New study examines role of intimate partner violence in workplace homicides among U.S. women

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Researchers from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the Injury Control Research Center at West Virginia University (WVU-ICRC) have found that intimate partner violence resulted in 142 homicides among women at work in the U.S. from 2003 to 2008, a figure which represents 22 percent of the 648 workplace homicides among women during the period.

The paper, "Workplace homicides among U.S. women: the role of intimate partner violence," published in the April 2012 issue of *Annals of Epidemiology*, reports that the leading cause of homicides among women was criminal intent, such as those resulting from robberies of retail stores (39 percent), followed closely by homicides carried out by personal relations (33 percent). Nearly 80 percent of these personal relations were intimate partners.

Risk factors associated with workplace-related intimate partner homicides include occupation, time of day and location. Women in protective-service occupations had the highest overall homicide rate; however, women in healthcare, production and office/administration had the highest proportion of homicides related to intimate partner violence. Over half of the homicides committed by intimate partners occurred in parking lots and public buildings.

"Workplace violence is an issue that affects the entire community," said

NIOSH Director John Howard, M.D. “Understanding the extent of the risk and the precipitators for these events, especially for women, of becoming victims of workplace violence is a key step in preventing these tragedies.”

In addition to its focus upon the role of intimate partner violence in workplace homicides among women, the study reports that workplace homicide remains a leading cause of occupational injury death in U.S. women. In fact, in 2010, homicides against women at work increased by 13 percent despite continuous declines in overall workplace homicides in recent years.

Other study findings include:

- More U.S. women died on the job as the result of domestic violence than at the hands of a client — such as a student, patient or prisoner — or of a current or former co-worker.
- Workplace homicide rates among women were significantly higher in private workplaces than in federal, state or local workplaces.
- Firearms, knives and other sharp objects were the top items used in workplace homicides against women.
- The most common locations where workplace homicides among women occurred were retail businesses, such as restaurants, cafes, convenience stores, and hotels and motels, followed by commercial stores, public buildings, and parking lots.

More information: www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/violence

Provided by West Virginia University

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