

## ELDER ABUSE

Updated January 21, 2009

As Canada's population ages, the number of citizens over 65 years of age will outnumber the number of citizens under the age of 15 by 2015.<sup>1</sup> This shift means that an increasing number of people will be put into the position of caregiver for their parents even as they may be caring for their own family. Juggling these responsibilities involves, by necessity, a great deal of stress. We must be mindful, therefore, of the problem of elder abuse. Below are some quick statistics on the scope of the problem today.

All statistics are quoted from *Family Violence in Canada, 2007* pages 32-34. Published by Statistics Canada and retrieved on January 21, 2009 from <http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/85-224-XIE/85-224-XIE2007000.pdf>

- In 2005, there were 160 violent incidents for every 100,000 seniors, almost 14 times lower than the rate recorded for persons aged 15 to 24 (2,317 per 100,000).
- Trend data show that between 1998 and 2005, the overall rate of police-reported violence against seniors increased 20%.
- According to police-reported data, senior males are more likely than senior females to be victims of violent crime. In 2005, senior men experienced rates of violent crime that were 1.5 times higher than for senior women (172 versus 114 per 100,000).
- When considering violence at the hands of a family member, rates of violence were higher for senior women. There were 47 per 100,000 females over 65 who were violently victimized by a family member, compared to 36 per 100,000 males over 65.
- According to police-reported data, rates of family violence against seniors were highest when the accused was an adult child (15 per 100,000) or a current or former spouse (13 per 100,000).
- Senior females were most likely to experience family violence at the hands of their current or ex-spouse (17 per 100,000) or their adult children (16 per 100,000); while senior males were more likely to be victimized by their adult children (13 per 100,000).

- Police-reported data show that the oldest seniors are less likely to be victims of family violence (Figure 3.3). The rate of family violence against seniors aged 85 and over was lowest at 22 per 100,000, compared to 34 for seniors between 75 and 84 years of age, and 52 for the youngest seniors aged 65 to 74 years of age.

#### Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Bélanger, A., L. Martel and É. Caron-Malenfant. (2005). *Population Projections for Canada, Provinces, and Territories, 2005-2031*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 91-520-XIE. Retrieved January 7, 2009 from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/91-520-x/91-520-x2005001-eng.pdf>

1912 – 130 rue Albert Street Ottawa Ontario Canada K1P 5G4

T 613.565.3832 f/t 613.565.3803 1.866.373.4632

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