

Briefing Paper 1:

Findings from a Systematic Review of DVFR/DHRs' Processes and Recommendations

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Introduction & Aims

Globally deaths from domestic homicide are estimated to be 50,000 annually (UNODC, 2019) with further increases anticipated due to continuing austerity and restrictions from the global COVID-19 pandemic (Grierson, 2020a; Rahim, 2019; WHO, 2020).

Women continue to be the victims in most cases (UN Women, 2020). Domestic Violence Fatality Reviews/Domestic Homicide Reviews (DVFR/DHR) were first introduced in the 1990s and aim to reduce domestic homicide (DH). These multi-agency reviews identify lessons learned and make recommendations to improve policy and practice.

Our systematic review addresses three key questions:

- 1 What recommendations are made from DVFR/DHRs internationally?
- 2 What is the impact of these recommendations?; and
- 3 What recommendations are made about the processes of DVFR/DHRs?

This systematic review provides valuable messages concerning case selection, panel membership and funding mechanisms for jurisdictions currently in the process of introducing DVFR/DHR's and for those seeking to refine and strengthen current processes and outcomes.

Methods

(n=11) 

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Electronic databases (n=11) were searched for articles published in English (2001 – August 2019) which focused on international DVFR/DHRs processes and initiatives.

16+ yrs 

16+ yrs

The focus was on adults aged 16+ years who were killed by a family member/(ex) partner

11 

11

After robust screening, 11 studies were included in the final review.

Findings



Recommendations made by DVFR/DHRs focus on: DVA training and awareness and DH; provision and coordination of services; children impacted by DVA and DH.



Recommendations on DVFR/DHR processes emphasise: the importance of standardizing data collection, diverse team membership, child involvement, and consideration of ethical dilemmas arising from review team members' potential conflict of interests. DVFR/DHR team members should consider that stereotypes and a lack of cultural sensitivity may influence the review process.



Impact of DVFR/DHRs: There is no evidence that DHRs/DVFRs reduce domestic homicide. The lack of evidence regarding impact may be due to a failure to monitor and evaluate the implementation of recommendations and reduced resources.

Conclusions

Organisational & Professional Responses

Organisational and professionals' responses to DVA are central to operationalising the learning from DVFR/DHRs. This includes training, interagency working, as well as relationships between these organisations and the community. The wider socio-political context also shapes DVA service provision and the ability to implement recommendations.

The potential to improve public awareness and responsiveness

DVFR/DHR findings have the potential to improve public awareness and responsiveness to DVA. Publishing DVFR/DHR figures and narratives highlights the gendered nature of DVA and provides a powerful driver for governments to introduce relevant legislation and resource DVA services.

Implications for Practice, Policy, and Research

- 1. Greater investment is needed** in frontline services, review processes and in implementation of review recommendations to respond to DVA and DHs.
- 2. Common guidance or principles for review teams could improve intra-country, cross-country and international knowledge transfer.**
- 3. Improved monitoring** is needed to understand if DVFR/DHR recommendations are implemented and barriers or facilitators to implementation.
- 4. National repository of DVFR/DHRs:** Several studies reviewed recommended a repository OF DVFR/DHRs to maximise learning.



- 1. Greater investment**
- 2. Common Guidance**
- 3. National Repository**

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