

Behavioral researcher conducts Attorney General's state domestic violence homicide report

November 17 2014, by Elizabeth Adams

When cases of intimate partner domestic violence appear in national news, University of Kentucky behavioral researcher TK Logan said she often hears the question, "Why don't women leave?"

Logan, who studies violence against women and the prevention of [intimate partner violence](#), said the better question is, "Why doesn't he leave her alone?" In many cases, victims of intimate partner [domestic violence](#) are bound by circumstances that make walking away impossible. And, if they do walk away, they often endure threats, stalking and harassment by their abusive partner.

Logan recently collaborated with Commonwealth Attorney General Jack Conway's Office of Victim's Advocacy to prepare a special report examining 35 intimate partner homicide cases resulting in 40 deaths in Kentucky occurring in 2010. Research suggests that that domestic violence homicides are preventable. But the report, titled "Domestic Violence Special Report: Kentucky 2010 Homicides," cites a need for systemic programs to track of abusive behavior patterns, which will provide information to help victims who are unable to escape domestic violence situations on their own.

The report is part of a multifaceted effort to prevent domestic violence deaths in Kentucky. Conway's office and the Statewide Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee, a coalition of domestic violence

experts in Kentucky, organized the initiative after convening during the state's first Summit on Domestic Violence Fatalities in August 2011. The report will be included in the Attorney General's Domestic Violence Fatality Review Data Report and Summation, which documents a history of domestic violence laws and services in Kentucky.

"This report helps provide a clearer picture of the extent and nature of domestic violence-related deaths in Kentucky and is a first step toward understanding how to better identify these cases," Conway said.

Throughout the past two years, Logan has analyzed the 35 criminal case cases with data contributed from the FBI, the Office of the State Medical Examiner, the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association and media articles. Based on information from the cases, 75 percent of the victims were women and 74 percent of the offenders were male. Two out of three victims and offenders were married or living together at the time of the homicide, and the homicide occurred at the couple's shared residence 46 percent of the time.

The report concluded that one in four intimate partner-related homicide cases had some form of domestic violence or civil justice activity, such as a protective order or a domestic violence-related call to the police within a year prior to the homicide. The report also concluded that a firearm was most frequently the weapon use in the homicide, and that 37 percent of cases were homicide-suicides.

While the report provides evidence that domestic violence homicides are preventable, Logan said the incidence of these cases have not declined over time and may even be rising in the state. She emphasized victims need to feel their cases of domestic violence are taken seriously by law enforcement and know how to seek out help. According to the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association, one in three women in Kentucky will experience domestic violence in their lifetime. A Centers for Disease

Control (CDC) study also found that one in four women in Kentucky will be stalked by her current or ex-[intimate partner](#), which is higher than the rate nationally. Logan considers the report an important step in reducing the incidence of domestic violence homicide cases in Kentucky.

"This report imparts the understanding that domestic violence can be lethal, and there are many consequences," Logan said. "Many women fear they are going to die, and fatalities are a small percentage of cases. But along their journey, many fear that is going to be their fate."

More information: The full report: ag.ky.gov/pdf_news/DVFR%20book.pdf

Provided by University of Kentucky

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