

AGE, CRIMINAL HISTORY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In Calgary in 2019, 934 men were charged with a crime perpetrated against an intimate partner. These charges were typically preceded by a growing number of other police-interactions in the two years before the charge.

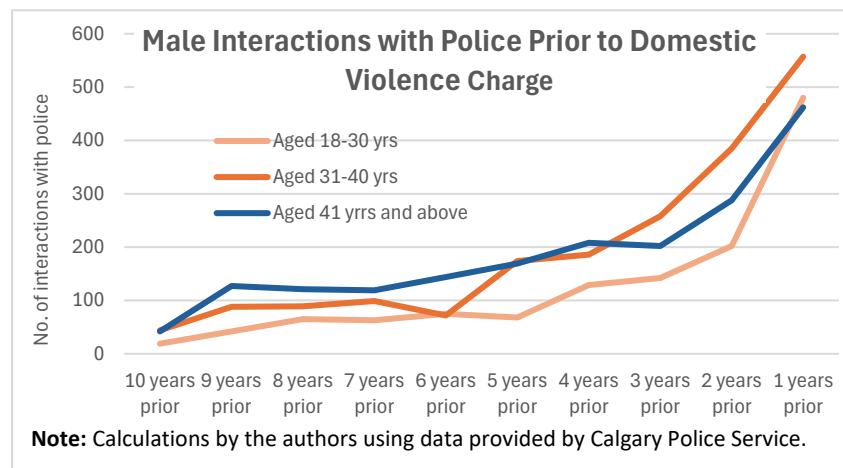
Domestic violence is a crime against a person, frequently an intimate partner or ex-spouse but also sometimes a crime against a child or a parent. In nearly 90 per cent of cases, the perpetrator is male.

Domestic violence incidents perpetrated by males have been linked to unemployment, financial stress, alcohol and substance abuse, childhood experiences of abuse, and even the results of certain [sporting events](#). The December [holiday season](#) is typically a period of much higher numbers of domestic violence incidents.

It is generally assumed acts of violence peak during young adulthood. This may not be the case when it comes to domestic violence.

An important public policy response to incidents of domestic violence is keeping victims safe. This includes funding women's shelters and providing supports to victims and to children who witness incidents of domestic violence to prevent intergenerational trauma. Less frequently supported are interventions with men, interventions meant to prevent the violence from happening or escalating. Using data made available by Calgary Police Service, we are engaged in a research agenda that examines the possibility of such early interventions.

In 2019, 934 men in Calgary were charged with a crime perpetrated against a female intimate partner. In the chart we present data describing the history of police involvements with these men during the 10 years prior to them being charged with a crime involving domestic violence. These histories are stratified by the age of these



men at the time of the charge laid in 2019. The three age groups are remarkably similar in size, each containing approximately 300 men.

Two types of police interactions are reported in these data. One involves the laying of *criminal charges*. The other involves what are known as *domestic conflict encounters*. A domestic conflict encounter is an interaction that meets the threshold for police involvement but does not result in a charge of a criminal offence.

The data shows in the 10 years before the criminal charge involving domestic violence was laid in 2019, the number of police interactions steadily increased. The upward trajectory is observed for men in all three age groupings suggesting acts of domestic violence are not the sole domain of young men. Rather than the age of the perpetrator, a better predictor of an eventual charge involving domestic violence may be their history of police interactions.

Our on-going research program focuses on pinpointing when during their history of police interactions there may be critical points when well-designed interventions by police and community services could prevent the incident of domestic violence from ever occurring.