New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey: Capturing Family members’ controlling behaviour as an extension of the crime and victims survey

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Principal Advisor, Lead of the New Zealand Crime and Victims Research Programme
Monday, 17 July, 10AM - noon
What is the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey?

The NZCVS is a national representative random sample survey

- ~8,000 adults (15+) each year pre-pandemic
- 70 - 80% response rate
- Face-to-face interviews
- Covers victimisation in 12 months prior to the interview (with one exception)
- 5 years of data collected starting in 2018 (35,000 interviews)
Family violence and offences by family members

**Family violence**, as defined in the Family Violence Act 2018, is a pattern of behaviour that **coerces, controls** or **harms** in the context of a close personal relationship.

**Family and sexual violence is gendered**, and it is mainly or most often men who commit acts of violence against women

- Women are also more likely experience more severe forms of violence

In the NZCVS, **offences by family members** includes physical violence, sexual assault, threats and harassment and property damage where the perpetrator was a family or whānau member of the victim.
Number of victims of offences by family members

- **All offences by family members**
  - 2022: 74.0
  - 2021: 69.0
  - 2018: 87.0

- **Intimate partner offences**
  - 2022: 56.0
  - 2021: 35.0
  - 2018: 50.0

- **Other family member offences**
  - 2022: 20.0
  - 2021: 34.0
  - 2018: 41.0
What are controlling behaviours?

Controlling behaviours are specific acts of control that are used to coerce, isolate and harm a person and impact their self-determination.

• Behaviours reflect some ways in which coercive control can be expressed in familial relationships.

Controlling behaviours are aspects of family violence that are not necessarily captured as offences and are not covered by questions relating to offences by family members.
In the NZCVS, **Controlling behaviour and harm questions** were designed to capture the broader patterns of family violence as it is defined in the Family Violence Act 2018

**Objectives:**

- Recognise family violence as a pattern of behaviour
- More comprehensively cover psychological abuse
- Measure experiences of relationships that are coercive or controlling or cause cumulative harm
Controlling Behaviours module – Harm and Impacts

- Cycle 1 & 3 introduced questions around specific behaviours by partners or ex-partners
- Specific behaviours questions may inadvertently capture behaviours that are not harmful
- Specific behaviours are often nuanced and determined by context and culture
- Following further consultation, the decision was made to screen for impacts or harm in addition to specific behaviours
- Cycle 4 saw the introduction of questions asking about impact or harm caused by the behaviour of other family members
Controlling Behaviours module – Gender based violence

• Gender Asymmetry: Women are more likely to experience more severe violence than men (Fanslow et al 2023)

• Capturing harm may be a more reliable measure than capturing specific behaviour only and may show the gender differences more clearly

• The resultant harm from behaviours is likely to have more of a negative impact on the victims wellbeing and be considered family violence under the Family Violence Act 2018 definition

• Behaviours may be experienced but not causing harm
Prevalence of harm by victim’s gender and personal factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand average</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual*</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated/divorced</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15–29 years</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never married or in a civil union</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māori</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled*</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* the rates for males suppressed due to the high margin of error

% of adults who experienced any harm, by victim gender – Cycle 4
Prevalence of controlling behaviour occurring with harm by victim’s gender and personal factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand average</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay/lesbian, bisexual or other*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated/divorced</td>
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<tr>
<td>Māori</td>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

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% of adults who experienced specific acts of controlling behaviour, by victim gender – Cycle 4
Percentage of adults who experienced any harm, by perpetrator relationship

- Partner: 5%
- Ex-partner: 4%
- Parent: 34%
- Parent's partner: S
- Step-parent: S
- Sibling\(^1\): 21% \(^1\) include step-sibling
- Children\(^2\): 14% \(^2\) include children in-law
- Other family/whānau\(^3\): 30% \(^3\) include extended family

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Relations between harm and controlling behaviour

Any harm
701K
(18% of NZ adults)

Harm and controlling behaviours
353K
(9% of NZ adults)

Any controlling behaviours
500K
(13% of NZ adults)

Any harm or any controlling behaviour
848K
(21% of NZ adults)
Females were significantly more likely to experience the following negative reactions in relation to harms caused by a partner, ex-partner or other family / whānau members behaviour than males.

- **Anger / annoyance**: 69% (Female) vs 53% (Male)
- **Crying / tears**: 50% (Female) vs 12% (Male)
- **Loss of confidence / feeling vulnerable**: 43% (Female) vs 24% (Male)
- **Anxiety / panic attacks**: 41% (Female) vs 21% (Male)
- **Depression**: 36% (Female) vs 19% (Male)
- **Difficulty sleeping**: 34% (Female) vs 20% (Male)
- **Fear**: 33% (Female) vs 9% (Male)
- **Shock**: 26% (Female) vs 16% (Male)

**Negative reactions in relation to harms, by gender**
Consequences of the controlling behaviour and harms

As a result of the controlling behaviours or harms experienced

- 20% of adults had to take time off work
- 9% of adults had to take time off from studying
- 12% of adults had spoken to the Police
- 24% of adults had spoken to a health professional
Help-seeking for family violence

- Any harms or acts of controlling behaviour or any offending by family/whānau members: 39%
- Any harms or acts of controlling behaviour: 39%
- Any offending by family/whānau members: 74%
- Harms or acts of controlling behaviour only: 37%
- Both harms or acts of controlling behaviour and offending by family/whānau members: 77%
Where to from here?

- The ability to expand this analysis as more cycles of the NZCVS are completed and the sample size increases.
- Potential to include cross sectional analysis to investigate different demographics groups and the impact of controlling behaviours and harm (for example Māori adults, disabled adults, and adults with diverse sexualities).
- Exploring coercive and controlling behaviours by non-intimate partners, for example other family members like parents and children and any age dynamics.
- The prevalence rate of offending by family members (2%) is considerably lower than the prevalence rates of harm as a result of behaviours and acts of controlling behaviour. It would be useful to explore this disparity more.
THANK YOU.

New Zealand Crime and Victims survey

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