

Compared to women who have not been physically or sexually abused as adults, 40% more battered women report using drugs to sleep, and 74% more battered women report using drugs to relieve anxiety. Sexually assaulted women are two-and-one-half time more likely than other women to use drugs to help them sleep, and nearly four times as likely to use drugs to combat anxiety.

Dr. Jeri Wine, of the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, cited the findings of a recent study of women who are in psychiatric wards in Toronto general hospitals. Interviews revealed that 90% of them had suffered from severe sexual and/or physical abuse in their childhood. The witness concluded: "So clearly the costs of early abuse to the social health and mental health care systems is extremely high" (12:35).

The impact of violence against women extends beyond the victim to her children. There is solid evidence that violence against women is passed from one generation to the next. Witnesses who work with violent men and those who work with survivors of wife abuse told the Committee that child witnesses of violence in the home are likely to repeat the violence either as victims or as perpetrators. Gene Krawetz, a worker with a shelter for battered women in Saskatchewan told the Committee:

Our shelter has been opened for 11 years and we are now starting to see second-generation victims. Young women are coming to us, leaving an abusive relationship. We already know them because they were there with their mothers when they were girls of 10 or 12 or 15. (5:40)

The Committee heard this tragic story repeated by shelter workers from across the country. One of the witnesses who works with children and families involved in the court system pointed out that women do not seek violent men, but rather they are less likely to seek safety for themselves if they were exposed to violence in their family of origin.

The findings from *Creating Choices*, the recently released task force report on federally sentenced women further confirms the maxim "violence breeds violence". The study found that over 80% of the federally sentenced women interviewed had been abused; 68% indicated that they had been physically abused and 54% reported being sexually abused by parents, relatives, foster parents or institutional staff or by boyfriends, husbands or common-law partners. The incidence of assault and abuse among federally sentenced Native women was even higher (Task Force in Federally Sentenced Women, *Creating Choices*, Correctional Service Canada, April 1990, p. 52).

The Family Services Association of Metropolitan Toronto provides group counselling programs for men who batter their wives or partners. Ann Nosko, a social worker with the Association estimates that three-quarters of the men in the programs had experienced violence in their family of origin (12:29).