

# **Statistical Analysis and Summary of Themes**

## **Family Violence Death Reviews of Deaths between**

### **2004 – 2011**



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# 1. Executive Summary

This report includes data about family violence deaths that occurred between 2004 and Sept 2011, where a family violence death review was carried out. It does not include all FV deaths that occurred during the period.

Family violence death victims were almost evenly proportioned across adult female (36%), adult male (31%) and child<sup>1</sup> deaths (33%).

Adult males were more commonly killed by people outside of their immediate family (not people they lived with) while women and children were most commonly killed by people who lived in the same house.

Children were more often killed by their mothers than any other group of suspects:

- Fifteen out of 33 child victims (45%) were killed by their mothers.
- Five newborn babies (15% of child victims) were killed by women who concealed their pregnancy and killed the baby immediately after birth.
- Six children were killed by their mothers, prior to the mother committing suicide.

***Figure 1 - Summary Comparisons Between Three Categories***

	Child Victims	Adult Female Victims	Adult Male Victims
Total Number	33	37	31
Lived in same house as suspect	91%	65%	48%
Family and friends aware of violence but did not report	21%	35%	6%
Killed by females	55%	8%	32%
Killed by suspect with previous convictions	42%	62%	65%
Killed by suspect with mental health issues	27%	14%	26%
Most common cause of death	Head trauma	Stabbing	Stabbing

## 1.1 Statistical Summary

- 81% of female adult deaths were a result of intimate partner violence compared with 29% of male adult deaths. This represents 57% of all adult family violence deaths, or 39% of all family violence deaths.
- 67% of suspects were men, 30% were women and 3% were unidentified.
- In 34 of the 95 (36%) FVDRs, there was no prior Police FV involvement with the suspect or victim that would indicate the potential for a family violence death to occur.

<sup>1</sup> A child is a person under 17 years of age.

- Females killed 8% of adult women victims, 32% of adult male victims and 55% of child victims.
- 45% of victims were male, 55% were female.
- 43% of suspects were Maori, 37% European and 20% other ethnicities.
- The most common means of killing adults (both male and female) were stab wounds, head trauma and gun shot wounds.
- The most common circumstances of death for children were:
  - head trauma inflicted by biological parent, stepfather or other family member
  - newborn baby killed immediately after birth by mother who had concealed her pregnancy
  - injuries to the body inflicted by stepfather, biological parent or other family member
  - suffocation or drowning by mother.
- Mothers killed their children far more frequently than anybody else (being 45% of child deaths).

## 1.2 Themes and Recommendations Summary

A number of central themes were identified from the review of the FVDRs and these may provide opportunities for Police and other Government and non-Government organisations to improve their response. The main areas where opportunities exist for a better interagency response were:

- Improved information sharing
- Revision of the risk and lethality scoring process
- Promoting reporting of family violence incidents:
  - By family and friends
  - Mandatory reporting by professional services
- Better processes to deal with transient families
- Less tolerance of incapable parenting<sup>2</sup> - some children are left in situations of risk despite agencies being aware that parents are incapable.

Common themes relating to potential areas of improvement of response to family violence are discussed in more detail in Section 6 of this report.

Some of the FVDRs are several years old and changes to processes have already been, or are in the process of being, implemented. For example the risk and lethality scoring process is being replaced by the Canadian ODARA (Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment) tool (for collection of risk information in intimate partner violence cases). Processes and systems within districts around FV management, including the interagency response, have evolved significantly since the earliest FVDRs were completed.

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<sup>2</sup> Incapable parenting was identified in cases where a parent or parents were provided with significant support and interventions, but were still unable to be effective or competent parents.

## 2. Background

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In 2007 Police introduced a process to review each Family Violence (FV) death. The purpose was to prevent further FV deaths by analysing the activity and incidents relating to the perpetrator, victim or family in the period leading up to the death and identifying areas where improved action or processes could be introduced and potentially prevent further deaths.

### 2.1 Purpose of the Review

A review of family violence death reviews was completed in 2011 to collate information, carry out a statistical analysis and to draw together common themes. Police have been doing family violence death reviews for some, but not all, deaths since 2004. We decided to use all the available information rather than have a cut off date that would mean some reviews were excluded. Excluding a review would result in any information or learning from that death being lost. All of the family violence death reviews were relevant given the purpose of the review which was to better understand the circumstances that lead to the death.

It is important to note that the summary of findings relates only to homicides where:

- the homicide was identified as being a family violence death, **and**
- a family violence death review was carried out.

If a family violence death occurred but a review was not carried out, that homicide has been excluded from this analysis.

### 2.2 Next Steps

The statistical summary and analysis will be periodically updated (possibly on an annual basis). The FVDR process was revised in 2011 to increase the level of consistency in content and format. As compliance with standardised collection practices and formats improves, and more data is collected, it is anticipated that the limitations outlined above will reduce and the quality of the information will improve.

Family Violence Death Reviews are carried out soon after a family violence death occurs, and usually before court proceedings against a suspect are finalised. Therefore the FVDR review does not take into account the outcome of the court process.

### 3. Review of Police Family Violence Death Reviews

#### 3.1 Number and Location of FVDRs Reviewed

Ninety five Police Family Violence Death Reviews<sup>3</sup> (FVDRs) were reviewed. These involved 101 victims. Figure 2 shows the number of victims from each year and Figure 3 shows the number of victims by district.

***Figure 2 - Family Violence Death Review Victims by Year***

Year of Death	Adult	Child	Total
2004		2	2
2006		2	2
2007	3	2	5
2008	11	4	15
2009	23	12	35
2010	22	6	28
2011	9	5	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>101</b>

***Figure 3 - Family Violence Death Review Victims by District***

District	Adult Victims	Child Victims	Total Victims
Bay of Plenty	11	5	16
Central	7	4	11
Counties Manukau	5	6	11
Auckland City	8	2	10
Waitemata	5	4	9
Southern	8	1	9
Wellington	7	2	9
Northland	5	2	7
Canterbury	5	1	6
Eastern	2	4	6
Tasman	3	1	4
Waikato	2	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>101</b>

<sup>3</sup> Referred to in this report as FVDRs or 'cases.' A 'case' may involve more than one victim.

## 4. Analysis of Family Violence Death Victims

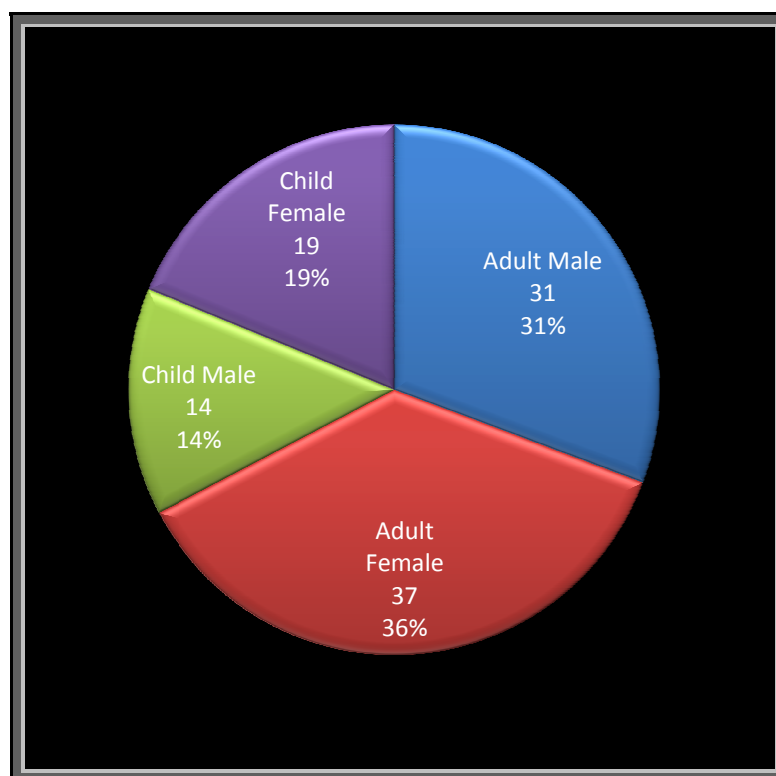
### 4.1 All Family Violence Deaths

Ninety five FVDRs were assessed involving 101 victims.

- The total number of child<sup>4</sup> victims was 33.
- The total number of adult victims was 68.
- 56 victims were females (adults and children) and 45 victims were males (adults and children).

Figure 4 illustrates the composition of the 101 FV deaths included in the review.

**Figure 4 - Proportion of Deaths: Adult, Child / Male, Female**



The proportion of men, women and child deaths was almost a third for each. The actual percentage was:

- Men – 31%
- Women – 36%
- Children – 33%

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<sup>4</sup> A child is defined as being under 17 years of age.

#### 4.1.2 Relationship of Suspect to Victim

Appendix One contains a full table of the relationships between suspect and victim. Figure 5 shows the top 15 suspect / victim relationships and accounts for 73 of the 101 deaths.

***Figure 5 - Top 15 Suspect / Victim Relationships***

Relationship Suspect / Victim	Number Victims
Defacto husband / Defacto wife	11
Mother / Daughter	10
Husband / Wife	8
Ex Boyfriend / Ex Girlfriend	6
Stepfather / stepson	6
Defacto wife / Defacto husband	6
Mother / Son	5
Suspect not identified	4
Boyfriend / Girlfriend - not living together	3
Father / Daughter	3
Brother / Brother	3
Husband / wife's new partner	2
Stepfather / stepdaughter	2
Son / Father	2
Stepson / Stepfather	2
Other	27 <sup>5</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>

<sup>5</sup> The suspect / victim relationships of the other 27 victims are fully detailed in Appendix 1.



### 4.1.3 Cause or Circumstance of Death

Notwithstanding the higher number of female victims, some causes of death were exclusively gender related, such as strangulation and burning. No males were killed by either of these methods.

**Figure 6 - Cause/Circumstance of Death – All Victims**

Cause/Circumstance of Death	Female Victims	Male Victims	Total Victims
Head trauma	18	16	34
Stab wounds	15	11	26
Firearm wounds	8	5	13
Injuries to body	2	5	7
Newborn baby killed by Mother	3	2	5
Other	1	4	5
Drowning	2	1	3
Suffocation	2	1	3
Strangulation	3		3
Burning	2		2
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>101</b>

### 4.1.4 No Prior Involvement with Police in 36% of Cases

In 34 of the 95 (36%) FVDRs, there was no prior Police FV involvement with the suspect or victim that would indicate the potential for a family violence death to occur. This is a conservative assessment<sup>6</sup>.

This indicates that in over a third of family violence deaths there was no opportunity for Police to refer any of the parties to other agencies who could provide interventions or support.

This does not mean that other agencies were not aware of the parties. It is possible that other agencies had information that Police did not, and consequently had opportunities to offer interventions.

### 4.1.5 Police and Other Agency Involvement

In 61 cases Police had prior family violence dealings with the victim and / or suspect<sup>7</sup>.

In 23 cases there was involvement or dealings by both Police and other agencies.

<sup>6</sup> Prior Police involvement was assessed as 'yes' in the following types of cases:

- Police had previous FV dealings with the victim and offender involved in the fatal relationship
- Police had previous dealings with the victim or offender in incidents of family violence with other, unrelated parties
- The offender had convictions for serious violent offences but not necessarily family violence.

<sup>7</sup> Family violence related involvement by Police does not necessarily mean that the victim and / or suspect had been charged with an offence. Police may have been called to an incident but determined that their attendance was sufficient and no further action was required.

#### 4.1.6 Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence is violence between current and former spouses or partners. Figure 7 compares female and male victims in intimate partner relationships.

**Figure 7 - Summary Intimate Partner Violence – All Victims**

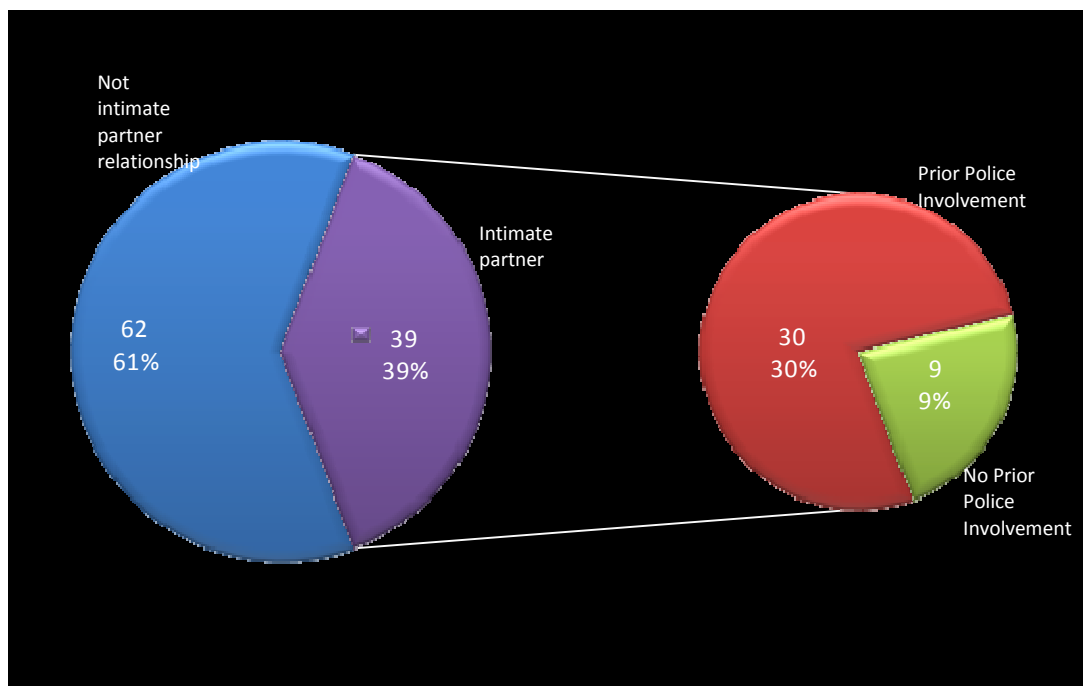
	Female Victims	Male Victims	Total Victims
Total Adult Victims	37	31	68
Victims of Intimate Partner Violence	30	9	39
Intimate partner violence deaths as % of total (Adult Female or Adult Male or All Adults)	81%	29%	57%
Victim killed by suspect with previous convictions	70%	78%	72%
Suspect had prior conviction for Index offence <sup>8</sup>	7	1	8
Prior Police involvement for any FV	21	9	30
Previous reported FV between victim & suspect	15	8	23
Killed by suspect with mental health problems	2	2	4

The following points summarise the family violence deaths relating to intimate partner relationships:

- 39 of the 101 deaths (39%) involved intimate partner relationships (either current or ex intimate partners).
- In eight of the intimate partner cases, the suspect had previous convictions for Index offences.
- 30 of the 39 intimate partner deaths involved victims or suspects who had previously come to the attention of Police.
- Of the 30 cases of intimate partner violence where there was prior Police involvement:
  - 23 involved couples who had previously come to Police attention with reported family violence between them.
  - Seven involved cases where the Police attention was for one of the parties in the case being reviewed and with another, unrelated party (eg – current suspect with previous partner or current victim with previous partner).
- In nine of the 39 intimate partner violence deaths, neither of the parties (victim or suspect) had previously come to the attention of Police, in a way that would allow Police to assess the risk of further violence, i.e. coming to Police attention for traffic related or other minor offences, but no history of family violence or other serious violence.

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<sup>8</sup> Index offences are offences of physical or sexual violence in the presence of the victim or threats to kill with a weapon in hand.

**Figure 8 - Intimate Partner Violence – Prior Police Involvement**

## 4.2 Child Deaths

Thirty FVDRs (referred to as 'cases') involve child victims:

- 33 children were killed by 34 suspects:
  - One suspect killed one child in 26 cases
  - One suspect killed two children each in three cases
  - Five suspects killed one child in one case
- 14 children were killed by suspects who had previous convictions (ranging from shoplifting, traffic-related and drugs offences through to burglary and concealing the body of a dead child) while 16 were killed by suspects who didn't. (
- Three victims were killed by unidentified suspects. This circumstance arises when a suspect was unidentified at the time of the FVDR, but it was clear that somebody in the family had caused the child's death.

### 4.2.1 Child Victims

- 79% of children were aged three years or under at the time of death.
- 16 of the 19 female child victims lived in the same house as the suspect. All 14 of the male child victims lived in the same house as the suspect. In total 91% of child victims were killed by people who lived in the same house.
- The three female victims who did not live in the same house as the suspect, were killed by their:
  - Grandmother
  - Babysitter

- Flatmate's ex-boyfriend (this child was 16 years of age)
- Many of the children were reported to have had significant historical injuries in addition to the injuries that caused their death.
- In at least seven cases other family and / or friends were aware of violence being directed at the child and did not report or prevent it.
- 13 cases had no previous Police FV involvement with the victim, family or suspect.

**Figure 9 - Age and Gender of Child Victims Family Violence Deaths**

Age (years)	Female	Male	Total
Less than 1 year old	6	7	13
1	3	3	6
2	3	1	4
3	3		3
4	1		1
5	1		1
7		1	1
8	1	1	2
10		1	1
16	1		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>33</b>

#### 4.2.2 Cause of Death

Figure 10 shows that head trauma was the most common cause of death for (16) children. Seven of these children were aged less than one year old, six were between one and four years, while the remaining three were eight years, 10 years and 16 years old.

**Figure 10 - Cause of Death**

Victim Cause of Death	Number Victims
Head trauma	16
Newborn baby killed by Mother <sup>9</sup>	5
Injuries to body	5
Drowning	3
Suffocation	3
Stab wounds	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>

<sup>9</sup> Concealed pregnancy, baby born in secret, immediately killed and body disposed of.

### 4.2.3 Child Deaths - Relationship of Suspect to Victim

Figure 11 shows the relationship of the suspect to the victim with more detailed analysis provided below.

***Figure 11 - Relationship of Suspect to Victim***

Suspect / Victim	Number Victims
Mother / Daughter	10
Mother / Son	5
Stepfather / stepson	5
Suspect not identified	3
Stepfather / stepdaughter	2
Father / Daughter	2
Ex Boyfriend / Ex Girlfriend's friend	1
Babysitter / baby	1
Boarder / Resident's child	1
Father / Son	1
Aunt / nephew (in uncle and aunt's care)	1
Grandmother / Granddaughter	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>

### 4.2.4 Mother Kills Child(ren) – 15 Children

An analysis of the relationship of suspect to child victim shows that the most common familial relationship between suspect and victim is that of mother and child. Mothers killed 15 (45%) of the 33 child victims, comprising 10 daughters and 5 sons.

Three of the 13 mothers had previous convictions however, none of these were for violent offences.

Further analysis shows common circumstances with regards to mothers who killed their children.

#### **Newborn baby killed by mother – Five Babies**

- In five cases the mother concealed her pregnancy from family, friends and/or workmates. When the baby was born the mother, through act or omission, killed the baby and disposed of the body. In two of these cases it is not clear if the baby was stillborn or lived briefly before being killed. However, what is clear from the FVDRs is that the babies almost certainly would have lived had they been born in hospital or if the mother had rendered medical assistance.
- In two cases, the suspects' mothers suspected pregnancy and even queried their daughters about it. Following denial from their daughters that they were pregnant, they did not pursue the issue.
- The mothers were aged between 17 and 28. Only one of the mothers was known to other agencies and the Police. With 15% of the child deaths being attributed to this circumstance, it could be worthwhile to further research this aspect.

- Three of the mothers were European, one Pacific Island and one Indian.
- Three of the babies were females and two were males.
- One of the FVDRs related to a mother who had twice concealed her pregnancy, given birth in secret and then disposed of the baby/body.

#### **Murder Suicide – Six Children**

- Six children died as a result of (four) mothers who killed their child(ren) and then killed themselves:
  - In two cases, the mother killed two children and then herself.
  - In two cases, the mother killed one child and then herself.
- The mothers were aged between 31 and 40.
- Three mothers were European and one was Maori.
- The children were aged one year, two years, four years, two children were eight years olds and one was ten years.
- Four children were female and two were male.
- Three children were killed by suffocation, two by injuries to the head and one drowned.

#### **Drowned – Three Children**

- In three cases children aged between one and two years of age were drowned by their mothers.
- In two of the cases the children drowned in the bath after being left unattended.
- In one case the child was drowned by her mother, who later killed herself (this case is also included in the Murder Suicide section).
- The mothers were aged 21, 28 and 33.
- The mothers were Maori, European and Fijian.

#### **Remaining Two Cases**

- In the remaining two cases of mothers killing children, both victims died as result of physical assaults to their head and body.
- The victims were aged one and two years of age.
- Both mothers were Maori.

### **4.2.5 Stepfather Kills Stepchild – 7 Children**

- Stepfathers killed five stepsons and two stepdaughters.
- In all cases the injuries involved physical assaults resulting in trauma to the head or body.
- Three children were one year old or less, the other four were two years, three years, five years and seven years old.

- In every case the suspect had previous convictions. In four cases these included violence related offences while in three cases the convictions were for non-violent offences.
- Five stepfathers were Maori, one was European and one was Cook Island.
- One stepfather was 19 years old, four stepfathers were aged 21 – 24, one was 31 and one was 37.

#### 4.2.6 Father Kills Child – 3 Children

- Fathers killed two daughters and one son.
- Two babies were five weeks and 11 weeks old and died from head trauma.
- One child was three years old and died from injuries to her head and body.
- Two Maori fathers were aged 18 and 21, while the Tongan father was aged 27.
- Two fathers had previous convictions and one did not. One of the father's previous convictions included convictions for violent offences whilst the other was not.

#### 4.2.7 Suspect Age and Ethnicity – Child Victims

The tables below show the age and ethnicity of suspects who killed children. Note that the total reflects 34 suspects against children, not 34 child victims. Maori are significantly over represented as offenders against children in child homicides.

***Figure 12 - Suspect Age Category and Gender – Offenders of Child Victims***

Suspect Age Category	Not Identified	Female	Male	Total
Under 20		3	3	6
20 - 29		8	9	17
30 - 39		4	2	6
40 - 49		2		2
50 - 59		1		1
Suspect not identified <sup>10</sup>	2			2
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>34</b>

<sup>10</sup> The offender was not identified in two cases involving three children.

***Figure 13 - Suspect Ethnicity – Offenders of Child Victims***

Suspect Ethnicity	Not Identified	Female	Male	Total
Maori		8	10	18
European		7	1	8
Suspect not identified	2			2
Indian		1	1	2
Tongan			1	1
Pacific Islander		1		1
Fijian		1		1
Cook Island			1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>34</b>

## 4.3 Adult Female Deaths

### 4.3.1 All Deaths – Adult Female

Significant points to note about adult female deaths are:

- 34 female victims (92%) were killed by men, whilst only 3 were killed by women (two by their sisters and one by her daughter).
- 30 of the 37 deaths (81%) occurred where the relationship was intimate partner.
- 24 of the 37 victims (65%) lived in the same house as the suspect.
- 20 victims (54%) were killed by suspects with previous convictions for violent offences while a further three victims (8%) were killed by suspects with convictions for non-violent offences.
- 14 victims (38%) were killed by suspects with no previous convictions.
- 19 victims (51%) were killed by European suspects and 12 (32%) by Maori suspects. The remaining suspect ethnicities were Indian (two), Samoan (two), Pacific Island and Iraqi (one each).
- Adult females were most commonly killed by stabbing, head trauma or firearm wounds.



**Figure 14 - Suspect / Victim Relationship – Adult Female Victims**

Suspect / Victim	Number Victims
Defacto husband / Defacto wife	11
Husband / Wife	8
Ex Boyfriend / Ex Girlfriend	6
Boyfriend / Girlfriend - not living together	3
Sister / Sister	2
Ex husband / Ex wife	2
Brother / Sister	1
Boarder / Resident	1
Daughter / Mother	1
Ex Boyfriend of daughter / Mother of suspect's Ex Girlfriend	1
Father / Daughter	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>

*Note the yellow highlighted rows indicate an intimate partner relationship*

**Figure 15 - Cause of Death – Adult Female Victims**

Cause of Death Adult Female Victims	Number Victims
Stab wounds	14
Head trauma	9
Gun shot wounds	8
Strangulation	3
Burning	2
Other	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>

#### 4.3.2 Intimate Partner Violence – Adult Female

- 30 of the 37 adult female deaths (81%) were intimate partner violence (either current or ex partners). The intimate partner relationship deaths are shown in Figure 14 highlighted in yellow.
- Seven of the suspects had previous convictions for an Index offence (being an offence of physical or sexual violence in the presence of the victim or a threat to kill with a weapon in hand).
- In 15 of the 30 cases there had been previous reported family violence occurrences between the victim and suspect.
- The FVDRs noted that heavy alcohol use on an ongoing basis by one or both parties was apparent in 12 cases.
- The FVDRs note that two suspects had mental health problems and three suspects had previously attempted suicide however, the actual numbers may be higher.

## **4.4 Adult Male Deaths**

### **4.4.1 All Deaths – Adult Male**

Significant points to note about adult male deaths are:

- 12 of the 31 victims (39%) were killed by people who had previous convictions for violent offences. A further eight victims (26%) were killed by suspects who had convictions for non-violent offences.
- 20 victims (65%) were killed by male suspects.
- Nine victims (29%) were killed by women – of who they were in an intimate partner relationship with.
- One victim was killed by both a female and a male suspect.
- 15 victims (48%) were killed by a suspect living in the same house.
- Adult males were most commonly killed by stabbing, head trauma or being shot.

***Figure 16 - Suspect / Victim Relationship – Adult Male Victims***

Suspect / Victim	Number Victims
Defacto wife / Defacto husband	6
Brother / Brother	3
Son / Father	2
Stepson / Stepfather	2
Husband / wife's new partner	2
Son-in-law / father-in-law	1
Uncle / Nephew	1
Stepfather / stepson	1
Ex Girlfriend / Ex Boyfriend	1
Distant relatives in Maori land dispute	1
Ex husband / Ex wife's new partner	1
Step Nephew / Step Uncle	1
Brother in law / Brother in law	1
Daughter's partner / partner's father	1
Ex boyfriend / Ex girlfriend's new partner	1
Wife / Husband	1
Associates	1
Daughter, daughter's partner / Father	1
Girlfriend / Boyfriend - not living together	1
Suspect not identified	1
Partner's nephew + friend / Uncle	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>

*Note the yellow highlighted rows indicate intimate partner violence*

***Figure 17 - Cause of Death – Adult Male Victims***

Victim Cause of Death	Number Victims
Stab wounds	11
Head trauma	9
Gun shot wounds	5
Other	4
Injuries to body	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>

#### **4.4.2 Intimate Partner Relationships – Adult Male**

- Nine of the 31 adult male deaths (29%) were classified as intimate partner violence (either current or ex partners). The intimate partner violence deaths are shown in Figure 16 highlighted in yellow.
- Only one of the suspects had previous convictions for an Index offence.
- In eight of the nine cases there had been previous reported family violence occurrences between the victim and suspect.
- In two cases there was a significant history of family violence however, the current victim had usually been recorded as the suspect. Eventually the (female) partner who had previously been the victim, killed her partner.
- Seven victims were stabbed, one was shot and one died from head trauma.
- Two suspects had mental health problems and one had previously attempted suicide.

#### **4.4.3 Adult Males - New Partner Victims**

- In four cases, new (male) partners of ex-intimate partners were killed.
- In one of these cases the suspect also attempted to kill their ex-intimate (female) partner.

## 5. Analysis of Family Violence Death Suspects

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### 5.1 All Suspects

101 suspects killed 101 victims however, this does not equate to 1 suspect for 1 victim because:

- One suspect killed one victim in 86 cases
- One suspect killed 2 victims in six cases
- Two suspects killed one victim in two cases
- Five suspects killed one victim in one case.

#### 5.1.1 Suspect Gender

- 67 suspects were males.
- 31 suspects were females.
- 3 suspects were not identified. These were cases of child victims where it was clear that the children were killed by somebody in the family, but the offender was not identified.

#### 5.1.2 Mental Health Issues – Suspect

In at least 22 cases the suspect had mental health issues (either formally diagnosed or known about, but not formally diagnosed). This number may be higher because the FVDR may not have identified mental health issues even if they had existed.

The following summarises the main findings relating to the existence (or at least reference in the FVDR) of mental health issues:

- Depression was noted in 11 cases
- Eight suspects had previously attempted suicide

Many of the FVDRs did not mention mental health and suicide issues. Further analysis on the existence of mental health issues of suspects is needed in order to provide robust commentary.

### 5.1.3 Suspect Tables

**Figure 18 - Suspect Previous Convictions – Any Offence**

Previous Convictions Any Offence	Suspect not Identified	Female	Male	Total
No		17	21	38
Yes		14	46	60
Suspect not identified	3			3
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>101</b>

**Figure 19 - Suspect Previous Convictions – Violent Offences**

Previous Convictions Violent Offences	Suspect not Identified	Female	Male	Total
No		26	33	59
Yes		5	34	39
Suspect not identified	3			3
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>101</b>

**Figure 20 - Suspect Ethnicity**

Suspect Ethnicity	Not Identified	Female	Male	Total
Maori		15	28	43
European		10	27	37
Pacific Islander		1	4	5
Suspect not identified	3			3
Indian		1	2	3
Samoan			2	2
Not Recorded		1		1
Cook Island			1	1
Iraqi		1		1
Fijian		1		1
Tongan			1	1
Iranian			1	1
Asian		1		1
Kenyan			1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>101</b>

**Figure 21 - Suspect Age Category**

Suspect Age Category	Not Identified	Female	Male	Total
Under 20		4	6	10
20 - 29		11	18	29
30 - 39		7	15	22
40 - 49		6	17	23
50 - 59		2	6	8
60 - 69		1	4	5
80 - 89			1	1
Suspect not identified	3			3
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>101</b>

## **6. Main Themes Identified in FVDRs**

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A number of common themes were drawn from the review of FVDRs, where it was apparent that changes could be made to improve the response to family violence. These are outlined briefly below.

### **6.1.1 Improved Information Sharing**

In many cases it was apparent that various agencies held information pertaining to the risk to the victim as a result of the relationship / environment they were living in. However it was relatively common that this information was not shared between Police and other agencies until after the victim's death.

### **6.1.2 Revise the Risk and Lethality Scoring Process**

A number of FVDRs noted that the risk assessment process could be revised to more accurately reflect the level of risk associated with individuals / families. The risk and lethality scoring process is currently being replaced with:

- the Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment (ODARA) tool, which predicts the likelihood of re-assault in intimate partner relationships
- a revised Police Family Violence Inter-agency Response form
- a child risk factor form that is a world-first in assessment specifically for children in homes where partner violence is occurring.

### **6.1.3 Promoting the Reporting of Family Violence**

In some cases a family violence death occurred following earlier instances of violence between suspect and victim. Many times, other people were aware of at least one or more violent incidents. Better reporting is needed to improve the safety of victims of family violence and this can be classified under two categories:

#### **1. Reporting by Public and Family or Friends**

Many of the FVDRs noted multiple family violence incidents that were witnessed or known about by other members of the family, friends or public but not reported to Police.

#### **2. Mandatory Reporting by GP's, Schools, Early Childhood Education Services**

##### Mandatory Reporting of Abuse of Children

Mandatory reporting of child abuse has been the subject of public attention and debate but has not been implemented to date. It is clear that mandatory reporting would bring child abuse to the attention of agencies who could then intervene with strategies to protect the child.

##### Mandatory Reporting of Family Violence Assaults on Adults

Consideration should also be given to mandatory reporting to Police by agencies and health professionals who become aware that an individual is the victim of family violence, regardless of their age.



#### **6.1.4 Incapable Parenting**

In a few of the family violence deaths of babies or children it is apparent that the parent or parents were incapable of parenting without significant ongoing support. In these cases the issues were less to do with criminal intent, but rather that the parent(s) simply did not have adequate parenting capability. Sometimes it was clear that the children were still at risk, despite intensive support provided, and they remained in the family environment until the events that lead to their death.

#### **6.1.5 Transient Families**

In a few cases families were identified as being 'at risk' and provided with interventions and support by various agencies. However due to their transient living arrangements, moving from one district to another, continuity of interventions and support was sometimes disrupted or permanently terminated and subsequently a family violence death occurred. It is not certain that if support had continued, the death would not have occurred however, it is important that processes to maintain support throughout transfers to new locations are maintained.

## 7. Appendix One: Relationship of Suspect to Victim

Relationship (Suspect / Victim)	Number of Victims
Defacto husband / Defacto wife	11
Mother / Daughter	10
Husband / Wife	8
Defacto wife / Defacto husband	6
Stepfather / stepson	6
Ex Boyfriend / Ex Girlfriend	6
Mother / Son	5
Suspect not identified	4
Boyfriend / Girlfriend - not living together	3
Brother / Brother	3
Father / Daughter	3
Son / Father	2
Stepfather / stepdaughter	2
Husband / wife's new partner	2
Ex husband / Ex wife	2
Stepson / Stepfather	2
Sister / Sister	2
Daughter's partner / partner's father	1
Girlfriend / Boyfriend - not living together	1
Boarder / Resident's child	1
Ex Boyfriend of daughter / Mother of suspect's Ex Girlfriend	1
Father / Son	1
Partner's nephew + friend / Uncle	1
Ex boyfriend / Ex girlfriend's new partner	1
Aunt / nephew (in uncle and aunt's care)	1
Daughter, daughter's partner / Father	1
Son-in-law / father-in-law	1
Associates	1
Step Nephew / Step Uncle	1
Brother in law / Brother in law	1
Ex Girlfriend / Ex Boyfriend	1
Distant relatives in Maori land dispute	1
Brother / Sister	1
Boarder / Resident	1
Ex husband / Ex wife's new partner	1
Grandmother / Granddaughter	1
Uncle / Nephew	1
Babysitter / baby	1
Wife / Husband	1
Ex Boyfriend / Ex Girlfriend's friend	1
Daughter / Mother	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>