

## **ABSTRACT**

**OBJECTIVES:** To describe homicide trends and years of potential life lost (YPLL) in Trinidad and Tobago for the period 2001 to 2009.

**METHODS:** Data for homicide from 2001 to 2009 were obtained from the Crime and Problem Analysis (CAPA) branch of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. The data provided the number of homicides, for each gender, per age group. The data were used to estimate the years of potential life lost due to homicide for the period under study. To observe the trend of homicide the number of homicides per 100 000 of the population was also calculated for each year under study using an estimated population of 1.3 million.

**RESULTS:** There were 3012 homicides for the period 2001 to 2009. The rate of homicides increased from 12 per 100,000 in 2001 to 42 per 100,000 in 2008. There was a small decrease to 39 per 100,000 in 2009. The number of males murdered for the period far exceeded the number of females, 2669 to 343 respectively. The rate for males moved from 18 to 74 per 100,000. The homicide rate for females remained unchanged at about 6 per 100,000. The rate for the 20 to 39 age group increased from 23 to 80 per 100,000.

The total YPLL for the period was estimated to be 95,162.5. This represented a rate of YPLL of 7320.19 per 100,000 of the population. The YPLL for males exceeded the YPLL for females. The

YPLL for young adults between ages 20 to 39 exceeded the YPLL for any other age group. For the period 2004 to 2005 the YPLL for homicide was greater than other causes of premature mortality such as HIV/AIDS and road fatalities.

**CONCLUSION:** Over the period under study, 2001 to 2009, homicide increased steadily. The rate of homicide from 2001 to 2009 more than tripled. From 2004 to 2005 it lead HIV/AIDS and road fatalities as a main cause of premature mortality. More males were victims of homicide than females and the 20 to 39 age group had a higher incident of homicide than any other age group. This has implications for the labour force and by extension the economy given that these individuals are supposedly in their most productive years. An important point to note is that the data obtain does not support the claim that the homicide rate for Trinidad and Tobago was higher than Jamaica at any time during the period under study.