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OBJECTIVE: To describe the pattern of gender-associated violence amongst adult survivors. **DESIGN:** Descriptive case analysis of prospectively collected data. **SETTING:** The gender violence and recovery centre (GVRC), a shelter and violence treatment facility for the gender-associated violence at the Nairobi Women's hospital (NWH). **SUBJECTS:** Data on 663 consecutive adult patients who presented to GVRC between February 2003 and April 2004 were evaluated. **RESULTS:** The patients age ranged from 18 to 74 years (mean 27.7 years). Four hundred and eight patients (61.5%) presented following sexual assault. Most of assaults were perpetrated at night. A stranger was the assault perpetrator in 75.1% and 2% of sexual and non-sexual assault respectively. An intimate partner was the perpetrator in majority (86.5%) of nonsexual violence. Most physical injuries were minor bruises and swellings. The rate of positive spermatozoa from high vaginal swabs was only 15.9% in cases of sexual assault. Sexual assault was significantly associated with single status of the victim and assault by more than one assailant. **CONCLUSIONS:** Violence against women is a common public health problem in the city of Nairobi. Women are vulnerable both in and out of the home. More efforts, including massive public education, are needed to protect this vulnerable population.