors report original data from a number of cities, e.g., Chicago, Detroit, Houston, where the ratio of wives as perpetrators exceeds that of husbands.)

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Other types of abuse

False allegations and perjury

We have found 5 citations to published research that show that false accusations are frequent in the Family Court.

False allegations and perjury in the Family Court are common tactics. Since they prevent the Court from being to determine the best interest of the child, they must be considered as abusive. The perjurer should have their custody decreased as they are clearly demonstrating that they put their own interests above the child's.

# Allegations of sexual abuse during a custody dispute there is a greatly increased likelihood that the allegations are false.


# Some studies have found that 50% or more of allegations arising in the context of custody access disputes were false.


Parental alienation

Children nearly always want both parents, they don't want their parents to separate. However occasionally an abusive parent can coach the children to reject the other parent. This is called parental alienation syndrome (PAS). Contact with non-resident parents often decreases over time, due to the emotional difficulties in maintaining these part-time relationships.

This is the classic example of damaging children to hurt the Ex. Parental alienation relies on one parent having the majority of time with the children. Because mostly it's mothers that have majority custody of children is why American talk shows have started calling this ‘malicious mother syndrome’. 50-50 shared parenting makes it difficult for one parent to brainwash and alienate the kids because the children have meaningful relationships with both parents.
Parental Alienation is a campaign of denigration against a good, loving parent. It results from the combination of a programming (brainwashing) parent’s indoctrinations and the child’s own contributions to the vilification of the target parent. It is abusive because with the result that they became permanently estranged from loving fathers.


This kind of communication has at least two psychologically destructive effects. First, it puts the child squarely in the middle of a contest of loyalty. No matter what the choice, the child is very likely to end up feeling painfully guilty and confused.

Second, the child is required to make a shift in assessing reality. One parent is presented as being totally to blame for all problems, and as someone who is devoid of any positive characteristics. Both of these assertions represent on parent's distortions of reality.


Custodial parents frequently obstruct visitation

A great deal of importance is placed on minimising trauma of separation and change for the children during the divorce.

Generally, children see both parents every day while their parents are together. Custody orders should reflect that reality as closely as possible and shared residence is the best practical way of achieving this.

The court does not penalise the custodial parent who prevents the other parent from spending time with his children, even if court ordered it the best interest of the child. Too often the result is that the child loses the benefit of having a relationship with her father and all the damage and risks involved in that.

For example; a father turns up for a court-ordered visitation and the mother refuses to open the door. What can he do? He waves the court order around in the air an is ignored; he calls the police and they say they can't intervene; he goes back to the Family Court seeking some form of enforcement and gets another piece of paper as useless as the first one.

The Family Court must enforce it's own orders. We have found 9 citations to research that demonstrates that the custodial parent frequently abuses their power to the detriment of the child.

Many custodial mothers believe that there is no benefit in dad’s involvement, but apart from the dangers for kids living with a sole parent, it is a human right’s violation under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

We have found 21 citations showing that the ongoing relationship with the non-custodial parents is often sabotaged or destroyed by the custodial parent. Again, this situation is made worse by the Family Court's refusal to enforce it's own orders.
# 50% of non-resident fathers had a problem with the breakdown of court ordered contact due to opposition by an ex-spouse.

Gibson J. Non-Custodial Fathers and Access Patterns: Family Court of Australia. Office of The Chief Executive. Summary of Key Findings. Research report No. 10. Australian Government Publishing. Service Canberra (1992). 50% of fathers had a problem with the breakdown of court ordered contact due to opposition by an ex-spouse; 66% of fathers reported that contact periods were always too short; 73% of fathers wanted increased contact with their children; 75% of fathers rated as poor the relationship with an ex-spouse

# Interviews with 560 divorced adults about the impact of the divorce in their lives and in the lives of their children. One third of those fathers were not satisfied with the residence decision, and indicated they wanted a change.

Victimisation was shown by the self-reports of resident mothers, 40% of whom indicated that they had denied contact between father and child at least once out of spite. Even more of the non-resident fathers (53%) claimed that their ex-wives had refused to let them see the children at one time or another.

Further, the majority of the mothers did not involve their former spouses in matters concerning the children. Expressing the sentiments of many mothers, one mother said “and what’s more, I don’t intend to”. Because of the nature of the data and the unflattering light cast upon the resident mothers answering that particular question, the 40% figure may be an understatement.


# Mothers, fathers, and children were assessed over a five-year period. Only half of the resident mothers indicated that they valued the continued contact between the father and his children. 20% of the custodial mothers in their research sample directly attempted to sabotage the relationship between the children and their fathers. A further 20% of custodial mothers saw no value in continuing the relationship and may have sabotaged it in more subtle ways. Clearly placing the parenthood status of fathers in the hands of those sole residence mothers assures the intentional victimisation of many fathers as well as their children.


# “A family move, regardless of its reason, disrupts the living environment of the child and can require important adjustments for the child and family. Children in families with fewer resources are probably more at risk of experiencing psychological or behavioural problems due to the stress of a move, especially when a move is compounded by other negative family events such as divorce, eviction from the family home, or parental job loss. As such family moves can potentially contribute to psychological morbidity or behavioural problems. These and other ‘morbidities’ are being recognised with increasing frequency by providers of health care for children.


# Moving home is likely a big culprit in the poorer performance of these children, for such moves tend to decrease school achievement for most children, regardless of family background.


# But compared to children of intact families, children of divorced families move much more frequently.
Moving houses tend to increase behavioural, emotional and academic problems for all adolescents regardless of family structure.


When very young children leave their original family home for another, because of their parents’ divorce, the move is even more traumatic because they tend to become even more attached to their family home during the break up of their parents.


Compared to non-resident fathers, twice as many non-resident mothers failed to maintain contact.


50% of non-resident fathers had a problem with the breakdown of court ordered contact due to opposition by an ex-spouse.

Gibson J. Non-Custodial Fathers and Access Patterns: Family Court of Australia. Office of The Chief Executive. Summary of Key Findings. Research report No. 10. Australian Government Publishing. Service Canberra (1992). 50% of fathers had a problem with the breakdown of court ordered contact due to opposition by an ex-spouse; 66% of fathers reported that contact periods were always too short; 73% of fathers wanted increased contact with their children; 75% of fathers rated as poor the relationship with an ex-spouse.

20% of the mothers in their research sample saw no value in the relationship between the child and their non-resident father and tried to actively sabotage contact.


Local and overseas research indicates that between 20% and 50% of custodial mothers directly attempted to sabotage the relationship between children and their non-resident fathers.


Researchers recommend that in a child’s best interests, the job of the courts is to protect children from emotional damage by safeguarding the child’s relationship with each parent to the fullest extent possible.

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Custodial parent moving

So much weight is placed on minimising disruption for children in divorce. The fact that the mother is typically the main carer for the kids is used to justify giving the children to the mother and allowing minimal time with dad.

However, when a custodial parent decides to move away, the change forced on the kids is immense. New city, new house, new school, loss of friends... and loss of the remaining attachment to their dad.

Why is shared residence with dad traumatic, but taking them to a new city somehow not considered to be emotional abuse?

We have found 7 citations demonstrating risk inflicted on children who are forced to move to a new home.

It is precisely joint residence that allows parenting consistency to continue after separation. To break the bond between the child and one parent arbitrarily is to destroy continuity of care. They argue that joint residence allows both adults the gratification of parenting.


“A family move, regardless of its reason, disrupts the living environment of the child and can require important adjustments for the child and family. Children in families with fewer resources are probably more at risk of experiencing psychological or behavioural problems due to the stress of a move, especially when a move is compounded by other negative family events such as divorce, eviction from the family home, or parental job loss. As such family moves can potentially contribute to psychological morbidity or behavioural problems. These and other ‘morbidities’ are being recognised with increasing frequency by providers of health care for children.


Moving home is likely a big culprit in the poorer performance of these children, for such moves tend to decrease school achievement for most children, regardless of family background.

Neglect and emotional abuse

Mothers are clearly the perpetrators of the vast majority of emotional abuse and neglect of children. This is partly due to the long hours of childminding and social isolation forced on mothers.

50-50 shared residence between the parents would allow the mother to have a more-balanced life and reduce the frustrations and responsibilities of sole-parenthood.

We have found 6 citations showing that the majority of this abuse is perpetrated by mothers.

# Children are at the greatest risk of all forms of child abuse when they are being raised by solo mothers, without input from the fathers. It is ironic that so often current child protection policies result in the removal of children from father’s care.


Mothers were perpetrators in 79% of proven emotional abuse, and 85% in cases of neglect.
Neglect is by far the most common form of child mistreatment. In 1994 about one million cases of child maltreatment were substantiated in the United States. Nearly half of these were cases of neglect; over a quarter were physical abuse; about 10% were sexual abuse and the remainder were cases of emotional or other unspecified abuse.

Women, are responsible for the majority of non-sexual child maltreatment.
Attachment theory

Attachment theory is the basis of many family court rulings for sole custody. The theory proposes that children need a secure emotional attachment to caregivers for healthy emotional development. However today attachment theory recognises that a child can form attachments to several caregivers, typically the father and the mother.

Mainstream attachment theory DOES NOT suggest that there is only one single attachment figure. Rather, babies can form multiple attachments, particularly with the mother and the father. Although many professionals and the family court use attachment theory to justify their belief in the importance of a ‘primary’ caregiver.

Attachment theory itself is criticised because the first one of it’s two core planks of the theory have not been reproduced and better explanations exist. Attachment theory says firstly that the style of care-giving the child receives determines the child's response in the 'strange situation' experiment. And secondly that the 'strange situation' measurement of a child then goes on to predict many outcomes for the child later in life, including emotional adjustment, success at school, and many other measures of well-being. This second plank has been widely confirmed.

The first plank however is based on a single experiment of 26 children, the Baltimore project in 1963. This has not been reproduced. A more convincing explanation for interpreting the 'strange situation' is that it is simply a form of personality test and not related to care-giving style or attachment to the mother at all. Children are born with different temperaments and this is the main factor in their response to the attachment theory measurement of the strange situation.

Attachment theory was the life’s work of Bowlby and Ainsworth.

# Bowlby’s own research published just 5 years after the maternal deprivation monograph concluded that the dangers of separation had been overstated.

# In fact, in his later work, Bowlby (1988) acknowledged the enduring attachments bonds between father and child.

# Children are born with different temperaments and this is the main factor in their response to the attachment theory measurement of the strange situation, rather than attachment to a caregiver or that caregiver's parenting style.
Most children develop bonds with several people and it appears likely that these bonds are basically similar. An infant is not confined to just one bond...once he has reached the stage of forming specific attachments, he is capable of maintaining a number at the same time...


Like many others Bowlby confuses biology and culture. His is the mathematics of sexism, which manages to quantify and endorse two mutually exclusive sex-defined roles for parents to act. And it is more dangerous: herein a psychoanalyst gives credence to the view of the father as a non-parent, a 'useful' financial and emotional presence for his contented wife.


While maternal attachment has been widely recognised for several decades, the more recent literature on attachment clearly demonstrates that children form important bonds with both parents.


The attachment bond with the father is the beginning of the development of social skills, and social relationships, and, in the broader context of society cannot in any way be considered secondary to the mother-child attachment.


Steinman evaluated 24 couples who chose joint residence arrangements for their children at divorce. The children felt that they were strongly attached to both parents and were not troubled by the loyalty conflicts. A comparatively low rate of the children experiencing confusion or anxiety to their shared residence arrangement. Consequently the argument that children in joint residence experience more confusion and frustration was not supported in that study.


The notion that children have only one psychological parent has been thoroughly discredited by a large body of evidence that has demonstrated that infants normally develop close attachments to both of their parents


Attachment occurs at about 6 months of age and that do best when they have the opportunity to establish and maintain such attachments. Reducing the father’s involvement in the children’s lives to a trivial level obviously destroys this major attachment.

Attachment bonds which meet different needs of the developing child are not interchangeable. One type of attachment cannot typically make up for the absence of the other.

Most children in normal families experience a variety of caregivers, even in their second and third year.

Infants can be attached to a hierarchy of figures, including fathers, grandparents, and siblings, as well as day-care providers.

Contemporary attachment theory has abandoned the notion of monotrophy—the idea that children have a biological need to develop selective attachment to just one person. The notion that children have only one psychological parent has been thoroughly discredited by a large body of evidence that has demonstrated that infants normally develop close attachments to both of their parents.

The recognition that children usually have more than one loving relationship that provides emotional security has led to a greater realization of the importance of facilitating attachments and a corresponding de-emphasis on the trauma of separations.

It is now generally accepted that the finding that children are distressed when separated from a parent and left with a stranger is not at all relevant to the situation where children are separated from one parent to whom they are attached and spend time with another parent to whom they are attached.

Lamb, a leading authority on attachment, summarized two decades of research as demonstrating that the presence of one attachment figure provides sufficient emotional security to allow a child to avoid separation anxiety when separated from another attachment figure. He concluded that extended separations, including overnights apart from either parent, usually do not distress infants when they are with the other parent.


Hill M. Sharing Child Care In Early Parenthood. RKP (1987)


Lamb M E. Brief For The Texas Supreme Court Committee On Child Visitation. Austin, Texas (3 November 1994). See also, Lamb, supra note 113
The evidence reveals that babies clearly can and do form more than one attachment relationship. They can, for example, be attached securely to mother, father, and regular caregiver.
Joint residence is what children want

Overwhelmingly, children want to maintain close relationships with both their natural parents.

We have found 18 citations to research demonstrating that children’s wishes are nearly for a continued meaningful relationship with both parents.

Joint residence is what children want, because it allows kids to continue their relationship with both parents. Each of the studies that sought the views of children indicates that while they would prefer the intact family of origin, they are satisfied with joint residence and value the opportunity to continue their relationship with both parents.


Data in Australia has confirmed overseas evidence reporting that the children of divorce long for frequent ongoing contact with their absent parent and suffer immensely if this relationship is severed or severely limited.


Nearly all the joint residence children were content with the arrangement. These children echoed the sole residence children in responding to the question, “With whom would you have wanted to live after the divorce?” by saying, “With both”. (p 47). The joint residence children were able to cite specific advantages in the two–household lifestyle. They described their arrangement as more fun, more interesting or more comfortable.


There is considerable evidence demonstrating that the child and his or her non–resident parent feel a strong reciprocal attachment and, in fact, need one another.


An earlier study conducted by the University of Michigan (1979) that asked 165 school children in grades three to six from divorced and intact families their residence preference, found that the majority of interviewed children wanted to live half the week with one parent and the remaining half of the week with their other parent. None of the children in the divorced group had experienced this type of parenting. The high prevalence of reconciliation fantasies among children in sole residence arrangements would also seem to indicate a strong desire for continued involvement of both parents in children's lives.

Recent local research adds weight to the view that children are better off spending equal time with both parents after divorce. The study is one of the first in Australia to look at how children feel about spending time with their parents. When asked how parents should care for children after...
divorce, the most common answer was half and half" or "equal." Half also said they wanted more
time with their non-resident parents (Parkinson, Cashmore & Single 2003).

Arrangements. Faculty of Law, University of Sydney

# This desire on the part of children is understandable, given the evidence that children form
meaningful attachment bonds to both parents.

E Lamb, & A Sagi (Editors), Fatherhood and Social Policy. Erlbaum, Hillsdale, New Jersey pp 50-100
(Editor), Psychology and Child Custody Determinations. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln Nebraska
Warshak R A 4 October 2000). Blanket Restrictions: Overnight Contact Between Parents And Young Children. 4(38)
Family And Concilliation Courts Review (pp 422-445

# In a research review Kelly summarizes children's own descriptions:
· The children continue a daily life with both parents, and they consequently don't become
strangers to each other.
· The children feel that it is Just: neither of the parents is favoured.
· The children are less likely to feel guilty and/or to miss their fathers.
· The children get to experience that they are loved and important to both parents, which
strengthens self-confidence.
· The boys continue to have a father as a role model for identification.
· There is no risk that contacts with either of the parents will cease in the teenage years.
· It can feel good to have a rest from one of the parents (especially for teenagers).
· A divorce is not experienced as a devastating loss, because the child has not lost any love
and important person from their daily life (p 133).
2 Journal of Family Psychology pp 119-140

# Children in joint custody are better adjusted than those in sole residence situations.

Psychological Association, Washington D.C.
16(1) Journal Of Family Psychology

# Fathers in joint custody comply with their child support obligations in 90.2% of cases; fathers with
contact comply 79.1% of the time and fathers with no contact privileges comply only 44.5% of the
time.
Printing Office, Washington D.C.

# We have yet to read a study that concludes children prefer their parents to go their separate ways
than to stay together—even when the domestic atmosphere is tense. The work undertaken so far
suggests that the ready accessibility of the non–resident parent, is likely to be of considerable value
in assisting children come to terms with the reality of their changed predicament and in keeping
both parents alive for them.
Hetherington E M, Cox M, & Cox R. Effects of Divorce On Parents and Children. In M E Lamb (Editor), Non-
Hetherington E M, & Hagan M S. Divorced Fathers, Stress, Coping, and Adjustment. In M E Lamb (Editor), The
Joint residence is what Australians want

On average, over 90% of Australians believe that there should be a legislated presumption of 50/50 shared residence, in the event of separation. The following surveys are cited on the Fathers 4 Equity website.

http://www.fathers4equality-australia.org/equalparenting/fathers4equality.nsf/pages/publicopinion

# Insight: Who Gets the Kids?" - SBS - 23/03/2004

When parents break up, should 50/50 custody of kids be the norm?
Results
91% of respondents said YES.
8% of respondents said no.
1% of respondents said I don't know.

# The Sunday Program: "Caught in the Middle". - the NINE network - 07/03/2004
Should separated parents be required by law to share equally the custody of their children?
Results
82% of respondents said YES.
18% of respondents said no.

# SkyChannel: 29/07/2004
Do you agree that both divorced parents be given legal rights to access to children?
Results
90% of respondents said YES.
10% of respondents said no.

# Daily Telegraph: - 26/03/2004
**FEDERAL POLL:** Which Federal issue do you think needs the most attention in 2004?

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National security</td>
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<tr>
<td>Superannuation</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child custody</td>
<td>62.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
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<td>Tax</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<td>Universities</td>
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<td>Home affordability</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Willesee Across Australia: - Skynews - 2003**


Do you believe that Dads should have more rights in child custody?

Results

98% of respondents said YES.

2% of respondents said no.

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**Sunday Program, Channel 9**


12 June 2005: Do you believe Australia's child support laws are effective for all? Yes - 4% v No - 96%

7 March 2004: Should separated parents be required by law to share equally the custody of their children? Yes - 82% v No - 18%

June 13 2003: Should divorced parents be given equal shared custody of their children? Yes: 79% v No: 21%

June 3 2001: Should divorced women be allowed to change their children's surnames, against their husbands' wishes? Yes - 23% v No - 77%

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**Approximately 85% of 600,000 Massachusetts citizens voted for rebuttable presumption of shared physical and legal custody included on the ballot for the presidential election in Nov 2005.**

The referendum asked whether voters want their state representatives to "create a strong presumption in child custody cases in favor of joint physical and legal custody, so that the court will order that children have equal access to both parents as much as possible, except where there is clear and convincing evidence that one parent is unfit, or that joint custody is not possible due to the fault of one of the parents."

www.berkshireeagle.com/Stories/0,1413,101-7516-2509560,00.html
Men want more time with their kids, but know they won’t get it

Far from being ‘deadbeat-dads’, most fathers want to be actively involved with their children before and after divorce.

Official Family Court documents understate father's real desires because there is little point in fighting for more time than your legal advice says is likely. It is also it is very expensive and painful.

We have found 15 citations to published research showing that fathers want to spend more time with their children than they achieve.

Statistics published by the Family Court of Australia show that only 2.5% (329) of residence orders were for joint residence.


“in cases where there is any degree of conflict between the parties (family court) judges had not embraced the concept of shared parenting.”
[Editor’s note: Now, think about that for a moment… the Family Court is a still a court... who goes to court unless there is conflict?]

The 14th Annual Family Law Masterclass Conference, Sydney, 10 May 2005 RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SHARED PARENTING AND JOINT CUSTODY, A Personal View From the Court. JUSTICE ALWYNNE ROWLANDS AO

# The advantages of joint residence provides specific advantages for each parent


# Post divorce can mean that fathers spend even less time with their children. An Australian survey of 10,000 divorced fathers revealed that 80% were advised by their lawyers that applying for residency would be a waste of money as the family court would refuse their request.


# The typical Australian family has the mother working part-time, and the father working overtime. Bureau of Statistics figures show that Australian dads do 23hrs a week more paid work than Australian mothers.

"You would be shocked how many men say, 'I didn't know I had a child until I got these court papers.'... And, when they find out, almost all of them take steps to become involved in their child's life, even if it's years after the child was born.

"Fathers should not be portrayed as generally not caring, because they're not," he says. "When you're talking about deadbeats, I think it's important to know that many, many guys are completely cut out, because they were never told they were the father and then, when they find out that they are the father, they want to start a relationship with the child."

Harvey Brownstone (family court judge, North York Canada) quoted in "Put kids first, judge tells parents His family court sees conflicts daily Complex reasons why dads absent" ANDREA GORDON, Toronto Star newspaper, Jan. 16, 2006

# A third of fathers work more than 50hrs a week. Two thirds of fathers believe they did not spend enough time with their kids. Paid work was often cited as the major barrier to spending time with their kids.

Fitting Fathers Into Families: Men and the Fatherhood Role in Contemporary Australia, Department of Family and Community Services. Commonwealth of Australia 1999 ISBN 0 642 39934 4

# Studies have shown that around 50% of children from sole mother custody families see their fathers once or twice a year or less.


# The reason why so many children see their fathers so rarely is because father's parenting efforts are thwarted by restrictions imposed by custodial mothers or gender biased court orders. The most frequent reason for fathers' disengagement (90%) was obstruction of paternal contact by the child's mother and her desire to break contact between father and child. Fathers also mentioned that they ceased contact because of their inability to adapt to the constraints of the visiting situation (33%). Regardless of interpretation of motives, the fact remains that sole maternal custody relates strongly to ultimate father absence.

Knuk E. Psychological and Structural Factors Contributing To The Disengagement of Non Custodial Fathers After Divorce. 30(1) Family and Conciliation Courts Review (January 1992) pp 81-101

# Joint resident fathers had a much higher self-esteem than fathers receiving sole residence. Further, the fathers with joint residence reported much more contact time with their children and higher overall satisfaction with their parenting status.


# The typical custody order is where the non-custodial parent spends four days a month with the children. Sadly, reality is that most children of divorce rarely see their fathers. Internationally the rate of paternal disengagement is well documented. It is estimated that over one half of non-resident divorced fathers in the USA gradually lose all contact with their children.

Furstenburg et al. The Life Course of Children of Divorce; Marital Disruption and Parental Contact. 48 American Sociological Review (1983) pp 656-668

42% of Australian children in sole residence had contact with their other natural parent just once a fortnight, while 36% had contact with their other natural parent either rarely (once per year, or less often) or never.


Bias of the Family Court

The view of the Family Court is that any stress, disagreement, or concerns that the custodial parent (usually the mother) has will make her a worse parent, and this is not in the best interest of the child.

To you and I this sounds like the ‘best interest of the mother’ is being placed above the ‘best interest of the child’. There is no way to correct this perverse mindset.

Clearly the changes in the proposed legislation will not improve this situation. Specifically mandating shared residence will ensure that fathers are considered as ‘parents’ too, so the true best interest of the child will (for the first time) prevail.

If the Family Court decides that a father is not a risk to his child. If the mother still fears that the father may harm his child on an access visit the court will order that the father shall not see his child, or only in if supervised. The perverse logic of this precedent is that an anxious mother is a poorer parent, and it is not in the child’s best interest to have an anxious parent.


Once an apprehended Violence Order is issued, a “man can contest it, but only with the greatest difficulty since it is hard to disprove an apprehension. The usual advice is to accept the order without admission. But in the Family Court the existence of an order is taken as prima facie evidence of violence.”


“But having given the mother custody, the Court allows her to do what she likes. She can shout out the father, change the kids’ names, make false allegations, defy the Court – all more or less with impunity”

Premature puberty

Recent corroborated research show that girls that grow up without their natural (biological) fathers reach puberty 9 months earlier than girls who live with their natural fathers and are vastly more likely to become pregnant as teenagers, even after controlling for wealth and race.

There are many things we do not yet know about our bodies. Some researchers argue that this is a result of the trauma of separation; others view it as a biological fact, possibly due to some hormonal mechanism.

We have found 13 citations showing that girls reach puberty earlier and are more likely to become teenage mothers if they have reduced residence with their natural fathers.

# There seems to be a protective effect increasing health and reducing promiscuity when children live with their natural (genetic) fathers.

Rates of teenage pregnancy increased from about 1:20 among father-present girls to 1:3 among early father-absent girls in the US sample, and from about 1:30 among father-present girls to 1:4 among early father-absent girls in the New Zealand sample (early father absence was defined as the first five years of life)."

"... teenage girls are more likely to go through puberty early up to nine months earlier than in some cases when they live with unrelated males (like stepfathers), another factor which increases risk of early sexual behaviour." (please note that these few months brings the onset of puberty generally in primary school.

Dr Bruce Ellis of the University of Canterbury, NZ quoted in "A rainbow ends for Daddy's little girl" Author: Bettina Arndt Date: 23/09/2003 Words: 1678, Publication: Sydney Morning Herald, Section: News And Features, Page: 11)

# If a mother's new partner becomes part of the family, this can increase the risk for these girls. A few years ago, QUT’s Nicholson was involved in research with Professor David Fergusson, another of the Christchurch team, which found that teenagers in step-families are 50 per cent more likely to engage in early sexual activity and have multiple partners.


# Many studies have identified the absence of the natural (biological) father from the home as a major risk factor for early sexual activity


# Many studies have also identified the absence of the natural (biological) father from the home as a major risk factor for teenage pregnancy


Children whose natural father was not present in their lives from when they were younger than 5 years old, had a much higher risk of adolescent pregnancy rates were approximately 7 times higher in the US study and 8 times higher in the NZ study compared to families that still had their natural (biological) father.

The study found that even after controlling factors such as wealth, education and race, girls who lost their natural fathers when they were younger than 5 years old still had between 3 and 5 times the risk of having a teenage pregnancy. These other factors controlled for included the age and education of the mother, the occupation of the father, wealth, race, family conflict, stress and mothering style.

These studies suggest that there is some biological or hormonal mechanism that results in early puberty and risk of teenage pregnancy. Girls who lost their fathers when they were young didn't have significantly higher rates of behaviour problems, poor school results or violence, after controlling for race, class etc as before.

Does father absence place daughters at special risk for early sexual activity and teenage pregnancy? Ellis, Bruce J. Child Development; Vol. 74, no. 3 May / Jun. 2003
UN Convention on the rights of the child

Below is an extract from the UN Charter on the rights of the child. Australia’s Family Law regime routinely flouts the spirit, and the letter of this convention. Emphasis added.

This convention has been ratified by the Australian Government

Article 5
States Parties shall respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents or, where applicable, the members of the extended family or community as provided for by local custom, legal guardians or other persons legally responsible for the child, to provide, in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognized in the present Convention.

Article 7
1. The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents.

Article 8
1. States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognized by law without unlawful interference.

Article 9
1. States Parties shall ensure that a child shall not be separated from his or her parents against their will, except when competent authorities subject to judicial review determine, in accordance with applicable law and procedures, that such separation is necessary for the best interests of the child. Such determination may be necessary in a particular case such as one involving abuse or neglect of the child by the parents, or one where the parents are living separately and a decision must be made as to the child’s place of residence.
3. States Parties shall respect the right of the child who is separated from one or both parents to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents on a regular basis, except if it is contrary to the child’s best interests.
4. Where such separation results from any action initiated by a State Party, such as the detention, imprisonment, exile, deportation or death (including death arising from any cause while the person is in the custody of the State) of one or both parents or of the child, that State Party shall, upon request, provide the parents, the child or, if appropriate, another member of the family with the essential information concerning the whereabouts of the absent member(s) of the family unless the provision of the information would be detrimental to the well-being of the child. States Parties shall further ensure that the submission of such a request shall of itself entail no adverse consequences for the person(s) concerned.

Article 14
2. States Parties shall respect the rights and duties of the parents and, when applicable, legal guardians, to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child.

Article 18
1. States Parties shall use their best efforts to ensure recognition of the principle that both parents have common responsibilities for the upbringing and development of the child. Parents or, as the case may
be, legal guardians, have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child. The best interests of the child will be their basic concern.