

# Intimate Partner Homicides in Illinois: 2005 through 2010

Intimate partner homicide (IPH) is the lethal outcome of unaddressed intimate partner violence (IPV). IPV — including sexual violence, physical hostility, stalking and psychological aggression — can and does result in IPH. Here we present information on the circumstances surrounding IPH in five Illinois counties — Cook, DuPage, Kane, McHenry and Peoria — from 2005 to 2010. Using data from the Illinois Violent Death Reporting System (IVDRS), we describe characteristics of the victims, suspects and surrounding circumstances of IPH. IVDRS is part of the National Violent Death Reporting System, which pools information about the “who, when, where and how” of violent deaths to provide a more accurate picture and develop insight into “why” they occur.

*Two-thirds of intimate partner homicide occurred in the victim's home.*

Information about how the data was collected is presented in a previous Data Brief (Illinois Violent Death Reporting System, July 2008). Cases were included where the county of injury leading to death and county of death were the same.

From 2005 to 2010, 275 documented cases of IPH occurred in IVDRS counties. Table 1 presents demographic information on the victims. The median age of IPH victims was 36.1 years, and females comprised 60.4% of all deaths. When looking at the racial breakdown, 63.4% of victims were identified as African American, 21.3% as Caucasian and 15.3% as Latino. By weapon, firearms were used in 46.9% of all homicides, and sharp instruments were used in 32.4%. One-third of IPH victims tested positive for alcohol.

*One-fifth of the victims of intimate partner homicides had a documented history of abuse, including prior law enforcement involvement.*

Table 2 depicts suspect information. Over three-quarters of the suspects were male. Over 60% of suspects were identified as a current partner of the victim, and additional 13% were ex-partners of the victim. Corollary victims included relatives, close acquaintances and friends of the suspect's current or former intimate partner; these

victims were targeted due to their connection with the suspect's current/former intimate partner. “Lover's triangle” victims were killed by a third-party member in an act of love, jealousy, anger or revenge.

**Table 1. Victim demographics (total victims, N=275)**

Category	Description	Measure (n)
<b>Age</b>	Mean	36.1 (274)
<b>Sex</b>	Male	39.6% (109)
	Female	60.4% (166)
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b> (n=268)	Caucasian	21.3% (57)
	African American	63.4% (170)
	Latino	15.3% (41)
<b>Location of Injury</b>	Away from victim's residence	36.4% (100)
	At victim's residence	63.6% (175)
<b>Weapon Type</b>	Firearm	46.9% (129)
	Sharp instrument	32.4% (89)
	Hanging/strangulation	8.7% (24)
	Other weapon	12.0% (33)
<b>Positive for Alcohol Toxicology</b> (n=258)	Yes	34.5% (89)
	No	65.5% (169)
<b>County of Injury</b>	City of Chicago	58.5% (161)
	Suburban Cook	25.1% (69)
	DuPage, McHenry, Kane and Peoria	16.4% (45)

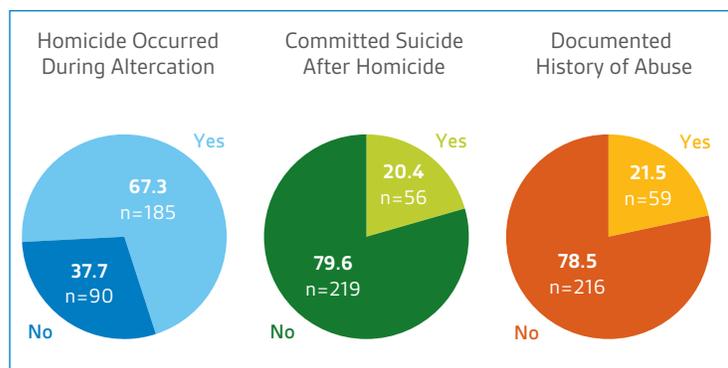
**Table 2. Suspect information (total suspects, N=275)**

Category	Description	Measure (n)
<b>Sex</b>	Male	78.5% (216)
	Female	21.5% (59)
<b>Relationship to Victim</b>	Current boyfriend/girlfriend	34.9% (96)
	Current spouse	26.2% (72)
	Ex-partner	13.1% (36)
	Corollary victim*	11.3% (31)
	Lover's triangle	10.5% (29)
	Law enforcement intervention led to homicide	4.0% (11)
<b>Order of Protection Issued</b>	Yes	6.2% (17)
	No	93.8% (258)

\*Corollary victims consist of family, friends or close acquaintances

Figure 1 depicts circumstances surrounding IPH. A documented history of abuse, including cases in which there was prior law enforcement involvement, was found in 21.5% of IPH cases. Twenty percent of suspects committed suicide immediately following the homicide. Most notably, IPH occurred during an altercation, verbal and/or physical, in 67.3% of cases.

**Figure 1.** Circumstances surrounding intimate partner homicide



This information can be used to prevent IPH; law enforcement, for example, can use this information to identify and work with those who are affected by IPV to deter future acts of IPV and IPH. Assistant Chief Lisa Snow of the Peoria Police Department states, "During my 26-year career in law enforcement, the majority of intimate partner homicides I have witnessed have documented incidents of physical abuse occurring in the relationship before the death. Law enforcement is currently experimenting with programs that focus intervention efforts on perpetrators with a history of physical abuse towards an intimate partner who is actively engaged in an intimate partner relationship. This intervention will include counseling and regular contact with law enforcement as part of a treatment plan. It is hoped that by working with perpetrators at the first signs of violence that law enforcement can stop the violence from becoming ongoing and potentially fatal."

## RESOURCES

**If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence and needs help:**

### State of Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline



Domestic violence programs located throughout Illinois provide safety assistance to victims of domestic violence. Services include: 24-hour crisis hotline, counseling, safety planning, legal advocacy, children's services, temporary food and housing and outreach.

<http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=30275>

**If you want to learn more about what you can do to end domestic violence:**

### Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence



The Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV) is a not-for-profit membership organization that works to eliminate violence against women and their children by promoting the eradication of domestic violence throughout Illinois; ensuring the safety of survivors, their access to services and their freedom of choice; holding abusers accountable for the violence they perpetrate; and encouraging the development of victim-sensitive laws, policies and procedures across all systems that impact survivors.

[icadv.org/](http://icadv.org/)

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information on the Illinois Violent Death Reporting System, please contact:

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