

## 9. Interpersonal violence

Interpersonal violence is the term used to describe injury purposely inflicted by one or more persons on another person (WHO, 1977; WHO, 1992). WHO classifies the cause of interpersonal violence hospitalisations by the method used to inflict injury on another person: using a *sharp or blunt object* to hit, cut or stab another person causing bleeding or other type of injury, *shooting by firearm*, *struck by/struck against* a person or object, *hanging*, *strangulation or suffocation*, and *poisoning*.

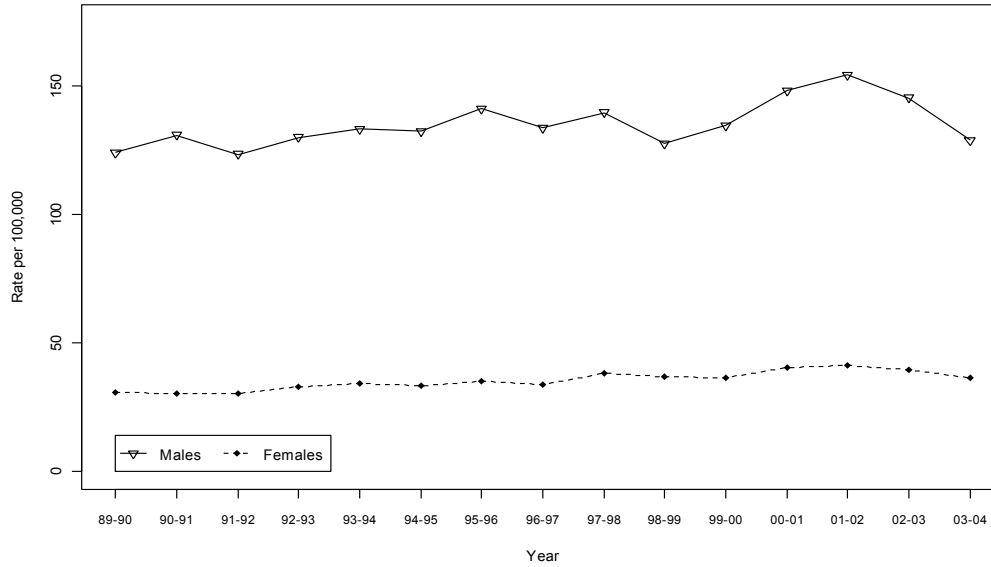
In NSW, interpersonal violence was the fifth leading cause of death in NSW during 1998–2002, with 513 deaths, giving a mortality rate of 1.6 per 100,000 population (Schmertmann et al, 2004). The lifetime cost of fatal and non-fatal interpersonal violence in NSW has been estimated at \$133.9 million—\$21.9 million in direct costs and \$112 million in mortality and morbidity costs (Potter-Forbes & Aisbett, 2003).

Interpersonal violence hospitalisation data were used to describe the profile of hospitalisation for NSW residents. Hospitalisation data from 1999–2000 to 2003–2004 were used for the majority of analyses, except for the trend analyses, which used data from 1989–1990 to 2003–2004.

Injury due to interpersonal violence was the sixth leading cause of injury hospitalisation for the period 1999–2000 to 2003–2004, and accounted for 5.9% of all injury hospitalisations (Table 3). During this period, there were 29,701 hospitalisations due to interpersonal violence, at a rate of 90.8 per 100,000 population. There were approximately 5,940 hospitalisations per year during 1999–2000 to 2003–2004 due to interpersonal violence.

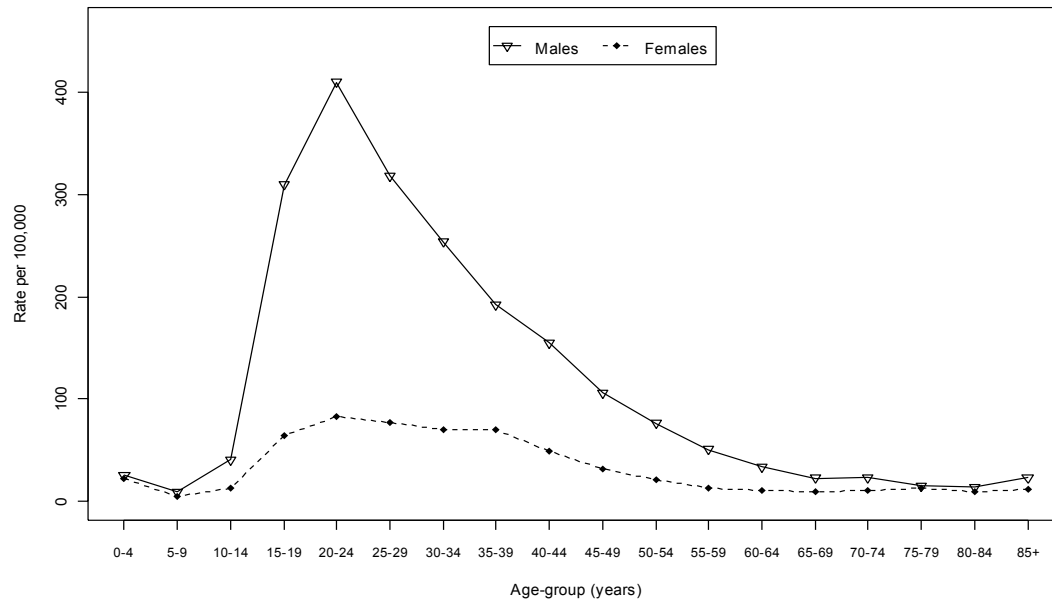
Rates of hospitalisation for interpersonal violence were almost three times higher in males than females for the period 1989–1990 to 2003–2004 (Figure 13). The hospitalisation rate was estimated to have increased significantly by 0.9% per year for males (95% confidence interval for the increase: 0.3% to 1.5%), and increased significantly by 2.7% per year (95% confidence interval for the increase: 1.9% to 3.5%) for females.

**Figure 13. Hospitalisation rate for injury due to interpersonal violence by sex, NSW 1989–1990 to 2003–2004**



Rates of hospitalisation for interpersonal violence were higher in males than females for all age groups during 1999–2000 to 2003–2004 (Figure 14). Males aged 20–24 years had the highest hospitalisation rates for injuries due to interpersonal violence.

**Figure 14. Age-specific hospitalisation rate for interpersonal violence by sex, NSW, 1999–2000 to 2003–2004**



Interpersonal violence using *bodily force* accounted for just over half (58.0%) of the hospitalisations due to interpersonal violence (Table 14). For males, bodily force represented over three-quarters of the hospitalisations for interpersonal violence. The overall hospitalisation rate for males was about 266% higher than for females.

Table 15 shows the number of hospitalisations by age group and method used for the period 1999–2000 to 2003–2004. In all age groups, *bodily force* was the most common method of interpersonal violence that caused hospitalisation.

**Table 14. Injury hospitalisations by interpersonal violence method, NSW, number, rate and CI, 1999–2000 to 2003–2004**

IPV method	All Persons			Male			Female		
	N	Rate <sup>1</sup>	95%CI <sup>2</sup>	N	Rate <sup>1</sup>	95%CI <sup>2</sup>	N	Rate <sup>1</sup>	95%CI <sup>2</sup>
Bodily force	17,238	52.7	(51.9,53.5)	13,000	79.1	(77.7,80.4)	4,239	26.0	(25.2,26.8)
Sharp or blunt object	6,830	20.9	(20.4,21.4)	5,870	35.7	(34.8,36.7)	960	5.9	(5.5,6.3)
Firearm	308	0.9	(0.8,1.1)	286	1.7	(1.5,1.9)	22	0.1	(0.1,0.2)
Poisoning	113	0.3	(0.3,0.4)	54	0.3	(0.2,0.4)	59	0.4	(0.3,0.5)
Suffocation	39	0.1	(0.1,0.2)	15	0.1	(0.1,0.1)	24	0.1	(0.1,0.2)
Other	5,172	15.8	(15.4,16.2)	4,132	25.1	(24.4,25.9)	1,039	6.3	(5.9,6.7)
All <sup>3</sup>	29,701	90.8	(89.8,91.8)	23,356	142.1	(140.3,143.9)	6,343	38.8	(37.8,39.8)

1 Age-adjusted rate per 100,000 population.

2 95% confidence interval.

3 The number of NSW residents hospitalised interstate during 2003–2004 was imputed and as a result the sum of submechanisms may not equal the total.

## SUMMARY

Injury due to interpersonal violence was the sixth leading cause of hospitalisation due to injury involving NSW residents between 1999–2000 and 2003–2004, accounting for 5.9% of all injury-related hospitalisations. The yearly hospitalisation rate for interpersonal violence-related injuries was estimated to significantly increase by 0.9% per year for males and 2.7% per year for females during 1989–1990 to 2003–2004.

In 2003–2004, there were 5,500 hospitalisations of NSW residents following interpersonal violence, giving a hospitalisation rate of 82.9 per 100,000 population. More than four-fifths of those hospitalised following an injury due to interpersonal violence (80.5%) were aged 15–44 years.

*Bodily force* and *sharp or blunt objects* were the two most common methods of interpersonal violence that led to a hospitalisation. Males had higher hospitalisation rates for all types of interpersonal violence than females, except for poisoning and suffocation. The overall hospitalisation rate for males was about 266% higher than for females.

**Table 15. Number of hospitalisations for interpersonal violence<sup>1</sup> by age group and cause, NSW, 1999–2000 to 2003–2004**

Rank	Age group										Total
	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+		
<b>1</b>	Bodily force 410	Bodily force 107	Bodily force 457	Bodily force 5,790	Bodily force 4,898	Bodily force 3,271	Bodily force 1,475	Bodily force 483	Bodily force 348	Bodily force 17,238	
<b>2</b>	Sharp or blunt object 11	Sharp or blunt object 22	Sharp or blunt object 72	Sharp or blunt object 2,228	Sharp or blunt object 2,146	Sharp or blunt object 1,427	Sharp or blunt object 612	Sharp or blunt object 188	Sharp or blunt object 122	Sharp or blunt object 6,830	
<b>3</b>	Poisoning 5	Firearm #	Suffocation #	Firearm 142	Firearm 81	Firearm 51	Firearm 18	Firearm 9	Poisoning #	Firearm 308	
<b>4</b>	Suffocation #	Poisoning #	Poisoning #	Poisoning 45	Poisoning 25	Poisoning 15	Poisoning 12	Poisoning #	Firearm #	Poisoning 113	
<b>5</b>		Suffocation #	Firearm #	Suffocation 7	Suffocation 11	Suffocation 7	Suffocation #	Suffocation #	Suffocation #	Suffocation 39	
	Other 86	Other 20	Other 77	Other 1,507	Other 1,545	Other 1,075	Other 499	Other 204	Other 160	Other 5,172	

<sup>1</sup># Cell sizes represent fewer than five hospitalisations or data have been removed to prevent identification of cell sizes less than five.