

Exposure to domestic violence costs US government \$55 billion each year

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Economic Burden of Child Exposure to Domestic Violence

\$55 BILLION Annual Cost in the United States



Average Lifetime Costs per Child: \$50,495

By the time a child exposed to domestic violence reaches the age of 64, that child's average costs to the national economy over their lifetime will reach nearly \$50,500. This includes at least \$11,042 in increased medical health care costs, \$13,922 in costs associated with violent crimes, and \$25,531 in productivity losses. Each year, these costs amount to over \$55 billion nationwide.



10+ MILLION women and men each year in the United States are physically assaulted by their current or former intimate partners

25% OF ALL CHILDREN WILL BE EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BEFORE THEY TURN 18

Children exposed to domestic violence have a higher risk of developing: behavioral, mental health, cognitive, social, physical health, and physiological problems.



Holmes, M. R., Richter, F. C.-G., Votruba, M. E., Berg, K. A., & Bender, A. E., (2018). Economic burden of child exposure to intimate partner violence in the United States. *Journal of Family Violence*. <http://rdcu.be/HjOM>

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The results of a study on the national economic impact of exposure to domestic

violence -- published in *The Journal of Family Violence* -- showed higher health-care costs, higher crime rates and lower productivity in children as they aged.
Credit: Case Western Reserve University

The federal government spends an estimated \$55 billion annually on dealing with the effects of childhood exposure to domestic violence, according to new research by social scientists at Case Western Reserve University.

The results of a study on the national economic impact of exposure to [domestic violence](#)—published in *The Journal of Family Violence*—showed higher health-care costs, higher crime rates and lower productivity in children as they aged.

"This is a significant public-health problem that not only means long-term consequences for these children, but also imposes a substantial financial burden to society," said Megan R. Holmes, assistant professor and founding director of the Center on Trauma and Adversity at the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) defines [intimate partner violence](#)—more commonly known as domestic [violence](#)—as any [physical violence](#), [sexual violence](#), stalking and/or psychological aggression perpetrated by a current or former intimate partner.

In the United States, an estimated 15.5 million children each year are exposed to at least one episode of intimate partner violence, with more than 25 percent of children exposed to domestic violence in their lifetime.

The CDC's National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey

reports that 27.3 percent of women and more than one in 10 men (11.5 percent) have experienced physical violence, sexual violence or stalking by intimate partners at least once in their lives.

Married or cohabiting couples who have children are reported to experience the highest likelihood of domestic violence.

By the time a child exposed to domestic violence reaches age 64, the average cost to the national economy over their lifetime will reach nearly \$50,000 across the following main categories, according to the research.

- **Health care:** Estimated effects of domestic violence exposure on the use of hospital care and physician and clinical services.
- **Crime:** The estimated effect of domestic violence exposure on the lifetime likelihood of violent crime: murder, rape/sexual assault, aggravated assault, robbery.
- **Productivity:** The productivity effects of domestic violence exposure stem from a connection to lower educational attainment. Using estimates for the age-specific effects of education on worker earnings, the study calculated the expected earnings detriment associated with exposure to domestic violence.

That includes at least \$11,042 in increased medical costs, \$13,922 in costs associated with violent crimes and \$25,531 in productivity losses.

"And that's just for one person," Holmes said. "If we consider Ohio's young adults, for example, the 172,500 Ohioans who are 20 years old, the cumulative lifetime cost for the estimated 25 percent who were exposed to domestic violence as children will be nearly \$2.18 billion. Applied to the entire nation, the economic burden becomes substantial—over \$55 billion."

She said the effects of children's exposure to domestic violence carry long-lasting consequences—and society picks up the tab.

While much research has been conducted on the effect of domestic violence exposure on short- and long-term outcomes, this is the first study to add a price tag to this public health problem.

"Although we researchers often use words like 'ground-breaking' to describe our work, few studies really meet that bar," said Rebecca J. Macy, editor-in-chief of *The Journal of Family Violence* and associate dean for academic affairs in the University of North Carolina School of Social Work.

"With their study on the economic burden of children's [exposure](#) to partner violence however, Prof. Holmes and her colleagues have really produced a groundbreaking study."

By understanding the extent of the costs incurred, policymakers can now reference the economics to push for more effective preventive and therapeutic interventions, Holmes added.

The study was done in coordination with Francisca García-Cobián Richter, research assistant professor; Kristen Berg and Anna Bender, both doctoral candidates, at the Mandel School; and Mark Votruba, associate professor of economics, at the Weatherhead School of Management.

Provided by Case Western Reserve University

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