

# Incel terrorist attacks pose an increasing threat

May 8 2020, by Simone Hewett

---



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Researchers at The University of Western Australia have found that self-identified "incels" (involuntary celibates, young men who cannot find female sexual partners), present a national security issue.

In a landmark paper published today in the *Australian Journal of Political Science*, Incels are determined to have killed at least 50 people and injured at least 58 more since 2014—statistics comparable to the number of victims of Islamic extremism in the same period. However, Incels are receiving little preventative attention.

Considering the recent rise of high-profile misogynistic violence in Australia, the authors call for the Australian government to label Incels as a [security threat](#) and, in doing so, adopt preventative programs to address misogyny in the community.

Project co-author Dr. Sian Tomkinson, from UWA's School of Social Sciences, said Incels were part of a network called the Manosphere.

"The Manosphere contains various groups who believe that feminism has overtaken society and that men must fight back in order to survive," Dr. Tomkinson said.

"In extreme cases, Incels become radicalized online and commit attacks against everyday men and women, who they blame for their misfortunes."

Co-author Dr. Tael Harper, from UWA's School of Social Sciences, said one of the great dangers of trying to combat ideological extremists such as Incel was the creation of a 'suspect community,' which could encourage even more extreme behavior.

"In order to avoid this scenario with 'the manosphere' we present a program to tackle misogynistic views at the community level," Dr. Harper said.

"Key to this effort is to ensure that public figures and anyone who comments on violence against women understands that gendered

violence presents a threat to [public security](#).

"Comments that make gendered [violence](#) seem justifiable or the fault of the victim have been shown to further encourage violent attitudes and behavior."

Co-author Dr. Katie Attwell, also from UWA's School of Social Sciences, said misogyny had been killing women for centuries.

"What Incel has done is make misogyny dangerous to everyone, not just women. The very broad and public nature of this threat means that the government must now deal with misogynistic attitudes as an issue of national [security](#)."

**More information:** Sian Tomkinson et al. Confronting Incel: exploring possible policy responses to misogynistic violent extremism, *Australian Journal of Political Science* (2020). [DOI: 10.1080/10361146.2020.1747393](#)

Provided by University of Western Australia

Citation: Incel terrorist attacks pose an increasing threat (2020, May 8) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2020-05-incel-terrorist-pose-threat.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.