

Report on the Communication and Dissemination of Findings Of a Research Study

Exploring the Links: Family Violence, Firearms and Animal Abuse in Rural Communities



Submitted to the Canada Firearms Centre

By

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A) Introduction

The purpose of this report is to document the dissemination and communication efforts undertaken to share the findings of the research study entitled **Exploring the Links: Family Violence, Firearms, and Animal Abuse in Rural Communities**. The co-principal investigators, Dr. Deborah Doherty and Dr. Jennie Hornosty, have jointly and individually, shared and publicised both the preliminary research findings over the course of the research, as well as widely communicated the findings of the final report with a variety of stakeholders, the general public, policy-makers and the academic community. This has entailed distributing an *Executive Summary* of the research to participants and others, writing and publishing papers about the research, presenting the research at academic conferences of provincial, national and international scope, sharing the findings at “community” conferences and workshops, and finally, creating exposure in the media and making special presentations to stakeholders and policy-makers. The current report presents a detailed overview of our communication efforts for the period of the research which commenced in the winter of 2006, through until May 30, 2008. It should be noted that initiatives to disseminate the findings, and to promote evidence-based change to policies, programs and laws intended to promote safety for rural women experiencing firearms victimization, is on-going.

The aim of the research study was to examine the ways in which firearms serve as instruments of control and intimidation in family violence situations, particularly in a rural context. The research fills a significant gap in knowledge with respect to victimization of women in rural communities generally, and provides an understanding of how the presence of firearms in situations of abuse can shape women’s decision-making in particular. This research, we believe contributes to:

- (i) expanding the information base on the various forms of firearms misuse in a domestic violence context (e.g. threats to kill the family pet or farm animals, commit suicide, harm others, and so on);
- (ii) increasing knowledge about firearms victimization and the range of responses that might enhance the safety of victims and the community;
- (iii) promoting understanding of service providers’/crisis workers’ perceptions of domestic firearms abuse and their influence on safety planning and intervention strategies;

- (iv) greater understanding of how rural perceptions, norms and values mediate the experiences of victims in domestic violence situations involving firearms.

From the outset, a significant goal of the research has been to communicate the research findings to a wide audience with a view to enhancing policy and program responses to family violence by taking into account the risk factors associated with domestic violence and firearms abuse. Our communication strategy is based on a multi-faceted approach for sharing the findings with academic audiences, as well as front line workers such as law enforcement, crisis workers and others who are positioned to respond to and help abused women who are experiencing firearms threats and abuse to themselves and/or their children and pets. In our interviews and focus groups we asked participants to describe how the economic, social and cultural context of rural life created unique challenges for women experiencing family violence. We also asked them to share their suggestions and solutions for addressing rural victimization, including firearms victimization and abuse of pets. Suggestions ranged from stronger laws for the removal of firearms from abusive homes, to public education about the link between animal abuse and family violence, to alerting victims of abuse about the risks associated with firearms victimization. Participants, particularly the abused rural women interviewed who had experienced firearms victimization firsthand, also made suggestions for educating and training police and others who come into contact with abused women. Their suggestions were incorporated into our final report.

However, the commitment to participatory action research goes beyond asking participants about solutions; it involves an obligation to communicate the findings and to seek action on a number of fronts to improve the safety of abused rural women and children. The research findings reflect the nature and dimensions of women's experiences of abuse and they demonstrate how women's assessment of risk is mediated by a rural context in which hunting and firearms are highly valued. Our communication efforts have included explaining these findings, as well as making recommendations for change and identifying potential enhancements to the responses of service providers, crisis workers, the police and the justice system to women experiencing abuse in farm and rural communities and small towns.

While the research report attempted to outline areas of consensus with respect to solutions, sometimes opinions varied about what should be done to address a particular aspect of firearms victimization. Clearly more dialogue and exploration is warranted and this has been critical to our dissemination efforts. In other words, we have attempted to stimulate informed discussion and debate on the research findings, including reflection on the issues and the solutions. To this end, we undertook numerous distribution and communication initiatives to reach as wide an audience as possible and engaged a research assistant to help with the distribution of the *Executive Summary*. The following is a synthesis of the efforts undertaken to promote the research in academic venues and more broadly with the community including the media, government policy makers, and front line service providers ranging from police and firearms officers, to judges and Crown prosecutors, victim service workers, crisis workers, veterinarians and others interested in animal welfare.

B) Dissemination of Research Findings

As is evident below, we have tried actively to share both our preliminary findings and the final results with community and academic audiences.

1. Dissemination of Preliminary Research

Listed below are conferences and presentations made by the co-principal researchers based on the preliminary data, in order to show the progression of the research.

i.) Community Conferences and Presentations

- Doherty, D. & Hornosty, J., (December 12, 2006), *Family Violence, Firearms and Animal Abuse in Rural Communities*, Presentation to PEI research partners, Charlottetown, P.E.I.
- Doherty, D. & Hornosty, J., (November 23, 2006), *Family Violence, Firearms and Animal Abuse in Rural Communities*, Presentation to the New Brunswick Provincial Caring Partnership, Family Violence Prevention Provincial Networking Conference, Fredericton, New Brunswick.

- Doherty, D. (November 2006), *Understanding Family Violence, Firearms and Animal Abuse in Rural Communities*, Presentation to the Miramichi Family Violence Prevention Workshop, Miramichi, New Brunswick.
- Doherty, D. & Hornosty, J., (October 11, 2005), Paper presented to the National Rural Research Network conference, Twillingate, Newfoundland.

ii.) International Conferences - Academic

- Doherty, D. & Hornosty, J., (October 23, 2006), *The Culture of Firearms in Rural Communities: It's Impact on Abused Women*, Paper presented to International Conference on Violence Against Women: Diversifying Social Responses, CRI-VIFF, Montreal, Quebec. A revised version of the presentation was selected for publication.
- Doherty, D. & Hornosty, J., (July 10, 2006), *Family Violence and Firearms in Rural Communities*, Paper presented to the International Family Violence And Child Victimization Research Conference, University of New Hampshire, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

2. Dissemination of Final Research Findings

The final research report, which was over three hundred pages, was submitted to the Canada Firearms Centre (CACF) on July 12, 2007. Subject to addressing feedback from the CAFC and editorial revisions, the full report will eventually be shortened and made available on the CAFC website. Since completion of the report, the co-principal researchers have worked diligently to communicate and share the findings of the research with all relevant stakeholders. The following is an overview of these communication efforts.

i.) International Conferences and Presentations

- Hornosty, J. & Doherty, D., (May 10, 2008), *Family Violence and Firearms: Contextualizing Fear in Rural Communities*, Invited paper presented at the 2nd International Conference on Sociology, Athens Institute for Education and Research, Athens, Greece.
- Hornosty, J., (August 1, 2007), *Firearms and Rural Culture: Impact on Women in Abusive Relationships*, Seminar Presentation: Building Knowledge to Make a

Difference, School of Social Work and Social Policy, University of South Australia, Whyalla Campus, Whyalla, Australia.

- Hornosty, J. (International Visiting Scholar), (August 1, 2007), *Family Violence in a Rural Context: Exploring Some of the Barriers*, Presented as a Public Lecture, University of South Australia, Centre for Rural Health and Community Development, Whyalla, Australia.
- Hornosty, J., (July 25, 2007), *Firearms and Rural Culture: Impact On Women In Abusive Relationships*, Seminar Presentation: Building Knowledge to Make a Difference, School of Social Work and Social Policy, University of South Australia, Magill Campus, Adelaide, Australia.

ii.) Academic Conferences

- Hornosty, J., (June 4, 2008), *Understanding Family Violence When Firearms are Present: The Perspectives of Abused Rural Women*, Paper presented at the Canadian Sociology Association Annual Meetings, Families II Session, Vancouver, British Columbia.
- Hornosty, J. & Doherty, D., (May 24, 2008), *Understanding the Culture of Firearms from Abused Rural Women's Perspectives*, Invited presentation to *The 25th Qualitative Analysis Conference*, UNB, Fredericton, New Brunswick.

iii.) Community Conferences and Presentations

- Doherty, D., (April 25, 2008), *Picture of Family Violence: An Overview of Family Violence Research in Rural Communities*, Presentation to a conference on *Playing Safe! Creating Safe Activity Environments for all Participants*, Oromocto, New Brunswick.
- Doherty, D. & Hornosty, J., (June 9, 2007), *Fear and Firearms: Perceptions of Risk for Abused Women, their Children and Pets in Rural Communities*, Presentation to the *Atlantic Crime Prevention Conference* at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia.
- Doherty, D., (May 11, 2007), *Family Violence and Firearms: Perceptions of Risk for Abused Women, their Children and Pets in Rural Communities*, Presentation

- to the N.B./P.E.I. Criminal Justice Association Conference, Cornwall, Prince Edward Island.
- Hornosty, J. & Doherty, D., (November 21, 2007), *Abused Rural Women's Perceptions of Firearms Misuse and Animal Abuse*, Presentation to the Canadian Federation of University Women, UNB, Fredericton, New Brunswick.
 - Doherty, D., (November 19, 2007), *Experiences of Abused Rural Women in N.B. and P.E.I. – Firearms, Animal Abuse, and Culture*, Presentation to a community workshop entitled *Many Faces of Violence*, hosted by the Saint John Family Violence Committee, Lily Lake Pavilion, Saint John, New Brunswick.
 - Doherty, D. & Hornosty, J., (October 2007), *Experiences of Abused Rural Women in N.B. and P.E.I. – Firearms, Animal Abuse, and Culture*, the following free public Lunch and Learn Sessions were sponsored by the New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women.
 - **Fredericton:** Oct. 2, 2007, Wilmot United Church (the sixty minute presentation is available on the NBACSW website – see Appendix A – Link to Fredericton Lunch and Learn Presentation) (in English).
 - **Caraquet:** Oct 11, 2007, Auberge de la Baie (in English with simultaneous translation).
 - **Campbellton:** Oct. 12, 2007, Motel Super 8 (in English with simultaneous translation).
 - **Woodstock:** Oct 19, 2007, New Brunswick Community College (in English).

iv.) Presentations to Government and Policy Makers

- Doherty, D. & Hornosty, J., (May 23, 2008), *Experiences of Abused Rural Women in N.B. and P.E.I.: Understanding the Nature and Extent of Firearms Victimization*, Presentation to the Coordinating Team of the new specialized Domestic Violence Court in Moncton. Participants included the Judge, Crown prosecutor, probation services, victim services, legal aid and others.
- Doherty, D. & Hornosty, J., (October 2007), Presentation to the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Board, eliciting support.

3. Development and Distribution of *Executive Summary* to Participants and Research Partners

In order to share the findings with the research participants (interviewees, focus group participants and research partners) and promote widespread dissemination of the findings, the researchers created a plain-language, easy to read version of the *Executive Summary* (See Appendix B – Executive Summary; Appendix C – Sommaire) which was also translated into French. The summaries were circulated in the following ways:

i.) Mail out to Participants

A copy of the *Executive Summary*, accompanied by a cover letter, was sent to all the research participants who had requested one. After agreeing to participate in an interview or focus group the participants had been asked whether they were interested in receiving a copy of the summary of the findings when the report was completed. To maintain confidentiality the emails or letters were sent individually to each participant in the manner they had requested. Participants who filled out a French consent form were sent a French copy of the summary and cover letter, while participants who filled out an English consent form were sent English copies (See Appendix D – Letter to Participants). In total, approximately 60 summaries were mailed or emailed to participants.

ii.) Mail out to Research Partners

As well, all research partners were sent copies of the *Executive Summary* and a cover letter thanking them for their assistance in the research. Summaries were sent to the Executive Directors of the thirteen transition houses in New Brunswick and the transition house in P.E.I., the Chief Firearms Officers for New Brunswick and P.E.I., Victim Services in PEI, various government and law enforcement representatives, as well as those on the research team representing SPCA.

4. Additional Distribution

In addition to the participants and research partners, the co-principal researchers distributed the Executive Summaries more broadly to groups of people they thought might be interested. An overview of the generalized distribution of the executive summaries is provided below.

i.) Mail out to Police and RCMP

Copies of the *Executive Summary* and cover letters were sent to all municipal police departments and officials from RCMP detachments in both New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island (See Appendix E – Letter to Police/RCMP). It was felt that the research findings about domestic violence, firearms victimization and pet abuse would be helpful to this audience by broadening their information base with respect to firearms misuse. Detachments were sent either English, French or bilingual copies based on their location within the provinces. This resulted in an invitation to include an excerpt of the research in the RCMP's Gazette, which is an international journal that provides information on the latest topics of interest to law enforcement, and is distributed quarterly to subscribing police agencies and government departments worldwide. (For more information, visit <http://www.rcmp.ca/gazette/index.html>.)

ii.) Mail out to Veterinarians and Animal Welfare Groups

A cover letter and copies of the *Executive Summary* were sent to animal welfare stakeholders in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. These included vets, breeders, groomers and the SPCA (See Appendix F – Letter to Veterinarians/Animal Welfare Groups). As well, the summaries were shared with all provincial SPCA offices across Canada. We believe that access to this information will be helpful for those who work with animals, both in reinforcing the link between family violence and animal abuse, and in identifying possible solutions.

iii.) Mail out to Service Providers and Other Potential Stakeholders

A cover letter and copies of the *Executive Summary* were sent to service providers in both provinces who come into contact with individuals experiencing family violence. These included counsellors and mental health workers, victim services, Crown prosecutors and so on (See Appendix G – Letter to Service Providers/Others). The summaries were also sent to the family violence research centres across Canada. Several libraries have expressed interest in obtaining the full report for inclusion in their collections once it is available. This is an important step in creating greater awareness of the risks associated with family violence and firearms victimization and the link to animal abuse. In total, approximately 30 summaries were sent out.

iv.) Conference Hand Out

The American Humane Association invited the co-researchers to share the *Executive Summary* at their conference on family violence and animal abuse entitled, *Strategizing the Link*, in Portland, Maine, June 9-10, 2008. Forty summaries were handed out.

C) Scholarly Articles

The book *Violences faites aux femmes* was published after an international conference organized by CRI-VIFF. This collective work includes 23 chapters in French or in English, by 44 authors from a dozen countries. The first chapter, authored by Dr. Doherty and Dr. Hornosty, was translated into French (*La culture des armes a feu en milieu rural: impact sur la violence contre les femmes*). Below is the citation for the chapter:

- Doherty D. & Hornosty, J., (May 2008), “La culture des armes a feu en milieu rural: impact sur la violence contre les femmes”, *Violences faites aux femmes*, Eds. S. Arcand, D. Damant, S. Gravel and E. Harper, Les Presses de l’Université du Quebec (PUQ).

D) Media

The use of media to create awareness of research findings is important because it makes it possible to share information with a wider audience that we may otherwise have no way of reaching. The media coverage of our research included attending presentations and writing articles, as well as interviews for radio shows and television, and newspaper articles. Eventually, we plan to issue a national press release on the findings.

1. Interviews

Both Dr. Doherty and Dr. Hornosty were interviewed for television after the lunch and learn presentations. After the initial media coverage following the first lunch and learn presentation in October, 2007, Dr. Deborah Doherty participated in radio interviews on the findings. One was on the New Brunswick CBC *Rolling Home Show* with Paul Castel, and the other with the P.E.I *Information Morning Show*. As a result of these

interviews, a woman in P.E.I. contacted Dr Doherty by email offering to become involved in sheltering larger pets or farm animals. The woman said:

I was listening to CBC radio this morning and heard the interview with Deborah Doherty regarding your study of abuse in rural PEI and NB, and how guns and animals play a large part in women's fears. Both to stay in the home and leave the home. It was mentioned that safe havens have to be found to foster those animals while the women get a chance to sort out their lives. I would like to help by being one of those safe havens. I have a small farm with lots of animals and I would be more than willing to help others in this way, short or long term. If you do try to set up such a service, I would like to help. Please let me know any thoughts you have or possible ways to get started with such a program.

Dr. Doherty was also interviewed by CTV television and radio on the relationship between domestic violence and murder-suicides when an Oak Bay woman was shot by her partner in July 2007, and then again after a Memramcook woman was found shot in her home, both the result of a domestic murder-suicide with shot guns. (See Appendix H – New Brunswick man and woman found dead in their Memramcook home).

2. Newspaper Articles

Release of the findings of the study to the public and media resulted in several interviews for newspaper articles and subsequent opinion letters. The study was covered in July, 2007, in L'Acadie Nouvelle, by *Acadie Presse* (See Appendix I - Violence domestique: il faut saisir les armes).

In an article in the *Telegraph Journal* on July 27, 2007 the CBC asked Dr Doherty for a response to the proposed firearms ban for people who have been convicted of domestic violence. The article utilizes results from the study in support of the proposed ban. (See Appendix J – Prohibit domestic abusers from owning guns: lawyer).

An online article by *cbcnews.ca* on October 2, 2007, includes commentary from Dr. Doherty about the significance of the findings (see Appendix K – Guns influence abused women's decisions to seek help). An October 24, 2007 article in the *New Brunswick Tribune* spoke highly of a Campbellton lunch-and-learn session in which Dr. Doherty and Dr. Hornosty presented. The article, while stating the research was funded by the Canada Firearms Centre, pointed out the study “was not commissioned by the” Centre, and that the “researchers were careful not to make any particular value judgments about firearms used for hunting or varmint control in small communities.” (See Appendix L – Small communities hard for abused women).

The study was discussed in an article by Charles Mandel for *CanWest*, as well as in an article for the *Times and Transcript* by Ginette Petitpas-Taylor; these October 4, 2007 articles feature key aspects of the research and pointed out the necessity for change in order to deal with the issues the research raises. (See Appendix M - Study of rural families links guns and abuse; and Appendix N - Much needed to address rural abuse in N.B.). The latter article resulted in an October 12, 2008, letter to the editor (see Appendix O – Firearms logic is lacking).

An article in the *Daily Gleaner* on April 26, 2008 discussed the outcomes of the Oromocto conference: *Playing Safe! Creating Safe Activity Environments for All Participants* to discuss the relationship between violence and sports. The article includes a quote from Dr Doherty relating to this connection (see Appendix P – Coaches, parents urged to curb sports violence).

3. Newsletter/Magazine Articles

An article about the research was submitted, on invitation, to run in a 2008 edition of the *Women's Issues Branch* newsletter. The newsletter is widely distributed electronically across the province. The article will discuss the research findings and recommendations. In January 2008, the American Humane Association's publication *The Link* featured a description of the research, resulting in inquiries about the research from interested professionals across the United States requesting copies of the summary (See Appendix Q – AHA Newsletter). It also resulted in an invitation to publish the Executive Summary in the Latham Foundation's quarterly magazine entitled *The Latham Letter*.

E) Website Exposure

To further ensure distribution of the research findings, copies of the *Executive Summary* were posted on two websites. Since the research team is affiliated with the *Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research* and is one of the original research teams established in 1995, the Centre has posted the executive summaries in both languages. The site also features an annual update on this research team under Family Violence on the Farm and in Rural Communities. The *New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women*, who have been tremendously supportive in

promoting this research, also posted the summaries on their website (See Appendix R – Links to postings of *Executive Summary*).

F) Forum for Discussing the Findings and Promoting Action: Family Violence, Firearms and Animal Abuse

The co-principal investigators felt that it was important to bring together the research partners and other stakeholders to present the research findings, and more importantly, to seek feedback on the recommendations and how best to move them forward (See Appendix S – Forum Invitation, Agenda and Evaluation). A project assistant was hired to help organize a one-day “forum” which was held on May 26, 2008, in Fredericton, New Brunswick.

Representatives from New Brunswick and PEI transition houses, the S.P.C.A., the police, and government agencies such as: Social Development, Women’s Issue’s Branch, the Chief Firearms Officers, Domestic Violence Court, Victims’ Services, Family Violence Outreach Services, the University of New Brunswick, and the Women’s Advisory Council, attended. The agenda was structured to promote maximum discussion of the findings and recommendations. The researchers started the day by providing an overview of the findings and then the forum participants broke into facilitated small discussion groups around four themes - Family Violence and Firearms, Family Violence and Pet/Farm Animal Abuse, Public Education and Training, and Risk Assessment Tools.

Small group discussions were lively and participants had the opportunity to explore options for enhancing safety, while elaborating on the programs, policy or legislative actions that might be needed to ensure evidence-based responses. Participants were encouraged to suggest ways of moving the recommendations forward. They also identified actions that their own agencies could take immediately in response to the findings. The groups then came together to report back to the plenary group which resulted in further discussion. The participants completed an evaluation form which indicated that they were extremely pleased to have had the opportunity to hear the findings and discuss the recommendations firsthand. Several participants indicated that they planned to take relevant recommendations back to their own departments, agencies

or workplaces for immediate action or further reflection. A Report on the Forum was prepared and is attached to this communication report.

G) Brochure

In order to continue to promote awareness and interest in the research findings, the researchers have created a brochure which describes the research project and methodology and outlines the major findings and recommendations (See Appendix T – Brochure).

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Link to Fredericton Lunch and Learn Presentation

Appendix B – Executive Summary

Appendix C - Sommaire

Appendix D – Letter to Participants

Appendix E – Letter to Police/RCMP

Appendix F – Letter to Veterinarians/Animal Welfare Groups

Appendix G – Letter to Service Providers/Others

Appendix H – New Brunswick man and woman found dead in their Memramcook home

Appendix I – Violence domestique: il faut saisir les armes

Appendix J – Prohibit domestic abusers from owning guns: lawyer

Appendix K – Guns influence abused women’s decisions to seek help

Appendix L – Small communities hard for abused women

Appendix M – Study of rural families links guns and abuse

Appendix N – Much needed to address rural abuse in N.B.

Appendix O – Firearms logic is lacking

Appendix P – Coaches, parents urged to curb sports violence

Appendix Q – AHA Newsletter

Appendix R – Links to postings of *Executive Summary*

Appendix S – Forum Invitation, Agenda and Evaluation

Appendix T – Brochure

Appendix A – Link to Fredericton Lunch and Learn Presentation

FIREARMS, ANIMAL ABUSE, RURAL CULTURE

Listen to the 60-minute presentation on Experiences of Abused Rural Women in N.B. and P.E.I. - Firearms, Animal Abuse, Culture, by Dr. Deborah Doherty and Dr. Jennie Hornosty at a recent Fredericton Lunch and Learn sponsored by the N.B. Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

[<http://www.acswccf.nb.ca/english/acsw1.asp>]

Appendix B – Executive Summary

Exploring the Links: Firearms, Family Violence and Animal Abuse in Rural Communities

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite the growing body of literature on family violence, there are few studies which deal specifically with family violence in a rural context. None have examined extensively the social and cultural context of firearms in rural homes and the impact this may have on women dealing with abuse. Yet we know from our previous research¹ that the availability of firearms in rural homes is a perceived threat by abused rural women (see Doherty, Hornosty & McCallum, 1997; Hornosty & Doherty, 2004; Doherty & Hornosty, 2004; Hornosty & Doherty, 2003). We also know that threats often extend to family pets and farm animals.

The current study, which was funded by the Canada Firearms Centre, examines family violence, firearms, and pet abuse within a rural context where firearms are positively valued. The research was by conducted by Dr. Doherty and Dr. Hornosty, as part of a research team, *Family Violence on the Farm and in Rural Communities*, at the University of New Brunswick. The research partners in the study included all the transition houses in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, Victim Services in Prince Edward Island, the Chief Firearms Officers in both provinces, Victim Services of the Fredericton City Police and Codiac RCMP in New Brunswick, and the RCMP “J” Division. The major goal of the study was to examine, from a broad regional perspective, the various dimensions or forms in which firearms serve as instruments of control, intimidation and abuse in family violence situations with a view to expanding the information base and gaining a better understanding of the risk factors that lead to, or escalate, firearms victimization of women and children in rural homes. The research documents the experiences of abused rural women and explores service providers’/crisis workers’ perceptions of domestic firearms abuse and its influence on safety planning and intervention strategies. It also sheds light on rural perceptions, norms and values on the relationships between firearms, family violence and animal abuse.

¹ This previous research was conducted by the research team, *Family Violence on the Farm and in Rural Communities*. The team was comprised of academic researchers, community researchers, a farmwoman, RCMP, and social service providers. The published articles reflect the analysis of Drs Doherty and Hornosty. The “Rural Research Team” is a team of the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre on Family Violence Research, established in 1994 to engage in participatory action research to end violence against women.

The research was carried out in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island in 2005-2007, over an 18 month period. We used both surveys (quantitative data) and semi-structured interviews and focus groups (qualitative data). The research instruments were available in both official languages. We conducted a review of the literature on firearms misuse, family violence, and animal abuse as a backdrop to the research. In addition, a media content analysis of newspaper articles on selected family violence issues helped us to understand public perceptions, particularly in association with firearms. Finally, an analysis of court cases in Atlantic Canada over the past several years relating to family violence provided insights into the justice system's response to family violence, particularly when it involved firearms victimization and/or abuse of pets.

Quantitative Data – Survey Participants

The survey questionnaire contained two parts – A and B. Transition house staff and victim services personnel invited abused women to participate and administered the survey. Part A was demographic information such as woman's age, the community of residence, her employment status, number of children, types of abuse experienced and relationship to the abuser. Part B asked specific questions that participants answered about the presence and types of firearms, the presence of pets, whether the presence of firearms made her more fearful or made her more reluctant to seek help, and whether her partner had deliberately threatened to harm the pets or farm animals.

In total, we received 391 surveys; 283 women had answered Parts A and B, while 108 surveys contained information only for Part A. A comparison of the two data sets shows no significant difference in the demographic characteristics of these sub-groups. Here is a profile of the women in the survey:

- 20% of the surveys were from Prince Edward Island; 80% from New Brunswick;
- Women ranged in age from 16 to 75 years of age;
- 33% of all participants used the services of French-speaking transition houses in New Brunswick;
- 75% of the women lived in rural communities with populations of 10,000 or less;
- Over 70% of the women in the survey were unemployed - the majority of them (58%) were receiving social assistance, while 27% had no income at all;
- 54% of the women who went to a transition house were accompanied by children;
- 64% of New Brunswick women who were abused in their current relationship were abused by a common-law partner; in Prince Edward Island, the percentage was 56% (Common-law relationships comprise less than 16% of intimate partner relationships in Canada);
- Over 80% percent of the women had experienced two or more types of abuse.

With respect to firearms, we learned that:

- 25% of the women who answered this question had firearms in their household;
- Of these, 72% had long guns. 18% had both long guns and hand guns present;
- Nearly 40% said partners did not have a license to own firearms; 44% of firearms were not registered; 50% were not kept locked, and 11% indicated the guns were kept loaded;
- 66% of the women who indicated there were firearms in their home said knowing about the firearms made them more fearful for their safety and well-being;
- 70% said it had an affect on their decisions to tell others or seek help;
- Women were more likely to express concern for their safety when the firearms were not licensed, registered or locked;
- 83% of the women who knew the guns were loaded were fearful;
- The presence of firearms increased a woman's fear when her partner used drugs and alcohol or was threatening suicide, or there were concerns that the partner would harm her, the children, family, or property.

Survey questions about the abuse of pets and farm animals revealed that:

- 70% of households had a pet or farm animal (based on the 273 women who answered the question concerning pets);
- 57% of the households with pets also had children;
- 45% said their partner deliberately threatened to harm their pets or farm animal, and, of those, 41% said their partner deliberately harmed or killed the pet;
- 64% of women in homes with firearms thought firearms were used to harm the animal;
- 27% of the women who owned pets said they were more reluctant to get help for fear the abuser would harm their animal if they left;
- 60% said they were reluctant to disclose even when an animal had been harmed;
- 24% of women with children said that their child was aware that an animal had been harmed or threatened with abuse.

Qualitative Data – Interviews and Focus Groups

The qualitative research was structured to provide a strong and poignant voice for New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island women who had recently experienced family violence in a rural context, as well as the service providers, crisis workers, police, social workers, child protection workers and many others, who daily come into contact with victims of abuse. In total we conducted 14 interviews; 11 with abused women and 3 with service providers. We conducted seven focus groups with 58 people. In total, we heard the views of 72 participants. These participants talked about their perceptions of rural life and rural values, the prevalence and status of firearms, experiences with domestic firearms victimization and its impact on women's decision-making, and whether threats to harm animals affected women's decision-making. They also discussed the sorts of barriers rural women face when disclosing or leaving an abusive relationship. In light of the survey findings, it is not surprising that we heard numerous heart-wrenching stories of firearms victimization of women, children, and pets. Some common and recurring themes that emerged include:

- Traditional family values, a submissive role for women, and stigmatizing women who report abuse are still common features of rural communities;
- Rural women face other unique and significant barriers and challenges to leaving abuse, including social and geographic isolation, poverty, a paucity of social services, inadequate transportation, and a lack of privacy;
- Firearms, mostly long guns, are thought to be readily available in most rural homes; a significant portion of which are unregistered;
- The attitude to firearms is influenced by the “hunting” or “gun culture” which places a strong, positive value on gun ownership for hunting and other peaceful pursuits. This fosters a cavalier attitude to proper firearms storage and lack of attention to the potential increased risk of lethality in homes which are experiencing family violence and other problems;
- Women who are experiencing firearms victimization tend not to tell the police or others about their experiences for a variety of reasons;
- While abuse sometimes involves having a firearm pointed at them, the very presence of firearms serves to silence women, even when the threats are indirect;
- The fear of firearms misuse can become a community concern affecting family, neighbours and service providers who are scared to call the police when they witness abuse for fear of retaliation;
- Women are concerned about police response times in rural areas and the widespread use of scanners. They generally distrust police and the justice system to take them seriously or protect them if they disclose. And when abused women do disclose firearms misuse to service providers, often, there is no follow-up;
- Police response to family violence situations is not standardized and unless an “incident” specifically involves a firearm, police may not search for and seize the firearms in the home;
- Other factors that heighten women’s fear of harm, particularly when associated with firearms misuse by their partners, include their partner’s mental health problems, threats to commit suicide, and drinking or drug use;
- Pets and/or farm animal are often threatened, harmed or neglected as a means of controlling an abused woman, and it is common for women to delay seeking help out of fear for their animals. Generally, there is no safe haven for these animals.

While we recognize that these interviews and focus groups looked at the experiences of relatively small sample of rural women and service providers, and because the sample was not randomly chosen, we make no attempt to generalize our findings to the entire population. However, our analysis confirms much of what we learned in the quantitative research, and our earlier research. We are confident the views expressed by the women, service providers and other participants are shared by many.

Recommendations

Since this study was conducted as participatory action research, we encouraged participants to reflect on the solutions to family violence and firearms victimization – the policies, programs and community responses that might help other rural women experiencing abuse.

Suggested solutions varied. Our recommendations incorporate the different views expressed, but we take sole responsibility for the following recommended suggestions:

- Ensure that risk assessment tools include questions about the misuse and abuse of firearms, as well as pet/animal abuse
- Support a series of gun safety commercials targetted at rural communities /provinces
- Publicize the family violence provisions of the *Firearms Act*
- Create pro-removal and pro-confiscation firearms policies in domestic violence cases similar to pro-arrest and pro-charge policies
- Confiscate firearms for unsafe storage violations
- Educate police, justice officials, and service providers on the nature and extent of firearms victimization in rural homes
- Encourage abused women to think about personal safety issues – explain risk.
- Restrict firearms access on stay-away and no-contact orders, and peace bonds in all domestic cases
- Ensure follow up and support for victims following a charge and better enforcement of protective orders
- Enact legislation to compel certain professionals (mental health and doctors) to report concerns about the stability of a gun owner

Specific recommendations relating to the abuse of pets and farm animals include:

- Create a public awareness education campaign about pet abuse and the risks associated with family violence and firearms
- Ensure that questions about pet-farm animal abuse are included on in-take forms and risk assessments
- Develop a safe haven program for pets and farm animals
- Provide stronger legal protections for the animals of victims of family violence
- Link animal abuse to other forms of abuse such as child abuse and senior abuse

Our general recommendations include the need for a public education initiative about the different faces of family violence, a need for a diversity of safe environments where women feel confident to disclose abuse and the importance of coordinating services and improving communication among all service providers. As well, we point to the necessity of coordinating risk assessment tools that take into account evidence-based risks such as pet abuse, and indirect fears of firearms.

Conclusion

The research findings help us to understand better the ways in which firearms may and do serve as instruments of control, intimidation and abuse in family violence situations. They show that the normalization of firearms in rural homes in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island has lead to the minimization of firearms misuse generally, including desensitization to firearms abuse in instances where women, children and pets/farm animals are the victims. The qualitative findings have complemented and enhanced the quantitative data. We not only know more about the

prevalence of firearms in rural homes and their association with various aspects of family violence, we can now situate firearms misuse within the social and culture context that shapes experiences and responses, and as a result, we can offer insights into potential strategies for addressing it.

In conclusion, we believe that the study makes a significant contribution to family violence research by demonstrating that cultural factors play a critical role in understanding the nature of, and response to, firearms victimization. The research and findings provide much needed information about the nature of family violence in rural communities and fill a gap in our understanding of how the presence and status of firearms influence women's decision-making. Dissemination of the findings will be a critical component of the success of this study.

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Appendix C – Sommaire

Étude des liens entre les armes à feu, la violence familiale et la violence envers les animaux dans les collectivités rurales

SOMMAIRE

Malgré la masse croissante de documents sur la violence familiale, peu d'études traitent explicitement de la violence familiale dans un contexte rural. Aucune n'a examiné à fond le contexte social et culturel des armes à feu dans les foyers ruraux et les conséquences possibles des armes à feu sur les femmes aux prises avec la violence. Nous savons pourtant grâce à notre recherche antérieure² que la disponibilité des armes à feu dans les foyers ruraux est perçue comme une menace par les femmes victimes de violence (voir Doherty, Hornosty et McCallum, 1997; Hornosty et Doherty, 2004; Doherty et Hornosty, 2004; Hornosty et Doherty, 2003). Nous savons aussi que souvent les menaces visent également les animaux familiers et les animaux de ferme.

La présente étude, financée par le Centre des armes à feu Canada, se penche sur la violence familiale, les armes à feu et la violence envers les animaux familiers dans un contexte rural où les armes à feu sont perçues de façon positive. La recherche a été effectuée par M^{me} Doherty et M^{me} Hornosty, dans le cadre d'une équipe de recherche sur la violence familiale en milieu agricole et rural, à l'Université du Nouveau-Brunswick. Les partenaires de la recherche comprenaient toutes les maisons de transition du Nouveau-Brunswick et de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, les services aux victimes de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, les contrôleurs des armes à feu dans les deux provinces, les services aux victimes de la police de la ville de Fredericton et du Service de police régional Codiak de la GRC au Nouveau-Brunswick et la Division « J » de la GRC. L'étude avait pour but principal d'examiner, d'un vaste point de vue régional, les divers aspects ou formes que prend l'utilisation des armes à feu comme instruments de contrôle, d'intimidation et d'abus dans les situations de violence familiale afin d'étendre la base de renseignements et de mieux comprendre les facteurs de risque qui entraînent ou aggravent

² Cette recherche antérieure a été effectuée par l'équipe de recherche sur la violence familiale en milieu agricole et rural, qui était formée de chercheurs en milieu universitaire, de chercheurs en milieu communautaire, d'une agricultrice, de représentants de la GRC et de fournisseurs de services sociaux. Les articles publiés reflètent l'analyse de M^{me} Doherty et M^{me} Hornosty. Cette équipe de recherche en milieu rural est une équipe du Centre Muriel McQueen Fergusson pour la recherche sur la violence familiale, établie en 1994 pour faire de la recherche participative en vue de mettre fin à la violence envers les femmes.

la victimisation des femmes et des enfants liée aux armes à feu dans les foyers ruraux. La recherche documente les expériences de femmes victimes de violence dans des collectivités rurales et elle examine les perceptions des fournisseurs de services et des travailleurs à l'intervention d'urgence au sujet de l'abus des armes à feu gardés au domicile et de son influence sur les stratégies en matière de planification de la sécurité et d'intervention. Elle éclaire également les perceptions, les normes et les valeurs rurales de la relation entre les armes à feu, la violence familiale et la violence envers les animaux.

La recherche a été effectuée au Nouveau-Brunswick et à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard au cours d'une période de 18 mois, de 2005 à 2007. Nous avons fait appel à la fois à des enquêtes (données quantitatives) et à des entrevues semi-structurées et des groupes de réflexion (données qualitatives). Les outils de recherche étaient disponibles dans les deux langues officielles. Nous avons passé en revue la documentation sur la mauvaise utilisation des armes à feu, la violence familiale et la violence envers les animaux comme toile de fond de la recherche. De plus, une analyse du contenu des articles de journaux sur des questions précises concernant la violence familiale nous a aidés à comprendre les perceptions du public, en particulier en rapport avec les armes à feu. Finalement, une analyse des affaires judiciaires au Canada atlantique au cours des dernières années en rapport avec la violence familiale nous a permis de mieux comprendre comment l'appareil judiciaire réagit à la violence familiale, en particulier dans les cas de victimisation reliée aux armes à feu et de violence envers des animaux familiers.

Données quantitatives – Participantes à l'enquête

Le questionnaire de l'enquête était formé de deux parties – A et B. Le personnel des maisons de transition et le personnel des services aux victimes ont invité les femmes victimes de violence à participer à l'enquête qu'ils ont administrée. La partie A comprenait des données démographiques tels l'âge de la répondante, la collectivité de résidence, la situation par rapport à l'emploi, le nombre d'enfants, les types de violence subis et la relation avec l'agresseur. La partie B posait des questions précises sur les sujets suivants : présence et type d'armes à feu, présence d'animaux familiers, influence de la présence d'une arme à feu sur la répondante, à savoir si celle-ci était plus craintive ou plus hésitante à aller chercher de l'aide, et menaces de blesser les animaux familiers ou les animaux de ferme pouvant avoir été proférées délibérément par le conjoint.

Au total, nous avons reçu 391 questionnaires; 283 femmes ont répondu aux parties A et B et 108 femmes ont répondu seulement à la partie A. Une comparaison des deux séries de données ne

montre aucune différence significative entre les caractéristiques démographiques de ces deux sous-groupes. Voici un profil des femmes ayant participé à l'enquête :

- 20 % des répondantes habitaient l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard et 80 % le Nouveau-Brunswick;
- Les répondantes avaient entre 16 et 75 ans;
- 33 % des répondantes avaient utilisé les services des maisons de transition francophones du Nouveau-Brunswick;
- 75 % des répondantes vivaient dans des collectivités rurales de 10 000 habitants ou moins;
- Plus de 70 % des répondantes étaient sans emploi – la majorité d'entre elles (58 %) recevaient de l'aide sociale et 27 % n'avaient aucun revenu;
- 54 % des répondantes qui s'étaient rendues à une maison de transition étaient accompagnées par des enfants;
- Les victimes de violence dans leur relation actuelle avaient un conjoint de fait dans 64 % des cas au Nouveau-Brunswick et dans 56 % des cas à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard (les unions de fait représentent moins de 16 % des relations avec un partenaire intime au Canada);
- Plus de 80 % des répondantes avaient subi au moins deux types de violence.

En ce qui concerne les armes à feu, nous avons appris ce qui suit :

- Il y avait une arme à feu au domicile de 25 % des répondantes;
- Parmi celles-ci, dans 72 % des cas il s'agissait d'une arme à feu d'épaule et dans 18 % des cas il y avait une arme à feu d'épaule et une arme de poing;
- Près de 40 % des propriétaires d'armes à feu n'avaient pas de permis; 44 % des armes à feu n'étaient pas enregistrées; 50 % des armes à feu n'étaient pas gardées sous clef et dans 11 % des cas les armes étaient toujours chargées;
- Pour 66 % des répondantes qui vivaient dans un foyer où il y avait une arme à feu, le fait de connaître la présence de cette arme les rendait plus craintives pour leur sécurité et leur mieux-être;
- Pour 70 % des répondantes, la présence d'une arme à feu avait un effet sur leur décision de parler à d'autres personnes ou d'aller chercher de l'aide;
- Les répondantes risquaient plus d'exprimer de l'inquiétude au sujet de leur sécurité lorsque le propriétaire de l'arme n'avait pas de permis, que l'arme n'était pas enregistrée ou gardée sous clef;
- 83 % des répondantes qui savaient que l'arme à feu était chargée étaient craintives;
- La présence d'une arme à feu augmentait la crainte des répondantes lorsque leur conjoint prenait des drogues ou de l'alcool ou lorsqu'il menaçait de se suicider, ou bien les répondantes craignaient que leur conjoint les blesse, ou blesse les enfants ou la famille ou qu'il endommage la propriété.

Les questions de l'enquête sur la violence envers les animaux familiaux et de ferme ont révélé ce qui suit (273 femmes ont répondu aux questions à ce sujet) :

- 70 % des foyers avaient un animal domestique ou un animal de ferme;
- 57 % des ménages ayant des animaux familiaux avaient aussi des enfants;
- 45 % des répondantes ont déclaré que leur conjoint avait délibérément menacé de blesser leurs animaux familiaux ou de ferme et, de ce nombre, 41 % ont déclaré que leur conjoint avait délibérément blessé ou tué leur animal familier;

- 64 % des répondantes vivant dans un foyer où il y avait une arme à feu pensaient que l'arme avait été utilisée pour blesser l'animal;
- 27 % des répondantes qui avaient un animal familial ont déclaré être plus hésitantes à aller chercher de l'aide de crainte que l'agresseur blesse leur animal si elles partaient;
- 60 % des répondantes ont déclaré hésiter à divulguer la situation même lorsqu'un animal avait été blessé;
- 24 % des répondantes ayant des enfants ont déclaré que leur enfant savait qu'un animal avait été blessé ou menacé de violence.

Données qualitatives – Entrevues et groupes de réflexion

La recherche qualitative a été structurée de façon à donner une voix forte et intense aux femmes du Nouveau-Brunswick et de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard qui avaient vécu récemment de la violence familiale dans un contexte rural ainsi qu'aux fournisseurs de services, aux travailleurs d'intervention d'urgence, à la police, aux travailleurs sociaux, aux travailleurs des services de protection de l'enfance et aux nombreux autres intervenants qui entrent quotidiennement en contact avec des victimes de violence. Au total, nous avons effectué quatorze entrevues, onze avec des femmes victimes de violence et trois avec des fournisseurs de services. Nous avons organisé sept groupes de réflexion avec 58 personnes. Au total, nous avons entendu les points de vue de 72 participants. Ceux-ci ont parlé de leurs perceptions de la vie rurale et de ses valeurs, de la fréquence et du statut des armes à feu, des expériences de victimisation liée aux armes à feu gardées au domicile et de leurs conséquences sur la prise de décisions des femmes, ainsi que de l'influence des menaces de blessures envers les animaux sur la prise de décisions des femmes concernées. Ils ont également discuté des types d'obstacles auxquels font face les femmes en milieu rural lorsqu'elles divulguent de la violence ou lorsqu'elles quittent une relation de violence. Compte tenu des résultats de l'enquête, il n'est pas étonnant que nous ayons entendu un grand nombre d'histoires déchirantes de victimisation de femmes, d'enfants et d'animaux familiaux ayant un lien avec des armes à feu. Parmi les thèmes communs qui reviennent souvent, notons :

- Des valeurs familiales traditionnelles, un rôle de soumission pour les femmes et la stigmatisation des femmes qui signalent de la violence sont des caractéristiques communes des collectivités rurales.
- Les femmes des collectivités rurales font face à d'autres obstacles et défis uniques et importants lorsqu'elles veulent quitter une relation de violence, incluant l'isolement social et géographique, la pauvreté, la rareté des services sociaux, des moyens de transport insuffisants et le manque d'intimité.
- Les armes à feu, en particulier les armes d'épaule, semblent être facilement accessibles dans la plupart des foyers des collectivités rurales et une partie importante de ces armes ne sont pas enregistrées.
- L'attitude envers les armes à feu est influencée par la « culture de la chasse » ou la « culture de l'arme à feu » qui accorde une valeur forte et positive au propriétaire d'une arme pour la chasse ou pour une autre activité paisible. Ceci encourage une attitude

- désinvolte vis-à-vis l'entreposage approprié des armes à feu et le manque d'attention à l'augmentation possible du risque de létalité dans les foyers aux prises avec de la violence familiale et d'autres problèmes.
- Les femmes qui subissent une victimisation liée aux armes à feu ont tendance à ne pas parler à la police ni à d'autres personnes de leurs expériences pour diverses raisons.
 - L'abus d'une arme à feu peut parfois signifier que l'arme a été pointée sur la victime, mais la seule présence d'une arme à feu sert à maintenir les femmes dans le silence, même lorsque les menaces sont indirectes.
 - La crainte d'une mauvaise utilisation des armes à feu peut devenir une préoccupation pour la collectivité ayant des répercussions sur la famille, les voisins et les fournisseurs de services qui n'osent pas appeler la police lorsqu'ils sont témoins de violence par crainte des représailles.
 - Les femmes s'inquiètent du temps qu'il faut aux policiers pour intervenir dans les régions rurales et de l'usage répandu des scanners. De manière générale, elles ne croient pas que la police ni l'appareil judiciaire les prendront au sérieux ou les protégeront si elles divulguent la violence dont elles sont victimes. Et lorsque des femmes victimes de violence parlent de la mauvaise utilisation des armes à feu à des fournisseurs de services, souvent, il n'y a aucun suivi.
 - L'intervention de la police dans les situations de violence familiale n'est pas normalisée et, à moins qu'un « incident » n'implique précisément une arme à feu, un policier n'est pas tenu de chercher ni de saisir une arme à feu.
 - Les autres facteurs qui augmentent les craintes des femmes d'être blessées, en particulier en rapport avec une mauvaise utilisation des armes à feu par leur conjoint, comprennent les problèmes de santé mentale de leur conjoint, les menaces de suicide et la consommation d'alcool ou de drogues.
 - Les animaux familiers ou de ferme sont souvent menacés, blessés ou négligés dans le but de contrôler une femme victime de violence et il n'est pas rare que la femme attende avant d'aller chercher de l'aide par crainte pour ses animaux. Habituellement, il n'y a pas de lieu sûr pour ces derniers.

Nous admettons que ces entrevues et ces groupes de réflexion ont examiné les expériences d'un échantillon relativement petit de femmes et de fournisseurs de services en milieu rural et, l'échantillon n'étant pas aléatoire, nous n'essayons pas de généraliser nos conclusions à toute la population. Cependant, notre analyse confirme une grande partie de ce que nous avons appris dans la recherche quantitative et dans notre recherche antérieure. Nous sommes persuadées que les points de vue exprimés par les femmes, les fournisseurs de services et les autres participants sont partagés par un grand nombre.

Recommandations

Étant donné que la présente étude a été effectuée en tant que recherche participative, nous avons encouragé les participants à réfléchir aux solutions à la violence familiale et à la victimisation liée aux armes à feu, c'est-à-dire aux politiques, programmes et interventions communautaires susceptibles d'aider d'autres femmes des collectivités rurales qui font face à de la violence. Les solutions proposées sont variées. Nos recommandations incorporent les différents

points de vue exprimés, mais nous prenons l'entière responsabilité des propositions recommandées ci-après :

- Veiller à ce que les outils d'évaluation des risques comportent des questions sur la mauvaise utilisation et l'abus des armes à feu.
- Appuyer une série de messages publicitaires sur la sécurité des armes à feu ciblant les collectivités et les régions rurales.
- Faire connaître la *Loi sur les armes à feu* et ses dispositions concernant la violence familiale.
- Créer des politiques favorisant l'enlèvement et la confiscation des armes à feu dans les cas de violence familiale en s'inspirant des politiques favorisant les arrestations et les accusations.
- Confisquer les armes à feu qui ne sont pas entreposées de manière sécuritaire.
- Faire de l'éducation auprès des policiers, des représentants de l'appareil judiciaire et des fournisseurs de services sur la nature et la portée de la victimisation liée aux armes à feu dans les foyers ruraux.
- Encourager les femmes victimes de violence à réfléchir aux questions de sécurité personnelle et expliquer les risques.
- Dans tous les cas de conflits familiaux, restreindre l'accès aux armes à feu s'il y a une ordonnance d'interdiction de communiquer et un engagement de ne pas troubler l'ordre public.
- Faire un suivi à la suite d'une inculpation, donner du soutien aux victimes et assurer une meilleure exécution des ordonnances de protection.
- Promulguer des lois pour obliger certains professionnels (travailleurs en santé mentale et médecins) à signaler les préoccupations au sujet de la stabilité mentale d'un propriétaire d'arme à feu.

Les recommandations concernant la violence envers des animaux familiers et de ferme comprennent :

- Créer une campagne d'éducation et de sensibilisation du public sur la violence envers les animaux familiers et de ferme et sur les risques liés à la violence familiale et aux armes à feu.
- Veiller à ce que des questions sur la violence envers les animaux familiers et de ferme soient incluses dans les formulaires d'accueil et d'évaluation des risques.
- Élaborer un programme de refuges sécuritaires pour les animaux familiers et de ferme.
- Fournir des protections juridiques plus solides pour les animaux des victimes de violence familiale.
- Faire le lien entre la violence envers les animaux et d'autres formes de violence telle la violence envers les enfants et la violence envers les personnes âgées.

Nos recommandations générales comprennent la nécessité d'avoir un projet d'éducation publique sur les différents aspects de la violence familiale, le besoin de divers milieux sécuritaires où les femmes se sentent en confiance pour parler de la violence et l'importance de coordonner les services et d'améliorer la communication entre tous les fournisseurs de services. Nous insistons également sur la nécessité de coordonner les outils d'évaluation des risques qui tiennent compte des facteurs de risques fondés sur des preuves comme la violence envers les animaux familiers et la crainte indirecte de l'usage d'une arme à feu.

Conclusion

Les résultats de la recherche nous aident à mieux comprendre de quelle façon les armes à feu peuvent servir et servent effectivement d'instruments de contrôle, d'intimidation et d'abus dans les cas de violence familiale. Ils montrent que la normalisation de l'usage des armes à feu dans les foyers ruraux du Nouveau-Brunswick et de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard a entraîné la minimisation de la mauvaise utilisation des armes à feu en général, incluant une désensibilisation à l'abus des armes à feu dans les cas de victimisation des femmes, des enfants et des animaux familiers et de ferme. Les données qualitatives ont complété et mis en valeur les données quantitatives. Nous sommes maintenant mieux renseignés sur la prévalence des armes à feu dans les foyers ruraux et sur leur association avec divers aspects de la violence familiale, et de plus nous pouvons situer la mauvaise utilisation des armes à feu dans le contexte culturel et social qui donne forme aux expériences et aux interventions et, en conséquence, nous sommes en mesure de faire des observations sur les stratégies qui peuvent s'attaquer à ce problème.

En conclusion, nous croyons que la présente étude représente une contribution significative à la recherche sur la violence familiale en montrant que des facteurs culturels jouent un rôle essentiel pour comprendre la nature de la victimisation liée aux armes à feu et pour y réagir. La recherche et les résultats fournissent des renseignements fort nécessaires sur la nature de la violence familiale dans les collectivités rurales et elle comble un vide dans notre compréhension de la façon dont la présence et le statut des armes à feu influent sur la prise de décisions des femmes. La diffusion de ces résultats sera une composante essentielle du succès de l'étude.

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Novembre 2007 (also available in English)

Appendix D – Letter to Participants

Dear Friend,

Dr. Deborah Doherty and Dr. Jennie Hornosty are pleased to send you a summary of the attached research findings: *Exploring the Links: Firearms, Family Violence and Animal Abuse in Rural Communities*. If you have any questions about these findings, please feel free to contact Dr Doherty or Dr Hornosty.

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Bonjour,

M^{mes} Deborah Doherty, Ph.D. et Jennie Hornosty, Ph.D. sont heureuses de vous faire parvenir un résumé des résultats de l'étude des liens entre les armes à feu, la violence familiale et la violence envers les animaux dans les collectivités rurales. Si vous avez des questions, n'hésitez pas à communiquer avec l'une ou l'autre de ces personnes.

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Appendix E – Letter to Police/RCMP

To Whom It May Concern:

Enclosed is a summary of research findings, which we believe will be of interest to you because of your work as a police/RCMP officer and your experience with domestic violence cases. This 18 month study on “Exploring the Links: Firearms, Family Violence and Animal Abuse in Rural Communities” was carried out in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island by Dr. Deborah Doherty and Dr. Jennie Hornosty. The research suggests that there are important connections between family violence, responses of abused women and the availability of firearms, particularly long guns, in the context of abusive homes. The research also indicates how women’s concern for the welfare of pets or farm animals may affect their decisions about leaving abusive relationships. We hope that our findings will be useful to you in dealing with complaints of family violence and/or animal abuse. If you would like additional information about this research or would like to discuss any of our findings, please do get in touch with us. We would be very happy to talk with you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Deborah Doherty
Co-Principal Researcher

Dr. Jennie Hornosty
Co-Principal Researcher

Madame,
Monsieur,

Vous trouverez ci-joint un résumé des résultats de recherche. Nous croyons que ce document vous intéressera en raison de votre travail de policier de la GRC et de votre expérience dans les cas de violence familiale. Menée pendant dix-huit mois par M^{mes} Deborah Doherty Ph.D. et Jennie Hornosty Ph.D. au Nouveau-Brunswick et à l’Île-du-Prince-Édouard, l’*Étude des liens entre les armes à feu, la violence familiale et la violence envers les animaux dans les collectivités rurales* suggère une corrélation importante entre la violence familiale, les réactions des femmes violentées et l’accès aux armes à feu, en particulier les armes à canon long, dans le contexte des foyers où il y a de la violence. La recherche indique aussi comment l’inquiétude des femmes pour le bien-être des animaux de ferme et de compagnie peut avoir une incidence sur leur décision de rompre une relation marquée par la violence. Nous espérons que nos constatations seront utiles à vos interventions dans les cas de plaintes pour violence familiale ou maltraitance des animaux. N’hésitez pas à communiquer avec nous si vous voulez avoir des renseignements complémentaires sur notre étude ou discuter de ses conclusions. Nous serions très heureuses de vous en parler.

Veillez agréer, Madame, Monsieur, l’expression de nos sentiments les meilleurs.

Deborah Doherty, Ph.D.
Cochercheure principale

Jennie Hornosty, Ph.D
Cochercheure principale

Appendix F – Letter to Veterinarians/Animal Welfare Groups

To Whom It May Concern:

Enclosed is a summary of research findings, which we believe will be of interest to you because of your work with and concern for animals and animal welfare. This 18 month study on “Exploring the Links: Firearms, Family Violence and Animal Abuse in Rural Communities” was carried out in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island by Dr. Deborah Doherty and Dr. Jennie Hornosty. The research suggests that there are important connections between family violence, responses of abused women and farm animal or pet abuse. We hope that our findings will be helpful to you in identifying and responding to potentially abusive situations where pets are involved. If you would like additional information on this research or would like to discuss any of our findings, please do get in touch with us. We would be very happy to talk with you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Deborah Doherty
Co-Principal Researcher

Dr. Jennie Hornosty
Co-Principal Researcher

Madame,
Monsieur,

Vous trouverez ci-joint un résumé des résultats de recherche. Nous croyons que ce document vous intéressera en raison de votre travail et de vos préoccupations relatives au bien-être des animaux. Menée pendant dix-huit mois par M^{mes} Deborah Doherty, Ph.D. et Jennie Hornosty, Ph.D. au Nouveau-Brunswick et à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, l'*Étude des liens entre les armes à feu, la violence familiale et la violence envers les animaux dans les collectivités rurales* suggère une corrélation importante entre la violence familiale, les réactions des femmes violentées et la maltraitance des animaux de la ferme et de compagnie. Nous espérons que nos constatations vous aideront à dépister des situations qui risquent d'entraîner de la violence envers les animaux et à y réagir. N'hésitez pas à communiquer avec nous si vous voulez avoir des renseignements complémentaires sur notre étude ou discuter de ses conclusions. Nous serions très heureuses de vous en parler.

Veillez agréer, Madame, Monsieur, l'expression de nos sentiments les meilleurs.

Deborah Doherty, Ph.D.
Cochercheure principale

Jennie Hornosty, Ph.D.
Cochercheure principale

Appendix G – Letter to Service Providers/Others

To Whom It May Concern:

Enclosed is a summary of research findings, which we believe will be of interest to you because of your work as a service provider who comes into contact with individuals experiencing family violence. This 18 month study on “Exploring the Links: Firearms, Family Violence and Animal Abuse in Rural Communities” was carried out in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island by Dr. Deborah Doherty and Dr. Jennie Hornosty. The research suggests that there are important connections between family violence, responses of abused women and the availability of firearms, in the context of abusive homes. Women’s fear is heightened when abuse and firearms are associated with a partner’s alcohol/drug abuse and threats of suicide. The research also indicates how women’s concern for the welfare of pets or farm animals may affect their decisions about leaving abusive relationships. We hope that our findings will be useful to you in dealing with complaints of family violence and/or animal abuse. If you would like additional information about this research or would like to discuss any of our findings, please do get in touch with us. We would be very happy to talk with you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Deborah Doherty
Co-Principal Researcher

Dr. Jennie Hornosty
Co-Principal Researcher

Madame,
Monsieur,

Vous trouverez ci-joint un résumé des résultats de recherche. Nous croyons que ce document vous intéressera en raison des rapports de fournisseur de service que vous pouvez avoir, dans votre travail, avec des personnes aux prises avec une situation de violence familiale. Menée pendant dix-huit mois par M^{mes} Deborah Doherty Ph.D. et Jennie Hornosty Ph.D. au Nouveau-Brunswick et à l’Île-du-Prince-Édouard, l’*Étude des liens entre les armes à feu, la violence familiale et la violence envers les animaux dans les collectivités rurales* suggère une corrélation importante entre la violence familiale, les réactions des femmes violentées et l’accès aux armes à feu dans le contexte des foyers où il y a de la violence. La peur ressentie par les femmes s’amplifie lorsque la violence et les armes à feu sont associées à l’abus de drogue ou d’alcool par le conjoint et à ses menaces de suicide. La recherche indique aussi comment l’inquiétude des femmes pour le bien-être des animaux de ferme et de compagnie peut avoir une incidence sur leur décision de rompre une relation marquée par la violence. Nous espérons que nos constatations seront utiles à vos interventions dans les cas de plaintes pour violence familiale ou maltraitance des animaux. N’hésitez pas à communiquer avec nous si vous voulez avoir des renseignements complémentaires sur notre étude ou discuter de ses conclusions. Nous serions très heureuses de vous en parler.

Veillez agréer, Madame, Monsieur, l’expression de nos sentiments les meilleurs.

Deborah Doherty, Ph.D.
Cochercheure principale

Jennie Hornosty, Ph.D
Cochercheure principale

Appendix H – New Brunswick man and woman found dead in their Memramcook home

New Brunswick man and woman found dead in their Memramcook home

Published: Sunday, November 11, 2007 | 5:20 PM ET

Canadian Press: THE CANADIAN PRESS

MEMRAMCOOK, N.B. - The RCMP major crime unit has been called in following the discovery of the bodies of a man and woman inside their Memramcook, N.B. home.

Neighbours, who had not seen the couple for days, discovered the bodies after going to the home early Sunday afternoon.

RCMP Sgt. Derek Strong says the man and woman were both in their 30s.

Autopsies will be done to determine the cause of the deaths.

Strong says foul play has not been ruled out.

Appendix I - Violence domestique: il faut saisir les armes

Violence domestique: il faut saisir les armes

Mise à jour le vendredi 27 juillet 2007

Par: CP

FREDERICTON - Une chercheuse du Nouveau-Brunswick demande à la GRC de saisir davantage les armes dans les résidences où ils sont appelés à intervenir dans des cas de violence domestique.

Deborah Doherty, directrice générale du Service public d'éducation et de formation juridiques du Nouveau-Brunswick, croit que la police devrait perquisitionner la maison et saisir toute arme à feu qui s'y trouve lorsqu'elle se rend sur une scène de violence domestique, même si les armes ne sont pas impliquées dans le litige.

Appendix J – Prohibit domestic abusers from owning guns: lawyer

Prohibit domestic abusers from owning guns: lawyer

Justice Hampton attorney says it should be policy for Crown to request and be granted ban

Meghan Cumby
Telegraph Journal
Published Friday July 27th, 2007
Appeared on page A7

FREDERICTON - Anyone convicted in a domestic violence case should be banned from accessing guns, says a New Brunswick lawyer.

David Lutz, who practises family and criminal law in Hampton, said it should be public policy for prosecutors to ask and be granted a ban on domestic abusers from owning or possessing firearms.

"Anyone who is ever convicted of a domestic assault should not be allowed to have a gun ever again," Lutz said. "At least for a substantial period of time. I would say a minimum of 10 years."

Right now, it's up to prosecutors to decide whether to ask a judge to order a firearms ban, sometimes on the recommendation of the RCMP.

The call for a policy change comes days after James McCurdy, 50, shot his common-law wife Karen Buchanan, 45, in their Oak Bay home before turning the shotgun on himself.

During their 10- to 12-year abusive relationship, McCurdy was convicted of assaulting Buchanan twice (once in 2001 and again in 2002). He faced charges of assault and uttering threats in February, 2006, but the assault charge was dropped.

The prosecutor's office said he was never prohibited from owning a weapon. The RCMP noted none of the charges were weapons-related.

Lutz said in cases such as this, guns should be taken away before the situation escalates to murder. He said domestic violence deaths almost always progress from less-serious threats and assaults.

"You could not get more typical than this (case) in terms of escalation," Lutz said.

Lutz said if there was a policy of banning gun possession and ownership, there would be a reduction in domestic violence cases and murders.

According to one study, 13 of 28 domestic violence deaths in New Brunswick between 1985 and 2005 were committed with a firearm.

Jackie Matthews, the Charlotte County representative for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, agrees convicted domestic abusers should have their guns taken away.

"If you've got a violent temper and got a history of abuse, then to me it's a no-brainer," Matthews said.

Valerie Kilfoil, a Justice Department spokeswoman, said the domestic violence committee - which falls under the Crown Prosecutor's Office - discussed establishing a policy mandating prosecutors to seek a firearms ban in every domestic abuse case.

"Right now they feel the system is working fine the way it is" "there's no plans, at this time to change it," Kilfoil said.

RCMP spokesman Cpl. Gilles Blinn said if police officers have reasonable and probable grounds to believe a person is violent and could harm someone, they will request a ban on that person from owning or possessing firearms.

But, he said, police officers weigh the level of the threat to someone's safety in each case.

Blinn said unfortunately a ban on firearms wouldn't necessarily have stopped McCurdy from killing Buchanan.

"What's to stop him from killing someone with a hammer or a knife?" he said. "If someone really wants to kill their spouse, they're going to do it."

However, researcher Deborah Doherty said access to guns greatly escalates the risk of someone being killed in violent homes.

"It's a lot harder to strangle somebody or to kill them with a knife than on the spur of the moment to pull the trigger," said Doherty, who is the executive director of the Public Legal Education and Information Service of New Brunswick.

In a report Doherty recently sent to the Canada Firearms Centre 68 of 391 women surveyed who used transition houses or victim services in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island said there were firearms in the home.

Of those 68, 43 said they were more fearful for their own safety and that their ability to seek help was affected by the presence of a gun.

Debrah Westerburg, director of Woodstock Sanctuary House, said a woman's fear for her safety is definitely a factor in her decision to leave an abusive relationship.

Lutz said he understands owning firearms is a right many people defend.

"However, when you beat up your spouse, you lose your right."

Appendix K – Guns influence abused women’s decisions to seek help

Guns influence abused women's decisions to seek help: study

Last Updated: Tuesday, October 2, 2007 | 4:23 PM AT

[CBC News](#)

A new study of abused women in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island shows that having firearms in the home made them more fearful and less likely to seek help.

The study was conducted for the Canadian Firearms Centre by Fredericton researchers Jennie Hornosty and Deborah Doherty. It surveyed 283 women living in transition and 108 crisis workers, police officers and child protection workers to gain a better understanding of family violence in a rural context.

The results show:

- 25 per cent of the abused women knew firearms were in the house.
- 40 per cent of those firearms were not licensed.
- 11 per cent of the firearms were kept loaded.
- 66 per cent of the women said firearms made them fear for their safety.
- 70 per cent said the firearms' presence affected their decision to seek help.
- 64 per cent thought firearms would be used to harm a pet or farm animal.

The study sheds light on an area rarely researched in Canada, said Hornosty, and demonstrated the ways firearms can be used as instruments of control, intimidation and abuse in family situation.

Women in rural areas can become trapped in abusive relationships out of fear about what their partner might do to them, to himself or to pets and farm animals if a rifle or shotgun is handy and loaded, she said.

"The fact of rural areas is that they're very remote or many of them are very remote, very isolated," said Hornosty.

Many of the victims take animal abuse very seriously and often refuse to get help for themselves out of fear their pets or livestock will be harmed, said Doherty.

The connection between gun violence in rural areas and animal ownership became apparent as the researchers repeatedly heard from many women who felt they could report if her partner was abusing her but if an animal was harmed she felt there was nothing she could do to protect it, said Hornosty.

Doherty said more safe havens for animals need to be established as a mechanism to prompt women to leave their own homes and abusive situations.

"Then women would have the time and the freedom to know that this beloved pet is well cared for and that they can think about their options," said Doherty, "whether they're going to leave the abuse and what they're going to do with their life."

Appendix L - Small communities hard for abused women

Small communities hard for abused women

BY TIM JAQUES

Published Wednesday October 24th, 2007

Appeared on page B1

Campbellton - Core societal values in small communities are such that spousal abuse is ignored or excused as something the woman should put up with. Moreover, women in abusive relationships in small communities are more likely to be afraid if there is a firearm in the house. While that might not be at all surprising, another finding is: the presence of pets in the home is often a determining reason why these women won't leave their abusive spouses.

These were findings by two researchers, Drs. Deborah Doherty and Jennie Hornosty, now on a speaking tour sponsored by the New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women. They presented their findings at a lunch-and-learn presented in Campbellton on Oct. 12. Their study dealt with a survey of "rural" women in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island entering transition houses who had been in an abusive relationship. "Rural" in this context means a community with a population of less than 10,000 people — meaning that even the City of Campbellton qualifies.

The study, "informed by feminist and participatory action research methods", was funded by the Canada Firearms Centre, although it was not commissioned by the FIC. The researchers were careful not to make any particular value judgments about firearms used for hunting or varmint control in small communities. Even some of the women studied who expressed fear at the presence of a firearm in the possession of an abuser had no particular animus against firearms per se, having grown up in homes that had them. However the researchers did point out that there were several instances in the news recently where a firearm figured in the murder of an abused woman in a small community.

Amongst the homes of the abused women studied in New Brunswick, about 75 per cent of the guns at home were long-barrelled, under 10 per cent handguns, and the rest mixed with both present. In PEI, about 50 per cent of the guns were long-barrelled, 30 per cent handguns, and the rest mixed.

Not surprisingly, the study showed that firearms appeared to be more common and accepted in small communities than in urban areas. The study found that 66 per cent of these abused women in homes with firearms said that they were more fearful for their safety and well-being because of the firearms. Very often, the abusive spouse referred to the presence of the firearm when threatening the spouse and children.

"Think about it. It's a weapon, and it will always be a weapon, whether it's for hunting or something else," said one participant in the study.

The study also showed that amongst these abusive homes at least, there were a great many unregistered and improperly stored firearms, with 12.5 per cent being kept loaded.

The researchers were also surprised to learn the reluctance with which abused women will leave an abusive relationship, if they have to leave pets or livestock behind. They fear that the abuser will kill a loved pet, which to some of the abused women was the only source of unconditional love and friendship they had. Since most shelters for abused women will not take pets or make arrangements for their care, these women refuse to leave their animals to the cruelty of the abusive spouse. The researchers said that this was a factor that had perhaps been overlooked in the past.

Attitudes in small communities were also cited as a reason why the women did not leave abusive relationships. Spousal abuse is seen as something women should put up with or at least not make a great deal about, and often relatives and friends will excuse the abuse until such time as the abuser acts to threaten the children. The behaviour of the abusive spouse is not taken as a serious crime. These women feel isolated and that they have no-where to turn, because of what the community might think, as the community judges them rather than the abuser. In some small communities, many people have police scanners for recreation and know to what houses the police have been called. The relatives of the abuser sometimes show up before the police do and attempt to get the woman to drop the matter. The presence of firearms and the fear of retaliation against pets adds to this burden.

RCMP District Commander Insp. Roland Wells, speaking after the presentation, said that the firearm is often the most prized possession of the abuser. Wells also said that the local RCMP is moving to a digital dispatch system which cannot be accessed by police radio scanners.

The researchers recommended seizures of firearms from abusive homes, and enforcement of the storage and licencing laws. (In fact, many of the abused women were reluctant to tell the police of the presence of firearms in the house for fear that the abuser's firearms would be confiscated, and they would be blamed by him and the community.) They also recommended linking pet abuse to other forms of abuse like spousal and child abuse, the creation of safe shelters for pets of women who leave abusive relationships, and stronger animal cruelty laws.

Appendix M – Study of rural families links guns and abuse

Study of rural families links guns and abuse

Charles Mandel

CanWest News Service

Published: Thursday, October 04 2007

The very presence of firearms in a household serves to silence women, report two researchers in a new study that argues women experiencing "firearms victimization" tend not to tell others about their abusive experiences for a variety of reasons.

"While abuse sometimes involves having a firearm pointed at them, the very presence of firearms serves to silence women, even when the threats are indirect," said the report titled Exploring the Links: Firearms, Family Violence and Animal Abuse in Rural Communities.

Jennie Hornosty and Deborah Doherty surveyed women in transition houses in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island to examine links between abuse, animal abuse and guns in rural settings.

"What we found was in many cases the abusive partner either abuses or threatens to harm the animal - including killing the animal - as a way to try to control and intimidate women," Hornosty said in a phone interview Wednesday.

Hornosty is a sociology professor at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton, while Doherty is the executive director of the non-profit organization, Public Legal Education and Information Services of New Brunswick.

During their research, the two women heard numerous stories where women were told if they left the abusive partner, they would not see the family pet upon return. This was sometimes complicated by the fact that the pet often belonged to a child, rendering the women worried that if the pet did vanish, they would be blamed.

Among the findings, 25 per cent of the women who responded to the question about guns had firearms in their household; 66 per cent of the women who indicated there were firearms in the house said knowing about them made them more fearful for their safety and well-being.

Forty-five per cent of the women said their partner had deliberately threatened to harm their pets or farm animal and of those, 41 per cent said their partner deliberately harmed or killed the pet.

Hornosty and Doherty have researched family violence in rural communities before, but hadn't considered the role of either firearms or animal abuse until women they spoke to identified them as important factors affecting their decisions to leave abusive situations.

Hornosty hopes the study will reach policy-makers and encourage them to put in place legislation that might mitigate the problems. The researchers recommended safe shelters be developed for animals.

"We certainly did find if women are concerned that the animals are going to be abused, this would delay their seeking help in some cases, because they had no place to put their pets," Hornosty said.

The survey contained two parts. The first was a demographic questionnaire, while the second asked specific questions about firearms and pets. The researchers received 391 surveys in total, with respondents ranging in age from 16 to 75 years. Seventy-five per cent of the women lived in rural communities with populations of 10,000 or less.

Women who entered transition houses or accessed victim services were asked to take part the questionnaire.

The study was funded by the Canadian Firearms Centre. Hornosty said they were encouraged to put in a proposal because centre staff had heard of their earlier research. She added the centre does not control the information in the study in any way.

The research conducted over an 18-month period included surveys, interviews, a literature review and focus groups, as well as an analysis of court cases related to family violence in Atlantic Canada.

Hornosty and Doherty have authored several research papers on spousal abuse in a rural setting.

Research partners in the study included chief firearms officers in both New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, Victim Services of the Fredericton City Police, Codiac RCMP and the RCMP J Division, and transition houses in both provinces.

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Appendix N – Much Needed to address rural abuse in N.B.

Much needed to address rural abuse in N.B.

Ginette Petitpas-Taylor

Woman's view

Published Thursday October 4th, 2007

Appeared on page D6

Anyone who has ever thought "why don't abused women just leave", should talk to abused women in rural areas.

Deborah Doherty and Jennie Hornosty of Fredericton have. Their study, funded by the Canada Firearms Centre, looked at the experiences of rural abused women.

Their research would be of great interest to New Brunswick even if it had been conducted in another part of Canada, but it was done mostly with New Brunswick women.

With half of us living in non-urban areas, and with New Brunswick having such a high rate of gun-related deaths and spousal murder-suicides, we should be paying attention to their results and recommendations. Fortunately the two researchers have embarked on a short tour of the province -- soon in Caraquet, Campbellton and Woodstock -- to let rural New Brunswick know about their findings.

We can imagine some of the problems particular to living in a rural area: isolation, poverty and transportation. Many abused women also mentioned police response times -- one said when you see two police cars going in one direction in a rural community, you know you can do anything you want in the other direction.

Many also talked about how traditional values, strong in some rural areas, mean that women are supposed to be submissive and that reporting abuse is stigmatizing.

And then there are the guns and animals, both frequently present in rural areas, and, the researchers found, both used as instruments of control, intimidation, and abuse in family violence situations.

Even crisis and victim service workers who participated in the study were amazed at the responses of abused women when asked about the use of firearms and threats to animals.

The workers later strongly recommended that these questions become standard on risk assessment and in-take forms.

Almost half of the abused women said that their partner had threatened to harm animals as a means of controlling her. "He would threaten to kill the dog, and describe the dog's death very violently, it was really graphic." Most said their partner had actually harmed or killed an animal.

It was common for the women to delay seeking help out of fear for their animals, and because there is no safe haven for these animals.

One woman who owned horses explained that when her partner's abusive behaviour towards her became intolerable, she would end up staying or going back because she had to feed the horses. . . "Where can you go with a horse or chickens or sheep?"

In homes where firearms were present, two-thirds of the women said knowing about the firearms made them more fearful for their safety. Most of the women said it affected their decision to ask for help, especially if the firearms were not licensed, registered or locked.

Indeed, even some family, neighbours and service providers who witness abuse were made too scared to call the police by the knowledge that firearms were present and the fear they would be misused.

Some spoke of actual assaults with a gun, including rape with a gun to their head. But threats can be subtly effective in the context, as is the fact that a gun is always loaded, or always on top of the fridge.

As one focus group participant said, "all he has to do is look over at the bed and she knows there is rifle underneath and that she had better do what he says."

In a province with a "hunting" or "gun culture", there can be a cavalier attitude to firearms, to their storage and to their potential lethality even where there is family violence and other problems.

Incredibly, the study found that unless a domestic violence incident specifically involved a firearm, police don't usually search for and seize the firearms in a home where they have answered a call.

Some rural abused women said they do not trust that their problem will be taken seriously if they disclose the abuse. Others said that when they do disclose firearms misuse to service providers, often there is no follow-up.

Some did not dare tell police or others about the guns in the home because they were not sure the guns would be taken away. If they were, she was in for a beating, and if they weren't, it could get even worse.

Some women were frightened of calling the police because so many rural people have scanners to listen to police calls.

Given perceived police response times, it's not just the shame of their neighbours knowing their business, it's the fear that a neighbour will tell the abuser.

Some imagined that if police came to take away his guns, it would end in a standoff.

Dr. Doherty and Dr. Hornosty heard heart-wrenching stories of women who stayed because if she tried to leave, he had said he would shoot and bury her and no one would ever know or even hear the shot, given where they lived.

Some women stayed because their children were so attached to the animals that were being threatened.

Women who eventually left said that some interveners told them they were stupid for having hesitated because of animals. When you are being terrorized and trying to react sanely to an insane situation, you don't need "helpers" to tell you that you are stupid.

Even people who understand about women and kids can lack concern about pets, or don't believe anybody would hurt an animal.

Add mental health problems and drugs, including alcohol, to the situations above, and you can imagine the paralyzing fear that women live with on some farms and rural homes in the province.

We have much to do to reach out to them.

Ginette Petitpas-Taylor, of Moncton, is Chairperson of the New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status Of Women. Her column on women's issues appears in the Times & Transcript every Thursday. She may be reached via e-mail at acswcccf@gnb.ca

Appendix O – Firearms logic is lacking

Letters (to editor Telegraph Journal)

Published Friday October 12th, 2007

Appeared on page D10

Firearms logic is lacking

To The Editor:

On Oct. 4 in her weekly column Ginette Petitpas-Taylor addressed the issue of abused women in rural areas.

In short the column basically regurgitated a study done by Deborah Doherty and Jennie Hornosty on rural abuse in New Brunswick and P.E.I.

This is not the first study done on rural abuse by these two women, but it is the first study that was funded by the Canada Firearms Centre.

Amazingly, in their previously studies firearms were never singled out as a factor in a woman's decision to leave an abusive relationship.

Now suddenly this new survey points to firearms as the problem and the mere presence of a firearm within a household is enough to scare women not to talk about abuse.

I wonder if this result has anything to do with who paid for the funding?

The Canada Firearms Centre is on its last legs, looking for anything to make itself look relevant.

At a cost of somewhere between one and three billion dollars, with error rates on licensing forms put as high as 71 to 132 per cent (never mind the actual registration and verification of the firearm) it has always been a database of useless information, none of which would ever help deter misuse of a firearm.

The only support it gets now is from a few liberals who still think that criminals register their guns.

After reading the article a few times I'm still not sure what Ginette was trying to say, but it sounded an awful lot like a rant against firearms to push a political ideology, and had very little to do with addressing the plight of abused women.

If this is the best the chairperson of the New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women can come up with regarding abused women in rural areas, then I can understand why the Harper government has cut funding for some women's lobby groups.

Paul Woodworth,

Moncton

(Via e-mail)

Coaches, parents urged to curb sports violence

By ADAM BOWIE
bowie.adam@dailyleaner.com

Organizers of a conference examining the intersection of violence and sports say coaches, parents and athletes must work together to keep recreational environments safe in New Brunswick.

Nicole Smith, executive director of Sport NB, said the conference is designed to explore topics such as abuse and harassment policies, the social implications of violence in New Brunswick and how coaches can set a positive example.

She said representatives from a variety of sports councils, governmental offices and academic institutions have been participating in the sessions.

"The real question is, 'What do they need to create these safe environments?'" she said.

"So there's a need to talk about screening and policies and to gain even more insight on how to put things in place to deal with these issues.

"When people think about abuse and harassment, they usually think about the sexual kinds of those behaviours. There's just so much more than that."

Neil Jacobson, from Hockey New Brunswick's risk and safety committee, is the master facilitator for a mandatory coaching program called Speak Out!

The program outlines ideas that coaches and volunteers can use when dealing with incidents of abuse, harassment and bullying.

Jacobson said he investigates between six and eight major complaints every year, but he's hoping to reduce that number by teaching coaches and volunteers how to handle situations properly.

"We've been to every small arena, every classroom, boardroom or whatever," he said.

"We've had as few as five people show up and as many as 200. We really try to get our message across and with a group of dedicated volunteers promoting the Speak Out! program. This really is a valuable program for sport organizations and it's putting us all on the right road."

Jacobson said between 800 and 900 coaches per year take the Speak Out! training in New Brunswick, and 96,000 coaches have been trained across the country.

He said he hopes the program will help reduce the number of incidents happening in other sports as well.

"It's not only a hockey program, it's a community program," he said.

"It's a program where everybody can take something away to their personal life and take to another sport.

"That's really important because not only are we going to reach the 96,000 coaches that we've reached so far (in Canada), it'll spin off to people involved in soccer, baseball and lots of communities."

Deborah Doherty, executive director of the Public Legal Education and Information Service of NB, presented some of her research on family violence in rural communities of New Brunswick.

She said that in order to understand the connection between violence and sports, it's important to understand violence in a broader social context.

"If being controlling and angry and domineering gets you your way in your family, and if that's how Dad acts towards Mom, then that's what I'll do on the hockey rink or on the soccer pitch," she said.

"Addressing violence is not just about how one kid is being a bully. It's about what makes him like that and how does the whole culture sanction those behaviours, or normalize them or minimize them as not really that abusive."

Appendix Q – AHA Newsletter



AMERICAN HUMANE'S
The Link® eNews
Studying The Link between animal abuse and family violence



Phil Arkow, Editor dona
January 2008



STRATEGIZING THE LINK
National Town Meeting

Plans for The Link National Town Meeting Moving Ahead!

The National Town Meeting on The Link -- a roll-up-your-shirtsleeves strategy session where researchers, community coalition leaders and advocates will meet to strategize a national effort to move The Link agenda forward -- promises to be one of the most exciting developments this year. It will be followed by an invitational Summit where national leaders will assimilate the ideas brought forth at the town meeting to craft what we hope will be a major collaborative effort.

Confirmed speakers and facilitators to date include Phil Arkow, Frank Ascione, Barbara Boat, Linda Jariz, Mark Kumpf, Randy Lockwood, Lila Miller, Gary Patronek, Allie Phillips and Ken Shapiro. There will be opportunities for poster presentations describing the public policy implications of The Link.

This all takes place June 8-10 in scenic Portland, Maine. If you're interested in The Link, you won't want to miss this. For details and to register, visit <http://www.americanhumane.org/> or <http://www.linkageproject.org/>, or contact susan@GreatGatherings.com.

Summary of Research on The Link Now Available

American Humane has compiled a concise summary of the highlights of research on The Link. This information will be of use to anyone needing a quick fact sheet to present to legislators, the media or the general public explaining how animal abuse interacts with violent crimes, child abuse, domestic violence and elder abuse. Look for the report on American Humane's website at www.americanhumane.org/link, or contact Phil Arkow, interim director for the Human-Animal Bond, at phila@americanhumane.org for a copy.

Link Brochure Now Available

American Humane has also completed work on a 16-page booklet summarizing The Link and what a variety of professionals can do. The booklet is designed for child welfare, domestic violence, law enforcement, criminal justice and veterinary professionals -- plus caring members of the public who want to get involved. To download the brochure, visit www.americanhumane.org/link or email phila@americanhumane.org to request a copy.

The Link between Rural Domestic Violence, Firearms Victimization, and Pet Abuse Explored

Despite the growing body of literature on family violence, there are few studies that deal specifically with family violence in a rural context. None have examined the implications of firearms in rural homes and the impact this may have on women dealing with abuse. New research from Deborah Doherty and Jennie

Hornosty in Atlantic Canada sheds new light on how the confluence of firearms and pet abuse serves as an instrument of control, intimidation and abuse. They reported that the presence of weapons, which are often neither registered nor locked, in remote areas with a prevalent gun culture makes abused women more fearful for their safety and less likely to tell others or seek help. Similarly, consistent with other studies focusing on urban areas, they reported high percentages of threats or harm to pets, of children who were aware of these acts, and of women who were reluctant to disclose either the domestic violence or animal abuse. Sixty-four percent of women reported that firearms were used to harm the animals. An executive summary of the report is available from deborah.doherty@gnb.ca.

-- Doherty, D. & Hornosty, J. (2007). *Exploring the Links: Firearms, Family Violence and Animal Abuse in Rural Communities*. Fredericton, NB: University of New Brunswick, Family Violence on the Farm and in Rural Communities.

Ohio Legislature Introduces Pets in Protection Order Bill

Ohio has become the latest state to address the welfare of animals in domestic violence situations. On Dec. 21, Reps. Courtney Combs and Brian Williams, with 12 co-sponsors, introduced H.B. 418. The bill would require the state to include the protection of companion animals in the standardized forms used to issue temporary, domestic violence and anti-stalking protection orders. The bill would also require juvenile animal cruelty offenders to undergo psychiatric evaluation and individual or family counseling, and it would establish continuing medical education courses to train doctors to provide this counseling. Nine states have recently enacted laws that include pets in protection orders.

Link Addressed at First Veterinary Social Work Conference

The Link between human and animal violence is one of four key topics to be addressed at the first Veterinary Social Work Summit, to be held April 17-20 in Knoxville, Tenn., and co-sponsored by the Colleges of Social Work and Veterinary Medicine at the University of Tennessee. Practitioners of this new sub-specialty of social work practice will also learn about animal-assisted interventions, grief and bereavement, and compassion fatigue. Details are available at the conference website, <http://www.vet.utk.edu/socialwork/summit/>

Have some information to share with us?

Please let us know of any new research, trainings, publications, legislation, court cases or other developments about The Link and we'll pass it on to our readers. Just send an email to link@americanhumane.org.

Know someone else who might like to receive The Link eNews?

Please feel free to forward (below) and share this eNews with others, and encourage them to [sign up for the newsletter](#). Also, visit [American Humane's website](#) for more news and information, or go directly to American Humane's [The Link web page](#).

[Forward this message to a friend](#)

Appendix R – Links to postings of *Executive Summary*

Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre Publications:

2007:

Family Violence on the Farm and in Rural Communities Research Team

- Doherty, D. & Hornosty, J. (August 2007). **Exploring the Links: Firearms, Family Violence and Animal Abuse in Rural Communities** – [Executive summary](#)

[<http://www.unbf.ca/arts/CFVR/documents/FirearmsFamilyviolenceexecutivesummary.pdf>]

- Doherty, D. & Hornosty, J. (août 2007). **Étude des liens entre les armes à feu, la violence familiale et la violence envers les animaux dans les collectivités rurales** - [sommaire](#)

[<http://www.unbf.ca/arts/CFVR/documents/etudearmesafeuetviolencefamilialesommaire.pdf>]

Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre Current Research:

Exploring the Links: Firearms, Family Violence and Animal Abuse in Rural Communities

Executive summary - [to view click here](#)

[<http://www.unbf.ca/arts/CFVR/documents/FirearmsFamilyviolenceexecutivesummary.pdf>]

Étude des liens entre les armes à feu, la violence familiale et la violence envers les animaux dans les collectivités rurales

[Télécharger le sommaire](#)

[<http://www.unbf.ca/arts/CFVR/documents/etudearmesafeuetviolencefamilialesommaire.pdf>]

New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women:

EXPLORING THE LINKS: FIREARMS, FAMILY VIOLENCE AND ANIMAL ABUSE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Despite the growing body of literature on family violence, there are few studies which deal specifically with family violence in a rural context. None have examined extensively the social and cultural context of firearms in rural homes and the impact this may have on women dealing with abuse.

-- [Read the Summary by Dr. Deborah Doherty and Dr. Jennie Hornosty](#)

[<http://www.acswccf.nb.ca/english/acsw1.asp>]

Appendix S – Forum Invitation, Agenda and Evaluation

Hello,

Dr. Jennie Hornosty and Dr. Deborah Doherty are organizing a one day Family Violence, Firearms and Animal Abuse Forum. The purpose of the forum is to present the findings of their research study, and more importantly, to seek feedback on the recommendations and how best to move them forward.

After providing an overview of the findings, the forum will break into small discussion groups around four themes - Family Violence and Firearms, Family Violence and Pet/Farm Animal Abuse, Public Education and Training, and Risk Assessment Tools. Participants will have the opportunity to explore options for enhancing safety, elaborate on programs, policy or legislative actions that might be needed, identify responsibilities, and then report back to the plenary group.

A jam packed day is planned. Hopefully the crisis community, academics, social service deliverers, government policy makers, court officials, law enforcement and others interested in this topic will be able to participate. Unfortunately there is no funding to conduct this forum in both official languages at this time. If there is enough interest, one of the discussion groups can be held in French. We do apologize for not being able to offer both.

While Jennie and Deborah realize that this is short notice, they strongly encourage you to try to find the time to attend this important event which will be held in Fredericton.

Please mark Monday, May 26, 2008 on your calendar and plan to attend. We will be in touch very soon with more information about the location (in Fredericton), time, and other details.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible.



Family Violence, Firearms & Animal Abuse Forum

**May 26, 2008
9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

**Fredericton Inn
315 Regent St.
Fredericton, NB
(506) 455-1430**

Co-principal researchers: Dr. Deborah Doherty and Dr. Jennie Hornosty

Agenda

9:00 a.m.	Overview of findings (continental breakfast provided)	<i>Salon A</i>
10:30 a.m.	Nutrition Break	
10:45 a.m.	Small discussion groups	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family Violence and Firearms• Family Violence and Pet/Farm Animal Abuse	<i>Salon A</i> <i>Prince Edward Room</i>
12:00 p.m.	Lunch	<i>The Brass Rail</i>
1:15 p.m.	Small discussion groups	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public Education and Training• Risk Assessment Tools	<i>Salon A</i> <i>Prince Edward Room</i>
2:30 p.m.	Nutrition Break	
2:45 p.m.	Report back from discussion groups	<i>Salon A</i>
4:30 p.m.	Wrap-up	<i>Salon A</i>

Contact Information

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Family Violence, Firearms and Animal Abuse

A Forum for Discussing the Findings and Promoting Action

May 26, 2008

Evaluation Form

Your feedback is important to us

1) What was your interest in coming to this forum? (Please circle all that apply)

- A. I am interested in the topic(s)
- B. I work with victims of family violence
- C. I work with animals and am concerned about the link to family violence
- D. I appreciate the opportunity to share ideas about preventing family, firearms victimization and animal abuse relating to domestic violence
- E. I wanted to learn more about how to incorporate evidence-based practices into my own work with rural communities
- F. I wanted the opportunity to network with others
- G. I want to become more involved in addressing family violence issues
- H. Other? _____

2) Was the morning presentation on the findings an effective way to learn about the outcome of the research?

- A. yes
- B. no
- C. Would have liked more information

Comments:

3) Did you gain a better understanding of the nature and dimensions of firearms victimization experienced by some abused rural women and the connection to pet abuse?

- A. yes
- B. no
- C. somewhat

4) Were the small group discussions an effective way for you to contribute your ideas and views on how to create safer environments for abused rural woman, their children and their pets/farm animals?

- A. yes
- B. no
- C. somewhat

5) Did the report back accurately reflect the group discussion?

- A. yes B. no C. somewhat

6) Are you leaving here today feeling encouraged to become involved in working with others to address family violence issues (such as firearms victimization and pet abuse)?

- A. yes B. no C. somewhat

Comment: How do you plan to stay involved?

7) What was your feeling at the end of the day? (Circle all that apply)

- A. I was motivated by the discussion (met interesting people, heard fresh ideas,)
- B. I felt good about having participated in today's event
- C. I was discouraged (too many vested interests, lack of concern...)
- D. I was frustrated (did not feel my voice had any impact)
- E. I would be interested in meeting again to discuss issues more at length
- F. I am undecided about the usefulness of this forum

Do you have any further comments or suggestions?

Thank you for taking the time to fill this out.

We hope to be working with you in the near future

Exploring the Links: Firearms, Family Violence and Animal abuse in Rural Communities



CONCLUSIONS

- Firearms serve as instruments of control, intimidation and abuse in family violence situations
- Normalization of firearms in rural NB and PEI homes has led to the desensitization to firearms abuse in instances where women, children and pets/farm animals are the victims
- Increased knowledge of the prevalence of firearms in rural homes and their association with various aspects of family violence, can now offer insights into potential strategies for addressing it
- Cultural factors play a critical role in understanding the nature of, and response to, firearms victimizations.
- Fills a gap in our understanding of how the presence and status of firearms influence women's decision-making.



GOALS

- To examine ways firearms are used to control, intimidate and abuse in family violence situations
- To understand risk factors that lead to firearms victimization of women and children in rural homes.

METHOD

- Research was carried out in NB and PEI in 2005-2007, using surveys, semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

SURVEYS

- 68% of women who indicated there were firearms in their home said knowing about the firearms made them more fearful of their safety and well-being
- 70% said it had an effect on their decisions to tell others or seek help
- Women were more likely to express concern for their safety when the firearms were not licensed, registered or unlocked
- 83% of the women who knew the guns were loaded were fearful
- The presence of firearms increased a woman's fear when her partner used drugs and alcohol or was threatening suicide, or there were concerns that the partner would harm her, the children, family, or property
- 45% said their partner deliberately threatened to harm their pets/farm animals, and of those, 41% said their partner deliberately harmed or killed the pet
- 27% of women who owned pets said they were more reluctant to get help for fear the abuser would harm their animal if they left
- 60% said they were reluctant to disclose even when an animal had been harmed
- 24% of women with children said that their child was aware that an animal had been harmed or threatened with abuse

INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

- Traditional family values, submissive roles, and stigmatization of women who report abuse are common features of rural communities
- Social and geographic isolation, poverty, a paucity of social services, inadequate transportation, and a lack of privacy are significant challenges to leaving abuse
- Attitude to firearms is influenced by a positive value on gun ownership for hunting and other peaceful pursuits.
- The presence of firearms serves to silence women, even when threats are indirect
- Women are concerned about police response times in rural areas and the widespread use of scanners. They generally distrust police and the justice system to take them seriously or protect them if they disclose. And when abused women do disclose firearms misuse to service providers, often there is no follow-up
- Police response to family violence situations is not standardized and unless an "incident" specifically involves a firearm, police may not search for and seize the firearms in the home
- Women's fear of harm heightened by their partner's mental health problems, threats to commit suicide, and drinking or drug use
- Pets/farm animals are often threatened, harmed or neglected to control an abused woman; it is common for women to delay seeking help out of fear for their animals. Generally, there is no safe haven for these animals

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure risk assessment tools include questions about misuse and abuse of firearms
- Gun safety commercials targeted at rural communities/provinces
- Share information about the Firearm's Act
- Pro-removal and pro-confiscation firearms policies in domestic violence cases
- Confiscate firearms for unsafe storage violations
- Educate police, justice officials, and service providers on firearms victimization in rural homes
- Restrict firearms access on stay-away and no-contact orders, and peace bonds in all domestic cases
- Follow-up and support for victims following a charge and better enforcement of protective orders
- Legislation to compel mental health professionals and doctors to report concerns about the stability of a gun owner
- Public awareness campaign about pet abuse and risks of family violence and firearms
- Questions about pet-farm animal abuse in in-take forms and risk assessments
- Safe haven program for pets and farm animals and stronger legal protection for animals of victims of family violence
- Safe environments where women feel confident to disclose abuse
- Risk assessment tools considering evidence-based risks (pet abuse, indirect fear of firearms)