

# Reporting Intimate Partner Violence

## Comparing rates before and during the pandemic shutdown

**Agencies:** Barrie (Ont.) Police Service, Saskatoon (Sask.) Police Service, and West Vancouver (B.C.) Police Department

**Analysis Period:** Data analysis spanned January 1, 2017 to June 30, 2020

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### Context

Community findings on intimate partner violence (IPV) during the Covid-19 pandemic document both lower and higher rates as compared with periods before the pandemic. Analyzing IPV reports to police agencies may help to illuminate this phenomenon.

### Key Finding

The number of IPV reports was not significantly different during the Covid-19 shutdown period in 2020 as compared with the overall trend for the same period in the previous years for Barrie or Saskatoon. No site-specific analysis was conducted for West Vancouver, given the small number of IPV reports in that location.

\*BetaGov trains agency personnel to become research-savvy "Pracademics" who lead trials.

## Background

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is any threat, attempt, or actual violence perpetrated by one current or past romantic partner against another. Recent research suggests that the Covid-19 "stay-at-home" orders would have resulted in more IPV events but fewer opportunities to report these events to law enforcement. Pandemic-related stressors may put IPV victims at greater risk due to proximity to their abuser and the reduced availability of support and avenues of escape. National data show that almost one third of all police-reported violence in Canada occurs between intimate partners. To address whether the number of IPV reports increased as a result of the pandemic, three Canadian police agencies serving diverse jurisdictions partnered on a cross-agency project.

## Study Design

Three police agencies provided data on IPV reports that occurred prior to and after the announcement of provincial Covid-19 shutdown orders. Barrie (BPS), Saskatoon (SPS), and West Vancouver (WVPD) police agencies collected demographic, crime, and associated data for years 2017, 2018, and 2019, and through June 30, 2020.

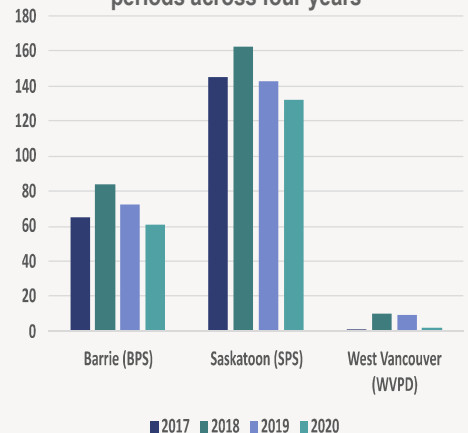
## Results

The number of IPV reports during the same period, by year, by site are shown in the figure for all three sites. T-test analyses compared both the mean number of IPV events for the reported shutdown period (March 11–June 30)

from 2017–2019 with 2020 for BPS and SPS and, separately, 2019 to 2020. No statistically significant difference in number of IPV reports was found for any comparison. Additional data collected from community shelters in both locations shows a decrease in the number of DV reports and housing requests during the shutdown period in 2020 compared to previous years, although no statistical analyses were conducted on these raw numbers. Because of the small number of events in WVPD, no statistical analyses compared the number of events by year.

Additional analyses, to be profiled in subsequent reports, addressed patterns of IPV reports from January 2017 through June 2020 and changes in case characteristics during Covid-19, most notably in demographics, relationship status, and the involvement of weapons.

IPV reports by site for March 11–June 30 periods across four years



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