

With some of the discussions recently surrounding knives, weapons, injuries, and violent crime, and being a creature of "probability" based upon credible research, I thought I would provide some of the following research information that I utilize to support my thoughts, opinions, and training:

Recently, the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics released their report (GSS Report) known as, "Criminal Victimization in Canada 2004". It is important that the reader first understands that there are two primary statistical sources on issues surrounding crime in Canada:

1. The Uniform Crime Report (UCR): this is a statistical census of all incidents reported by police services across Canada. The UCR collects data on over 100 categories of criminal offences
2. The General Social Survey (GSS): this is a survey that records respondent's personal account of criminal victimization incidents. The GSS captures information on 8 offences (Robbery, assault, sexual assault, theft of personal property, break and enter, motor vehicle theft, theft of household property, and vandalism)

It is interesting to note that when one compares both reports, there are very little significant differences between the two.

The 2004 GSS report has some nuggets, specific to violent crime, which those of us who teach safety awareness and self-protection should be aware of:

More than one in four Canadians have been the victim of the 8 measured categories that are considered in the GSS report.

- Household crimes 34%
- Violent crimes 29%
- Thefts personal property 25%

Rates of Violent Victimization shows no significant change since 1999

Factors Influencing Risks of Violent Crime:

- Both women and men are experiencing similar levels of violent crime
- Men's rates of physical assault and robbery continue to be higher than women
- The rate of sexual assault for women was 5 times higher than men
- Young people were particularly vulnerable to violent crime. In 2004, the rate for Canadians aged 15-24 (226) was 1.5 to 19 times greater than the rate recorded for other age groups. The risk of violent victimization steadily declined as age increased. For example those aged 25-34 years had a rate of 157 per 1000, compared to a rate of 115 per 1000 for the next oldest age group (those aged 35-44 years)
- Surprise, surprise, participating in evening activities such as working or going to bars elevates risk

Profile of Violent Victimization Incidents:

- Victims are most often victimized in commercial establishments or public institutions
- Excluding spousal violence, violent crimes were most likely to occur in a commercial place or public institution (38%). In particular, 14% of all violent incidents took place in an office, factory, store, shopping mall, 12% in a bar or restaurant, 7% in schools, and 5% in hospitals.
- In addition to being the most common location for violent victimization, commercial establishments were often the victim's place of work (43%)
- Public places such as sidewalks, street and highways accounted for 9%, parking garages or parking lots 3%, rural areas or parks 3%, public transportation 2%
- 19% of violent crimes took place either in or outside the victim's home
- Robbery most often took place on the street, 43%
- Both physical (39%) and sexual assaults (49%) were most likely to occur in commercial establishments.

- The most common commercial establishment where sexual assault occurred was a bar or restaurant (20%) or an office building, factory, store or shopping mall (19%)
- Physical assault took place most often in commercial establishments such as office buildings, factory, store or shopping mall (14%) followed by a bar or restaurant (11%)
- One quarter of violent crimes involved the use of a weapon
- Robberies were most likely to involve a weapon (45%), physical assaults (29%) sexual assaults (9%)
- Overall, knives were twice as likely to be used in a violent crime, as were guns (6% versus 3%). Other weapons recorded included bottles, bats, sticks, and rocks (17%)
- In 52% of violent incidents either alcohol or drugs played a role
- Most violent crimes involved a male acting alone (76%), while in about one in five crime incidents more than one accused was involved (22%). Of the three types of violent crimes, robberies were most likely to involve more than one accused (39%)
- Among the 76% of violent incidents in which one accused was involved, the vast majority of accused were male (87%) and this remained true for the three types of violent crimes, ranging from 86% of physical assaults to 91% of sexual assaults
- The majority of accused acting alone tend to be young, with one-half between the ages of 18-34 years
- Half of violent crimes are committed some someone known to the victim (51%). Strangers accounted for 44%. A small proportion (5%) of incidents were committed by a family member, however, this analysis excludes spousal violence.
- 25% of violent incidents result in victim being injured
- Only 33% of criminal incidents are reported to police in Canada

“Violence Related Injuries Treated In Hospital Emergency Departments” (Bureau Justice Statistics USA 1994)

Although dated, this study does offer some nuggets:

- **In 1994 1.3 million people treated in US emergency wards were for injuries contributed to violence**

Although this number appears to be large, this only represents 1.5% of all visits to ERs

- **94% sustained injuries from the assault that required treatment**
- **2% were injured during a completed or attempted robbery**

According to this study, 98% of all robberies committed the victim was not injured. This, to me, supports the fact that if someone wants your property give it to them. There are those who say that if robbed you should still fight because you don't know if the offender will beat you, stab you, or shoot you after they get what they want. Although this is a reality, it is a rarity (according to this study only 2% of the time).

Of those treated in the ER:

- **34% were treated for bruises of similar injuries**
- **31% for cuts or stabs (total of 433,500 victims)**
- **17% for fractures, sprains, dislocations, dental injuries**
- **5% for gun shots (70,300 victims)**
- **5% for rapes**
- **4% for concussions of other head injuries**

People who committed these violent acts:

- **23% were strangers**
- **23% were a friend or acquaintance**
- **10% by a current or former boyfriend or girlfriend**
- **8% by parent or sibling**
- **7% by spouse of ex-spouse**

Again this study confirms that most (77%) who will commit a violent act against you will be someone who you know, love, or trust. Although the unknown bad guy is a reality (especially when it comes to robberies), it is a rarity.

In this study, they also found that approximately 14% of the victims or offenders had been drinking or using drugs.

The next study of interest:

“US Department of Justice – Bureau of Justice Stats 2005”

- **7/10 victims stated that the attacker was someone they either knew, loved, or trusted**

This supports the above noted ER study. Both this study and the ER study also provide us, as trainers, with the fact that when it comes to neural based scenario training, we want to ensure that some of the aggressor in the script are described as someone the fighter knows, loves, or trusts.

- **74% stated those that robbed them was a stranger**

Again, this stat, does support many other studies that have reported out that those who commit violent robberies are usually strangers.

- **53% of violent crimes occurred during the day 6am – 6pm**

Most people believe that violent crimes occur at a much higher frequency during nighttime hours. Again this study, as well as others, proves this to be wrong.

- **For violent crimes, about half occurred within a mile from home, and 76% within 5 miles. Only 4% reported that the crime took place more than 50 miles from their home.**

Anecdotally, I believe that human nature makes us believe that the closer to home we are, the safer we will be. Because of this fact, we have a tendency to lower our awareness radar the closer we are to home, which sends a message to a potential predator; “TARGET”. The fact remains that awareness and vigilance is an important safety attribute that we need to employ at all times.

- **24% of incidents involved a weapon**

According to this study, almost ¼ of all violent incidents involved a weapon. Unfortunately they do not break down the weapon type specific to this stat. However, when it came to homicides the study found:

- **71% were committed with a firearm (55% handgun 16% long gun)**
- **14% with knives**
- **5% with blunt objects**
- **11% with other weapon**

These numbers support the fact that weapon defence training should form an important part of self-protection training.

Unlike the ER study (14%), this report found that 30% of offenders were reported to be intoxicated by alcohol or drug.

Another study of interest:

“Weapon Use and Violent Crime 1993-2001, Bureau of Justice Statistics USA”

- **26% of violent victimizations between 1993-2001 involved a weapon**

This stat supports the above-noted 2005 DOJ study

- **Of the 26% of violent victimizations, 10% were committed with firearms, 6% with knives, and the other 10% with other weapons such as blunt objects**
- **While victimization involving knives comprised 6% of all violent crimes resulting in an injury, these victimizations accounted for about 24% of all serious injuries experienced by crime victims compared with firearms 13%, and blunt weapons 20%.**

Specific to Robberies, I offer the following study from Great Britain, which also reflects what is happening in Canada and the US as well:

“A Qualitative Study of The Role of Violence In Street Crime, U.K. 2002”

In this research study, the authors identified five main motives for street robberies:

(1) Good Times / Partying:

Money or property obtained was used to finance gambling, drugs, or alcohol. In most cases the property/money obtained was used for pleasure pursuits such as partying or having a good time.

(2) Keeping up appearance / flash Cash:

Here the proceeds of a robbery are used to purchase non-essential, status-enhancing items such as jewellery, clothing, vehicles so as to show off on the street.

(3) Buzz/Excitement:

Known as the “seduction of crime”, the robbery offers a “high” that offers emotional benefits that was seen to be both fun and exciting to the criminal. Some even reported that the buzz was greater when the victim resisted. When the victim did resist, the challenge to the robber was even greater and so too was the reward of ultimately winning over and completing the robbery. (another reason why, in my opinion not to resist a property type robbery)

(4) Anger/Desire:

Robbery is prompted by anger to start a fight, with cash being taken only as an afterthought. Here the attacker's primary aim was to attack somebody and the level of violence used to commit the offence was beyond that required to secure the victim's compliance

(5) Informal Justice / Rights Wronged:

Here a robbery was committed as a kind of informal justice in which the offender felt he/she had righted some wrong done to them. “Taking Back” money they believed was owed to them was the main factor

This study also found a direct correlation between drugs and robbery as well. In this study the authors found 4 main drug related motives for robbery:

- (1) To fund dependant drug use (based upon desperation)**
- (2) To fund recreational drug use (more of a desire to party than addiction based)**
- (3) Robberies committed under the influence of drugs (about 15% of robberies)**
- (4) Drug involvement in the commission of robbery as part of informal justice. (Example: he sold me two bags of bunk and I realized it wasn't the heroin I paid for, so I took my money back, punched him in the face and took off)**

Specific to weapons, this study reported that of the 100 criminals interviewed, who committed a robbery:

- **28% reported carrying a gun**
- **35% reported carrying another weapon other than a gun**
- **37% reported carrying no weapon**

The last study of interest:

“ Non-Firearm Weapon Use and injury Severity: Priorities For Prevention” U.K. 2006

- **Study sample 24,660 ER patients injured in a “reported” assault**
- **Men accounted for 74.5% of the sample**
- **21.5% of injuries were committed with a weapon. Of these 11% of all injuries were inflicted with a sharp object, and 10.5% were inflicted with a blunt object**
- **Most patients had one injury 81%**
- **14.6% had two injuries**
- **4.5% had more than two injuries**
- **62% victims reported being attacked by one person**
- **12.3% victims reported being attacked by two persons**
- **25.7% victims reported being attacked by three or more persons**

- **41.1% of injuries sustained were to the face**
- **24.9% of injuries were sustained to head and neck**
- **5.3% of injuries were to the thorax**
- **2.5% of injuries were to the abdomen**
- **20% of injuries were to the upper limbs**
- **6.3% of injuries were to the lower limbs**
- **2.4% of patients lost consciousness during the assault**
- **Weapon use was more likely to result in serious injury than if a weapon was not used**
- **Compared with being injured with a fist, the use of blunt objects, feet, sharp objects and other body parts was considerably more likely to result in severe injury**

What was most interesting in this research study, was the fact that they found the use of feet resulted in the greatest injury severity, when compared to the use of other blunt objects, and that sharp object (edged weapons) was the next most likely to result in severe injury. To me this is another reason why one cannot stay on the ground given the probability of being kicked or stomped by your attacker or their friends.

Specific to knives, I attempted to locate research specific to:

1. At what point did the offender have their weapon deployed, and
2. What kind of occurrence rate is there for knife to knife encounters

Unfortunately I could not find any Peer reviewed research on these two topics, but I did just recently read a book by James Lafond called, **“The Logic of Steel, a Fighters View of Blade and Shank Encounters 2001”**. Based upon a large number of interviews (1000 separate acts of violence), the author created something that he called a “Violence Index”. Although not a peer reviewed scientific study, Lafond does offer some retrospective empirical/anecdotal research that is of some interest and does correspond with some of the above noted research:

- **59% of incidents occur outside**
- **59% of incident occurred after dark**
- **69% of incidents were described as an attack rather than a consensual fight**
- **53% involved alcohol or drugs**
- **25% of violence resulted in at least one party being knocked out**
- **63% of violent acts were resolved in less than 10 seconds**
- **25% of violent acts lasted from 10 seconds to 1 minute**
- **13% lasted more than a minute**

- **57% of aggressions were successful, 32% by knockout**
- **13% of defences were successful, 50% by knockout**
- **32% of aggressors were armed**
- **8% of defenders were armed**
- **7% of aggressors required medical attention**
- **28% of defenders required medical attention**
- **1% of aggressors died**
- **4% of aggressors died**

Specific to incidents of weapon use per 1000 acts reviewed:

- **Edged weapons 11%**
- **Firearms 10%**
- **Clubs, rocks, sticks 8%**

According to LaFond, in most edged weapon attacks, the attacker already had their weapon deployed, and the vast majority of attacks lasted less than 10 seconds. This supports the fact that unless the fighter (defender) already has their knife pre-deployed prior to engagement, the defender will have very little time to deploy their own weapon. This fact is also compounded when you also factor in Survival Stress Reaction, retrieving a holstered or pocketed knife, combined with the attacker's already violent engagement.

Specific to knife-to-knife encounters, LaFond reported that this type of occurrence is extremely rare.

So what do I take from all of this research:

- 1. Violent crime overall has not risen and is in fact on a slight downturn**
- 2. Most violent crimes are committed very close to home**
- 3. Most violent crime is committed by someone you either know, love, or trust (other than robberies)**
- 4. Alcohol and drugs are contributing factors in about 1/3 of all violent incidents**
- 5. Weapons (Firearms, Knives, and Clubs) are used in about 1/4 of all violent crimes**

- 6. In robberies involving weapons, only 2% result in injury to the victim**
- 7. There is about a 50/50 chance that you will be the victim of a violent crime during daytime or nighttime hours**
- 8. There is a 1 in 3 chance that you will be faced with multiple opponents**
- 9. Staying up on your feet and mobile offers a better chance of not being severely injured**
- 10. If grounded, there is a greater chance of being “severely” injured from being kicked or stomped**
- 11. Knife attacks happen very quickly, and are over just as quickly (under 10 seconds)**
- 12. In most knife assaults, the attacker already has their weapon deployed**
- 13. Your chance of effectively deploying your knife during a deadly force engagement decreases given time, space, and distance to your threat.**
- 14. The probability of finding oneself in a knife-to-knife duel in North American or the U.K is negligible.**

Although most of the above information is nothing new too most, the cited research helps to strengthen our position when it comes to training. Often when conversing in forums, it is not uncommon to be challenges on thoughts or opinions. Although one can do anything with stats, the information in this posting can provide the research needed to support the who, what, where, how, and why of what we do and why we have the opinions we do. Anecdotal information is often used to support one's beliefs. Don't get me wrong, anecdotal experiences/information is at times very valuable, BUT if one can support their anecdotal with empirical retrospective or prospective research (especially if peer reviewed), it can pack, excuse the pun, a one two punch that is very hard to attack !!!!! The above noted information can also go a long way in help you to design Neural Based Scenario Training sessionsí í í .

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