

Safety and Security

OUTCOMES

People enjoy personal safety and security. Society is free from victimisation, abuse, violence and avoidable injury.

INTRODUCTION

Living without physical and emotional harm, or the fear of them, is fundamental to being able to participate in society, and necessary if people are to reach their potential and enjoy life. This includes freedom from intentional injury by others in the form of violence and abuse as well as from avoidable injury.

“People are entitled to live their lives feeling safe and secure.”

Violence in the home, including child abuse and neglect and domestic violence among adults, is an area of major concern. The Roper Report suggested that violence in the home could account for up to 80 per cent of all violence in society¹. Child abuse and neglect have been linked to a range of negative outcomes, both short and long term and including physical, psychological and behavioural, and social². Since 1986, an average of 10 children per year have died, and around 250 per year were hospitalised because of injuries inflicted by others³. It is widely accepted that this is a tiny proportion of the children for whom violence is part of their experience and expectation.

Other forms of criminal victimisation include physical assault and crimes against property which impose significant costs on individual victims and society as a whole. The costs include not only those of recovery, replacement or repair, but the fear of again being a target.

Measurement of criminal victimisation is notoriously difficult, as much crime is unreported, particularly domestic violence and child abuse. Under-reporting also makes it difficult to interpret changes over time: a rise in rates of child abuse does not necessarily mean that more abuse is occurring – it may mean simply that more is being reported. With child abuse and domestic violence, an increase in reported rates might be regarded as positive if it is a result of people talking about previously hidden problems more openly.

Because much crime goes unreported to police, victimisation surveys can give a more accurate picture of the extent of victimisation than police statistics. New Zealand has only conducted two such surveys, although another is planned, so time series data for these indicators is currently unavailable. However, while much crime is unreported, police statistics have the advantage of being able to provide information over time.

People should also be able to live in a society where they are free from the risk of avoidable death or injury. The leading cause of avoidable injury and death is motor vehicle crashes. Injuries and deaths from motor vehicle crashes bring enormous personal, social and economic costs and are a major cause of premature death and disability⁴. In economic terms, the social cost of motor vehicle crashes has been estimated at \$3.1 billion annually⁵. Workplace accidents are another form of avoidable injury. They are discussed in the section on paid work.

KEY POINTS

- The prevalence of **child abuse and neglect** is measured here by the proportion of children assessed as neglected or abused by the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services (CYFS). Rates of substantiated child abuse have remained stable for the past three years, and are somewhat lower than the year before that, the earliest year for which data is available. However, trends in the rate of assessed child abuse do not necessarily reflect changes in prevalence, as many factors influence whether people report suspected neglect and abuse. Maori children are much more likely than non-Maori to be assessed as abused or neglected.
- **Criminal victimisation** survey data shows that around one in 12 New Zealanders was a victim of violent offending in 1995. The large majority of offences against the person were perpetrated on a small number of people who had been repeatedly victimised. Men and women were victimised at about the same rate, although women were likely to have been assaulted by someone they knew well, and men by strangers or casual acquaintances. Survey data also indicates that one in seven women and one in 14 men had been abused by a current or previous partner. Maori and Pacific peoples were considerably more likely to have been a victim of violent offending than Europeans/Pakeha.
- **Road casualty rates** are the deaths, injuries and disabilities resulting from motor vehicle crashes. In 1999, New Zealand had a rate of around 13 deaths per 100,000 population, an improvement on the previous year, but still much higher than the rate of six in the United Kingdom. Males and younger people are much more likely to be killed or injured than other groups in the population. Maori and Pacific peoples, although less likely to drive than Europeans/Pakeha, are at greater risk of injury or death from motor vehicle crashes.

SUMMARY

People are entitled to live their lives feeling safe and secure. The indicators chosen for this domain suggest that this is not always the case. In particular, some children are killed, abused and neglected within families; some people suffer repeated victimisation at the hands of others; and each year deaths and injuries resulting from motor vehicle crashes impose high personal, social and economic costs.

Over the past five years there has been a reduction in the rates of death and injury from motor vehicle crashes. The rates of substantiated abuse and neglect of children reported to the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services show little change.

Children and young people seem to be at greater risk of both intentional and avoidable injury. Maori children figure prominently among those assessed as abused or neglected. Maori and Pacific peoples are more often the victims of crimes of violence than others, and they appear to encounter death and injury on the roads out of proportion to the amount of driving they do. These outcomes may be related to the younger age structure of the Maori and Pacific populations.

International comparisons of death rates from motor vehicle crashes show that other countries have lower rates of death from road crashes. Robust comparative data for other indicators is not available.

DEFINITION

The number of children assessed as abused (physically, emotionally, sexually) or neglected following a notification to the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services (CYFS), as a proportion (per 1,000) of all children under 17 years of age.

RELEVANCE

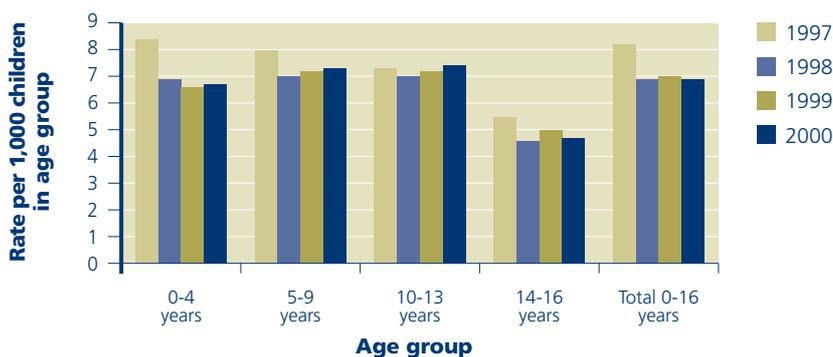
Abuse or violence can seriously damage a child’s physical and psychological health, with the consequences often experienced well into adolescence and adulthood. Protecting the lives and health of children and future adults by reducing child abuse is a critical component of improving social well-being in New Zealand.

CURRENT LEVEL AND TRENDS

In the year to June 2000, there were 26,588 care and protection notifications to CYFS. On a population basis, this represents 27 notifications per 1,000 children aged 0-16 years. Annual fluctuations in these figures do not necessarily reflect changes in the prevalence of child abuse. They may be influenced by the level of resources made available, and by changes in administration and reporting patterns⁶. More than one notification can be made for individual children.

In the year to June 2000, 6,833 children were assessed as abused or neglected by CYFS. This was a rate of 6.9 children for every 1,000 children under 17 years of age.

Figure SS1.1
Substantiated child abuse and neglect rate, by age group 1997-2000



Source: Ministry of Social Policy, SWIS data
 Note: The rate is based on individual children who were assessed as abused (physically, emotionally, sexually) or neglected

AGE AND GENDER DIFFERENCES

Rates of assessed abuse or neglect are fairly consistent across most age groups, but are much lower for males aged 14 to 16 years.

CYFS data shows that rates of sexual abuse are much higher for females than for males at all ages. Rates of physical abuse are slightly higher for males under 14 years and higher for females between 14-16. Little gender difference is apparent in rates of emotional abuse or neglect.

Table SS1.1

Children reported to CYFS who were assessed as abused or neglected, by age and gender, year ended 30 June 2000

Age	Rate per 1,000			Percentage distribution		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
0-4	6.4	6.8	6.7	26	32	29
5-9	7.5	6.9	7.3	32	35	34
10-13	8.3	6.4	7.4	27	25	26
14-16	6.7	2.8	4.7	15	8	12
Total	7.4	6.2	6.9	100	100	100

Source: Ministry of Social Policy, SWIS

ETHNIC DIFFERENCES

Maori children are much more likely than non-Maori children to be assessed as abused and neglected. In 2000, the rate per 1,000 was 12.0 for Maori and 5.3 for non-Maori.

While equivalent rates are not available for Pacific children, they are not over-represented among children assessed as abused, accounting for 12 per cent of such children in 2000, about the same representation as they have in the child population.

Table SS1.2

Children reported to CYFS who were assessed as abused or neglected, by ethnic group and gender, year ended 30 June 2000

Ethnicity	Rate per 1,000			Percentage distribution		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Maori	12.2	11.3	12.0	44	44	44
Non-Maori	5.8	4.7	5.3	56	56	56
Total	7.4	6.2	6.9	100	100	100

Source: Ministry of Social Policy, SWIS

INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

Comparison of child abuse statistics of different countries is difficult. The only recent attempt to compare international rates of abuse was published in 1993 and was based on infants under one year who had died from “undetermined causes”, a category which includes accidents as well as intentional harm. This study suggested that the “presumed childhood abuse mortality” rate for infants in New Zealand is relatively high by international standards. However, the comparison needs to be treated with caution, as in countries such as New Zealand with a small population, the number of homicides of infants is relatively low, and small changes in the number of deaths can lead to large fluctuations in rates from one year to the next⁷.

DEFINITION

The proportion of the population aged 15 and over who have been the victims of one or more incidents of criminal offending as measured by the 1995 National Survey of Crime Victims.

RELEVANCE

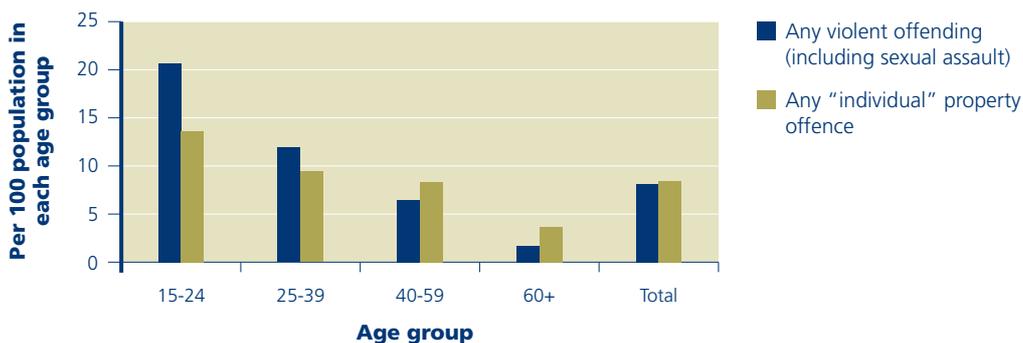
The criminal victimisation rate provides a broad measure of personal safety and well-being. Surveys of criminal victimisation generally provide a more comprehensive picture of victimisation than police data, as not all offending is reported or recorded.

CURRENT LEVEL (NO TREND DATA AVAILABLE)

Survey data shows that around one in 12 New Zealanders aged 15 and over (8.2 per cent) reported that they had been the victim of violent offending in 1995. A similar proportion (8.5 per cent) stated that they had been subject to an individual property offence, such as theft or wilful damage. Over a third (37.8 per cent) had experienced a household offence such as burglary or theft from, or of, a motor vehicle.

A small number of individuals accounted for the majority of offences against the person. Only six per cent of violent offence victims were victimised five or more times, but they accounted for 68 per cent of the violent offences reported in the survey. Repeat victimisation was also found among individual property offence victims, though to a lesser extent.

Figure SS2.1
Criminal victimisation rate by type of offence and age group 1995



Source: Young et al. 1997, Table 2.6

Survey information on partner violence shows that almost one in seven women (15.3 per cent) and one in 14 men (7.3 per cent) had been abused or threatened with violence by a current or previous partner at some time in their adult life. These figures should be regarded as indicative only, because of the problems associated with the collection of information on victimisation of this type⁸.

AGE AND GENDER DIFFERENCES

Young people are more likely than older people to be the victims of a violent offence. In the 1995 survey, just over a fifth (21 per cent) of the 15-24 age group had been the victims of a violent offence compared with 12 per cent for those aged 25-39, six per cent for the 40-59 age group and two per cent for those aged 60 and over. Younger adults were also more likely than older people to experience an individual property offence, though the difference by age was less pronounced than for violent offences.

Table SS2.1
Criminal victimisation rate by major offence type and age, 1995

Offence	Victimisation rate per 100 persons in each age group				Total
	15-24	25-39	40-59	60+	
Any violent offending (incl. sexual assault)	20.74	11.99	6.46	1.80	8.20
Any "individual" property offence	13.71	9.45	8.34	3.70	8.50

Source: Young et al. 1997, Tables 2.4, 2.5, 2.7

The rate of victimisation did not vary substantially by gender. In 1995, women who had been the victims of a violent offence were much more likely than men to report being assaulted by a person they knew well, while men had much higher rates of assault from strangers or casual acquaintances⁹.

ETHNIC DIFFERENCES

Patterns across ethnic groups varied according to the type of offence. In 1995, Maori and Pacific peoples were considerably more likely to have been a victim of violent offending than Europeans/Pakeha, but less likely to have experienced an individual property offence.

Table SS2.2
Criminal victimisation rate by major offence type and ethnicity, 1995

Offence	Victimisation rate per 100 persons aged 15+			
	European/Pakeha	Maori	Pacific	Other
Any violent offending (incl. sexual assault)	9.16	16.10	16.37	12.05
Any "individual" property offence	8.99	7.16	4.40	11.32

Source: Young et al. 1997, Table 2.8

Note: Information on victimisation among Pacific people is based on a relatively small sample size and should be treated with some caution

INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

The 1992 International Crime Survey showed that the overall criminal victimisation rate in New Zealand was similar to that of Australia, and England and Wales, but well above that of the United States and Sweden. These figures do not take account of the relative seriousness of the victimisation in the various countries.

DEFINITION

The number of people killed or injured in motor vehicle crashes as a proportion (per 100,000) of the total population.

RELEVANCE

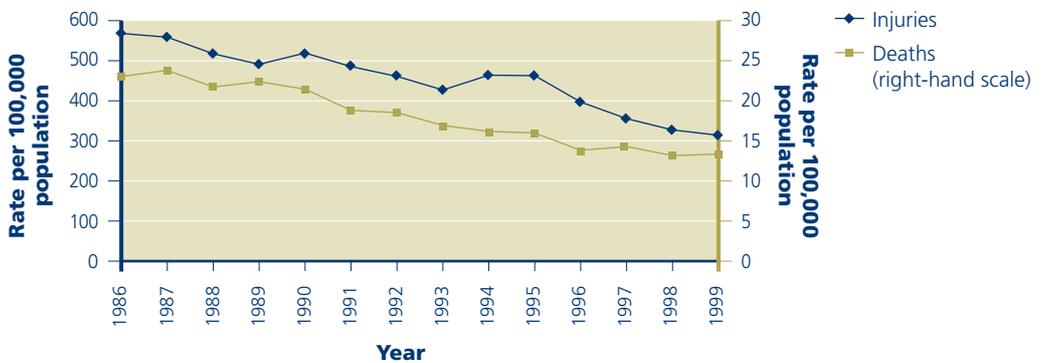
Road deaths are a major cause of premature death, especially among young adults. Deaths, injuries and disability resulting from motor vehicle crashes inflict considerable pain and suffering on individuals, families and communities, as well as on other road users, emergency service providers, health workers and others.

CURRENT LEVEL AND TRENDS

In 1999, 509 people died as a result of motor vehicle crashes, a rate of 13.4 deaths per 100,000 population. A further 11,999 people were injured, a rate of 314.9 per 100,000 population. Almost half of these people (5,819) had injuries serious enough for hospital admission.

Deaths and injuries from motor vehicle crashes have declined substantially since 1986, when the rates were 23.1 and 569.6 per 100,000 respectively. The number of people killed or injured in motor vehicle crashes was a third lower in 1999 than it was in 1986.

Figure SS3.1
Road traffic injury and death rates 1986-1999



Source: Land Transport Safety Authority 2000a, Table 1

AGE AND GENDER DIFFERENCES

Youth aged 15-24 years are far more likely than other age groups to be injured in a motor vehicle crash, with a rate more than double that of the population as a whole (696.3 per 100,000 compared with 314.9 per 100,000). The risk of dying is relatively low in middle age, then increases sharply at older ages, partly because of increasing fragility among the very old.

Males are much more likely than females to be injured or killed in motor vehicle crashes. In 1999, the injury rate was 362.8 per 100,000 for males and 263.2 for females; the death rate was 17.5 per 100,000 for males and 9.4 for females.

Table SS3.1

Road casualty rates by age and gender, 1999

Age	Rate per 100,000 population in each age group					
	Reported injury rate			Death rate		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Under 15	153.4	121.3	138.5	3.8	3.5	3.7
15-24	842.0	539.9	696.3	31.8	16.6	24.3
25-34	503.8	312.0	405.9	27.7	5.5	16.2
35-44	302.0	239.8	271.6	12.7	8.6	10.6
45-54	246.5	210.4	230.3	15.0	5.8	10.4
55-64	199.3	200.1	200.0	11.2	8.6	9.9
65-74	195.5	184.3	190.9	19.1	20.0	19.6
75+	260.3	186.1	214.7	33.7	18.0	24.0
Total	362.8	263.2	314.9	17.5	9.4	13.4

Source: Land Transport Safety Authority 2000a, Table 5

ETHNIC DIFFERENCES

Maori are much more likely than other ethnic groups to die in motor accidents. In 1997, the Maori age-standardised death rate from motor vehicle crashes (25 per 100,000 population) was more than twice the rate of other ethnic groups (Pacific, 10 per 100,000, European/Pakeha and other ethnic groups, 12 per 100,000).

Table SS3.2

Motor vehicle deaths and death rates by ethnicity, 1996, 1997

	Maori	Pacific	European/Pakeha/Other	Total
Number of deaths				
1996	131	26	363	520
1997	134	17	378	529
Age-standardised rate per 100,000				
1996	26	14	12	14
1997	25	10	12	14

Source of data: New Zealand Health Information Service, cited in Ministry of Health 2000, Table 1

Note: 1997 mortality data is provisional

Maori and Pacific people are less likely to drive than Europeans/Pakeha, but they are at greater risk of injury and death from motor vehicle crashes. A 1997/98 survey showed that, per distance driven, the risk of being hospitalised as a result of a crash was more than three times as high for Maori drivers, and only slightly less than three times as high for Pacific drivers compared to Europeans/Pakeha¹⁰.

INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

While the road death rate in New Zealand has fallen substantially since the mid-1980s, it remains considerably higher than that of several other countries. In 1998, the countries with the lowest road death rates were Sweden and the United Kingdom, with rates of 6.0 and 6.1 per 100,000 respectively. With a rate of just over 13, New Zealand performed slightly better than the United States and France, each with a rate of around 15 per 100,000.