

Fall in violence in UK, study finds

April 19 2011

Injuries from assault requiring hospital treatment fell by more than 10 per cent last year, the University's Violence and Society Research Group has found.

The Group's annual survey of hospital emergency attendances found a violence injury rate of 5.72 people for every 1,000 residents. This represents 313,033 people in England and Wales needing treatment after assault – a 10.8 per cent fall since 2009. There were particularly large decreases among two of the highest risk groups - teenagers and young adults. The overall fall continues the downward trend in violence injuries found in the last ten years.

Worryingly, the team found an increase in violent injuries among children aged under 11 for the second year running.

The Group, winner of a Queen's Anniversary Prize in 2009, surveys a structured sample of hospitals every year, analyzing anonymised data about patients treated for violence-related injuries. The 2010 survey found 11 per cent fewer males and 8 per cent fewer females needing treatment. Serious violence fell in all age groups between 11 and 50. The largest decreases were a 16.5 per cent fall for those aged 11 to 17, and 11.3 per cent for those aged 18 to 30.

Professor Jonathan Shepherd, Director of the Violence and Society Research Group, said: "We have been conducting the survey for ten years now, and this is one of the largest overall reductions we have seen. During this period, violence has fallen in every year except one, and this

trend is confirmed by other studies based on police data. There have been particularly important falls this year in some of the most vulnerable groups – teenagers and young adults.

"The reasons for this downward trend in violence are unclear. Over the last ten years, targeted policing has increased in England and Wales, focussing more on specific locations where violence is common. Health services, local authorities and other agencies have contributed more since crime prevention partnerships were introduced in 1998. We do not believe the economic downturn of the last three years is a factor, as the fall in violence started several years before that."

However, the team did find a 20 per cent rise in children under 11 who needed emergency hospital treatment. While the overall numbers remain small, the rise follows an 8 per cent increase in 2009.

Professor Shepherd, of the School of Dentistry, added: "The figures for the last two years show a disturbing upward trend in violence against children. Again, the reasons are unclear, but the figures highlight the need for child safeguarding to remain a national priority. It is vital that the Munro Review, due to report this month, results in further action to improve the quality of our child protection services."

As in previous years, the violence survey found that males were at a higher risk of [violence](#) than females and that the 18 to 30 age group were most likely to be victims. Violence-related hospital attendance is consistently most frequent on Saturday and Sunday, and peaks between May and October.

Provided by Cardiff University

Citation: Fall in violence in UK, study finds (2011, April 19) retrieved 9 May 2024 from

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