

HEALTH MATTERS

Riverside University Health System – Public Health
Epidemiology & Program Evaluation



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Domestic Violence in Riverside County (2017-2022)

Domestic violence (DV), also referred to as intimate partner violence, impacts people across every age, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion, or nationality¹. Social and structural conditions create inequities in risk for violence that persist in communities where individuals live, work, and play¹. Global estimates report a 20% increase in DV during the COVID-19 stay-at-home restrictions². Additionally, recent trends in the State of California show more incidents of DV involving the use of firearms or other lethal weapons, putting victims at greater risk for harm³. Historically, nearly half of incidents of DV go unreported for many reasons⁹. This report provides a snapshot of reported cases of DV to law enforcement (2018-2022) and emergency departments (EDs) (2017-2021) across Riverside County.

KEY FINDINGS



Domestic violence ED visits **increased by 27%** between 2017-2021.



Black/African American residents are disproportionately impacted by DV, with **rates 2-3x higher** than Hispanic and Non-Hispanic White residents.



In 2022, Riverside County law enforcement received nearly one DV-related call **every hour**.

Domestic Violence Calls (2018-2022)⁵

Domestic violence (DV) as defined by the California Department of Justice (DOJ) is abuse committed against an adult or a fully emancipated minor by an intimate partner. Abuse is defined as an individual intentionally or recklessly causing or attempting to cause bodily injury or placing another person in apprehension of imminent serious bodily injury to him/herself or another.

Figure 1 DV calls in Riverside County (2018-2022)*

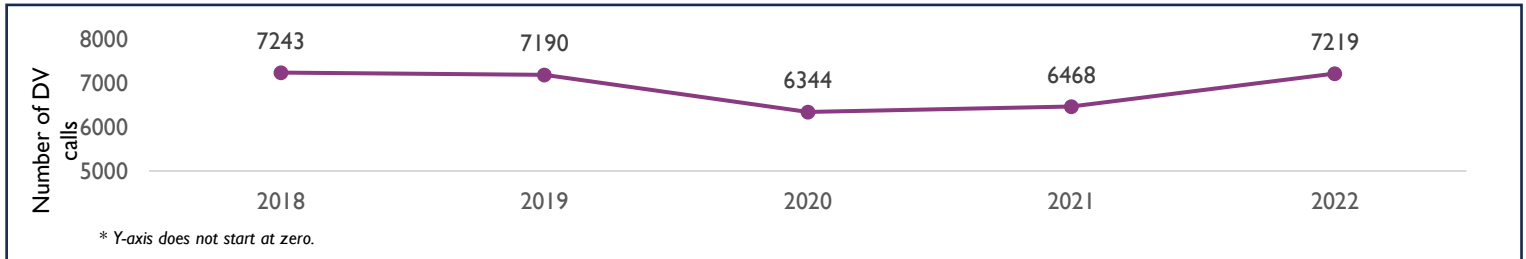


Figure 2 DV calls involving a firearm (2018-2022)

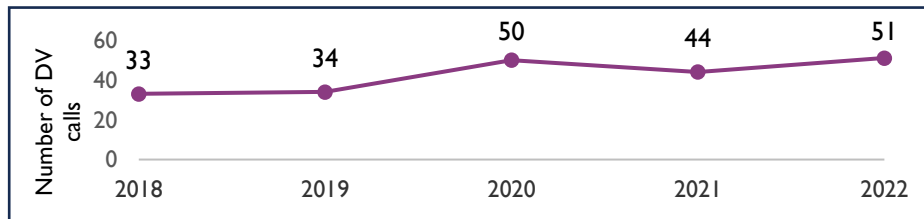
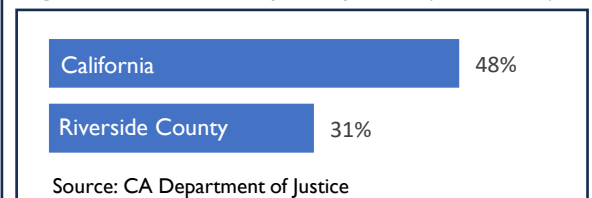


Figure 3 DV calls, weapon reported (2018-2022)



The California Department of Justice (DOJ) reported 34,464 DV-related calls to law enforcement in Riverside County between 2018-2022. Despite national increases in DV-related calls during the COVID-19 pandemic, a decline in calls was seen in 2020 in Riverside County, a trend that requires further investigation but may possibly be attributed to challenges experienced by victims to seek help during stay-at-home restrictions^{2,4}. Data from 2021 and 2022 show a return of DV-related calls to pre-pandemic levels. The use of a weapon was reported in 31% of all DV-related calls compared to 48% of calls for the State of California (Figure 3). Strangulation and suffocation was reported in 4.5% of all calls. The number of DV-related calls involving a firearm increased by 55% with 33 calls in 2018 and 51 in 2022 (Figure 2).



Emergency Department Visits (2017-2021)⁶

DV for emergency department data was defined as a visit with an ICD-10 code Y7[01-04] specifying a partner as the perpetrator to an injury in any external cause field. Deaths and hospitalizations were not included due to low numbers.

The total burden of DV is difficult to quantify due to underreporting, however ED data provides insight into trends around domestic violence in Riverside County. Domestic violence cases reported by EDs increased by 27% from 2017 to 2021 (n=755) with 80% of victims experiencing physical abuse or injury (Table 1). Sexual abuse made up 7.2% of all DV-related ED visits. In 96% of all cases, the perpetrators were male intimate partners with 66% reported to be unmarried to the victim and 30% reported as the victim’s male spouse. Although uncommon, wives were specified as perpetrators 3% of the time and female partners were specified as perpetrators 1% of the time.

Figure 5 Trends in DV-related visits to the ED, 2017-2021, Riverside County

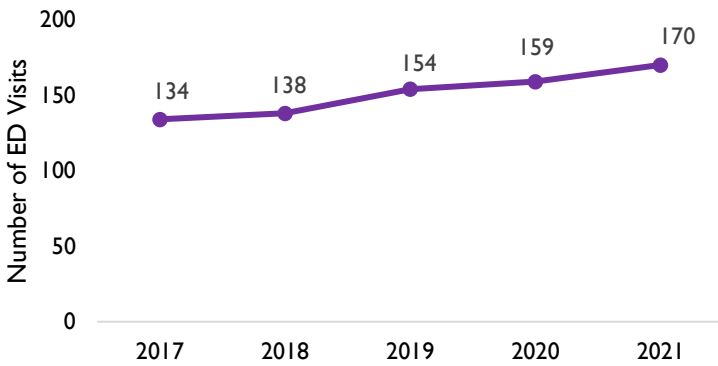


Table 1 DV-related ED visits by type of violence/abuse reported, 2017-2021, Riverside County

Type of Domestic Violence	Count (%)
Physical Abuse or Injury	601 (79.6%)
Sexual Abuse	72 (9.5%)
Other or Unspecified	40 (5.3%)
Labor Trafficking*	33 (4.4%)
Psychological Abuse	7 (0.9%)
Neglect	2 (0.3%)
Total	755 (100%)

*Domestic violence-associated labor trafficking cases

People at Risk

Domestic Violence ED Visits (2017-2021)



14% of DV victims visiting the ED were pregnant.

7x

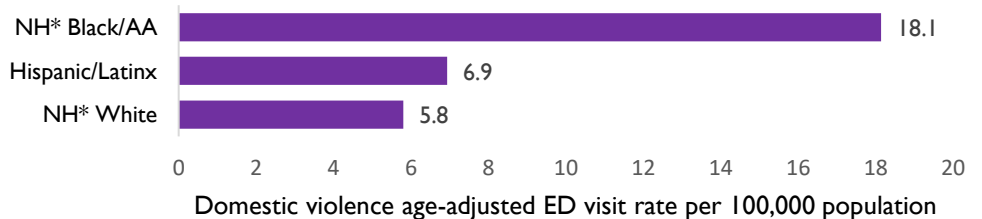
The sexual abuse rate for 18–24 and 25–34-year-olds was more than seven times the rate for those aged 45-54.

50%

18–34-year-olds made up more than half of all DV cases resulting from physical abuse.

Women made up 97% of all domestic violence ED visits between 2017-2021. Black/African American residents had a five-year (2017-2021) DV rate at least two times higher than other racial/ethnic groups across all types of reported violence (Figure 6). Furthermore, residents between the ages of 18 to 34 were the most impacted by domestic violence overall (Figure 7), as well as sexual violence specifically (Figure 8). Among DV cases, victims between ages 25 to 44 were more susceptible to domestic violence associated labor trafficking cases. These cases are reported to be domestic violence victims who are also exploited with force, fraud or coercion to perform commercial work (labor trafficking).

Figure 6 Domestic violence disproportionately affected Black/African American residents of Riverside County, 2021



Note: Visual only demonstrates racial demographics with statistically significant results. Additional data can be provided upon request. *NH is short for Non-Hispanic.



The risk for domestic violence has been linked to multiple community factors⁷. To identify areas in Riverside County with a higher need for DV interventions, the relationship between the Healthy Places Index (HPI)⁸, a measure of community conditions that impact life expectancy, and the number of DV-related ED cases by resident zip code were analyzed. Areas with low HPI scores have less healthy community conditions, and areas with high HPI scores have healthier community conditions. Analysis of DV-related ED visits over five years showed a statistically significant association between the number of residents presenting to the ED and HPI percentile ($t(59) = -2.5, p=0.01$), with incidents increasing as HPI percentile decreased. The five zip codes with the highest number of DV incidents all fell in zip codes with low HPI scores (Figures 9, 10). These communities have a higher need for targeted DV interventions. However, some neighborhoods with higher HPI scores, also had high numbers of DV incidents, indicating that additional factors may play a role in determining outcomes of domestic violence. This is consistent with the current literature that DV occurs across all income, education, and other sociodemographic levels and factors.

Figure 9 Five zip codes with the highest domestic violence ED visits 2017-2021, n(%), Riverside County

92553 (Moreno Valley)	39 (5.2%)
92543 (Hemet, Sage)	36 (4.8%)
92571 (Perris, March ARB)	33 (4.4%)
92530 (Lake Elsinore)	32 (4.2%)
92544 (Hemet, Sage, Valley Vista)	30 (4.0%)

Figure 7 Domestic violence among Riverside County residents disproportionately affects younger adults, 2017-2021

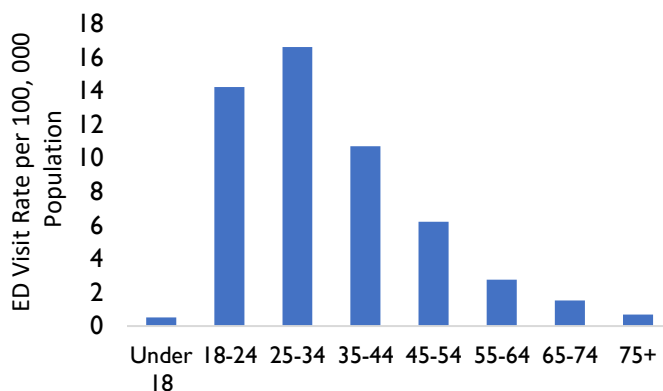


Figure 8 Risk of type of violence experienced by DV victims varies with age., 2017-2021, Riverside County

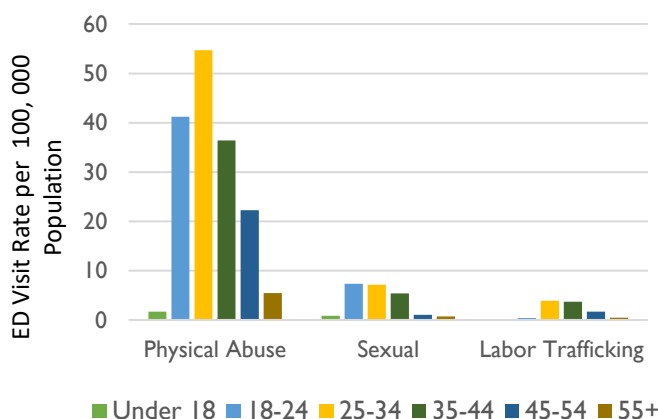
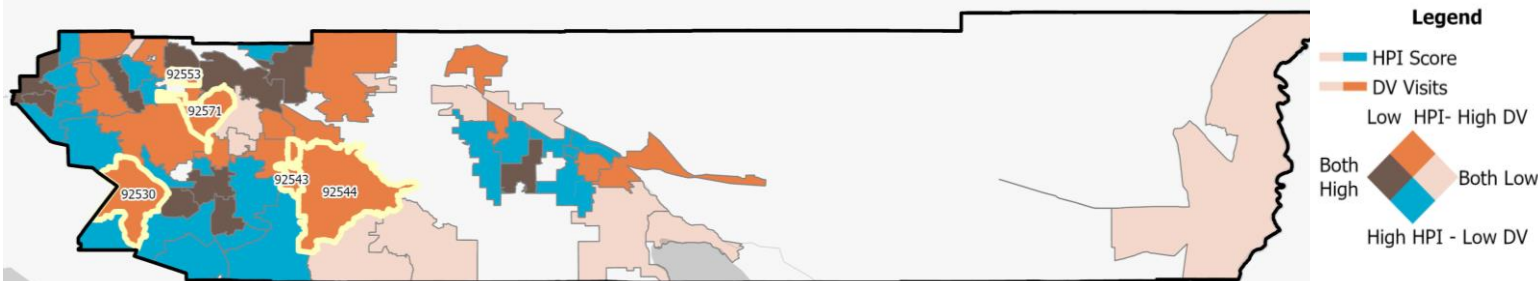


Figure 10 Relationship between HPI score and DV-related ED visits by resident zip code, Riverside County, 2017-2021^{6, 8}



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