



Australian Government

Australian Institute of  
Health and Welfare



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## How many women and girls were hospitalised due to assault?

Just over 20,000 people (20,111) were hospitalised in Australia in 2013–14 as a result of an assault, of which 31% (6,293) were women and girls. The overall rate of assault injury among women and girls was 56 cases per 100,000 population, compared with 121 for men.

Rates of assault among women and girls were higher in age groups from about 15–19 to 50–54 years (Figure 1) and the age group with the highest rate of assault was 30–34 years (113 cases per 100,000 population).

## Who were the perpetrators of assault against women and girls?

More than three-quarters (76%, or 4,788) of records of cases of assault against women and girls contained information about the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim. Where specific information about the perpetrator was available, 'spouse or domestic partner' was the most commonly reported perpetrator of assault among women and girls (59%, or 2,843 cases). 'Parents' (195 cases) and 'other family members' (726 cases) accounted for nearly half of the remaining cases where the type of perpetrator was specified (Figure 2).

## Type of assault

Over half (59%, or 3,685) of all women and girls hospitalised due to assault were victims of an *Assault by bodily force* (Figure 3). A further quarter of all hospitalised assault cases against women and girls involved a blunt (17%, or 1,048 cases) or sharp object (9%, or 551 cases).

## Nature of the injury

Open wounds (22%, or 1,400 cases), fractures (22%, or 1,375) and superficial injuries (19%, or 1,194) accounted for almost two-thirds of the types of assault injuries sustained by women and girls.

For assaults by bodily force and involving sharp and blunt objects, the majority of injuries were to the head and neck area (63%, or 3,328) (Figure 4).

Hospitalised assault injuries  
among women and girls



### Quick facts

Nearly **6,500** women and girls were **hospitalised** due to assault in Australia in 2013–14.



When place of occurrence was specified, **69%** of assaults against women and girls took place in the **home**.



Nearly **60%** of hospitalised assaults against women and girls were perpetrated by a **spouse** or **domestic partner**.



### In this fact sheet

Assault injury cases are those classified in the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th Revision, Australian Modification (ICD 10 AM) (NCCH 2012) as *Assault* (X85–Y09) or *Legal intervention and operations of war* (Y35–Y36). This includes all cases in which a person, or more than 1 person, intentionally injured another person. It does not include cases where the intent was unspecified, unstated or could not be determined.

Just as not all offences are reported to police, not all hospitalised assault cases will be identified as assaults. This may be particularly the case for acts of domestic violence or sexual assault, where victims can be reluctant to report an incident to hospital personnel or to identify a perpetrator for hospital records. As a result, this fact sheet probably underestimates the incidence of hospitalised assault.

The data were sourced from the AIHW's National Hospital Morbidity Database for 2013–14, which covers all (admitted) episodes of care in Australian hospitals. Records with a mode of admission reported as a transfer from another hospital were excluded to reduce double counting.

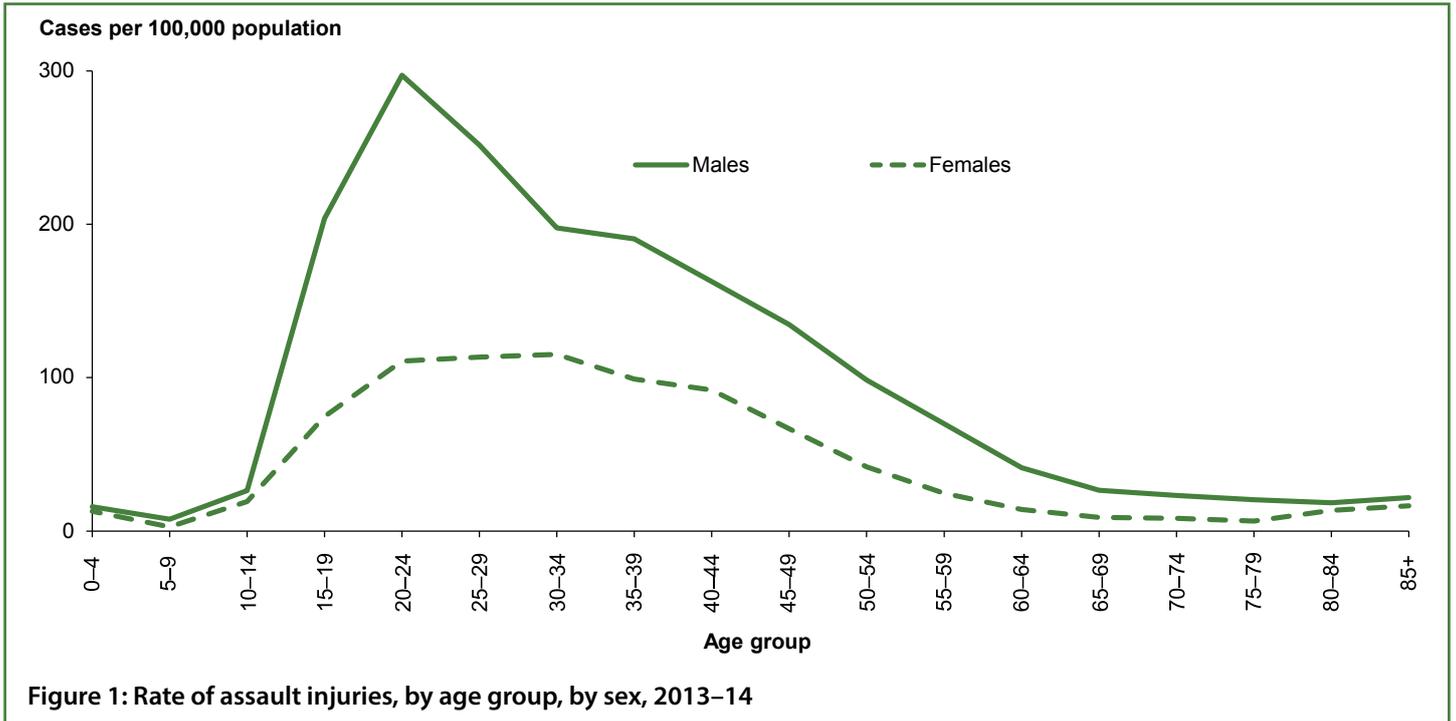


Figure 1: Rate of assault injuries, by age group, by sex, 2013-14

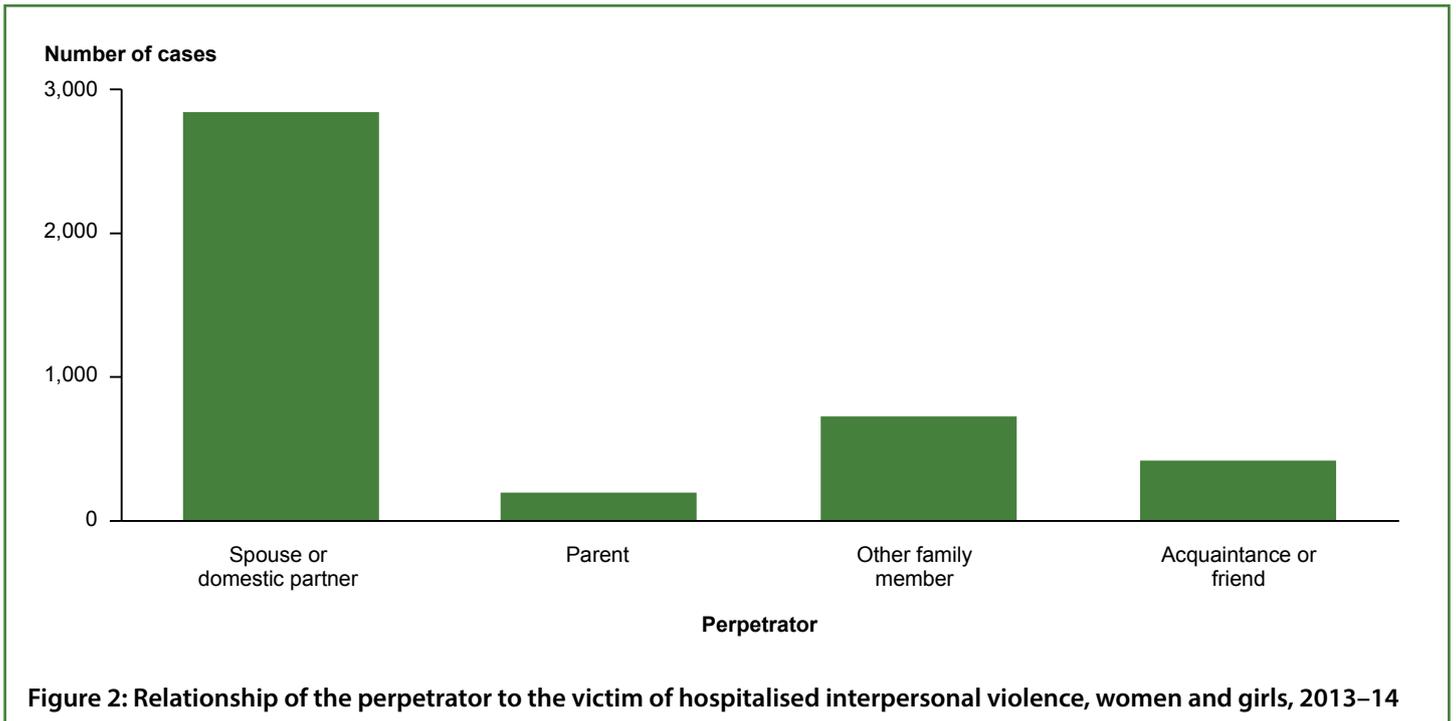


Figure 2: Relationship of the perpetrator to the victim of hospitalised interpersonal violence, women and girls, 2013-14

## Where did the assaults take place?

A large proportion (57%) of records of assault cases among women and girls did not have a record of the place of occurrence of the assault. Where a place of occurrence was specified, the largest proportion in each age group reported being at home when the assault occurred; overall, 29% (1,853 cases) occurred at home (Figure 5).

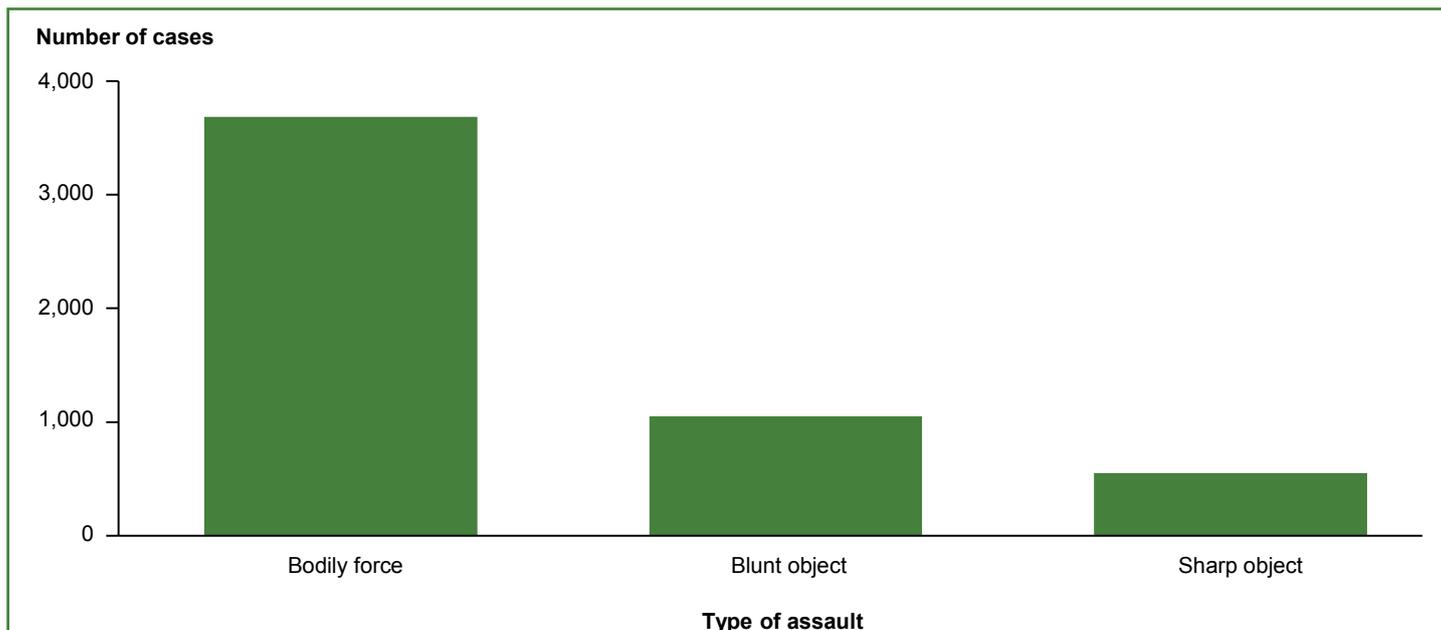


Figure 3: Number of cases by type of assault, women and girls, 2013–14

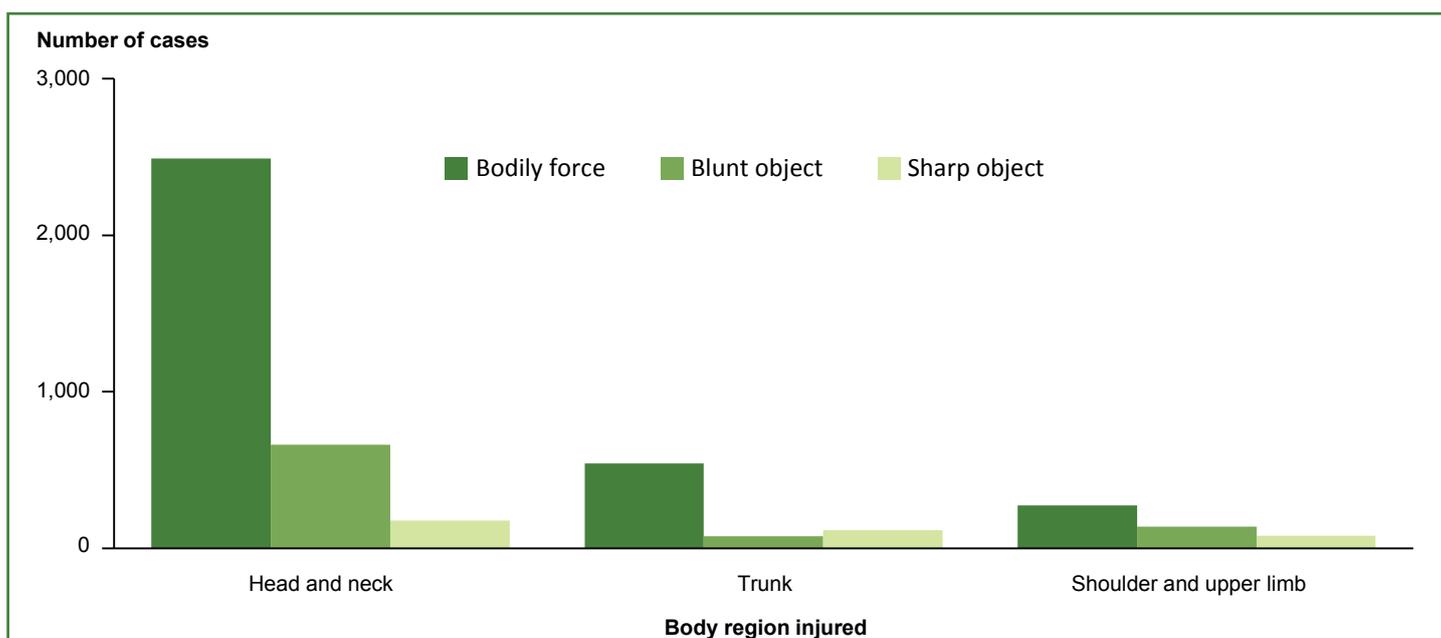


Figure 4: Number of hospitalised assault cases, by body region injured, by type of assault, women and girls, 2013–14

## Spouse or domestic partner violence

The focus of this next section is on women and girls who were the victims of violence perpetrated by a spouse or domestic partner. For the 2,843 victims of spouse or domestic partner violence, most (67%, or 1,895) were assaulted using bodily force (Figure 6). Almost a quarter of hospitalised spouse or domestic partner victims were assaulted with either a blunt (16%, or 441 cases) or sharp (8%, or 219 cases) object.

Superficial injuries (22%), open wounds (21%) and fractures (21%) were the most common types of injuries sustained by women and girls who were the victims of spouse or domestic partner violence. The ‘head and neck’ was the body region most often injured in hospitalised cases of assault of women and girls (59% of cases). This was also true when the perpetrator was a spouse or domestic partner (61%), and at all ages (Figure 7). Injuries to the trunk (which includes the thorax, abdomen, lower back, lumbar regions, spine and pelvis) were less common.

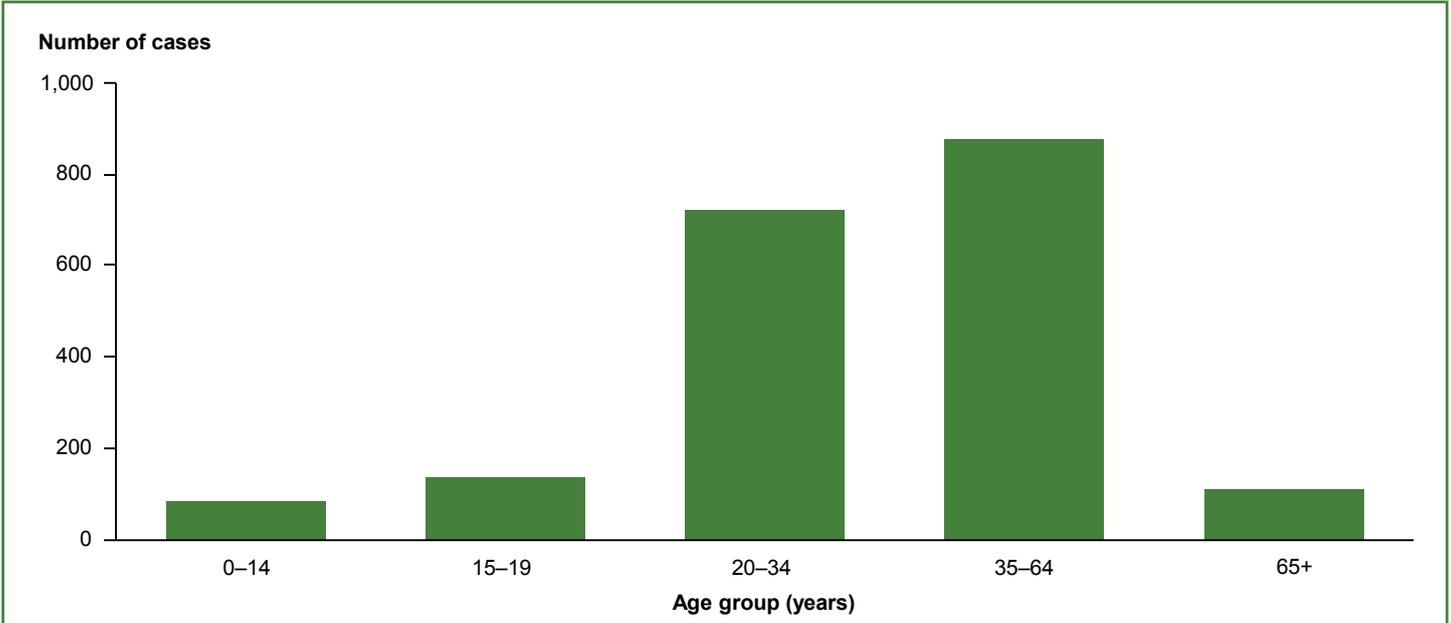


Figure 5: Number of hospitalised assault cases that occurred in the home, women and girls, by age, 2013-14

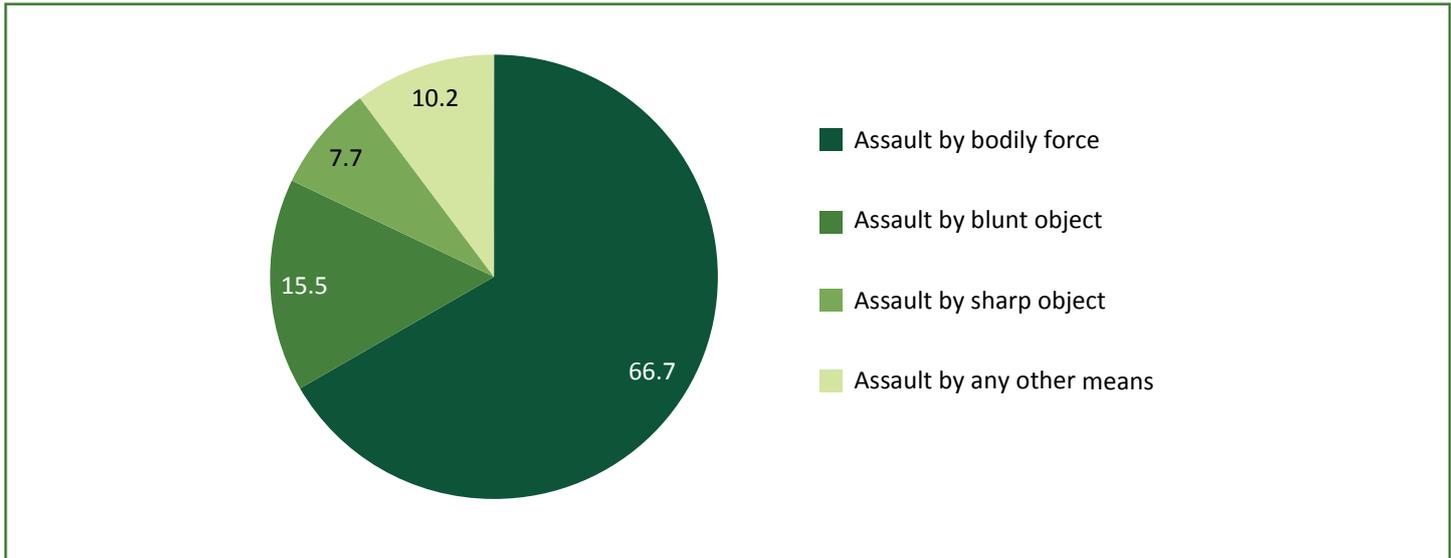
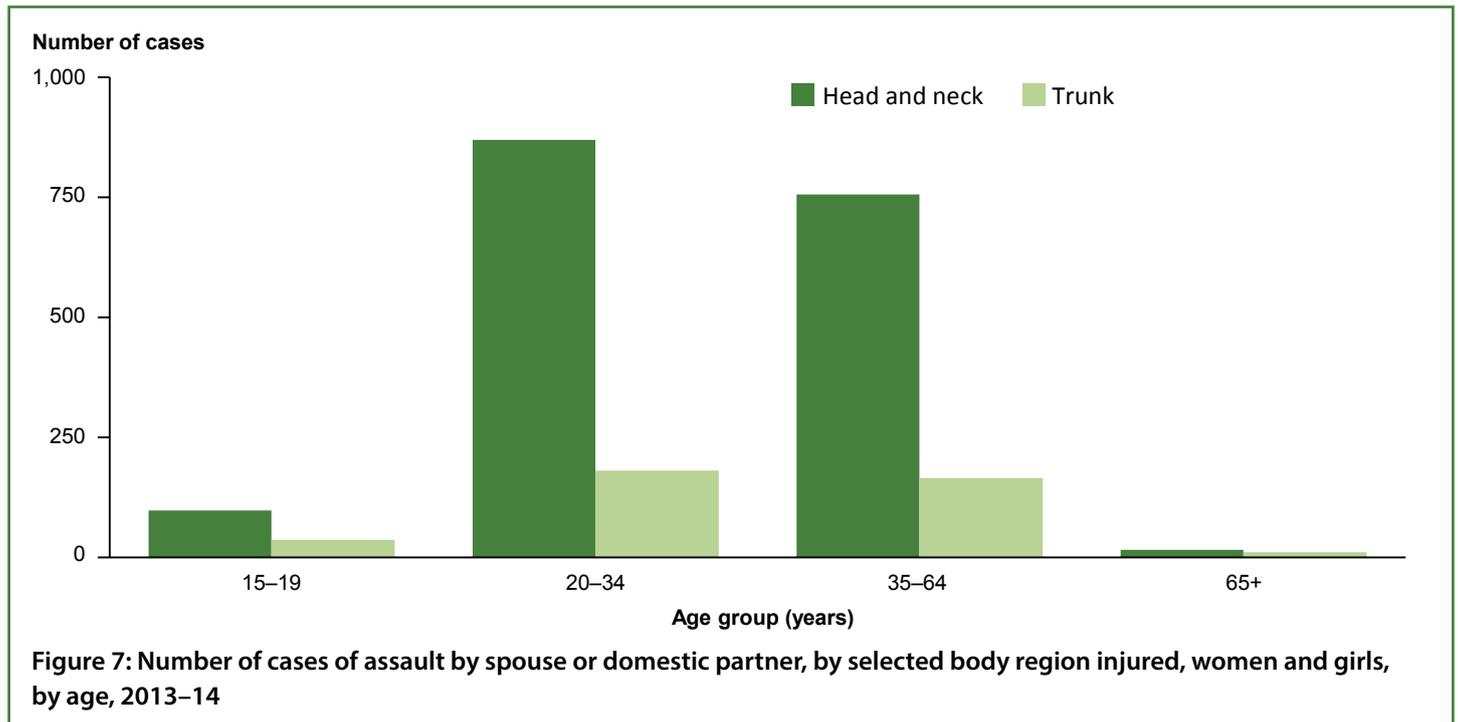


Figure 6: Type of assault by spouse or domestic partner, women and girls, 2013-14

For female victims 15 years and over, 8% (217 cases) were pregnant at the time of the assault. Pregnant women and girls who were assaulted by their spouse or domestic partner had a larger proportion of injuries to the trunk (33%) compared with their non-pregnant counterparts (12%).



## References

NCCC (National Casemix and Classification Centre) 2012. The international statistical classification of diseases and related health problems, 10th revision, Australian modification (ICD-10-AM), Australian Classification of Health Interventions (ACHI) and Australian Coding Standards (ACS), 8th edn. Wollongong: University of Wollongong.

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