

Calgary's Domestic Violence rate is on the rise. How do Stamps and Stampede factor in? New School of Public Policy report

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CALGARY- Alberta has the fourth-highest police-reported rate of domestic violence (DV) in Canada. The Calgary Police Service reports steadily rising domestic violence rates in the last few years with the largest increase in 2016 (36-per-cent more DV calls than the average), the highest rate since 2004. Compounding the toll that violence takes on individuals and families, the minimum cost to Alberta's taxpayers is estimated at **\$100 million per year** for basic services for victims. But, there are some days and events in Calgary when domestic violence is more likely to happen. What are they? Why?

Today, The School of Public Policy and authors Sophia Boutilier, Ali Jadidzadeh, Elena Esina, Lana Wells and Ron Kneebone released a report that examines variations in DV rates during holidays and professional sporting events, specific to Calgary from 2011 to 2014. The report also makes solid recommendations for primary prevention efforts.

According to co-author Lana Wells, "There are some days in Calgary when domestic violence is more likely to happen than other days. There is a statistically significant connection between higher rates of domestic violence and certain Calgary Stampeders' football games as well as the arrival of the Calgary Stampede. During the 10-day-long **Calgary Stampede**, domestic violence calls on the seventh, ninth and 10th day of Stampede, were up **15 per cent** compared to an average day. Weekends and summer months were also generally associated with the highest rates of domestic violence reports in Calgary. When it came to **Calgary Stampeders'** football games, calls were higher only when the Stampeders faced off against the rival Edmonton Eskimos – with a **15-per-cent** increase in domestic violence reports. Grey Cup games in which Calgary played were associated with a **40-per-cent** increase in reports of domestic violence. However, games played by the **Calgary Flames** seemed to have no relationship to domestic violence calls, even those against the rival Edmonton team.

Since reducing domestic violence requires recognizing possible contributing factors and finding ways to counteract their effect, identifying these correlates is the first step to prevention. New places to look, based on these results, are highly charged Stampeder football games, the Calgary Stampede, weekends, summer months and certain holidays. The authors recommend increasing publically funded childcare and affordable family outings; increasing training in social and emotional learning for parents and families; working with sporting organizations and workplaces to better educate and support gender equity, healthy relationship skills, healthy masculinities and norms and bystander skills; and implement alcohol prevention strategies.

The report can be found online at www.policyschool.ca/publications/

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