

Rape and Sexual Assault

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigations's Uniform Crime Reports, an annual statistical compilation of crimes reported to law enforcement agencies across the nation, in 1996, there were 95,769 reported forcible rapes and assaults or attempts to commit rape. (*Federal Bureau of Investigation. (released September 28, 1997). Crime in the United States, Uniform Crime Reports, 1996, p. 23. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.*)

The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice obtains information about crimes both reported and not reported to the police. In 1996, the NCVS identified 307,000 incidences of rape/sexual assault committed in the nation (more than two-thirds remained unreported). (*Ringel, C. (1997, November). Criminal Victimization in 1996, Changes 1995-96 with Trends 1993-96, NCJ-165812, p. 3. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.*)

More than 52 percent of all rape/sexual assault victims were females younger than 25. (*Perkins, C. A. (1997, September). Age Patterns of Victims of Serious Crimes, NCJ-162031, p. 1. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.*)

Among female victims, friends or acquaintances committed 40 percent of the rapes and sexual assaults; strangers, 32 percent; and intimate partners, 24 percent. The intimate offender was more likely a boy/girlfriend (14.3%) than a spouse (7.3%), a difference that may be due in part to spouses' reluctance to disclose violence by their partners. Researchers noted that boyfriends or girlfriends may be more likely than spouses to define violent episodes as criminal. (*Craven, D. (1994). "Sex Differences in Violent Victimization," NCJ-164508, p. 5. Bureau of Justice Statistics, Special Report. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.*)

Injury sustained by females during rapes and/or sexual assaults also affected whether law enforcement was notified. Females who suffered physical injury in addition to the injury suffered from the rape or sexual assault itself reported 37 percent of those victimizations; while 22 percent of rapes and sexual assaults without an additional physical injury were reported. (*Ibid.*)

Overall, rape has the highest annual victim costs at \$127 billion per year (excluding child sex abuse), followed by assault at \$93 billion, murder (excluding arson and drunk driving) at \$61 billion, and child abuse at \$56 billion. (*Miller, T. R., Cohen, M. A., & Wiersema, B. (1996, February). Victim Costs and Consequences: A New Look. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice.*)

In 1980, state prisons held 20,500 sex offenders. By 1994 over 88,000 sex offenders were held in state prisons — comprising nearly 10 percent of all state prison populations. (*Finn, P. (1996, November). Sexual Offender Community Notification, Research in Action. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice.*)

Based on the findings of a national survey of 4,008 adult women, a 1992 study found that every year in our country 683,000 women are forcibly raped. (*Kilpatrick, D., Edmunds, C., & Seymour, A. (1992, April). "Rape in America: A Report to the Nation." The National Women's Study. Washington, DC: Sponsored by the National Institute of Drug Abuse, National Victim Center and National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center at the Medical University of South Carolina.*)

Note: OVC makes no representation concerning the accuracy of data from non-Department of Justice sources.