

Fatal assaults 30 times higher among poor Scots than among most affluent

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Fatal assaults among the most disadvantaged in Scotland are more than 30 times as high as they are among the most affluent sectors of society, reveals research published today in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*.

Estimates suggest that violence costs the Scottish economy around £3 billion a year in terms of healthcare, law enforcement, and lost productivity.

The authors base their findings on an analysis of all 1,109 certified deaths due to assault in Scotland between 1980 and 2005.

The murder rate in Scotland has been steadily increasing since 1980, accompanied by rising [death rates](#) from suicide, [chronic liver disease](#) and [mental health problems](#) related to drug and alcohol misuse.

The findings showed that the rate of fatal assaults was significantly higher in Scotland than in other high income countries in Europe, with rates among Scottish men more than double those of their European peers.

The most noticeable increase in fatal assaults was among men aged between 15 and 44, whose death rates doubled between 1981 and 2004.

Fatal stab wounds from knives and other sharp weapons accounted for most of this increase.

Despite the fact that fatal assaults made up just over 3% of deaths among men aged 15 to 44, these deaths accounted for almost 6.5% of the difference in death rates among the most and least deprived sectors of the population.

The death rate among men aged 20 to 59 with manual/labouring jobs was 12 times higher than it was among men of the same age with higher managerial/professional jobs.

Men under the age of 65 living in the most deprived areas were almost 32 times as likely to die following an assault as those living in the most affluent areas.

This rate of 127 per 100,000 of the population is the same as the death rate from stroke, and higher than the death rate from [bowel cancer](#), say the authors.

Among women, the difference was even more striking. Those living in the most deprived areas were 35 times as likely to die following an assault as those living in the most affluent areas.

"Not only do these inequalities for assault exceed those for other causes of death in Scotland, but also they far exceed the ratio reported for homicide in Great Britain," say the authors.

Provided by British Medical Journal

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