

Family Violence
Death
Review
Committee



Case Review Public Report No.9

Table of Contents

Incident.....	3
Background	3
Key Findings / Analysis	3
Recommendations	4

Incident

In 2014, multiple victims were found deceased in two separate homes. Police determined the homicides were all connected. The perpetrator was found deceased in a different location, having died by suicide.

Background

The perpetrator and his wife had both immigrated to Canada; the perpetrator had been in Canada for several decades when he met and sponsored his wife. The couple had children during their relationship, and the perpetrator had also sponsored his wife's family to immigrate to Canada.

The perpetrator had an extensive criminal history and a history of being abusive to previous partners and children from a prior relationship. The perpetrator had served only limited time in jail because most of the charges against him had been stayed, withdrawn, or dismissed.

The perpetrator frequently accessed the health care system for a variety of physical and mental health concerns. In addition to struggling with his mental health, the perpetrator experienced significant financial difficulties.

Key Findings / Analysis

Systems Involved

The perpetrator had frequent involvement with the health and justice systems. The perpetrator and his family also had cursory involvement with Children's Services. Information reviewed for this case indicates opportunities for interventions were limited due to cultural, language, and financial barriers experienced by both the perpetrator and victims.

Recommendations

Recommendation to Children's Services:

1. In consideration of findings from this case review and several previous case reviews completed by the Family Violence Death Review Committee (FVDRC), there is a demonstrated need for an objective reliable, domestic conflict/violence risk assessment tool that will inform case planning and management. The FVDRC recommends that Children's Services:
 - a) Review current risk assessment tools to ensure they are objective, reliable and consistent tools to measure risks associated with family conflict and/or family violence;
 - b) Require the mandatory use of an objective, reliable and consistent domestic conflict/ domestic violence risk assessment tool during all intake and investigation;
 - c) If the assessment tool determines there is a high risk of violence or lethality, Children's Services will forward concerns to the police and work collaboratively and in coordination with one another;
 - d) Require training for all frontline Children's Services staff dedicated specifically to assessing warning signs, and risk levels, including risk of lethality, in cases of suspected domestic conflict and violence.

Recommendation to Health:

2. Findings based on this case review and several previous case reviews have demonstrated that the health system is often a potential intervention point for perpetrators and victims of domestic violence. As such, there is a need for increased collaboration between health care providers to ensure a holistic, team based approach is used when diagnosing, treating and monitoring individuals who present as being in crisis or distress. Increased collaboration and information sharing will ensure health care professionals are better able to identify patterns of access or use that could be considered as potential warning signs of abuse, violence, mental health concerns, prescription drug issues or other signs that require follow up.

In recognition of this, the FVDRC recommends Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services work with all impacted medical professional colleges, associations and advisory bodies to:

- a) Explore the development and implementation of a patient care model that is based on a team care approach and ensures collaboration between health professionals, with special emphasis on a patient centered approach.
- b) Improve the accuracy of up-to-date patient information accessed by pharmacists and physicians by ensuring Netcare data uploads in real time.
- c) The Ministry of Alberta Health work with the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner to help educate health care professionals on how legislation permits sharing of information to enhance safety in health care service delivery.
- d) Enhance and expand training regarding best practices for providing care to suspected perpetrators and/or victims of family violence including identifying risk factors and warning signs, duty to report, identifying and providing referrals for services and supports.

Re-recommendation of Case 3 Health Recommendation:

3. Findings based on this case review and several previous case reviews completed by the FVDRC, have demonstrated that the health system is often a potential intervention point for perpetrators and victims of domestic violence; as such there is a need for health care professionals to consult the Alberta Netcare online portal (hereafter referred to as 'Netcare') for information on a client's past interactions with the health system and medications and use this information to determine if there are patterns of access or use that could be considered as potential warning signs of abuse, violence, mental health concerns, prescription drug issues or other signs that require follow up.

In recognition of this, the FVDRC recommends that Alberta Health, Alberta Health Services, the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta, the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta and the Alberta College of Pharmacists:

- a) That all authorized health care providers, authorized information custodians and their authorized affiliates in Alberta who have not registered for Netcare be required to do so within a reasonable timeframe, and that enforcement measures be introduced to ensure registration.
- b) That all authorized health care providers, authorized information custodians and their authorized affiliates in Alberta be required to access patient profiles via Netcare at every

point-of-care interaction with patients, to ensure patients are assessed in a comprehensive fashion.

Recommendation to Justice and Solicitor General:

4. In consideration of findings from this case review, there is a demonstrated need for increased communication and collaboration both within the legal system and with its stakeholders. The FVDRC recommends to Alberta Justice and Solicitor General:
 - a) In cases where the Crown stays or withdraws charges of domestic violence due to a victim recanting their statement, the Crown communicates the decision with police who will follow up with the victim and witnesses and/or refer to an agency for safety planning and follow up.
 - b) Consider legislative amendment to require offenders to complete court mandated offender treatment programs.

Recommendation to Community and Social Services:

5. In consideration of findings from this case review and several previous case reviews completed by the committee, there is a demonstrated need to create a family violence public awareness campaign with inclusive messaging to address the diverse needs of all Albertans as well as ensuring all Albertans are educated and empowered to access family violence supports and services. The FVDRC recommends that Community and Social Services:
 - a) Develop a public awareness campaign to address diverse cultural communities understanding of:
 - i. Where and how to get help with family discord, family violence and the threat of family violence in the Canadian context;
 - ii. Work with local community based organizations and influential employers to ensure information and education is readily available at various community touch points in various languages; and,
 - iii. What constitutes “high risk” as it relates to family violence, abusive behaviors and warning signs;
 - b) Explore best practices and implement a coordinated services model to address family violence in Alberta, focusing on effective and early responses, and which include the capacity to address cultural and language barriers for both victims and perpetrators.