

Where are the Canadian data?

I was disappointed to see the answer to the Self-Learning Review on domestic violence¹ in the October 1999 issue because it referred only to American data. Good Canadian data on the epidemiology of domestic violence in the general population are readily available (eg, the 1993 Statistics Canada survey of 12300 adult women²), as are data on the incidence of abuse among particular groups (eg, pregnant women³ or women attending emergency departments⁴).

It is inappropriate to discuss health problems for which the social context plays an important role in epidemiology or etiology or in patients' presentations to the health care system, using only American data, when good Canadian data exist. Educational activities sponsored by the College of Family Physicians of Canada, such as *Canadian Family Physician* and the Self-Learning Review, should provide Canadian data, not only to reflect more accurately the experience of our patients, but also to highlight the efforts of Canadian physician researchers.

—Barbara Lent, MD, CCFP
London, Ont
by mail

References

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2. Statistics Canada. The violence against women survey. *The Daily* (Cat. No. 11-001E). Ottawa, Ont: Statistics Canada; 1993.
3. Stewart D, Cecutti A. Physical abuse in pregnancy. *Can Med Assoc J* 1993; 149(9):1257-63.
4. Hotch D, Grunfeld A, Mackay K, Cowan L. An emergency department-based domestic violence intervention program: findings after one year. *J Emerg Med* 1996;14:111-7.

Response

Dr Lent makes some good points, and, in fact, this particular article was questioned for the same reasons at our national meeting, but we decided that the findings were applicable to the Canadian context. We also decided to use this question and article, as it is such an important issue for family physicians to be well informed about.

The description of our question selection and writing process would be an article in itself, but I will briefly explain the process, as I believe it will help members of the

College to understand why it is that this situation occasionally occurs.

Small groups of College members across the country meet frequently to discuss articles written and generated on topics they find useful, interesting, and timely for family physicians. These articles are then reviewed three times a year at the National Self Learning Suite committee meetings before being accepted for publication. We do not do a literature search on each topic, although we are in the process of looking at ways to target important and recent research on various issues relevant to family practice. We are required to use articles published within the last year, so that they are still somewhat current by the time the question and educational point is published in the SLS. Because of this, the articles that Dr Lent quotes cannot be used, as they would be deemed too old (although they are good articles with Canadian content).

We are always looking for recent articles with research done by and about Canadians. If this is unavailable, we try to ensure that the data are applicable to our practice here. At the same time, we attempt to give our subscribers a variety of topics from the recently published literature. I sincerely hope that this clarification of the process helps subscribers and College members understand we are in no way insensitive to the need to look at and use Canadian data. We welcome the interest and feedback and invite members to contact me or the College if they wish to become involved in writing questions for this program.

—Jean Maskey, MD, CCFP, FCFP
Chair, Self Learning Committee

Make your views known!

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