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The information presented in this report is a synopsis of victims of domestic violence and child abuse murders in the city of Chicago in the year 2005 and in comparison to the ten-year period of 1995 through 2004.

**Overview**

During the entire period of 1995 through 2005, domestic violence murders totaled 522 or 7.3% of all murders and child abuse murders totaled 166 or 2.3% of all murders in Chicago (n = 7,179). A murder is considered domestic violence in Illinois if the victim and suspect/offender meet any of the following criteria as established by the Illinois Domestic Violence Act (IDVA):

- persons related by blood or by present or prior marriage;
- persons of the opposite sex or same sex who have or had a dating relationship;
- persons who have or claim to have a child in common;
- persons who share or claim to share a blood relationship through a child;
- persons who share or previously shared a common dwelling (e.g. roommates); and,
- persons with disabilities and their personal assistants or caregivers.

A murder is considered child abuse if the victim was under the age of 18 at the time of abuse and a parent, immediate family member, any person responsible for the child’s welfare, or other individual residing in the same home inflicts, causes to be inflicted, or allows to be inflicted upon such child physical injury, by other than accidental means, which causes death.

In the year 2005 in Chicago, there were 36 murders classified as domestic violence and nine murders classified as child abuse. By historical comparison, those numbers were below the annual averages for the 10 year period of 1995 through 2004, which were 49 and 16, respectively, representing variances of -26.5% and -56.3%, respectively. Exhibit I graphically depicts the number of domestic violence and child abuse murders from 1995 through 2005.

The rate of decline in the numbers of domestic violence and child abuse murders tracked closely with the rate of decline in the number of total murders in Chicago. Comparing 1995 to 2005, domestic violence murders decreased by 41.9%, child abuse murders decreased by 65.4%, and all murders in the city decreased by 45.9% (from 828 to 448).

**Gender**

Exhibits 2 and 3 on the following page present domestic violence victims by gender for the year 2005 and for the period 1995 through 2004. Though just over one-half of the victims have been females, in eight of the 11 years reviewed, there were more female victims than male victims of domestic violence murder. Please refer to the sidebar article on page 3 for additional gender comparisons.

Of the nine child abuse murders in 2005, two of the victims were females and seven victims were males. However, in the 1995-2004 period, the difference was small, as 47.8% were females (n=75) and 52.2% were males (n=82).
Gender and Race

The numbers of domestic violence murder victims are shown together with race groups and gender distributions in Exhibits 4 and 5, with the former presenting 2005 and the latter 1995 through 2004. Both exhibits indicate that the African American community experiences many more domestic violence murders than other race groups—approximately six times more than Caucasians for both time frames, and from three and one-half times more in 2005 to nearly seven times more than Hispanics from 1995 through 2004. The reader should note that the data presented address the race of the victim only and does not include the race of the offender.

Child abuse murder victims by race and gender are presented in Exhibits 6 and 7. Again we see that African Americans were the majority of the victims in both periods: 88.9% in 2005 and 75.2% in the 1995 through 2004 period. Although 77.7% of Chicago’s child abuse murder victims were males in 2005, gender was not significantly one-sided from 1995 through 2004 when 52.2% were males and 47.8% were females.

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United States Intimate Partner Compared to Illinois Domestic Violence Act

The adjacent table lists the percentages of intimate partner and domestic violence homicides by race and gender for the period 1995 through 2004 for Chicago and the United States. The more inclusive definition of domestic violence was noted at the beginning of this report. Intimate partners are defined to include only spouses, former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends (but not former boyfriends or former girlfriends). The data in the table indicate that both in Chicago and in the country, females are more likely than males to be the victim of an intimate partner homicide. Nationally, intimate partner homicide victims were 73.8% female and 26.2% male during those 10 years. This is particularly true for Caucasians and other non-African American race groups. However, using the IDVA expanded definition (including all relatives, roommates, and caregivers), there are more male victims than female victims of domestic violence homicide in Chicago among African Americans, but still more female victims than male victims among Caucasian and other non-African American victims.

Another aspect of intimate partner data is the following: in the United States between the years 1995 through 2004 inclusive, 30.7% of all females murdered (n = 40,061) were victims of intimate partner violence, whereas 3.3% of all males murdered (n = 132,039) were victims of intimate partner violence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1995 - 2004 Murder Victims</th>
<th>Intimate Partner</th>
<th>IDVA</th>
<th>Chicago</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>IDVA</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
<td>53.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57.7%</td>
<td>64.6%</td>
<td>46.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>89.2%</td>
<td>78.2%</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>81.5%</td>
<td>71.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: IDVA is the Illinois Domestic Violence Act with relationships that include more than Intimate Partners and are defined at the beginning of this report.

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The vast majority of both domestic violence and child abuse murders occur in or immediately about a residence (e.g. porch, hallway, garage). In 2005, 80.6% of domestic violence murders and 100.0% of child abuse murders occurred in or immediately about a residence. From 1995 through 2004, 81.9% of domestic violence murders and 96.8% of child abuse murders were committed in or about a residence.

Weapon Type

Weapon type used in domestic violence homicides are shown for 2005, and 1995 through 2004 in Exhibits 9 and 10, respectively. For the entire combined period, stabbing is the most frequent method of injury, followed by firearm, then an object with which to bludgeon.

In 2005, a bludgeoning instrument was used in 88.9% of child abuse murders and in 70.7% from 1995 through 2004. During the 10 year period, drowning was the second most-frequent method of child abuse murder, accounting for 5.1% of such incidents.

Relationships Between Victim and Offender

By definition, both domestic violence and child abuse murders involve victims and offenders with a prior known relationship. Reviewing only intimate partner relationships, that is, current and/or former husbands and wives, and current boyfriends and girlfriends, murders involving those relationships accounted for 5.4% of all murders in 2005 and 4.3% from 1995 through 2004 in Chicago. For comparison, intimate partner relationships accounted for 9.7% of all murders nationally from 1995 through 2004.

In regard to cases of child abuse murder in Chicago in 2005, mothers, fathers, and caregivers each accounted for 22.2% of the offenders. Between 1995 and 2004, inclusive, the most frequent offenders in child abuse murders were mothers (34.8%), fathers (24.2%), and mother’s boyfriends (21.9%).


3 Excludes step-parents and foster-parents.